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UT PERFECTUS SIT HOMO DEI

“Rekindle the gift you have received”

Creative fidelity to one hundred years of the Pauline charism

Letter of the Superior General

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UT PERFECTUS SIT HOMO DEI
(THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT)

“Rekindle the gift you have received”
Creative fidelity to one hundred years of the Pauline charism

Dear brothers,

following the dictate of **operative line 3.3.1** of the IX General Chapter, the annual letter 2012-2013 has for its topic the “50 instructions” that blessed James Alberione gave to 125 Paulines (95 priests and 30 disciples) gathered at the Casa Divin Maestro of Ariccia (Rome) during the extraordinary course of spiritual exercises lasting a month (1-30 April 1960). Those instructions, as we know, are gathered in a single volume *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (=UPS).¹ The critical edition handled by the Center of Pauline Spirituality (1997), has been edited in 1998 and translated into English and Spanish (and later on into other languages on the part of some circumscriptions) and it is the text that I use for this letter.

In choosing the work of the Founder to be presented and made up to date for this year, I have also taken into account the program of the Intercongregational Commission for the **triennium** of preparation for the jubilee of 20 August 2014, which, among the texts of reference to be valued for the second year to be lived as Pauline Family, lays down two instructions contained in *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*.

Lastly, it is right to read, deepen and make up to date *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* after reflecting on the text *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ* (The abundant riches of his grace) (AD) proposed last year if we observe the **development of the thought** of the Founder.

The content of AD has been written upon the request of some Paulines so as to be able to celebrate in 1954 the fortieth of foundation of the Society of Saint Paul, recalling above all the memory of the beginnings and of the first developments. In the text Fr. Alberione narrates the origins of the first Congregation and of the other foundations then existing, gathering together the historical memory under a series of “themes” (*the particular mission, the pastoral spirit, the gift and the wealth of the cooperators*, etc.). These themes, inherent in the beginnings of the Pauline charism, are like the “**genetic code**” that must serve for every Pauline generation in order to trace its own physiognomy “in creative fidelity,” or to elaborate in a new form the constitutive elements of the Pauline identity.

In the instructions of UPS of 1960, on the other hand, there is the lucid determination of the Founder to offer the “**synthesis of his thought and foundations**,” the **definitive** presentation of the practical and theoretical elaboration of his “**project of new evangelization**” inspired by Saint Paul to evangelize society through the press and other mass media, and realized through the convergence of the apostolic initiatives of the other Institutions joined together in the Pauline Family.

¹ *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, Cinisello Balsamo, 1998.

If in AD we have the elements of the “**Pauline genetic code**,” in UPS we find before us distinct “**living organisms**”: 5 Congregations, 4 Aggregated Institutes and the Association of Pauline Cooperators that form due to their close kinship one “**family**”: “The Pauline Family has now become complete” (UPS I,19).

Studying in depth UPS, therefore, constitutes an opportunity to have an exact knowledge of the identity of the Society of Saint Paul and of the Pauline Family as it has been willed by blessed James Alberione. This first step reveals itself to be indispensable, inasmuch as it supplies the contents and the method of work necessary to bring to completion the theme of the IX General Chapter: “**Rekindle the gift you have received. Creative fidelity to one hundred years of the Pauline charism.**”

While in April of 1960 the month of spiritual exercises for the “updating of the members of the Congregation and of the Pauline Family was taking place,” the Church was mobilized by blessed John XXIII for the preparation of Vatican Council II. Similarly, the **updating** of the Pauline charism during the vigil of the jubilee of 2014, with the help of the Holy Spirit and the collaboration of all the Paulines must have the courage of “**re-formulating**” the “**immutable values**” of the Pauline charism **taking into account the changes** which, starting from 1960, have taken place in the Church, in society, in culture, in communication, in the Society of Saint Paul and in the Pauline Family.

1. THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT

1.1. Content of the text

1.1.1. Together with the title *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* there have been published **four volumes** that contain the transcription of the recordings of 54 meditations of some Pauline priests, 50 instructions of the Primo Maestro, 3 conclusions of the Vicar General Fr. Damaso Zanoni and 18 conferences held during the month of exercises of April 1960 (I volume: first week, edited in 1960; II volume: second week, edited in 1962; III volume: third week, edited in 1962; IV volume: fourth week, edited in 1962).

In presenting the extraordinary course of exercises, Fr. Alberione writes: “In 1960 together with the Primo Maestro will talk elderly Priests, to whom special topics are assigned. Also some Disciples will talk regarding their part in the apostolate. Everything will have to be recorded for the future and for the absent ones.”²

1.1.2. The **Center of Pauline Spirituality**, in its precious work for the realization of the *Opera omnia* (complete writings) of the Founder, in 1998, using the title *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, has edited a critical edition that contains **only** the 50 instructions of Fr. Alberione, together with a *Presentation*, a *Preface*, an *Index of biblical quotations*, a *thematic Index* and an *analytical Index*.

1.2. Significance of the title

1.2.1. The words of the title take up verse 3,17 of the *second letter to Timothy* and in UPS they are recorded in III,9 (in the instruction that has for theme *Editions: the*

² *San Paolo*, April-May 1959; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, care of Rosario F. Esposito, Rome 1971, p. 192.

Bible first) and in I,423 (in the instruction regarding *Formation for pastorality*, with cross-referencing to the Apostolic Constitution *Sedes sapientiae* of Pius XII).

The Founder then alludes to 2Tim 3,17, talking about *Pauline Formation*: “Unitary formation includes human, religious, clerical and apostolic life, so as to present unto itself *a perfect man in Christ*. The perfect Master will form perfect men in Jesus Christ” (II,191).

Knowing the propensity of the Primo Maestro to title his writings with biblical verses, above all taken from Saint Paul, we can presume that the meaning attributed by him to the quotation 2Tim 3,17 coincides with the objective of the spiritual exercises: to form the Pauline in his **complete identity** in view of his specific apostolic mission.

1.2.2. The results, shared today by the exegetes, regarding the meaning of 2Tim 3,17 show first of all that v. 17 – “Let the man of God be ready and well-prepared for every good work” – concludes the third chapter of 2Tim: it is the **ideal identity of the believer** formed by meditation on the Sacred Scripture. The baptized person and, even more, the one who in the ecclesial community has a task of guiding, if he allows himself to be “modeled” by Sacred Scripture, gradually becomes a “man of God,” “ready and well-prepared for every good work,” so as to resemble the risen Christ, a new creature and a new perfect man according to God.

Secondly, the term “*perfect*” used by the Latin version to translate the Greek *ártios* is to be understood not as “perfection” insofar as end in itself, but as “being well-equipped” for a task that is being entrusted and for a work that must be accomplished: its meaning is not “**qualitative**,” but “**functional**.” The fruit of assimilating Sacred Scripture makes one “**competent**” in collaborating as an **apostle** for the coming of the Kingdom through “good works,” that is, works of the Spirit.

1.3. The ecclesial context of the course

1.3.1. An attentive reading of *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ* allows us to point out how starting from the seminary years of Alba, at the start of the 1900’s, Fr. Alberione has a **personality** interested in knowing the world wherein he lives, in documenting the developments taking place and in imagining future changes: “He felt deeply obliged to prepare himself to do something for the Lord and for the men of the new century with whom he would have lived” (AD 15).

Limiting our attention to the ecclesial context starting from the end of the world war in 1945, we see how Fr. Alberione continues to observe the progressive expansion of initiatives for “**updating**” in catechesis, in liturgy, in the reading and study of Sacred Scripture, in pastoral, in the use of the means of communication for evangelization, in Christian commitment in politics.

