



**International Meeting of the
Coordinators of Formation and Vocation
Promotion of the Society of Saint Paul**
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THE PASSION FOR THE PAULINE MISSION

To communicate the Gospel in the present day culture of communication

Fr. Juan Antonio Carrera, SSP

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1. Followers of Blessed James Alberione

"He chose us in Christ before the world was made, to be holy and without fault before him in love"
(Ep 1, 4).

It is superfluous to reaffirm that the source and documentation relative to the formulation of the Pauline mission are in the works of our Founder, Blessed James Alberione. Those are carefully listed and documented in historical works, among which the *Opera Omnia Alberioniana* excels, and in many other works of various dimensions, which each one can find, with some good will, in our institutional Web site www.paulus.net.

As the one responsible for the Formation and Vocation Promotion of each Circumscription of the Congregation, I want to offer to all in this report some notes and suggestions which can enlighten the sense of the orientation to the mission which Pauline formation should have in all its stages. Each one can enrich these ideas or points by drawing from the documentation found within the *Opera Omnia*.

In the digital era and that of on-line communication we need wider horizons for the Pauline mission, but precisely because of this, at the same time, we are also obliged to be more demanding in our formation in order to face the new challenges of the apostolate. The axis is always the mission, the mission is at the center of our life, it is the precious load which supports and runs on the "four wheels" (AD 100) of the Pauline cart. In the past the International Seminar *Pauline Formation for the Mission* (12-23 October 1994) already treated, very clearly, the theme of Pauline Formation oriented to the mission. From 1994 until today, 14 years have gone by and, in the meantime, some things in the life of the Church and of society have changed, nevertheless, in spite of the social, cultural, ecclesial, etc. development and the fact that some means and works have been surpassed, have become obsolete or have been replaced by others, our specific mission remains and is today even more relevant and demanding than in the past.

In this sense, the document of the General Government at the conclusion of the International Seminar on Pauline Formation maintains all its validity. In fact the operational proposals of the Seminar and especially the 12 directives of the General Government of that

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time continue to indicate to us, in the multi-cultural and multi-medial dimensions of today, some guidelines for the specific preparation of the apostolate, which is indispensable “to Be Saint Paul alive today” (APim 225), on which we reflected during the last Chapter (*Reflections and documents of the VIII General Chapter, Ariccia, April 20th to May 20th 2004*).

As Paulines today we are all called to be professionals in the world of communication. But, first of all, we have the duty to be leaven and salt, well beyond the eight daily hours of work, which are not always nor by all carried out with responsibility. Speaking about the apostolate of the Editions and of the two-fold expression of the Pauline vocation, Don Alberione, recalled in 1960 some essential gifts or talents, which are certainly a necessary even today, required by the apostolate for the successful fulfilment of our mission: “The disciple like the priest should be attentive to the interests of God and of souls; and little by little, according to his capacity, become a master in technology and propaganda” (UPS III, 133).

The apostolic mission entrusted to us by the Founder in 1914, asks us today to work united on behalf of men and women of the whole world, precisely at the moment when globalization and on-line communication extend their boundaries to new cultures and new needs. As followers of Blessed James Alberione and Coordinators of Formation and of Vocation Promotion of the 18 Circumscriptions of the Society of Saint Paul, all of you have the serious responsibility to live the integrity and all the dimensions of Pauline life according to the new challenges. The Alberionan affirmation that “today, more than in past times, organization, especially on an international level, is valid, in every sector; particularly in that of the apostolate” (UPS 1, 382), therefore, maintains all its relevance and validity.

Blessed James Alberione was also convinced that it was not possible to proceed in a scattered or dispersed manner. He thought big, having his feet well on the ground. The Founder always adds to the care of the contents, the attention to technology and professional organization in apostolic work. Good has to be well done.

2. Paulines for the Mission

“And how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the gospel” (I Co 9, 16)

It seems convenient to strengthen this fundamental principle – we are Paulines for the Mission, we are Paulines for the apostolate – so as not to give ever the occasion to certain forms of fulfilment in the Pauline apostolic mission, justified sometimes only in the name of the primacy of contemplation in regard to action. Evasion into spiritualism, individualism and optimism are not, in fact, an advantage, neither for the mission of the Congregation nor for the personal sanctity of the members of the Society of Saint Paul. Our apostolic organization is fundamentally communitarian, according to the type of decisions which should be taken by those who are legitimately responsible.

Vatican Council II, the Pontifical Magisterium and the present social, cultural and ecclesial context stimulate and encourage us to live in communion with the universal Church and to journey together with the People of God and with society of today in dynamic fidelity to the Founder, being aware that all our works are always at the service of the mission.

The recent Instruction, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*, from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, approved by the Holy Father on May 5, 2008 says: “Today, it is not rare that the mission is addressed to people concerned with their own autonomy, jealous of their freedom, fearful of losing their independence. With their very existence, consecrated persons present the possibility of a different way for the fulfilment of their own life, a way where God is the goal, his Word the light and his will the guide, where consecrated persons move along peacefully in the certainty of being sustained by the hands of a Father who welcomes and provides, where they are accompanied by brothers and sisters, moved by the same Spirit, who wants to and knows how to satisfy the desires and longings sown by the Father in the heart of each one. This is the primary mission of the consecrated person: he or she must witness to the freedom of the children of God” (*The Service of Authority and Obedience*, n. 15).

In fact, Vatican Council II had already affirmed: “The evangelical counsels join their followers to the Church and her mystery in a special way... thence arises their duty to be discharged to the extent of their capacities and in keeping with the form of their proper vocation” (LG 44). The

religious “collaborate with their contemporaries so that in this way the work of building up the earthly city can always have its foundation in the Lord and tend toward Him” (LG 46). The apostolate is the real continuation of the mission of God entrusted to the Twelve and “belongs to the very nature of religious life” (PC 8a), thus, this is why all the decisions concerning observance and the use of the institutes should take into account the “needs of the apostolate” (PC 8b).

Blessed James Alberione expressed his idea concerning this as follows: “For us, life in common is born from the apostolate and in view of the apostolate. This characteristic of the Society directed to a purpose, includes the common good of the members; but, together with the observance itself of conventual life, it has a certain organization which takes into account this: we are at the service of souls: religious-apostles; to give everything that has been acquired, following the example of the Divine Master” (UPS I, 285).

