



GUIDELINES FOR THE JUBILEE COMMISSION OF SSP

Fr. Silvio Sassi, Rome 26 May 2011

CELEBRATION OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

In 2010, in the course of a meeting with the General Superiors of the Pauline Family, I have reminded that on 20 August 2014 recurs the **centenary** of the official birth of the Society of Saint Paul and that the Congregation intends to prepare itself for the event with a triennium of remembrances, reflections and projections for the future, in the spirit of “*I strain forward*” (Phil 3,13) of Saint Paul and of blessed James Alberione.

At the end of the dialog, the Superior Generals have manifested the desire that also the Daughters of Saint Paul, the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd and the Apostoline fully participate in the jubilarly triennium. To do in such a way that the entire **Pauline Family** be mobilized for the jubilarly celebration, also the Pauline Institutes of Consecrated Secular Life (Mary of the Annunciation, Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Jesus Priest, Holy Family) and the Association of Pauline Cooperators, are entirely involved.

The decision of the General Superiors of the Pauline Family has then been reprised and deepened during the last meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family in January of 2011, with suggestions and proposals of initiatives to be offered to the **Intercongregational Commission** that in the meantime had been nominated by the General Superiors under the presidency of the Vicar General Fr. Celso Godilano.

On its part, the **IX General Chapter** of the Society of Saint Paul (25 April – 15 May 2010) has approved an operative line on the theme of the jubilee of the Pauline charism: “*The General Government is to indicate to the Governments of Circumscription a “guideline,” in view of the centenary of the Congregation, so that it may be celebrated in a homogeneous and harmonious way*” (5.3.1). To fulfill that mandate, the General Government has created a **Commission** composed of Paulines and presided over by Fr. Alberto Fusi, Procurator General, that meets in Rome from 25 to 28 May 2011.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAULINE JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The existence of two Commissions for the organization of the Pauline jubilee of 2014, one **intercongregational** and another of the **Society of Saint Paul**, is justified so as to be able to reach **two objectives**, distinct but complementary.

The **first objective**: 20 August 1914 is the date of the official beginning of the Society of Saint Paul, willed by Primo Maestro. The **mother cell** of all the Institutions of the Pauline Family, by divine inspiration and with the recognition of the Church, is the charism of “**evangelizing through the press.**” Taking into account the history of the Congregation in

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these hundred years of social, cultural, communicative, ecclesial and congregational changes, we cannot think of the celebration of the centenary as a **simple historical recalling** of what has happened, but we have the responsibility of “**rekindling the gift we have received**” in order to project it into the future.

The **second**: with the start of the Society of Saint Paul also starts the Pauline Family that the Primo Maestro declares as **concluded** in 1960 explaining, during the Instructions in the course of spiritual exercises lasting a month, the **unity** that characterizes it: “a) due to its common origin, b) due to its general aim, c) the same Pauline spirit, even in the diversity of activities, d) due to converging, cooperative and dynamic activities, nourished by a single lymph” (*UPS*, I, 381).

The jubilee celebrations must allow reflection **as a Family** upon what, by will of the Primo Maestro, creates **unity** among all the Institutions and upon **diversities** that however makes us **complementary**. Belonging to the Pauline Family is **an immutable characteristic** of every Institution of the Pauline Family.

The two objectives that all of us together want to reach during the providential opportunity of the next triennium, converge in “**rekindling**” the **beginning** of the Pauline charism in its specificity of evangelizing with efficacy and speed, in the communication of every historical epoch and in its **successive development** that forms the complementary unity in diversity of the Pauline Family, planned and realized by the one Founder, under divine inspiration and with the official approval of the Church.

METHODOLOGY OF WORK

Once the two objectives are clarified, one specific for the charism of the Society of Saint Paul to evangelize in communication and employing the communication of every historical period, and another in order to live membership in the Pauline Family, it is necessary that all the initiatives be well harmonized to allow the **creativity** on the local level of a **unity** on the global level.

For that purpose, it is necessary that the **Commission of the Society of Saint Paul** look attentively at what has already been programmed by the **Intercongregational Commission** and take into consideration the **annual themes** indicated by the General Government in applying **operative line 3.2.1** (2011: **creative fidelity**; 2012: **Saint Paul**; 2013: **Fr. Alberione**) and the content of the **Annual Letter** of the Superior General, requested by **operative line 3.3.1** (2011: *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ*; 2012: *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*; 2013: *Appunti di teologia pastorale* and *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale*).