Among the initiatives of the Holy Year of 1950 there is the first *International Congress of the Institutes of Perfection* for the updating of the consecrated life (26 November – 6 December 1950). The talk given by Fr. Alberione on 26 November to the participants is significant not only for the contents expressed, but also for the openness of mind that it mirrors.³

³ *San Paolo*, November 1950; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., pp. 800-808.

Meriting to be recalled is the **definition of updating** given by Fr. Alberione in his intervention before the Congress: «“Updating” means to reanimate again all the spirit of the Founders and the principles and the rules of the Constitutions; but at the same time it is to consider the contemporary needs and circumstances for the applications and interpretations». “*Not new things, but in a new manner,*” footnote in 1959.⁴

“**Updating**” is the term that in the ecclesial ambience of that time, starting from the 1950’s and then afterwards, is used to express the need for a “creative fidelity” that is capable of newly expressing the “unchanging” values of faith and religious practice, taking into account the “changes” that have taken place after the world war.

This same intent guides blessed John XXIII, on 25 January 1959, in calling the Vatican II Ecumenical Council and which in this way he will take up again in his successive opening discourse: “...it is necessary first of all that the Church does not move away from the sacred patrimony of the truth received from the Fathers; and at the same time she must look at the present, at the new conditions and forms of life introduced in the modern world which have opened new paths for the Catholic apostolate” (11 October 1962).

1.3.2. Among the documents of the universal magisterium that encourage Fr. Alberione toward the commitment of updating, can be recalled: the discourses of Pius XII regarding the *ideal film* (21 June 1955 and 28 October 1955), the encyclical *Miranda prorsus* (8 September 1957) and the apostolic constitution *Sedes Sapientiae* (31 May 1956) with the relative *Statutes*, for the application, on religious, clerical and apostolic formation.

Sedes Sapientiae recommends for all priests a constant “pastoral” formation and provides that, after about five years of ministry, “there be a longer course of spiritual exercises and suitable lessons be imparted” (art. 53).

On the other hand, both in the Society of Saint Paul and among the Daughters of Saint Paul, in consideration of the specific charism closely connected to the continuous changes in communication, there was perceived the need for a “**course of updating**” in order to make better the apostolate. With the passage of time, moreover, the need was felt for a period of general “updating” even under the form of a month of spiritual exercises called, following the trail of Jesus’ invitation to his disciples (Mk 6,31), “*requiescite pusillum*” (= rest awhile).

In the *Introduction* to UPS, Fr. Alberione, recalling the suggestion of *Sedes Sapientiae* about a “longer” course of exercises as a concrete way to realize a “second novitiate” or an “apostolic novitiate” and after having added that he has not yet been able to realize initiatives of updating in the Congregation, concludes: “Hence, here is the great course of spiritual exercises, in which is also absorbed the *requiescite pusillum*” (I,9).

1.4. Objectives and methodology of the course

1.4.1. Through the bulletin *San Paolo* the Primo Maestro has illustrated the objectives that, together with the participants, he intended to attain through the course of exercises lasting for a month. After having presented the initiative as “a necessary pause but not an idle one,” the Founder fixes **two purposes**: allow a month-long course of spiritual exercises and an “updating of the members in relation to the Congregation and the Pauline Family and as a spiritual testament, concluding the mission that the

⁴ *San Paolo*, February 1959; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., p. 193.

Lord imposed on me. I do not intend to sadden anybody, but to reflect how he walks and on the other hand to understand well the Pauline Family and its beautiful way.”⁵

Given the importance of the initiative, he foresees that: “This course will be repeated, God willing, every two years in April, until all the professed will have passed,” already announcing the courses for 1962 and 1964.⁶

1.4.2. The **methodology** for the four weeks is programmed in such a way as to “penetrate the four parts: piety, study, apostolate, poverty according to the Constitutions” and every day starts with meditations thanks to which: “one comprehends the sanctification of the mind (Creed); one comprehends the sanctification of the heart (Liturgy); one comprehends the sanctification of the will (Commandments and virtues)”.⁷ It is a matter of realizing an “expanded course of spiritual exercises, but of Pauline and social character, with a familiar form” that includes as integrating part “updating regarding the practice of the Constitutions in the circumstances of life, places, time; in relation and realization of the apostolates.”⁸

In synthesis, the **contents** of the course of exercises are: the truths of faith meditated, prayed and lived; the updating of life to the Constitutions and to the Pauline Family, now complete. The methodology is new: “**Pauline and social, of family character.**” The experience of the month of Ignatian exercises lived by him previously is relaborated in “**Pauline key,**” presenting a new formula of spiritual exercises that applies also to other Congregations founded by him: **the Pauline spiritual exercises of updating.**

From 15 May to 5 June 1961, the Founder carries out in Ariccia an extraordinary course of exercises called “**twenty days**” for 92 **Daughters of Saint Paul** with the same goal of “updating” applied to the explanation of the Constitutions. The interventions of Fr. Alberione are collected in *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni, 1961.*⁹

Also to the Superiors and elderly Sisters of the **Pious Disciples of the Divine Master** he preaches an extraordinary course of spiritual exercises (Ariccia, 12 May – 1 June 1963); some of his interventions are published in *Alle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro, 1963.*¹⁰

1.5. Meaning of “updating” for Fr. Alberione

1.5.1. In adapting the indication of *Sedes sapientiae* to the Society of Saint Paul, Fr. Alberione does not mean updating for the Society of Saint Paul and for the Pauline Family in the sense of “changing” something in his project of new evangelization. **Updating** for him becomes synonymous to “understanding better,” “knowing well,” “clarifying by removing ambiguities and doubts,” “putting in practice what is already prescribed in the rules,” “understanding in order to better valorize”... to be applied to

⁵ *San Paolo*, April-May 1959; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., pp. 191-192.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 192.

⁷ *Idem*, p. 192.

⁸ *San Paolo*, February 1959; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., p. 193s.

⁹ *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni, 1961*, Figlie di San Paolo, Casa Generalizia, 2003.

¹⁰ *Alle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro, 1963*, Casa Generalizia delle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro, 1987.

the Christian and consecrated life, to the Constitutions of the Society of Saint Paul (those of 1957) and to the composition of the Pauline Family (now completed).

“The Pauline Family has now become complete; she does not need to update herself like the meritorious institutes existing since several centuries, but to study the best ways to correspond to the trust of the Church that has approved us”; “updating in deepening our specific vocation, in all-embracing knowledge of the now completed Pauline Family, so as to raise our spirits up, to pray and to formulate our corresponding resolves.”¹¹

At the start of the course of “twenty days” for the Daughters of Saint Paul, while talking about the meaning of updating, the Primo Maestro says: “But here, generally, there is a big error: many take the word updating as if they should not do anymore what has been taught. ...How is updating to be understood? It is updating to the Constitutions! It is not to make better the Constitutions: we are not yet at this point. No. And then we never substantially make better the Constitutions, because either that life exists or it does not. But it is to conform our life to the Constitutions. ...Do not yet update things, that is, the Institute to the times, but update the sisters to the Institute, to the Constitutions, in order to live them well.”¹²