It is also necessary to specify or explain clearly what the Primo Maestro really had in mind when he spoke about the apostolate. He did not identify the apostolate with pure and simple activity. This activity deprived of soul is expressly considered sterile, ambiguous and even dangerous, in any case, away from the proper end of the Church and of a religious Congregation. It would then be only an industry and a business: a deviation about which the Founder constantly warned us.

In *San Paolo* of February 1951, we find a normative article of great relevance, which the Primo Maestro asked Don Federico Muzzarelli to write with the approbation of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, prepared also to respond to the questions of some houses, to explain to those who ask, and especially as a *Directory for all Paulines*: “*Our Apostolate*: the activity of the Society of Saint Paul is not commerce or trade, it is not industry, but it is *work* for the sanctification of its members, *apostolate* for the sanctification of souls...” (CISP 810-822). Therefore, apostolate is also work, but not just any work, rather that which aims at one’s own sanctification and that of others, following the steps of the Apostle of the Gentiles on the road to Damascus.”

In fact, after encountering Christ, Paul feels urged to be his apostle and to carry out the role of the apostle, that is, of the one sent: “So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us” (2 Co 5, 20). This ardour and this apostolic pride have been stressed on numerous occasions by the Primo Maestro. Once, Don Alberione, in 1952, referring to the apostolate, affirmed: “All to the apostolate! All in view of the apostolate! Is there in us such a great love for God so as to desire that this God be known, loved; that his Kingdom may come? It is necessary to have fire, with two flames, in the soul: the love for God and the love for souls. In love, life: “For the love of Christ overwhelms us” (2 Co 5, 14) (*Deus caritas est*, n. 35).

3. Consecrated for the Mission

“Through him we have received grace and our apostolic mission of winning the obedience of faith among all the nations for the honour of his name” (Rm 1, 5).

Apostolate and consecration are two concepts which are closely connected with one another, that is, consecration is intimately bound with the quality and the attitude of the person who intends to dedicate himself/herself completely to apostolic action. The Founder writes: “The Apostle is the one who bears God in his soul and radiates him around self... The apostle is a chosen vase which overflows, and souls run to quench their thirst” (UPS IV, 277). And also: “The more we make man disappear in our writings and in our words so as to make God and the Church heard, the more and better will our apostolate be heard. In fact, the apostle is a witness of everything that he has seen and heard” (UPS IV, 122).

In 1934, the Primo Maestro exhorted: “We are with Jesus the Master: our life, our light, our strength... The observance of religious life is the guarantee and the basis of the apostolate” (CISP 15-16). Thirty years later, at the conclusion of the jubilee celebration in 1964, the 50th anniversary of foundation and 80th birthday of Don Alberione, he ended his homily as follows: “A reminder for all: the works of God are done by the men of God” (CISP 210).

The profound need for interiority and contact with God led our Founder to decide himself for religious life, when it was a question of founding an apostolic organization. He realized that for various reasons, a secular Institute would have been preferable, because less conditioned by

canonical structures. However, toward the year 1910 he took a definitive step. He received a greater light and saw: writers, technicians, propagandists: but *religious men and women*" (AD 24). And this, for which reasons? "On the one hand, to lead souls to the highest perfection, that of those who practice the evangelical counsels, and then the merit of apostolic life; on the other hand, for greater unity, more stability, more continuity, for the apostolate to be more supernatural. To form an organization, but a religious one; where forces are united, where dedication is total, where doctrine will be purer" (AD 24).

Considering that the Pauline mission demands team work and separates itself from every form of individualism, it seems to me that it is important to stress the value of the community, to recommend to you to take into account this great gift in all the stages of the formative journey of the young. In fact, with religious consecration, each one leaves his natural family to find himself forming part of a new family: the community. I strongly invite you and your collaborators in the field of formation and of vocation promotion "to be not only consumers of community, but above all, its builders" (*Fraternal Life in Community*, n. 24), to be creators of a life-style which makes possible the growth of fraternal dialogue, the exchange of opinions and the involvement of all.

The creation of a favourable climate for dialogue, for sharing and for corresponsibility *ad intra e ad extra* of the Congregation is today, like yesterday, an art in the formative journey of the young, and therefore, at the same time, a serious responsibility which we, Formators, should never forget: "Persons in authority will have to be concerned with creating an environment of trust, promoting the recognition of the abilities and the sensitiveness of individuals. Moreover, with word and deed they will nourish the conviction that the community requires participation and therefore, information. In addition to listening, persons in authority will value sincere and free dialogue – sharing of feelings, perspectives and plans: in this atmosphere each one will be able to have his or her true identity recognized and to improve his or her own relational abilities. Persons in authority will not be afraid to recognize and accept those problems that can easily arise from searching, deciding, working and together undertaking the best ways of realizing a fruitful collaboration. On the contrary, they will search for the causes of any possible uneasiness and misunderstandings, knowing how to propose solutions, shared as much as possible. Moreover, they will commit themselves to finding ways of overcoming any form of childishness and discourage whatever attempts are made to avoid responsibility or to evade major commitments, to close oneself in one's own world and in one's own interests or to work in an isolated manner" (*The Service of authority and Obedience*, n. 20 b). Nevertheless, "it must be observed that a community cannot be in a state of continuous discernment. After the time of discernment there is the time for obedience, which is the implementation of the decision. Both are times in which it is necessary to live in the spirit of obedience" (*The Service of Authority and Obedience*, n. 20 f).

Blessed James Alberione always expresses with great transparency the bond between Pauline apostolate, religious consecration and community life, and therefore, the consequences are very clear. He always conceived community life and, therefore, the formative journey of it in the service of the mission. All his preaching was aimed at preparing the religious for the apostolate in all fields: in the contents, in the diffusion, in the management or administration, in the relationship with others. It is very touching to listen to the Primo Maestro, in all the stages of his life, when he speaks of the Pauline publishing as of the Editorial House of God, of our bookstores as the modern pulpits and of the booksellers as preachers. Dear Brothers, Formators and Vocation Promoters, we should ask ourselves about what do we speak to our young in the meditations, in the retreats, in the Spiritual Exercises.