Bearing well in mind these contexts already established, the Commission has three areas of programming for the charism of the Society of Saint Paul in the prospect of the jubilar triennium: **the historical remembrance, the relaunch toward the future and the creation of ecclesial and cultural events connected to evangelization in communication and employing actual communication.**

The historical remembrance. We must **remember by narrating** the “abundant riches” lavished by the Lord on the Pauline charism during its birth and in the course of a hundred years: the various historical contexts of its beginning and of its development; the person, thought and work of the Founder; the successive apostolic initiatives and the foundations abroad; our members, blessed and venerable; the heroism and hard work of so many, the

particular contribution of some Paulines, the merits of some apostolic initiatives willed by the Founder and the developments at world level in the Circumscriptions, etc.

“*The abundant riches*” lavished by God on the Founder and on the Congregation merit a documented historical research so that we may not forget that the present is fruit of the laborious dedication of the Paulines who have preceded us and so that we may be able to reconfirm the certainty that God remains faithful in spite of our human limitations. This historical remembrance must be taken care of both by the General Government (we can think of a sub-commission) for a global vision, and by the single Circumscriptions talking about their specific history.

Relaunching toward the future. Knowing from where we come from helps us to know where we want to go. The **Primo Maestro** has thought and acted within his own historical context (1884-1971) utilizing specific philosophical and theological categories, the vision of religious life, pastoral sensibility, interpretation of Saint Paul and the understanding of the communication of his time and, on the ecclesial level, he has found solemn confirmation of the Pauline charism in the conciliar decree *Inter mirifica* (04.12.1963). It would be superficial judgment to affirm that Fr. Alberione is only a “**man of concrete facts,**” because a well documented knowledge offers us a “**thinker**” who has known how to articulate a complete ***Project of new evangelization.*** He has realized in his existence what he has planned: “The world needs **a new, long and profound evangelization**” (*Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, 20 August 1926, in *La primavera paolina*, p. 680).

The **Special General Chapter of 1969-71** has thought over the totality of the Pauline charism elaborated by blessed Alberione in light of the contents of Vatican II. **From 1971 to 2011** the Pauline charism has been lived by the laborious and persevering fidelity of numerous Paulines in the five continents; it has been thought about and planned by the General Chapters and by the respective General Governments, by the Provincial Chapters and Governments, by the Regional Assemblies and Governments; it has been codified in the suited normative that accompanies the historical development; it has been appreciated by the universal Church and by the local Churches; it has been blessed by so many men and women who have received some good from our existence in the ecclesial community. We not only have a history of apostolic works to narrate, but also a history of thought regarding our charism.

Starting today for the future we must reflect on the Pauline charism taking into account the changes that have taken place in the **Church** (Vatican II, the post-conciliar period, theology of the religious life, the magisterium on communication, interpretation of the thought and works of Saint Paul, etc.), in **society** (culture, world phenomena, etc.), in **communication** (all of present-day communication).

Even in the **Congregation** important changes have taken place that have not allowed us to realize fully some objectives willed by the Founder and transformed the concrete way of thinking - and living - the Pauline charism (vocation and number of the disciples, Pauline priesthood for communication, Pauline autarchy in the apostolate, important presence of the laity, editorial contents, assumption of the fastest and most effective means, community life and apostolate, vocation pastoral and formation, etc.).

The Primo Maestro has “thought about” in its totality the Pauline charism in successive developments (press apostolate, apostolate of the edition, apostolate of the editions) but in a complete form: **a spirituality for a specific mission** (Saint Paul to preach through the communication of the press and other principal mass media).

The Pauline charism has two sources of “eternal youth”: **Saint Paul and evangelization employing communication**. In order to “rekindle the gift received” we must reprise these two components of the single reality: **Saint Paul** (as he is understood today) and **communication** (as it is used and thought today). These two elements converge in a **Project of new Pauline evangelization that includes**: the recipients of our evangelization, the forms and contents of realization of evangelization, the evangelizing Pauline community formed by Pauline apostles, the search for and formation of the Pauline apostle of today, the spirituality of Saint Paul, the interpreter of Christ the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

With wisdom, **operative line 3.3.2** of the IX General Chapter asks: “The Governments of Circumscription are to appreciate the content of the international seminars “The actualization of the Pauline charism in the third millennium: spirituality and mission” (2008) and “International Seminar on Saint Paul” (2009), elaborating aids for animation and community projects.”