1.5.2. It is useful to pause on how he understands “**updating**” so as to have some criteria to understand and to make use of them today for “**creative fidelity**.” During the *Settimana di aggiornamento alle Maestre delle Figlie di San Paolo* (Week of updating for the Formators of the Daughters of Saint Paul) (11-18 July 1955), Fr. Alberione explains: “Let’s talk about the so-called updating! First of all we must put it under the protection of St. Paul, who always tended to go forward and that is: always greater love for Jesus, always a wider apostolate, always aiming at a higher place in heaven. In fact, the word updating can be understood in a different way, but during these days, in your environment, they could rather be termed as, according to the program, days of progress. ...Talking of updating can also lead to dangers, that is, to understand badly what updating means. The dangers are three: 1) want to reform first of all others and not ourselves; 2) want to reform what cannot be reformed; 3) instead, not want to reform what must be reformed.”¹³

A short time after, referring to the *Settimana di aggiornamento alle Maestre delle Figlie di San Paolo*, he says: “Give big credit to knowledge; if we do not grow in knowledge, little by little we remain behind and we would be like those physicians who have received their degrees thirty years ago. Medicine has advanced so much and nobody would go anymore to that doctor, since first of all he would not know very many diseases and much more he would not know the cures. We must be updated and follow the people, the world, according to scientific evolution. One who does not want to know at all about updating would live as if seven centuries ago, when a religious institute had the rule to go always on foot. Now, of course, they must have taken up the bicycle to reach on time the sick people. We must be updated. ...The spiritual Exercises for updating, carried out for the Superiors in Rome a short time ago, have produced a great good. ...Updating makes us young. We must always keep a young spirit, because we cannot constrict souls, and we cannot accompany them if we do not know

¹¹ *San Paolo*, February 1959; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., pp. 194-195.

¹² *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni*, 1961, cit., 7.

¹³ *Alle Figlie di San Paolo, 1955*, Figlie di San Paolo, Casa Generalizia, 2010, p. 531.

them, if we do not know their psychology, their mentality and all that complex of things that life today requires. Who would ever use now the printing machines of 1914? At that time you could print eight hundred sheets in an hour if the machine runs well. Now everything has become automatic so that we can produce much more than before.”¹⁴

1.5.3. The **need for updating** the Founder left as inheritance to all the institutions of the Pauline Family and expressed through the phrase mentioned above: “**Updating makes us young. We must always keep a young spirit,**” is repeated by him also through other forms. Constant themes of his life and preachings are: “**strain forward**” on the model of Saint Paul; “**progress a little every day,**” “**always on the go,**” “**forward always,**” “**make things better continually,**” “**walk with the times,**” “**holy men and women of today, not of past centuries,**” “**save the souls of today,**” “**don’t become crystallized,**” “**never stop,**” “**grow and grow,**” etc.

The Pauline spirit, inspired by the Spirit, elaborated by Fr. Alberione and recognized by the Church, is dynamic, on the move, itinerant, on the march, in permanent synchrony with the changes in the Church, in society, in culture and in communication. **To make the Pauline charism pass from “nomadic” to “sedentary” would mean to distort its identity,** blocking it on typical theological formulations of a particular moment of the history of the Church, on cultural categories of a specific society and on the existing communication of a certain historical era, instead of assuming “**the fastest and most effective means that progress shall invent**” in order to evangelize the contemporary world while proposing the integral Christ and interpreting the whole human reality in the perspective of evangelical values.

1.6. Methodology of reflection on the UPS

1.6.1. Taking into account that the contents of UPS make up the final “**synthesis**” of the identity of the Pauline charism as it has been conceived, lived and formed in the Paulines by blessed James Alberione, an attentive reading of what he affirms is indispensable. In fact, it is necessary to single out, in the elements of the Pauline life described, the **constitutive values of the charism,** which we cannot abandon or distort, but also the **historical formulation** of these inalienable values that he has elaborated using the theology, the culture and the communication of his time.

The **first interpretation** of the Pauline charism made by the Paulines while the Founder was still living but without his direct participation has taken place with success during the **Special General Chapter of 1969-1971,** whose **Documents**¹⁵ still constitute a source of precious teachings and a reference model for methodology. The **main goal** of the Special General Chapter has been the reelaboration of the integrality of the Pauline charism over the contents of the sixteen documents of Vatican Council II.

1.6.2. After an attentive reading and after having grouped together the passages regarding the same theme treated by the Primo Maestro in various instructions, once the inalienable values of the Pauline charism are identified, it is needful to pass over to their **updating** proposing a reelaboration for today that takes into account the actual situation in the Church, in society, in culture, in communication and in the Congregation.

¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 438.

¹⁵ *Documenti Capitolari* (=DC), Capitolo Generale Speciale 1969-1971, Casa Generalizia Società San Paolo, Roma 1972 e Alba 1982.

The ecclesial context of the **Year of Faith** (11 October 2012 – 24 November 2013), willed by Benedict XVI to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II and the 20 years from the publication of the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, will orientate the updating proposal, where top priority will be the rereading of the Pauline charism in light of the conciliar documents and of the post-conciliar universal magisterium. The second goal of the hundred years of the Pauline charism we have lived after Vatican Council II. We have therefore with the entire Church a good occasion to rekindle the Pauline charism with the original rethinking of the faith operated by Vatican II.

2. THE CONSTITUTIONS

2.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

2.1.1. In the program of the month of spiritual exercises, the **meditations** have been held by the Pauline priests, the **conferences** entrusted to priests and Pauline disciples chosen by the Founder himself and the **instructions**, which include the reading of the articles of the **Constitutions** (1957 edition), are all of Fr. Alberione and explain the various components of the charism and of the Pauline life.

2.1.2. Since the first end of the extraordinary course of spiritual exercises is the “**updating of our life to the Constitutions**,” the topic is treated in the various instructions of the four weeks through the reading of some articles which does not always follow a progressive order and which at times is not even an object of the rest of the discourse, and with comments. The following view gathers the passages and the related quotations.

To be read: I, II, III, IV indicate the four weeks or sections of UPS; 1, 2, etc., send to the marginal numbers used in the critical edition.

* **I**, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 81, 82, 83, 84, 114, 115, 148 (*sends to the articles read in 114 and 115*), 180 (*sends to the articles read in 81 and 82*), 183, 216 (*sends to the articles read in 82, 83 and 84*), 220, 221, 249, 250, 251, 283, 312, 313, 342, 343, 344, 370, 371, 414, 415, 448, 449, 450, 487, 488, 520, 521;

* **II**, 8, 26, 27, 56, 72, 102, 119, 147, 168, 189, 204, 230, 245;

* **III**, 8, 29, 56, 75, 101, 102, 125, 181, 182, 204, 206, 208, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 246, 247, 248, 249, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286;

* **IV**, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 27, 85, 117, 137, 163, 164, 188, 214, 233, 234.

2.2. Pauline values

2.2.1. The Constitutions are the **identity card** of the Congregation, and the objective of an “**updating of one’s life to the Constitutions**” is explained by Fr. Alberione: “An exact meaning: the good Christian must every day update or conform better the progress of his life to the Gospel; the good religious must every day update or conform better his life to the Constitutions, which, according to Pius XI, are the concrete application of the Gospel to the practice of the evangelical counsels for perfection and the apostolate” (I,12).

The Constitutions trace the **physiognomy of the Pauline**: “If the first end of this Course is to update our life to the Constitutions, it is necessary to read them, meditate on them and conform to them our thoughts and entire life. They trace our particular life for the spirit, study, apostolate and poverty” (I,44).