In the meditation given to the Roman Pauline communities, which met together in the sanctuary of Mary, Queen of Apostles on Saturday, September 27, 1952, Blessed James Alberione said: "The places of the apostolate are a second church; the machines and the seat of diffusion, a pulpit" (RSP, p. 242), but only on condition that men and women of God work, aware that they must treat in a holy way the holy things. It is true that the apostolate sanctifies, but it should also be sanctified through prayer, interior discipline and fidelity to one's own religious consecration. In the same way, in Ariccia, when speaking about the book stores, he affirmed in April 1960: "Our book stores are centers of the apostolate. The indication is the Gospel with the image of Saint Paul. They are not businesses, but service to the faithful... The bookstore is like a mirror of the entire Institute of

Saint Paul. It is the point of contact between the Institute and the people; it is the center of diffusion of all the initiatives of the Pauline apostolate. It is the Editorial House of God. The bookstore is a temple; the book seller a preacher; light, sanctity, joy in Jesus Christ and Christian life are all the fruits which we seek. The seat is a pulpit of truth" (UPS IV, 162).

The Apostle is the model for Formators and for those being formed: "The master of spirit, should associate firmness and frankness to charity; instead of allowing himself to be guided by likes and by the evil tendencies of the young, he should guide them to attain the highest goals, asking of them decidedly the imitation of Saint Paul the Apostle. The example of a young person who in all things always refers to his Master for orientation of his life and follows his direction: it is Saint Paul. Saint Paul was of a very strong character: and that power constituted in him a conviction, faith! And nevertheless, he always showed himself docile toward those whom Providence determined to guide him in his steps" (A PIM 223-224).

4. In the style of Paul of Tarsus

"I have made myself all to all" (I Co 9, 22).

It seems to me that it is significant to recall a passage of the catechesis on Saint Paul given by Benedict XVI at Saint Peter's Square in 2006. "How can we not admire such a man? How not thank the Lord for having given us an Apostle of that significance? It is clear that it would not have been possible for him to face such difficult situations, and sometimes desperate ones, if there had not been some reason of absolute value, in the face of which no limit or boundary could be considered insurmountable. For Paul, this reason, we know, is Jesus Christ, of whom he writes: "For the love of Christ overwhelms us... so that those who live should live not any more for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life" (2 Co 5, 14-15), for us for all".

Our own proper qualification, the heart and the center of our Charism is the so called Pauline apostolate: to practice the charity of truth with all, working united, acting as a team and being at the service of the mission following the style of Paul. Blessed James Alberione affirmed in 1954, that the Pauline Family is raised by Saint Paul to continue his work; today, it is the living Saint Paul in so far "as it proposes itself to represent and to live like Saint Paul today; thinking, being full of zeal, praying and sanctifying oneself as Saint Paul would do, if he was living today. He lived the two precepts of love toward God and toward neighbour in such a perfect way as to be transformed into Christ: "Christ lives in me" (Ga 2, 20). He made the Society of Saint Paul of which he is the Founder. It is not the Society of Saint Paul that chose him, but he chose us; rather he generated us: "It was I who fathered you in Jesus Christ by the Gospel" (I Co 4, 15). If Saint Paul was living today he would continue to burn with the two-fold flame, of one and the same fire, the zeal for God and his Christ, and for men of every nation. And in order to make us hear he would go up on the highest pulpits and would multiply his word through the means of modern times: the press, cinema, radio, television. His would not be a cold and abstract doctrine. When he arrived, he did not appear for an occasional conference: but he would stop and would form: to obtain the consent of the intellect, to persuade, to convert, to unite to Christ, to direct toward a fully Christian life. He would only begin when he was morally certain of the perseverance of his members. He would allow the priests to continue his work; he would return frequently with the word and the writings; he wanted to have news, and was with them in spirit, and he would pray for them. He would say to the Paulists: Know, love and follow the divine Master: "Take me as your pattern, just as I take Christ for mine" (I Co 11, 1). This is a general invitation for all the faithful and those devoted of him. For us, it is much more since we are sons" (APim 226-228).

And this is why, before placing the Pauline Family under the protection of Saint Paul Apostle, the First Master recalls, we have prayed very much because we wanted a Saint who would stand out in sanctity and would be an example in the apostolate: "Saint Paul is the disciple who knew the Divine Master fully" (AD 96). To be permeated by this conviction means also to possess the pastoral spirit, which vivifies technical means. It is evident that for our Founder, all technical means are the highest pulpits erected by modern progress, which become sacred if placed at the service of the Word of God; but they remain means, and as such belong to the category of the pastoral technology, which is in constant evolution. Therefore, they are not ends and, taken individually,

are not essential. Therefore, they cannot be identified simply with our apostolic charism or with the charism of the Founder, but only understood as an instrumental part of the whole.

“Redaction, technology, diffusion of the dogmatic, moral and liturgical doctrine of Jesus Christ and of the Church: and this by means of the press, or of the cinema, or the radio, or the television, etc. What assures us that we walk on our own way is love for redaction. The Congregation should never lower itself to the level of an industry, of trade or commerce; but should always remain at the human-divine height of the apostolate, exercised with the quickest and most fruitful means, in a pastoral spirit. Anyone who lowers himself to the level of an industrial, or of a merchant would contribute to a fatal deviation. It is not business but evangelization. Let us recall how our Congregation came into existence, under the action of God: before acquiring a printing house and the opening of a house, the apostolate and the redaction already existed, it was already functioning and with a pastoral purpose” (Don Alberione, *Camminare nella nostra via – Walking on our own way*, - February 1951; CISP 808-809).

Don Alberione, many times had recourse to the words of the Apostle, seized by the love of God (cf. 2 Co 5, 14) and constantly stretched out to proclaim the Gospel to all (cf. 1 Co 9, 16.22-23) with all possible means so that God may be all in all (cf. 1 Co 12, 6). “Being in communion with Jesus Christ – writes Benedict XVI in his second Encyclical Letter (November 30, 2007) – draws us into his ‘being for all’, it makes it our own way of being. He commits us to live for others, but only through communion with him it becomes possible truly to be there for others, for the whole” (*Spe salvi*, 28).

In this context, I consider it opportune to stress the fact that we are all called for the apostolate and that we should all prepare ourselves to be ready to cooperate in the elaboration and transmission of the apostolic messages, after having drawn them from our experience of God and the Teaching or Magisterium of the Church.

