



Rome, 10 January 2012

CONCLUDING MESSAGE

XXX MEETING OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

“The Pauline Family: a Letter of St. Paul to the People of Today”

St. Paul House, Via San Giovanni Eudes, 25, Rome, Italy

7-10 January 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We lived our XXX annual meeting in a climate of preparation for the Pauline Family’s Centenary of foundation, gratefully remembering the abundant riches the Lord poured out upon us through the person of our Founder, a true prophet of the new times.

This year too our assembly had a fresh and innovative note—the presence of the new governing teams of the Pious Disciples and Pastorelle Sisters.

The theme proposed for our reflection, *The Development of the Pauline Family from 1971 to Today*, underscored the fact that we continue the work of Blessed James Alberione—a subject presented from different perspectives by various people. We want to pass on to you what echoed among us during our fraternal exchanges of ideas but above all what reverberated in our hearts, namely: the profound desire to feel our *family* dimension and to respond to the plan of God by surmounting the problems and strains that may have clouded this gift.

In the certitude that goods shared favor a new circulation of life, we want to share with you some of the stimuli that struck us in a particular way in these days.

Immersing Ourselves in the Charism with Great Openness to the Church

Carmelite Fr. Bruno Secondin expanded our ecclesial horizons by means of his conference on the evolution of the theology of the consecrated life from Vatican II up to today. In his talk, he invited us to “inhabit” the front lines of mission through continual creativity and apostolic and prophetic daring.

It is impossible to attempt to summarize the innumerable provocations that this conference roused in us. It made us perceive the vital need for our communities to be constantly receptive to the solicitations of contemporary culture so as to open paths to hope, prophecy and communication, becoming “workshops” of a new humanity and witnesses to the Gospel through the magnetic and eloquent language of a transfigured life (VC 20b).

Fr. Teofilo Perez, ssp, offered us an excellent synthesis of the journey of the Pauline Family from the perspective of the consecrated life, highlighting the Founder’s profound originality (including his terminology) in renewing this form of life in the Church. In fact, his apostolic passion gave rise to a new style of religious life in which everything leads to and sustains mission and in which the vows become an expression of “complete availability,” “the greatest love” and “maximum freedom.”

Contemplating the work of God in our history, we paused to admire our manifold Institutes, which developed according to the pedagogy of small steps taken in keeping with the lights kindled by the Lord at opportune moments. Through the mysterious *élan vital* of the charism, the large and flourishing Pauline tree sprouted many branches over the years so as to proclaim the Gospel more widely and effectively.

How the Pauline Congregations Assimilated the Changes

An interesting rereading of our history was presented in round-table fashion by representatives of our five Congregations, who underscored the journey carried out over the last fifty years, after the death of the Founder, as we strove to assimilate the Council's proposals. We can say that the Pauline Congregations, above all on the occasion of General Chapters and institutional meetings, actively participated in the process of change initiated by Vatican II, growing in awareness of their identities in their search for creative fidelity.

An Important Turning Point with Regard to Methodology

Our review of the past was a motive for thanksgiving and for a comparison of life, opening our eyes to the profound and widespread changes that have taken place not only in society, in the Church and consequently in our Congregations, but also on the anthropological, theological and ecclesial levels. We have changed and we continue to change, whether we are aware of it or not. Problems and challenges pertaining to the consecrated life and to the mission of our Family are now more complex and communal; they can no longer be handled individually. The significance of the mission entrusted to us by our Founder and approved by the Church comes into play because the Pauline mission belongs not only to our individual Institutes but also to our Family as a whole. Because of this, we feel the need to adopt a different methodology with regard to the work we carry out in our annual meetings. This methodology should lead the General Governments to choose a theme or an important aspect of our Pauline life and interpret it for the whole Pauline Family, enriching it with communal and binding directives. If we have reflected at length on the birth and development of the Pauline Family as conceived of and gradually brought to fulfillment by the Founder, now we feel the need to live that charismatic project by working concretely and in union with one another.

Approval of the Statute of the Association of Pauline Cooperators

A concrete expression of the turn-about that we want to give to our meetings on the operative level was the three-year *ad experimentum* approval given by the Superiors General to the *Statute of the Association of Pauline Cooperators*, the fruit of a long work of study and research. In officially signing the first copy of the Document in the sight of the whole assembly, the five Superiors General expressed their esteem and gratitude to the Pauline Cooperators throughout the world.

Information from the Various Congregations

As is by now customary, the various Congregations informed the assembly about different initiatives they carried out or that are currently underway. Among these, we want to entrust to the prayers of our whole Family the upcoming General Chapter of the Apostoline Sisters, which will begin on 25 January 2012. It will be held in the Divine Master Retreat House, Ariccia, Italy, and will have as its theme: "*To Make One's Whole Life a Vocation Apostolate*" (J. Alberione). *The Vocation Apostolate: Between Fidelity to the Charism and Prospects for the Future.*

We are approaching the second year of preparation for our Centenary, during which we will contemplate the treasure we have received and also the response we have made in these years on the level of the Pauline Family. It will be the year of *Magnificat* and *Miserere*.

May the Holy Spirit make us capable of new prophecy so as to bring to fulfillment the Alberionian project: *To live and give Jesus Christ—Way, Truth and Life—to the men and women of our time.*

With fraternal best wishes,

THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE
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