By accepting willingly to be part of the Congregation and committing himself to observe her Constitutions, the Pauline finds his “**lifestyle**”: “After making his Profession, the Constitutions also become the only way for his sanctification. That which has been done against them, or even outside of them, is against the will of God or outside of the will of God. ...Through the Profession one has accepted as valid the principle of every practical reasoning the “*si vis perfectus esse*” (if you wish to become perfect) which is the reason of existence of the religious State” (I,50-51).

2.2.2. The **successive redactions** of the rules of the Pauline life have committed the Founder for years, in view of obtaining the diocesan and papal approval. The 1957 edition used during the extraordinary course of spiritual exercises contains the text approved by the Holy See (27 June 1949) integrated with articles marked by an asterisk to indicate the recent additions that the same Holy See has granted, for the moment, *ad experimentum*.

Fr. Alberione is explicit in his judgment: “Our Constitutions are among the best; from the best that were consulted we have drawn out a better one. And I must say: if I had yet found something better, more fit for the times, with regard to piety or the apostolate, I would have introduced it. To you, dear ones, I have proposed the best: I have – so to say – tried to prepare the richest table; and the Holy See has stamped its supreme seal” (I,52).

2.2.3. The Constitutions, in the thought of the Primo Maestro, need a complement: The articles of the Constitutions are cold and bare: they need a soul; and this has been given in the composition of prayers, chaplets, instructions like the ones in our **book of prayers**. Love them, recite them with heart; little by little the spirit of the Congregation enters your spirit” (I,47).

In another instruction the Founder explains: “The canons and the articles are cold like marble; but to them has been given the spiritual life. The **book of our prayers** is more important due to the introductions – the spirit – than for the formulas. In the beginning there is a general *Invitation*; then, before the various *practices* (Confession, Communion, Mass, Meditation, monthly Retreat, Examination of conscience, Visit to the Bl. Sacrament, etc.), there is a special introduction that explains how piety gives a soul to the rules and the individual articles and that communicates the spirit which informs the Pauline day and apostolate. ...Under this aspect the introductions are more useful which the formulas themselves are not” (I,310-311).

2.2.4. The integration between the **Constitutions** and the **Book of prayers** allows us to trace the profile of the **Pauline spirit**. “The spirit of an Institute is defined as: ‘a characteristic and permanent manner of seeing, feeling and willing, to the point of reproducing it in life.’ It is reduced basically to this: living integrally the Gospel of Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, as interpreted by Saint Paul, under the gaze of Mary, Mother, Teacher and Queen” (I,51; cf AD 93).

2.3. An updating

2.3.1. In illustrating the first objective to be reached through the course of the exercises, the Founder puts together the following values: the importance of the **Constitutions and Directory**, to be integrated with the **Book of Pauline prayers** in order to

live the **Pauline spirit**. For him the first identity of the Pauline is to be a member who has freely adhered to the Congregation of the Society of Saint Paul, embracing the **state of consecrated life** wherein one “tends to perfection through the observance” of the Constitutions (cf AD 23-24).

Intending to valorize for updating specific teachings of the documents of Vatican Council II and of the postconciliar magisterium, the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* (21 November 1964) – chapter V (*Universal vocation to sanctity in the Church*) and VI (*The religious*) – and the decree *Perfectæ caritatis* (28 October 1965) reveal themselves as indispensable for a deepening of the “**theology of the consecrated life**.”

Although Vatican II has not pretended to elaborate a complete treatise or a harmonious synthesis about religious life, the texts indicated however constitute a base of departure that modifies the traditional vision. Simplifying, the basic **change** can be described in these terms: the preceding theological picture defines the religious life as a state of life “of personal perfection” that requires from the individual an official commitment of constant “moral ascesis”; with Vatican II the religious life is not as a priority a special state of personal perfection, but “one of the states” of life of the Church that, like the others, is called to sanctification.

In the conciliar documents one does not meet anymore the definition of the religious life as a “**state of perfection**,” almost as if the religious were a “super-Christian” called to be part of a privileged class of the “righteous,” while all the other baptized must be satisfied solely with baptism. The religious life is “**one**” of the ways through which all the baptized are called to “perfection,” understood by the Council as “sanctification.” Chapter VI of *Lumen gentium* and the decree *Perfectæ caritatis* have as foundation chapter V of *Lumen gentium*: the universal call to sanctity of all the baptized. Perfection is not a monopoly of the religious.

The **specific** in the “way” of sanctification of the religious is in the choice of the **means**: the profession of the evangelical counsels and the communitarian life with a specific apostolate. One is the end being pursued: perfection understood as sanctification; varied are the means to attain it: the observance of the evangelical counsels and common life with a particular mission.

2.3.2. The conciliar teaching has also dealt with the rapport between the “**contemplative**” consecrated life and the “**active**” consecrated life. Are there two distinct ways in the style of life of the religious? Since for centuries in the Church the contemplative or monastic life has been considered as the ideal criterion in judging every other form of religious life, the Council treats the theme in number 8 of *Perfectæ caritatis*.

Taking as **ideal** of the religious life the contemplative life, spiritual theology has exalted for centuries personal ascetical commitment and exclusive dedication to prayer, presenting apostolic activity as an “external” commitment that can act as a brake or become an obstacle, or even a real danger for the “interior” life. One has thus come to a **dichotomy** between the “interior life” and “external commitment” that led to theorize the absolute primacy of contemplation over apostolic commitment.

The teaching of Vatican II, without taking anything from the identity of the contemplative ideal, presents the apostolic life in its positive value for sanctification and renews the reflection on the rapport between “prayer” and “action.”

The decree *Perfectæ caritatis* in referring to the Institutes of “active” life, affirms: “In these Institutes, apostolic or charitable action is part of the **nature itself** of religious

life” and therefore there are two forms of varying religious life but equal in dignity: the contemplative life and the active life. In active life “prayer” and “apostolic action” achieve their goal one helping the other, mutually making each other fruitful without opposing each other; on the contrary, **there is concrete unity between consecration and mission**: “The entire religious life of their members must be imbued with apostolic spirit and all their apostolic action must be animated by the religious spirit” (cf PC 8).

2.3.3. Upon considering the new ecclesial vision of the religious life and the riches of the Council’s reflection, Paul VI through his own *Ecclesiae sanctae* (6 August 1966) indicates to all the religious institutes concrete norms for the application of *Perfectae caritatis*, committing them to a global “**renewal**” that also includes an adjustment of their Rules and Constitutions.

The Special General Chapter of 1969-1971 is also busy with the **revision of the Constitutions**, injecting into them the integral reelaboration of the Pauline charism in the light of the documents of Vatican II. On **4 April 1984** the Sacred Congregation for the Religious and the Secular Institutes approves the Constitutions that are in force today.

Operative line 4.2.2 of the **VIII General Chapter** establishes: “In view of the next General Chapter, the General Government is to set in motion the revision and updating of the Constitutions.” For the updating of all the norms of the Congregation (Constitutions and Directory, Service of Authority in the Society of Saint Paul. Manual, *Ratio formationis*), operative line 4.2.1 of the **IX General Chapter** establishes: “The General Government is to constitute, already in the course of this year, a working Commission that puts order to the material up to now gathered and, involving the communities, suggests further improvements to be proposed to the Interchapter in view of approval in the next General Chapter.”

The Commission has been nominated and is working for some time according to the indications willed by the General Chapter. The next **Interchapter** (February 2013) will take into consideration the work of the Commission.

In order to involve in the best conditions the communities in the revision of the Constitutions, taking into account the content of UPS besides what has already been programmed by the Commission for the revision of the norms, I have decided with the unanimous consent of the General Council, that the second year of preparation for the jubilee of 2014 (20 August 2012 – 20 August 2013) be also lived as the **Year of the Constitutions**. Every Pauline and all the communities will thus be able to commit themselves, personally and as community, in the reading, reflection and examination of the Constitutions, proposing to the delegated Commission the suggestions that they consider opportune.