The Founder says: “The Pauline *Apostolate* requires a strong group of redactors, technicians, propagandists. All have to agree among themselves just like a group of artist agrees when they want to present a beautiful work. How much will and energy lost, disorganized, are wasted in desires and attempts and efforts, in disillusion! It is necessary that all together prepare the bread of the spirit and of the truth” (UPS I, 288). The Pauline Apostle, therefore, collaborates with the brothers of the Congregation, with the members of the Pauline Family and with the lay collaborators, to prepare together the “bread” and to take it to its destination; but giving preference to the work of the brothers and sisters consecrated for the same mission, “so that every member may attain the specific end through the Congregation, inserted in its organization, in the community, in the apostolic group in which the person lives, prays and works” (*Special Chapter*, n. 277).

This does not mean that the professional commitment, for the improvement of the quality of the content of our apostolate, is not valued, appreciated: in fact, the word of God merits the best contributions of science, of art and of technology; and a worthy service to it demands a serious preparation and continuous effort to progress.

All this would imply a deeper study of pastoral and apostolic formation, both initial and ongoing; a formation of Pauline style according to the indications of Don Alberione (cf. UPS I 415-428; II 204-214; Id 229-238; 245-253; III, 123-134; Id. 202-208; IV, 116-124).

In the present day culture of communication a new dynamism is necessary and also an incarnated spirituality in which the Pauline is called, above all, “to be” even before “to do for the sake of doing”. (Novo millennio ineunte, 15). In other words, today, our action should not be characterized so much by the anxiety of doing, but above all, by thinking for doing, by reflecting for acting.

5. Integral Formation for the Mission

“Let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that we love and admire” (Ph 4, 8).

The mission of the Society of Saint Paul implies today a large openness of horizons and a decisive formation in Pauline universality. Already in the work *Apostolate of the Press*, written in 1933, later updated and included at present in the ‘Opera Omnia’ bearing the title *The Apostolate of*

the Edition. Directive Manual of Formation and of Apostolate (AE), Blessed James Alberione observed the indissoluble or inseparable unity and the fruitful reciprocity, between contemplation and action, decisively orientating formation to the mission. All the chapters, including the one concerning piety and the various devotions, are destined to form the Pauline apostle for a specific task. Chapter six is the one which more directly concerns formation and is dedicated to the preparation or specific formation of the apostle, which the Primo Maestro considers under three different aspects: the formation of the mind, of the will and of the heart... This is a book to be read and to meditate on.

The thought of Don Alberione concerning the formation of the Pauline, which is already clear in the practice and in the directives of the first years, becomes more explicit and incisive in the synthesis concerning maturity. The study always has the mission as its aim. "It is absolutely necessary to remember: study is for life. This means: to learn what should be done in life" (*San Paolo*, June-July 1966, 6). The pedagogy of Don Alberione invites us to work continuously with the zeal of the Apostle: "straining forward to what lies in ahead" (cf. Ph 3, 13) is the legacy of the Founder to the entire Pauline Family, which he always wants to be turned toward the future and well balanced on "the four wheels" (AD 100) in its procedure. This urges us to a serious commitment of permanent or on-going formation so as to be authentic "apostles for today" (AD 15) in today's culture of communication which is in constant evolution and is the first one responsible for the profound individual and social transformation taking place.

In one word, the passion for the mission should involve all the stages of Pauline religious and apostolic formation from the very beginning. From the history of our Congregation we know that the aspirant begins the practical exercise from the time he joins. The Founder himself reminds us that in many things it is convenient to begin by doing, and then go on to the instruction, and insist on the practical dimension of our mission and on straining forward. He himself, during his life, never ceased to learn, learning "to transform everything into the object of meditation and of prayer" (AD 66-68), firmly convinced of how history is the teacher of life.

The following is the thought of our Founder concerning Pauline integral formation in view of the apostolate, expressed in four flash points which can accompany and help the formative journey to proceed better in the Circumscriptions:

- a) To progress in everything: technology, diffusion, methods... to aim at becoming the head and form the younger ones for the apostolate.
- b) To try to do in such a way that the places of our apostolate can continue to be our churches; and the machines our pulpits.
- c) To aim at carrying out our apostolate consciously: being aware that everything that is done is produced and is diffused, not as work, but in a way that it is a true apostolate.
- d) To accept the offices or tasks assigned so as to carry them out diligently; and to know how to carry the common burdens.

Once again we are introduced into the heart of our Charism. Pauline formation is always aimed at helping us to live our vocation and mission intensely. Like the young Alberione oriented toward the apostolate, the readings, study, prayer and the entire formation (cf. AD 20-21), in the same way the Pauline apostolic formation is orientated to awaken, nourish and develop the apostolic sense of our work. Concretely speaking, the *Alberionian Formative Journey* includes three fundamental points which we should never forget: a) theoretical formation to the apostolate of editions, b) technical formation concerning various forms of apostolate, c) practical exercise.

The young Pauline who are in formation today, and who will have some responsibility of administration or management of the apostolic works and of the development of their Circumscriptions tomorrow, are called to be audacious and creative; they have the obligation to form themselves integrally, to form themselves in missionary, social and cultural openness; to foster team work and synergy; to appreciate the advantages of the organization, to verify and control; and finally, to carry out in a responsible way the ordinary management of the works.

Speaking about the Pauline formation for the mission, it is worthwhile to mention the relationship between poverty and the correct use of economic and financial resources in the apostolic organization. Don Alberione already warns us "that in each nation it is necessary to know

the civil laws in matters of administration; to take care, as far as possible, of the goods and the rights of the Institute, to use the facilities and favourable dispositions available" (UPS III, 228).

In the Congregation some of the Paulines are always destined or assigned to the administration and to the management of the Society, of the means and the apostolic works (Circumscription Bursars, the General Directors of the Apostolate, Administrators of single societies, etc.) But experience tells us that we have not always taken good care in this area. Therefore, looking toward the future, even using some external collaboration and advise, which should never be lacking, we cannot forget that the last word concerning the property immovable property, titles, works etc. belong to us). It is of the utmost importance to inculcate these things during the formative journey and raise in those being formed the knowledge that it may happen that sometimes they would have to specialize in Canon Law, Bible or morals, but later on be deviated by obedience to services of administration and management.

