

Celebration of Morning Prayer for 26 November 2020

Feast of Blessed James Alberione

It would be well to place a symbol (a light or incense, etc.) next to the lectern to underscore the Gospel's importance. The lectern should be adorned with flowers. The closed *Evangeluario* (Book of the Gospel) is placed on the altar.

Introduction to Morning Prayer

On this very significant day, on which we commemorate as the Pauline Family the memory of the 49th anniversary of the birth to heaven of our Founder, Blessed James Alberione, we are also celebrating the opening of the Pauline Family's Year of the Bible, which will last until 26 November 2021.

In a special way this year, we are urged to dedicate ourselves to the study, meditation and prayerful and familial reading of Sacred Scripture so as to proclaim it with ever-greater wisdom and coherence with our life.

In communion with all our brothers and sisters of the Pauline Family, let us raise our voices to praise and bless the Father for his countless gifts, especially his Son, the Word made flesh, and for the ever-present Spirit, who raised up Blessed James Alberione as a man of the Word and a prophet of our times.

Introduction to Psalm 63 (62)

Psalm 63 (62), much loved by the mystical tradition, sketches out a kind of "geography" of the soul thirsting for the infinite, like the desert or the Palestinian terrain: arid, cracked and thirsty for water. Let us pray this Psalm calmly, with the members of the assembly freely intervening to proclaim each strophe, and let us allow ourselves to be sated by the Word, the spring of living, gushing water that nourishes and sustains our soul.

Prayer

O God, Father, Son and Spirit, you are one and holy. We seek you in Christ your Son—the sanctuary that you have prepared for us. He is our safety and refuge. Grant that, after searching for you, we may surrender ourselves to your embrace, where evil is banished and love remains forever and ever.

Introduction to the Canticle of Daniel 3:52-57

Daniel's long *berakàh* or blessing is a hymn of praise on the part of God's creatures. Let us sing (or proclaim) it in the form of a litany, between soloist and assembly.

Prayer

O God, the power of your presence fills the universe, and the very existence of all your works returns to you as perennial blessing and praise. Accept our song of thanksgiving, as creatures in tune with your creation, and make us responsible for it today, as an act of love for present and future generations. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Introduction to Psalm 149

Psalm 149 is the last of the songs that praise God by celebrating the victory he grants to the poor, who are also his "faithful ones" (in Hebrew, *ḥasidim*). The song can be called "new" because such is every intervention of God for the salvation of his people. Let us sing this Psalm in two choirs.

Prayer

Your people gathered here before you, Lord, joyfully acclaim with music and song the victory of love brought about by your crucified and risen Son. Our hearts, in which the breath of your Spirit dwells, honor and praise you for the admirable work that you perpetually accomplish through those who are faithful to your plan of love, justice and peace, now and forever.

Meditation after the Reading

The Bible Year Decreed by Fr. Alberione (1960-1961)

“Whoever loves the Bible will spread it. Whoever loves reading the Bible will be enlightened and will be useful to souls. Whoever knows how to communicate well with God by reading the Bible becomes more and more a person of God (*homo Dei*)...

“This is the Year of the Bible. If we want the sacred text to enter all families and be loved and understood, many means can be used, but the first means is to ensure that we ourselves read, meditate on and love the Bible. This is the vital prayer that will obtain for us the grace to communicate the *Verbum Dei*.”¹

“We hear talk about ‘an intelligent biblical apostolate.’ I agree with this expression, as long as it does not mean an apostolate carried out in such a way as to give greater importance to the one who compiles the notes or to the lecturer rather than to the Bible or Gospel itself. In my opinion, the Holy Bible should above all be read and meditated on because it is first of all divine grace that completes the action of reading and meditating on Sacred Scripture. The desire to explain too much and to carry out a pure exegesis [of the text] could also harm the supernatural action of the Holy Spirit.”²

“Our first biblical initiative took place in 1921 when we printed the first edition of the new translation of the Psalms. This was a remarkable step for that time: there was nothing like it previously. Afterward, we promoted the printing of hundreds of thousands of Gospels.”³

“In 1921, one of our cooperators from Cortemilia (Cuneo) offered to have the first 100,000 copies of the Gospel printed at his own expense. One of our priests, who is currently the provincial of Spain, was entrusted with the task of distributing this Gospel in the various dioceses and parishes, taking advantage of groups of willing and zealous cooperators for this purpose. The initiative was approved by many bishops and parish priests, who set up deposits of Gospels which they then had distributed to the parishioners.”⁴

“Our goal is a Bible in every family. In 1920-1922, I wrote in [the magazine] *Vita Pastorale* and in the *Pauline Cooperators Bulletin*: ‘May there be a crucifix, a picture of Our Lady and [a copy of] the Gospel in every family.’ Now, having taken a step forward, we say: ‘May there be a crucifix, a picture of Our Lady and the complete Bible in every family, and may it be highly honored, read and put into practice.’”⁵

After the Invocations and before the Our Father, the Prayer for the Year of the Bible is recited.

O Jesus, true Light
that enlightens every human being,
we know you came from the Father
to be our Master

¹ San Paolo, August-November 1960 (CISP, p. 663).

² Handwritten text of Fr. Alberione entitled, “Promemoria,” 1962.

³ To the Daughters of St. Paul 1961, p. 237.

⁴ Letter of Fr. Alberione to Bishop Scattolon, 17 March 1962.

⁵ To the Pious Disciples 1960, p. 91.

and teach us your way in truth:
the words you gave us are Life and Spirit.
Help us come to know the mysteries of God
and his unfathomable riches.
Show us all the treasures of God's wisdom
hidden in you.
May the Word remain in us,
guiding our steps like a light.
May it speed forward
and spread to the ends of the earth.
May Mary, Queen of the Apostles,
and Saints Peter and Paul
be our example, inspiration
and guide. Amen.

Prayer freely inspired by J. Alberione's book: *Read the Holy Scriptures*, p. 320.