2.3.4. In order to harmonize with ecclesial reflection the dimension of the Pauline charism relative to the “theology of the consecrated life,” it is opportune to deepen **other postconciliar documents** of the universal magisterium: *Renovationis causam. Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation* (6 January 1969), *Evangelica testificatio* (Paul VI, 29 June 1971), *Essential Elements in the Church’s Teaching on Religious Life* (31 May 1983), *Redemptionis donum* (John Paul II, 25 March 1984), *Potissimum institutioni. Directives on formation in religious institutes* (2 February 1990), *Fraternal Life in Community* (2 February 1994), *Vita consecrata* (John Paul II, 25 March 1996), *Starting Afresh from Christ* (19 May 2002) and *The service of authority and obedience* (11 May 2008).

After Vatican II the reflection on the “theology of the consecrated life” has been the object of international conventions, continental and national gatherings, publications and magazine articles in every continent with the care to “update it,” “renew it,” “relaunch it” and even to “refound it.” Our Pauline editorial activity has contributed to the research of the church by means of publications with worldwide reach.

2.3.5. We have taken note of the inalienable importance that the Founder attributes to the **Book of Pauline prayers** that he has prepared for the institutions of the Pauline Family in the course of the years, carefully watching over every reprinting and personally reserving for himself even the least change.

Exactly because it deals with the “**spiritual patrimony**” of the entire Pauline Family, the Superior General of the Society of Saint Paul and the General Superiors of the four Pauline female Congregations, on 8 May 2007, have formed an intercongregational Commission to study “**the origin, the evolution and the historical ground**” of what is contained in the Book of Pauline prayers. The Commission has for some time handed over some precious material, the fruit of a serious work of documentation.

We therefore now have at hand an **indispensable previous research**, that includes the sources from which the Primo Maestro has drawn to formulate the prayers, the originality of the method employed by him to involve the converging variety of the apostolates of the Pauline Family in a single spirituality, the final redactions and those of strictly Alberionian authorship.

Starting from this sure documentation, it is necessary to put together three particular abilities for a renewal: get the spirit of the “editorial methodology” of Fr. Alberione; take into account the biblical, theological, liturgical, pastoral and spiritual evolution of today; draw up a redaction where the words, the syntax and the expression are simple and faithful to the spirit of the Founder. An intercongregational Commission is getting ready to attempt this **bold adventure**, where together with the boldness of laying hands on the “praying” of the Pauline Family which is not a simple union of practices and prayers, there is the trepidation to safeguard its “specific spirit,” the “Pauline spirit” willed by the Founder.

We find ourselves in front of a text that it is not enough to update by changing only some word, modifying some antiquated expression or adding some terminological novelty. The importance and delicateness of the operation ought to discourage any **solitary attempt or one of a small group** to proceed to hasty and autonomous redactions. I believe that it is better to compose new prayers drawing inspiration from the “Pauline spirit” rather than attempt to “correct” those redacted by Fr. Alberione.

2.3.6. In order to update the meaning of “**Pauline spirit**,” considered as a true novelty by the Founder, it is necessary first of all to understand how he has understood it, resorting also to some definitions offered in the animation of the institutions of the Pauline Family.

On the occasion of the celebration of the first General Chapter (1957), Fr. Alberione synthesizes the Pauline spirit: “The Pauline Congregation wants to live and wholly give Jesus Christ as Saint Paul the Apostle interpreted, lived and gave him to the entire world.”¹⁶

¹⁶ *San Paolo*, April 1957, cf. *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., p. 159.

During the extraordinary course of exercises to the Daughters of Saint Paul, he affirms: “It is Jesus Christ interpreted by Saint Paul, and interpreted thus that forms the Pauline spirit.”¹⁷

In the explanation given to the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master during the extraordinary course of exercises, he confirms: “This is the Pauline spirit: to live in Jesus Christ the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life, as Saint Paul presents him to us, Jesus Christ, the Master. Hence, the need to read Saint Paul... Therefore, life in Saint Paul and through him, as Jesus is explained and presented by Saint Paul...”¹⁸

2.3.7. The “Pauline spirit,” understood as the **specific** of the entire Pauline Family, is not only a spirituality, but it characterizes all the “**wheels of the Pauline cart**” because Pauline integrality, having as model Saint Paul, must tend toward an **apostolic sanctity** that lives the “for me to live is Christ” and “it is not anymore I that lives, but the Christ in me” for the purpose of “making myself all for all” by means of communication and other apostolates that are necessary today.

Therefore, when the Primo Maestro speaks of “**Pauline spirit**” he means to indicate Saint Paul as model of the continuous dynamism of the Pauline, so that he live his faith in the total Christ in a continuous and progressive process of “Christification” and, because of this ever greater similarity, imitate Saint Paul in preaching Christ to all peoples. In order to merit the name of “Paulines” we must accept the invitation of Saint Paul, “be imitators of me as I am of Christ” (1Cor 11,1) in living the faith and in apostolic preaching.

Saint Paul has been the model-inspiration of the **Society of Saint Paul** in starting evangelization “through written preaching,” repeatedly reposed through the expression of Mons. Wilhelm von Ketteler: “If Saint Paul returned today, he would make himself a journalist.” With the foundations following one another, Fr. Alberione expands the application: “The Pauline Family must be Saint Paul living today, according to the mind of the Divine Master.”¹⁹ “The Pauline Family, composed of many members, is to be Paul living in a social body. Know and meditate Saint Paul in your life, works and letters: so as to think, reason, talk and work according to him and invoke his fatherly help.”²⁰

2.3.8. By the will of the Founder, the more we know, assimilate, imitate and pray to Saint Paul, the more we merit the name and become in fact “Paulines” and “children of Saint Paul.” The updating of the “Pauline spirit” of the Congregation and of the Pauline Family finds a source of privileged renewal in the study and assimilation of the thought and evangelizing activity of Saint Paul. **We are all the more Paulines the more we think and act like Saint Paul.**

This program of life, which is the substance of our identity, must give itself concrete instruments to make better the knowledge of Saint Paul and similarity with him. The Congregation, together with the whole Church, has lived the **Year of Saint Paul** from 28 June 2008 to 29 June 2009. I remember two fruits tied to this event: the publication in the *Opera omnia* of **L’apostolo Paolo, ispiratore e modello** (The apostle

¹⁷ *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni, 1961, cit., 389.*

¹⁸ *Alle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro, 1963, cit., 166 e 167.*

¹⁹ *San Paolo, July-August 1954; cf Carissimi in San Paolo, cit., p. 147.*

²⁰ *San Paolo, October 1954; cf Anima e corpo per il Vangelo, care of Center of Pauline Spirituality, Rome 2005, p. 63.*

Paul, inspirer and model)²¹ and the celebration of the **International Seminar on Saint Paul** (19-29 April 2009), the Acts of which have been published.²²

A contribution to the updating of the “Pauline spirit” is indicated by **operative line 3.3.2** of the IX General Chapter: “The Circumscription Governments are to give value to the content of the international seminars “The updating of the Pauline charism in the third millennium: spirituality and mission” (2008) and “International Seminar on Saint Paul” (2009), by elaborating aids for animation and community projects.”