The future of the mission and the new rhythm of the times (the world and the new means travel faster) require from all availability towards changes, mental flexibility, the capacity to take decisions at the appropriate time.

Blessed James Alberione has always been very clear on this argument, demanding from the Paulines, men and women, an integral education to live correctly the relationship between poverty, administration and money *ad intra e ad extra* of the Pauline Family: "Then Religious formation. Oh, it is understood: the religious sister has to be a good administrator, should also know how to manage money, should know how to practice poverty and know how to produce, either by her work or by obtaining from benefactors and how to administer in a holy way according to the Constitutions whatever she holds. She should not leave anything idle without producing fruit, even if it is only one meter of land, let us express ourselves in this way, only one meter of land where, let us suppose, she can plant four tomatoes. Oh!, she should take care of things and, at the same time, know how to provide for health, avoid certain sicknesses, know how to cure the most simple things and then how to doubt about more difficult cases and thus ask for the advice to competent persons" (*To the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd*, 1957, p.180).

The stimulus for the mission, anxieties and sufferings, remit us to the example and to the witness of Saint Paul, who lists the difficulties which he bore because of his preaching (cf. 2 Co 11, 16-33), and which Blessed James Alberione repeats frequently in his exhortations. The following is a comment during the month of Exercises at Ariccia in the year 1960: "To the Corinthians he writes about his sufferings which accompany the apostolate... Two reflections: 1) the true Religious and more so the Priest, by profession, should love sacrifice and suffering; 2) have to do the maximum spiritual good even corporal good to the neighbour" (UPS III, 57).

Everything, therefore, to live joyfully and united, as religious and consecrated, the love for Christ, Master, Way, Truth and Life, our hope, in order to be all for all, like Paul (cf. I Co 9, 22) in the communication of today.

6. Fundamental elements of the Mission

"I have not hesitated to do anything that would be helpful to you; I have preached to you and instructed you both in public and in your homes" (Act 20, 20).

We, Paulines, in fulfilling the mission, have the responsibility to present ourselves to the world with a common editorial policy, without neglecting any of the local realities. Those to whom we address ourselves and the contents are already very clear in the *Constitutions-Directory* (art. 69-76). The reference to Saint Paul, as inspirer and model of our apostolate remains irreplaceable; following his example, the content which we will try to communicate constantly will be in this order, the Word of God to "practice the charity of truth" to men of our time, then everything which promotes the good of men (cf. Ph 4, 8-9).

Therefore, we place ourselves in an attitude of service to man, a service which implies a continuous attitude of dialogue. It is only a solid integral formation (personal, communitarian, professional), a lucid conviction and a shared apostolic strategy of the Congregation, which should be made explicit in the single *Apostolic Projects*, which will make us capable to move with charity and understanding, faithful to Christ and to our charism in the Church diffusing truth.

Benedict XVI, in his Message for the XLII World Day of Social Communication, celebrated on May 4, 2008, reminds us: "Man is thirsty for truth, he is seeking truth; this is also shown by the attention and the success obtained by so many editorial products, programmes or *fiction* of quality, in which truth, beauty and the greatness of the person, including her religious dimension are recognized and are well represented. Jesus has said: "You will come to know truth and truth will set you free" (Jn 8, 32). The truth which makes us free is Christ, because he alone can respond fully to the thirst for life and for love which man has in his heart. Anyone who has found him and has become passionate for his message, experiences the irresistible desire to share and communicate this truth" (n. 6).

The Pauline apostolate has no limits or boundaries in diffusing always the truth which is Christ: no limits in contents, or means, or language and recipients. It is addressed to practicing believers as well as to non practicing ones, to believers of other religions, promoting the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. To question ourselves regarding the contents, the type of faith that we offer, to know what we want to offer, is already a response concerning the recipients. The legacy of Don Alberione leads us to benefit the people and the persons of culture using explicit announcement of the integral Christ and to speak of everything in a Christian way. The recipient should be at the center of our apostolic action: the *editing* with the eyes turned toward the recipients and then follows an adequate *production*; the *marketing* and the *diffusion*, trying to discover the requirements of the public. The Pauline apostolate is pastoral in its essence and questions itself if the language used is understood by the recipients.

Such an apostolate is a laboratory of the frontier, prophetic, looking at those who are far away and it confronts itself with the laws of the undertaking. From this result the editorial strategies, the importance of adopting a flexible organization in relation to the recipients, seeking collaboration in concrete actions.

Thinking of the recipients in the publication and diffusion of truth, it is urgent to review our presence within the territory at world level creating effective centers of diffusion in the more strategic points so as to arrive there where our potential "clients" are. Looking toward the future it is necessary to strengthen the technology of diffusion, optimizing the channels of sale and valuing new ways of being present. At the same time, the role of the virtual bookstore, the interaction with the public via E-Mail and ways of relating with the recipients in the diffusion and in on-line communication should not be underestimated.

Speaking about contents, *Bible, family and communication* are today at the center of our mission. The choice of these three areas has not been something casual on the part of the CTIA nor on the part of the General Government. These three are very dear to Blessed James Alberione, and the three of them allow us to carry out today his desire of "not to speak only of religion, but to speak of everything in a Christian way" (AD 87). In this way we can truly be faithful to the Founder, acting with dynamic fidelity and giving adequate responses to concrete situations. Out of fidelity to the Founder we should undertake a constant search, not an indolent continuity of his charism; a dynamic commitment to relive it and continually transcribe it in the present, adapting it to the changing times and of the environmental conditions.

1. *The first front* of our editorial lines, so as to communicate the Word of God truly to contemporary man with the means of today, is the development of the Biblical sector, capable of proposing among other things, updated editions of the Bible, pastoral editions, correctly translated in the vulgate languages, accessible by price and adapted by their language to all social classes, planned and thought out for all possible instruments of communication.