Creation of ecclesial and cultural events connected to evangelization using communication. Besides due “**internal**” celebration that includes remembrance and projection into the future by new formulations and new projects, it is necessary to appreciate the “**external**” celebration, both in the universal Church and individual local Churches, and in society and culture.

On the **ecclesial level** we can pick the opportunity of every initiative of thought and activity that may make reference to the binomial “*communication and evangelization*”; on the **social and cultural level**, manifestations to study communication as a “*complex social phenomenon that affects persons and society*.”

The multiple apostolic activities that we possess, the two faculties and the study centers of communication, the communities scattered in the various territories, the meaningful events of our history, the “good image” of which ecclesial communities give us merit, enterprises of Catholic and lay communication are components of our present Pauline reality to be exploited for ecclesial and cultural initiatives closely connected to communication.

Priority 3.2 of the General Chapter stimulates to “elevate the general cultural level of the Congregation and to “create thought.” The Primo Maestro reminds us: “The Pious Society of Saint Paul has something to say to the world; we have set ourselves on a journey not to wander around, but with a fixed goal and means that are studied and made perfect” (*San Paolo, May 1957, in Carissimi in San Paolo, p. 165*).

Among the “*Things to be realized*,” blessed Alberione recalls our attention: “The Pious Society of Saint Paul will often consider “*For what have you come?*” Let her always carry in her heart the intellectuals: the Gospel is a divine thing; at bottom it corresponds to all minds; it is capable of answering all questions. If we win over the intellectuals, we fish with nets, not only with hook and line” (*AD, 197*).

In Fr. Alberione **sensitivity for culture** is to be put to good use for the whole Pauline apostolate that aims to “not only talk of religion, but of everything in a Christian way” (*AD, 87*).

LEVELS OF CELEBRATION

The Commission must indicate a “guideline” for the jubilee celebrations **on the level of the General Government** and of the **Circumscription Government**.

On the level of the **General Government**: what can be realized in the area of historical remembrance, of the relaunch of the whole Pauline charism and of the ecclesial and cultural manifestations.

On the level of **Circumscription**: what can be realized in the area of a single Circumscription for its historical remembrance, for its relaunch toward the future and for ecclesial and cultural initiatives. The IX General Chapter asks for a “guideline” that is valid for all the Circumscriptions for a “homogeneous and harmonious” celebration, but which must stimulate the creativity of every Circumscription and of every local community, taking into account its own reality. The concrete realization of the jubilee triennium can also transform itself into an original contribution for the **inculturation of the Pauline charism** in the historical contexts of the five continents and **in the expectations of the various generations** that already make up the Congregation.

On the occasion of the celebrations for the **fortieth year** of the Congregation, the Primo Maestro affirms: “I know with what solemnity we celebrate this fortieth year. It is a happy occasion to thank the Lord; to repair for our lack of correspondence to his grace; to take up again vigor, energy and new dedication. Always following in the steps of Saint Paul” (*San Paolo*, July-August 1954, in *Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 149).

In his exhortation during the commemorative Eucharistic celebration for the **fiftieth year**, Fr. Alberione exclaims: “Fifty years! It can be compared to the beginning of a discourse; it is the announced trail; and now secure development... Today through this Mass of mine I close through the *Te Deum* a fifty-year period, and I open the future time through the *Veni Creator*” (*San Paolo*, July-August 1964, in *Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 210).

Let us invoke our blessed Founder, blessed Timothy Giaccardo, the whole Pauline Family in heaven so that also during the celebrations in view of the **centenary**, all the Paulines may know how to combine with intelligent creativity the praise of God for the *past* and the invocation of the Spirit for the *future*. Fr. Alberione has assured us: “I intend thus to belong to this wonderful Pauline Family: as a servant, now and in heaven; where I shall be busy for those who employ the modern and effective means of good: in sanctity, in Christ, in the *Church*” (*AD*, 3).



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