3. THE PAULINE FAMILY

3.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

3.1.1. The second goal of the extraordinary course of exercises is the “**updating of the Institute to the Pauline Family**” and Fr. Alberione develops the theme in:

- * **I**, *Apart with the Master*: 17, 18, 19, 20;
Apostoline: 122-126, 340;
Formation for pastoral work: 426, 427;
Pastorelle Sisters: 427;
- * **II**, *Pious Disciples of the Divine Master*: 71;
- * **III**, *Secular Institutes*: 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110;
Integration among the Institutes of the Pauline Family: 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191.

3.1.2. In *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ* the Primo Maestro presents the institutions that make up the Pauline Family at the end of 1953: Union of Cooperators for the Good Press, Pious Society of Saint Paul, Pious Society of the Daughters of Saint Paul, Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (AD 33-35) and hints at the difficulties encountered (cf AD 131-135, 163-167). In UPS he affirms with determination: “The Pauline Family has now become complete” (I,19) and he enumerates them: Pious Society of Saint Paul, Daughters of Saint Paul, Pious Disciples of Jesus Master, Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, Sisters of Mary Queen of the Apostles, Institute of Jesus Priest, Institute of Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Institute of Mary of the Annunciation, Union of Pauline Cooperators.

The **Institute of the Holy Family** has obtained the papal decree of approval for 10 years dated 19 June 1982, and on 19 March 1993 the definitive papal approval. The historical journey of the approval of the Institute as “work proper of the Society of Saint Paul” allows for two conclusions: 1) the commitment for the sanctification of the family even through a **special consecration** is an incontestable certainty in the thought of Fr. Alberione; the Decrees of the Holy See of 1982 and of 1993 are the juridical references to establish the date of the official foundation.

When preaching to the other institutions of the Pauline Family, Fr. Alberione reaffirms the certainty of having “accomplished the mission received from the Lord” for the foundations and offers again their detailed list. He takes up again the topic in the extraordinary course of exercises to the Daughters of Saint Paul;²³ in the extraordinary

²¹ *L’apostolo Paolo, ispiratore e modello*, care of Center of Pauline Spirituality, Rome 2008.

²² *Seminario internazionale su San Paolo*, Society of Saint Paul, Casa Generalizia, 2009.

²³ Cf *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni*, 1961, cit., 224-228, 276, 379-380.

course to the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master;²⁴ in his preaching to the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd;²⁵ to the Aggregated Pauline Institutes.²⁶

3.2. Pauline values

3.2.1. The certainty of “**having received a mission**” from the Lord is strong and constant: “I have felt the hand of God; a fatherly and wise hand, notwithstanding my numberless inadequacies” (I,17); “The hand of God upon me, from 1900 to 1960. ...I feel the gravity, before God and men, of the mission entrusted to me by the Lord; who, if he had found a more unworthy and incapable person than me, would have preferred him. This however for me and for everybody is a guarantee that it is the Lord who has willed and has done everything” (I,374). The Pauline Family is in its totality a **work willed by God in the Church**: “Fr. Alberione is an instrument chosen by God for this mission” (*Id.*), even if the true founder is **Saint Paul** (cf AD 2).

3.2.2. The successive foundations listed down by Fr. Alberione, 5 religious Congregations, 3 aggregated Institutes and 1 Association for lay people are described by him as parts of a **single project of “new evangelization”** having the spirit of Saint Paul: “Through these organizations which have international character, the Pious Society of Saint Paul can extend its wealth to all and give to the world Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life” (I,20). “These institutions function like the part that directs, as in a parish there are: the Parish Priest, the Coadjutors, Catholic Action, the Catechists, workers in the cinema and press; guides in activities for the youth, for men, for artists; for the sick, for vocations, for sacred chant, for political and social action, for beneficence, for the conversion of the separated brethren, of atheists, of pagans, etc. ...The **immense Pauline parish**, which for limits has only the boundaries of the world, and for flock both the one that is already in the sheepfold and the one desired to be led into it” (I,381-382).

3.2.3. Also detailed is the description of what creates “**unity**” and what constitutes “**diversity**”: “The spirit must be one, the one contained in the heart of Saint Paul, “*the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ*”; the *devotions* are the same; and the various *ends* converge in a common and general end: give Jesus Christ to the world, in a way that is complete, as He has defined himself: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14,6)” (I,20).

“How these Institutes are united:

1. Due to their common origin.
2. Due to their general end.
3. They have the same Pauline spirit, even in the diversity of their works.
4. Their activities are convergent, collaborative, dynamic, nourished by a single lymph” (I,381).

Three practical principles to regulate the **rappports** among the components of the Pauline Family: 1) “the various institutions of the Pauline Family will have their nourishment and vitality from the Pious Society of Saint Paul”; 2) “bond themselves together for the apostolates”; 3) “understand each other and love each other” (I,382).

²⁴ Cf *Alle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro*, 1963, cit., 161-168.

²⁵ Cf e.g. *Alle Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore*, 1963, 400; *idem*, 1964, 173; *idem*, 1965, 325. Casa Generalizia, Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore, Rome 1984.

²⁶ Cf *Meditazioni per consacrate secolari*, care of Casa Generalizia della Pia Società San Paolo, Modena 1976, pp. 481-488.

“Each Institute has its own approval. Each Institute has its own government. Each Institute has its own Constitutions. Each Institute has its own administration. Each Institute has its own apostolate. All the Institutes considered together form the Pauline Family. All the Institutes have a common origin. All the Institutes have a common spirit. All the Institutes have convergent ends” (III,185).

3.3. Updating

3.3.1. The supernatural value that must inspire the creative fidelity in thinking, organizing and living as Pauline Family is the testimony of the Primo Maestro: all his foundations are a “**work of God**,” stirred up and nourished by the Spirit.

In order to draw some practical results from this certainty of faith, it is necessary to deepen the meaning of “work of God” in the thought of the Primo Maestro. In some circumstances the Founder has specified that 20 August 1914 with the start of the Society of Saint Paul also **starts in fact the whole Pauline Family**: “Forty-eight years ago there was the start of the Pauline Family... the Family that was to be born little by little.”²⁷ Although the foundations have followed one another in time and have started when the “light of the Spirit has kindled,” Fr. Alberione had the intuition, gradually elaborated, of a “**single project of new evangelization**” to be realized in unity of spirit but with diverse forces flowing together in an organization.

The Pauline Family, therefore, is not a simple total of the institutions founded by Fr. Alberione in different times, but each one is conceived as “convergent, collaborative and dynamic” in relation to all the others. Being part of the Pauline Family is for every institution an **immutable element** of the charism, since the complete identity of each one is not only “**intrinsic**” for its specific apostolate, but also “**relational**” for the particular contribution that it gives to the whole conceived as a totality.

While seizing the opportunity of the celebrations in view of the Centenary, it is necessary to ask ourselves if the unity of the diverse apostolates of the Pauline Family must remain visible in its spiritual effects only to Providence or can it also not be organized visibly today with a minimum of “**project of new evangelization of the Pauline Family**.”

That the elaboration of the “project of the Pauline Family” also include an “ethical code of relations” that are reciprocal in the apostolic activities, is correct and necessary. However, the “organization” of the Pauline Family as “God’s work” requires above all drawing from what we have in common, the spirit of Saint Paul, if we want to be “**a letter of Saint Paul addressed to the men of today**,” and even “**Saint Paul living today**.”