But before the Biblical offer, we have the duty to act in such a way that the Word of God is the starting point of all the Pauline apostolic action: The Bible should enlighten and distinguish or characterize all the editorial reality. In this sense, our editorial activity in the religious area and in that of human sciences should journey together with the Church, but following the way of Paul, that is opening new frontiers. Don Silvio Sassi, the Superior General, expresses this very clearly in his annual letter of 2006: "Our attitude of being in the Church according to the spirit of Paul, requires great prudence on our part. The life of the first communities described in the Acts of the

Apostles, the writing of the four Gospels, the Letters of Paul, the history of the Fathers of the Church and the variety of theological schools, of morals and of spirituality, guarantee that faith can be lived and expressed in a variety of sensibilities and cultures. The true drama would be, above all, if it were not possible to recognize our editions as Pauline, and worse still, given the variety of contradictions, it would simply be impossible to identify ourselves" (*San Paolo, January 2006, n. 420, 46*).

2. *The second front* of our editorial lines is to give priority to the family, which concretely means to promote the dimension of the small, domestic Church, nourishing it spiritually, promoting life and true love in all its forms, giving attention to the problems which the families are facing.

Therefore, to speak today of the Family is to speak also about living together, with its lights and its shadows; in other words, it is to speak about betrothal or engagement, of the child before birth and of abortion, of the education of the children, of the world of youth, of drugs, of divorce, of the unmarried couples who live together and of other forms of life together, of the enlarged family, of illegitimate children, of the world of the marginalized, of violence and of abuses, of the broad field of sexuality, of social relationships and of social services, of the world of work and of economy, of retirement pensions, of the house and of assistance, of the loneliness of elderly persons, of illness and of pain, of suffering and of death.

Thinking about the future while keeping an eye on the present, we update ourselves concerning the problems which, in general, families have today, in order to be able to respond better to all the challenges and questions of today, finding a balance between the trends of current thought today and treating burning themes without fear, collaborating with the Church in the search for more just responses to the questions of our recipients.

3. *The third front* of our editorial lines, which concerns the Pauline apostolate, is the world of communication, understood not only as the use of the fastest and more effective instruments, but also as formation to the culture of communication. Up until now, we observe a scarce editorial production in the area of communication. It is something firm, but, there is the desire to continue to search, while we hope that the Circumscriptions will draw up new initiatives, and that they will succeed in their intention to pursue a highly qualified presence in the culture of communication, in fidelity to the dynamism and creativity which are proper to our apostolate.

Thinking and reasoning concerning the formation of the young and on the challenges of the Pauline mission regarding communication and the new technology, it is necessary to think of strengthening operationally the CTIA, in union with the International Secretariat for Formation and Vocation Promotion, or institute an *ad hoc* organism which will know how to create a truly Pauline mentality *ad intera e ad extra*. In that sense, it would be opportune to surround ourselves of collaborators (scholars, Philosophers, Biblists, Historians, experts in communication, etc.) who would offer, through studies of an eminently scientific character, or almost, a Pauline cultural and social thought, that is, deeply rooted in our charism: mission and spirituality.

Besides, it should also be considered that the technological and cultural development which has been reached in many countries, and the nature itself of the Pauline Charism, require from us a highly qualified presence. In order that communication may be efficacious, it should respect the concrete rules and use all the instruments of communication which are adequate for that time. Therefore, we cannot do without or omit integrity for professionalism which are normal requisites of our acting and of the formation of our young. Thus prepared and motivated for the apostolate in this way, they will know, when the case arises, how to be able to make courageous and prudent choices, in privileging means and works which guarantee to satisfy the mission of evangelization at a lower cost and with better and greater results.

Finally, aware that "we hold this treasure in pots of earthenware, so that the immensity of the power is God's and not our own (2 Co 4, 7), it will be their trust in God which will make up for their own inadequacy in the Pauline ministry." The Church – Don Alberione explained to the Daughters of Saint Paul – exalts this apostolate of the Word of God; the Church has given to it the most beautiful names. God's will is clear and precise for us. That will give you the divine blessings! Therefore, you have a great treasure in your hands. But, remember this treasure is in earthenware

vessels. ... Only if the Gospel falls, your mission will fall. This is on God's part! On our part, things are different: it is necessary to be faithful, to correspond" (To the Daughters of Saint Paul, 1934-1939 [1936], 418).

7. Fidelity to the Pope, fidelity to the Mission

"The purpose of this was that now, through the Church, the principalities and ruling forces should learn how many-sided God's wisdom is" (Ep 3, 10).

Blessed James Alberione wants us to be faithful to the mission and without fear before the challenges that the modern means of social communication and the new culture present to the Church and to the hierarchy, to society and to civil power. "We should not get lost, but pray and aim toward having independence in our activity in the Church, trying to pass unharmed between the drops, without getting wet and without getting mixed up. I do not know when or how, but we should have, and will surely have, the freedom of action in the Church because our mission demands, requires this" (Vademecum, n. 933, November 2, 1952). Nevertheless, fidelity to the Pope, to which the Founder has bound us by the fourth vow in what concerns the apostolate, is evident and unquestionable; and the Alberionian pedagogy insists on the knowledge of the Magisterium or Teaching of the Church, and asks that it be present in the different levels of formation of the young, and that with its authority, may be the guide for the drawing up of the editorial projects and for the apostolic activity in such a way as to guide our recipients correctly, according to reason and faith.

In the intention of the Primo Maestro, then, the vow of fidelity to the Pope is not a formality, but rather, it implies a serious assumption or undertaking of responsibility in regard to the Church, the Pastors, and the People of God. Its origin goes back not only to the dramatic events of modernism, in which Don Alberione experienced what it meant to adhere or not to the directives of the Holy See, but also to the awareness which he acquired of the tremendous ideological importance or significance of the editions and of the new audiovisual technology.

Already in 1924 he wrote: "We have to be the faithful interpreters of the word and of the addresses of the Pope. Let us not intend to be other: and God will give us the grace to do this. It will not be necessary to sink into the abyss of knowledge, we will not put into our head trends or currents of thought: it will suffice for us to understand and follow well the directions indicated by the Pope, and we will be close to him in the debated and discussed questions and in the crisis of thought and of practice. It is not our task to make theories, advance or progress, to level out the road of knowledge: we will remain close to the Pope, and will try to follow faithfully what he says" (*La Primavera Paolina*, p. 621). And in 1950: "The Pauline, living at the height of his mission, becomes a universal missionary... Let us walk at the pace of time, so that we may be actual with actual men today; and, one is such if one is in Peter's boat... To be with the Pope means to live always updated. Not dangerous adventures, no useless and belated complaining. Fervour is progress, progress is charity, when everything is aimed toward the glory of God and the good of souls" (CISP 857-858).