3.3.2. In order to have creative fidelity it is necessary that we feel ourselves like a “mystical body,” taking on the vision of the Church as a “**people of God**” and as “**communion**,” and that all together we operate to “evangelize the men of today with the means of today.” Of valid help are the texts of Vatican II: *Lumen gentium*, in particular chapters II and IV; *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), in particular chapter IV; the decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (18 November 1965) on the apostolate of the lay people; *Ad gentes* (7 December 1965) on missionary activity.

The **ecclesiology of communion** of Vatican II helps us to rethink not only **the convergence of the apostolates** in the Pauline Family, but also the **quality of the minis-**

²⁷ *Alle Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore, 1962*, Casa Generalizia Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore, Rome 1984, 314.

try of the priest and of the Pauline disciple, of the sister, of the consecrated layperson and of the Catholic laity.

In intending to commit all to live a missionary faith, the Founder has willed the **Pauline priesthood** as a minimum common denominator in all the apostolates of the Pauline Family. This presupposition is based not only on the theology of the priesthood and of the apostolate of his time; rather, Fr. Alberione has willed to “extend” in the practical choices of the apostolate the category of “priesthood” not because of a “clerical” dependence, but because of the “**sacramental**” efficacy of the various Pauline apostolates.

The involvement of the disciple, of the sister and of the layperson in Pauline preaching, described by the Primo Maestro as “almost a priesthood”²⁸ is to be studied in depth and **re-expressed** today with what Vatican II affirms about **ministerial priesthood, priesthood of the faithful and apostolate of the laity**.

3.3.3. The unity in the **common spirituality** is an **immutable element**: “Union in spirit. This is the substantial part. The Pauline Family has only one spirituality: to live the Gospel integrally; to live the Divine Master insofar as he is the Way, the Truth and the Life: to live him as his disciple Saint Paul has understood him. This spirit forms the soul of the Pauline family. ...There is no particular spirituality. ...the Gospel unites everybody; if it is lived integrally, that is the Christian spirituality; which is the only one, the true one, the necessary one for all. The activities are varied, but the spirit is one” (III,187-188).²⁹

The **title added** in the various Institutions (Jesus Good Shepherd, Saint Peter, Saint Gabriel, etc.) is only for the specific apostolate: “The spirit of the Pauline Family is in its devotion to Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life. Then every Institute of the Family has an indicated apostolate and the title that is added is the title that indicates the apostolate. As, for example, added to Jesus is the title of Good Shepherd inasmuch as it indicates the apostolate. As are indicated – according to their title – the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master insofar as eucharist, and thus the Annunciationists, the Gabrielites, etc.”³⁰

3.3.4. “The Pious Society of Saint Paul is the **Animator**” (cf I,376) with respect to the other institutions of the Pauline Family: “The warmth and the life-giving light must descend from the Pauline priests who have here a great and delicate ministry. Hence imposing itself, in the second place, is *their updating to the various institutions*: in order to give what they have to give, in conformity to the rules of Canon Law, and to receive that return which is conformed to the nature and spirit of the Church” (I,20).

In order to think and live with creative fidelity the function of “**animator**” entrusted to the Society of Saint Paul in relation to the Pauline Family, it is necessary to understand the **will of the Founder** and, at the same time, rethink this service with the **ecclesiology of communion** of Vatican II. A useful instrument for these reflections are the contents of the V Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family (12-20 September 1987) on the theme “*The ministry of unity in the Pauline Family*.”³¹

²⁸ Cf AD 40-42; *Alle Figlie di San Paolo*, 1955, cit., p. 73.

²⁹ Cf also *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni*, 1961, cit., 16-17; *Alle Suore Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro*, 1963, cit., 164-168; *Don Alberione alle Apostoline*, 1958/2, Casa Generalizia Istituto Regina degli Apostoli per le vocazioni, Castel Gandolfo - Rome, 2009, p. 235; *Meditazioni per consacrate secolari*, cit., pp. 483-484.

³⁰ *Alle Suore di Gesù Buon Pastore*, 1964, cit., 275; cf also 673.

³¹ *Il ministero dell'unità nella Famiglia Paolina*, Edizioni dell'Archivio Storico Generale della Famiglia Paolina, Rome 1987, quaderno 17.

The ministry of “animator” exercised by Fr. Alberione is **unique and unrepeatable**, because he is the sole Founder. His successors and the Pauline priests must exercise that function, bearing in mind the experience existing from his death to today and rethinking it – together with the various institutions – in the actual ecclesiological context.

The service of animation, which the Pauline priests carry out for the various institutions of the Pauline Family in the world, has need of a **constant betterment** not only as a qualitative exercise of the priestly ministry in itself, but especially with regard to what Fr. Alberione calls the “updating to the various institutions.” The role of “animator” must be the fruit of a “**Pauline priesthood**,” that is, of experience of the common Pauline spirituality and of knowledge of the specific apostolate, so that the animation being offered may not be “generic” both in the contents of the life of faith and in its apostolic applications.

As Pauline priests we must live and make live the spiritual exercises, the retreats, the meditations, the homilies, the conferences, letting ourselves to be guided according to this precious **testimony** of Primo Maestro: “I have heard some years ago one thing that had given me a certain impression and that is, for an entire course of Exercises the word “apostolate” had never been mentioned. How can the sisters have persuasions, enthusiasm for redaction, for technology, and especially for propaganda? The tasks are therefore executed materially, with hardships. But if you describe the function of redaction, of technology and above all of propaganda – the principal part – what an advantage will come additionally, and how many more merits.”³²

Since he is talking to the Daughters of Saint Paul, the Founder exemplifies in conformity with their apostolate; but the application is easily applicable to all the Pauline apostolates, since our **spirituality is apostolic**, not intimist or generic. Saint Paul’s “**it is not I anymore that lives, but the Christ in me**” is in function of “**I have made myself all for all**”: a “social” sanctity, not a “solitary” sanctity that does not commit itself to measure the consistency of its love for God with the concreteness of its love for neighbor.

4. VOCATIONS

4.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

4.1.1. Fr. Alberione considers the search for vocations as the **most urgent problem** for the Congregation and he develops it in various instructions:

- * **I, *In a place apart with the Master***: 21, 22;
Vocations: cross and fatherhood: 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92;
Authentic vocations: 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126;
Discernment: Priest-Disciple: 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156;
Spiritual exercises and vocation: 179, 180, 183;
Aspirants to the Pauline life: 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227;
Promotion and guide of vocations: 340, 341, 342;
- * **III, *The apostolate of the editions***: 127, 128, 132;
- * **IV, *Popular libraries***: 59;
Spirit of the Disciple of the Divine Master: 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201.

³² *Alle Figlie di San Paolo. Spiegazione delle Costituzioni, 1961, cit., 273.*

4.2. Pauline values

4.2.1. The Congregation, having as its only reason for existing that of collaborating through its particular charism in the work of evangelization of the Church, **has need of vocations**: “Every day there are announced works to be accomplished, initiatives to be supported, houses to be opened. But for works evangelical workers are needed. ...The Divine Master... has looked for future apostles, has formed them and has sent them” (I,21).

It is the **end** of the Congregation that justifies the commitment of all for vocations. (cf I,84). “The vocation problem, among the works of zeal, must be placed in the foreground. Jesus did not begin his public ministry by preaching; he began it by making disciples. He looked for them along the lake, he invited them; James, John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, etc. came” (I,85).

4.2.2. In order to be chosen by potential candidates, it is necessary that the Pauline vocation present a well-defined and not generic **identity**: the Society of Saint Paul “has now attained a physiognomy and well-determined characteristics in various nations” (I,87).