These words assume a special significance today, under the Pontificate of Benedict XVI, whose Magisterium or Teaching translates in an extraordinarily living way the charismatic message of our Founder. Our fidelity to him, to his doctrinal directives and to his disciplinary exhortations, will be not only a duty, but a happy privilege and a loving witness of gratitude. Our own reality of Pauline Family, called to collaborate together and with the Church to carry out the great design to offer Jesus, the Master to the world in His fullness, will truly be as Don Alberione intended it to be: "The whole world can be compared to an immense Parish; the Parish of the Pope. This is your field" (UPS I, 371).

Going through one's own experience, journeying together with the Church and faithful to the Pontifical Magisterium, the Primo Maestro recognizes "the paternal and wise hand of God, upon him, in spite of the innumerable insufficiencies" (UPS 1, 17; 374). We also continue to feel upon us this tender and powerful hand, which takes care and protects us, which opens new ways before us, which makes us perceive the invitation to an always more profound interiority in order to be in love with Jesus Christ, Master, Way, Truth and Life, and

be conquered by Him and passionate for Him – in the style of Paul of Tarsus – for the mission.

8. Collaborators of the Mission

“But at work in all these is one and the same Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual” (1 Co 12, 11).

The Pauline apostolate is evangelization in so far as it is the work of apostles who live of Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life following the example of Saint Paul. Our own specific human, Christian and religious identity of Pauline communicators and professionals is a guarantee regarding the contents, all our themes, joined together with pastoral and professional sensibility; but it is also a guarantee for the lay collaborators involved in our *Apostolic Project*, in so far as they perceive that they are valued and appreciated better, at professional as well as at apostolic level.

The Magisterium, teaching of the Church, since Vatican Council II opens unpublished or unheard of horizons to the vocation and mission of the lay faithful, it deepens the Ecclesiology of communion and shows a new way of being Church, where the richness of the different vocations, charisma and ministries meet (*cf. Christifideles Laici, n. 55*). In the relation between faith and culture – where communication plays a fundamental role – the role of the laity is indispensable and very committed, very necessary and urgent (*cf. CL, n. 44*) and it is clear that today consecrated religious and laity are called to a close collaboration *ad intra e ad extra*: consecrated persons should be spiritual guides and cultivate the most precious talent: that of the spirit, the soul, while the laity, in turn, can offer the religious the precious contribution of their secularity and of their specific professional service (*cf. Vita Consecrata, n. 53*). It is a question of “new routes”, ways, which deserve to be encouraged and deepened.

Since the beginning of the Pauline Family, the laity have been considered indispensable for the carrying out of the mission. Blessed James Alberione already as a young priest, was aware of the apostolic potentiality of the laity which he compared to “a bridge which unites God and men. Between the church and society a great abyss has been created: the apostolate of the laity is the bridge which has been thrown across this abyss, so that society can return to the alliance” (*Unpublished Meditation of the year 1910, written in Alba*). And later in his mature age he exhorted: “It is necessary that we make collaborators – men and women - who will then dedicate themselves voluntarily to the apostolate. We have not as yet developed this sufficiently... you can, in some way, double it” (*Unpublished Meditation, Ariccia, June 1, 1966*).

Therefore, “work with others, in organization” (AD 20), think how to integrate and have our lay collaborators participate in our mission, reaffirm the value of their participation in the apostolate, the duty of forming them and also the duty of making a more careful, attentive selection of the personnel, especially at the level of direction, this should be at the center of our reflections and concerns in the next years if we want to develop the apostolate and extend our presence to those places where we are not directly as yet.

To promote the collaboration with the laity and prepare well the future relationship between those in formation and the laity is also the responsibility of Formators: “The growing collaboration with the laity in the works and activities conducted by consecrated persons, raises new questions that require new responses both on the part of the community and on the part of authority... Furthermore, it is necessary that there be a well-defined description of the competencies and responsibilities of the laity as much as of the religious as well as of the intermediate entities (administrative councils and the like). In all this, the one in charge of the community of consecrated persons has an irreplaceable role” (*The Service of Authority and Obedience, n. 25f*).

Our young people live and will live more in this context; therefore they have to be formed and grow in this new mentality; respectful of the diverse competencies, suitable for a work in a team, in équipe, together with the laity even at directive level; ready to be under the responsibility of the laity in what concerns their professional competence; conveniently instructed about the civil legislation regarding work, administration and management, in

which are established the relationships between the “employer” and the “employee” and the rights and duties of each one (cf. UPS IV, 228).

Even if aware of the critical situation of our time, of the problems of society today, as well as of the reality of the Church and of our Congregation, we cannot ignore that openness to progress, to the future which is innate in our charism. Thus the Founder recalls this: “To stretch ahead every day, never stop, neither on the way to sanctity, nor on the apostolic work. Go ahead! Always ahead!” (*Vademecum*, n. 354, 30, June 1955).

9. New Horizons for the Mission

“Preaching the Gospel to regions beyond you, rather than boasting about work already done in someone else’s province!” (2 Co 10, 15b-16).

In 1969, the year of the first session of our Special General Chapter, is considered as the year of the birth of Internet, with four computers connected with one another, but it will be in the first years of the 90’s that the supporters of the “net of nets” grow and develop rapidly in the whole world. Thus, the product born during the time of the cold war will very soon be the most important means of the time. If printing, the telephone, the television, the radio and the post have shaped the XX century, the new millennium has been born under the patronage of a means which can fuse it and strengthen it. Its force lies in the same factors which render control difficult: the lack of hierarchy and flexibility. Societies equipped to navigate in the nets are likely or probably the more predisposed for the future.

The complex world of Internet opens new horizons for the Pauline mission, to communicate the Gospel to all. Because of this we cannot allow more time to go by without reflecting on this important means of communication and on the challenges which it presents to formation, in all its stages, and to the Pauline mission.

John Paul II, in 2001, mobilized the whole Church to find again “The impulse of the origins” (*Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 40). In this context, our apostolate, inserted in the action of the Church, is called to a dynamic fidelity toward the Founder who entrusted to it the task to evaluate for the Gospel the more rapid and efficacious instruments of each historical time. Today, this fidelity asks us for the courage to rethink once more, in the communicative and integral key, all our formative journey, with the tenderness and the firmness which Saint Paul and Blessed James Alberione teach us.

Immersed in this contemporary reality, fascinating more than complex; challenged by the era of the inter-nautical and of the navigators in net, so materialistic, changing and pluralistic, to ask some question is an obligation. Are we not perhaps, too anchored attached to a stale heritage, concentrated on poor means for the future, incapable of updating, of developing and of living today with fidelity, dynamism and creativity, giving priority to the contents and to the recipients regarding the means?

Do we still think that when our young postulants, novices and juniors are before the computer they are simply losing their time? Let us consider and reason on how important it is for their formation the fact that they are the ones, under our responsibility, who have to develop and update our sites. Looking toward the future of the mission and having before us the new means of communication, what levels or stages of formation are we preparing for our young people in formation? Have we started moving seriously to do a work of inculturated formation in the each of the local realities without betraying the integral aspect, the universality and the pastoral spirit transmitted by the Founder?

There is no doubt that study, reflection, fraternal and serene dialogue among those responsible for the apostolate and for formation will know how to indicate to those in formation the apt ways to navigate with a Pauline mind and heart, on the waves of the net and of the new means.

10. Looking to the future of the Mission

“Forgetting all that lies behind me, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I am racing toward the finishing point” (Ph 3, 13-14).

Looking toward the future of our apostolic mission, we cannot forget to say a word on the visible symbol of what we are and do. In fact, speaking about the Formative and Apostolic Projects, of the contents and of the editorial policies, of the present situation and of the perspectives of our mission, we cannot forget our mark or emblem. In reality, the mark SAINT PAUL is a demanding subject in our daily life, not only of our apostolic activity but also of our communities. The intention of this is to transmit a clear message to the recipients and does not want to be only a stamp or a type of abbreviation among others.

“In the new mark of the Society of Saint Paul, which is proposed here, the two dimensions of the mission are intersected: to serve the Word of God among men and have men learn to rediscover truth, hidden in the heart of events”, wrote Don Renato Perino, Superior General, on December 25, 1991, in the presentation of the *Manual of application* of the new mark SAINT PAUL, which already counts 17 years of life. Don Perino concluded his presentation assuring that “the new emblem is not a pretentious exterior make-up, almost the renewal of an abbreviation already worn out and formally inadequate, but to repeat the perennial actuality and youth of a mission which has the same limits of the world and same depth of God’s love for men”.

It seems to me important to stress it with prayer to explain well to those in formation, the importance of our emblem as the visible symbol of what we are and do, two phases of the same reality that we cannot divide.

Looking toward the future, we can neither ignore the *three principal challenges* which our Congregation has to face today, made explicit by the General directors in their message to the confreres at the end of the meeting held in Ariccia (9-15 October 2006) with the invitation to consider seriously and to translate on the occasion of prayer, of apostolic motivation, of creativity and of concrete initiative, of effective service to men of our time and to the Church. It is a question of indications summarized of what I have said many times, but which are necessary to form the “new” Paulines.

1. *The first challenge* is that we all walk in the same direction, acquiring the Congregational mentality, working as a team, with common editorial policies, drawing all the theological and pastoral patrimony from our Father Saint Paul, inspirer and model. This journey needs organization, programming, levels, strategies and, to verify and control together, have rules, and accustom ourselves to render an account of our work.

2. *The second challenge* commits us to open ourselves to the new forms and opportunities of the apostolate, to the new audio-visual and digital technology, to the new frontiers of communication, to the collaboration with the laity. The consolidation of the structures and of continental organisms (Cap-Esw, Cidep, Europe) becomes determinant in this perspective in order to give our apostolic action an effectively Catholic and global dimension.

3. *The third challenge* concerns the integral formation (initial, professional, permanent), which should never be dull, but should be clear, it should be directed to respond to the exigencies of our specific apostolic mission.

To conclude, I add some of the principal concerns which, according to me, the Congregation and the Circumscriptions should study more at depth and develop in the future with the collaboration or the guide of a strengthened CTIA, understood as a union of attempts between the Technical Committee for the apostolic coordination at world level and the “International Secretariat for Formation and Vocation Promotion”:

1. In vocation Promotion, during the Novitiate and in the various formative stages, present and have them assimilate the almost sacramental value of the means and the structures of the apostolate and of the need to work, according to the abundant and convincing reflections of the Founder on Pauline laboriousness, which in 30 years of life, hidden in Christ and in the manual work of Saint Paul has the models to imitate.

2. To reflect on how to involve, more decidedly, the Formators and those in formation, whether in the drawing up or in the updating of the *Apostolic Project* of each Circumscription or in its execution and evaluation.
3. To help every Circumscription to develop and to put into practice the three pillars of the *Editorial Policies of the Congregation* (Bible, Family, communication) with reference to the social, cultural and ecclesial reality in every country.
4. To deepen our presence in Internet, the common image at international level and the apostolic possibilities which this means offers, especially for the young of the whole Congregation.
5. Take care to apply correctly the emblem, the visible symbol of what we are and do, orientating regarding the correct use with opportune examples and updating.
6. To collaborate with the International Secretariat for Formation and Vocation Promotion and those Responsible for Formation in each of the Circumscriptions, so that it will always be integral (initial, professional, permanent) and in function of the apostolate.
7. To promote apostolic works and the activities encouraging some cultural and/or educational initiatives, to think and to deepen everything that is carried out in practice every day.
8. Too animate everyone, especially the new generations (postulants, novices, juniors, and the first five years before perpetual vows...), to have an open mentality to dialogue with the modern world, with the culture of communication, with the world of Internet and, in general, with the challenges of the new technology.

In the meeting of Masters of Formation (Formators) which was held at the end of March 1961, the Founder asked himself: "Which is the best formation? Which is the supreme personality? Which is the Pauline ideal? How and when is it realized and lived?" And he responded: "Like Saint Paul: when one can say: *I live but it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me*" (APim 235).

May the Pauline Year 2008-2009, desired by Benedict XVI and which we are celebrating with the whole Church, strengthen in us, and especially in our young who are in formation, the love for the Apostle, the disciple who identified himself with the Master and vibrated with ardour to announce to peoples the Word of salvation using the most appropriate languages.

Ariccia (Rome), September 19, 2008



Fr. Juan Antonio CARRERA
President of CTIA