This identity, progressively delineated in the Society of Saint Paul from 1914 to 1960, does not concern only its **specific charism** (the spirituality interpreted by Saint Paul placed at the service of evangelization using the press and other mass media of the time), but also its twofold form of **the one Pauline vocation: priest and disciple** (cf I,148-156; IV,189-201).

In dealing with a new vocation, the Congregation prefers the search for **young persons**: “...she intends to form religious from a young age, for the purpose of more easily familiarizing them with her characteristic life, which requires an entire mentality, habits and spirit proper to her; thus the choice of the state of life will be more conscious” (I,88). However, taking into account the historical circumstances, the Congregation accepts also persons of **more advanced age**, the “late vocations,” with certain conditions” (*Id.*).

4.2.3. Since God is “the lord of the harvest” and only he knows how many “workers” are needed for “his field,” it is necessary that all commit themselves in **prayer for vocations**. For this reason the Founder composes a prayer for the vocation worker (I,92), works for the institution of the “*Pontificia opera primaria delle vocazioni religiose*” (Primary pontifical work of religious vocations) (I,121-122); reminds of the existence of two pontifical Works for vocations (I,340); refers to the existence of the Pious Union *Preghiera, sofferenza e carità per tutte le vocazioni* (IV,59-60); explains why he has founded the *Istituto Regina Apostolorum* – Apostoline Sisters (I,122-125) and cites the prayer for vocations that he has composed for them (I,340-341).

4.2.4. Making use of his experience as a founder, he gives **suggestions** and also indicates **initiatives and means** for the vocation proposal: when is it necessary to talk about vocation (I,225-227); that there be “the call of God” (I,115) and the general signs (I,117); he enumerates some practical means, including those of our apostolate (I,119-120, 340); for the twofold manner of living the Pauline vocation, necessary are “love for the apostolate” (I,118) and some characteristics (I,222), etc.

4.3. Updating

4.3.1. In April 1960, the increased number of the members of the institutions of the Pauline Family allowed Fr. Alberione to advance for the Society of Saint Paul a “pro-

jection” of **growth** of 870 Paulines in the five year period 1958-1963, as reported in *San Paolo* of December 1958 (cf I,86-87). On the contrary, exactly starting from those years, there starts in the whole Church not only a **decline** of requests to commit in the religious life, but even the **crisis** of many who already had made this choice.

However, since the physiognomy of the Society of Saint Paul remains that of being a **religious clerical Congregation** composed of religious Priests and Disciples, the affirmation of Primo Maestro: “**The vocation problem, among the works of zeal, must be placed in the foreground**” (I,85), remains valid even today.

The IX General Chapter has faced with creative fidelity this irreplaceable Pauline value in **operative line 3.1.2**, by establishing: “The Governments of Circumscription are to prepare the project of vocation pastoral, inculcating the identity and the Pauline mission in the various geographical areas. They are to verify its realization.” In the Interchapter of February 2013 there will be a manner to verify the accomplishment of this line.

4.3.2. The **actual situation of vocations** in the Congregation is easily recognizable, in great lines, in listing down the nations where the **request is more**: India-Nigeria, Philippines-Macau, Congo, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia-Ecuador-Panamà, Venezuela-Bolivia, Argentina-Chile-Perù, Korea. The **influx is less**, sometimes nil, in Europe, United States, Canada, Japan, Australia.

This observation must stimulate a creative fidelity in actualizing the operative line mentioned, when it asks to “**inculturate** the identity and the Pauline mission in the various geographical areas,” applying what our *Ratio formationis* provides (cf 177-187), utilizing the indications and the aids prepared by the International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation (=SIF) above all on the occasion of the *Year of Vocations* (4 April 2005 – 4 April 2006) and paying attention to what is done in the respective local Church.

4.3.3. I believe it opportune to reaffirm a certainty of the Primo Maestro that cannot be considered bound to his time, but remains valid even for today: the Congregation “has reached a physiognomy and well-determined characteristics” (I,87). Hence, it is necessary that all the forms of vocational proposal addressed to the individual, to group meetings and the periods of experience in our communities offer to the young men a **clear presentation of the “specific” in Pauline life**, not a generic appeal to the faith or a theoretical description of the religious life.

If it is true that sometimes, above all in some nations, the young men who ask to join the Congregation show emphatic **deficiencies** in their knowledge of the Christian faith itself, it is not correct to wait to talk to the young man about the Pauline vocation when he is considered more aware of the faith in general. We cannot hypothesize entrance into the Congregation as a time of catechesis in recovery, but this necessary integration which will have to be supplied will have to be in close reference to our charism.

Starting from the first moment and always, we will have to **propose with clarity** that the Pauline vocation is not only to be lived as baptized people, but as consecrated ones; that our spirituality is the integral Christ, lived and interpreted by Saint Paul; that our witness of faith toward others happens through the languages of present-day communications. The **elements that are inalienable and to be always presented together** are: the consecrated life lived as a Priest or a Disciple, the spirituality of Saint Paul and evangelization using communication.

4.3.4. As to Pauline personnel, one of the ideals of the Founder has been the **numerical rapport** between Priests and Disciples: “the need to have at least, on the total of the Religious, two thirds of Disciples” (III,132). The percentage – a third of Priests and two thirds of Disciples – is by him tied to the threefold realization of the Pauline apostolate: there is the redaction (the contents are reserved to the Priests because officially they are given the task of preaching in the Church), and there is the technical production and diffusion entrusted to the Disciples.

The **Special General Chapter of 1969-1971**, in assimilating the theology of Vatican II regarding the ministerial priesthood, the priesthood of the faithful and the responsibility of the laity in evangelization, does not have recourse anymore to the need for percentage conceptualized by the Founder. In describing the role of the Disciple, it says: “It is open to him, without exclusions or exceptions, all the gamut of apostolic activities including those in creativity, in technical execution and in diffusion, depending on his personal gifts, his preparation and experience” (DC 34). Drawing on the chapter’s dictate are the current **Constitutions of 1984** (art. 5).

On the other hand, the three phases of the apostolate on which the Primo Maestro bases his percentage, are surpassed by the possibilities offered by digital communication: today it comes out rather complex to want to realize “an autopsy” of the message by identifying in the pure state the contents, the technology of production and the form of diffusion. **The communication of the web is invented, produced and disseminated not in successive times but in a synchronized way**, and it is quite difficult to distinguish if the success of the web communication is due to the contents, the technical elaboration or to the form of diffusion.

In observing that in some Circumscriptions, due to the local culture, the **vocation of the Disciple** does not constitute a strong attraction, it is necessary to **rethink** the distribution of the tasks in the Pauline apostolic activity based on the theology of the ministries of Vatican Council II and on the functioning of present-day communication. However, the indication of the Primo Maestro must remain unchanged: “The Priest and the Disciple share in accomplishing the same apostolate of the editions” (III,127), uniting the gifts of each one in order to realize a project of evangelization conceived and realized as a Pauline community (**Apostolic Project**).

5. THE PAULINE FORMATION

5.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

5.1.1. The topic is treated in different weeks:

- * **I**, *Novitiate, time of Pauline formation*: 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258;
Promotion and guidance of the vocations: 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353;
- * **II**, *Understanding and practice of prayer*: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12;
Pauline formation: 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195;
- * **IV**, *Foundations of the religious life*: 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.

5.1.2. In speaking about “**integral**” formation, the Founder incorporates human, Christian, religious and Pauline (spiritual and apostolic) formation; therefore the reflection on formation becomes completed with what will be said about spirituality and the life of prayer, study, apostolate and community life.

5.2. Pauline values

5.2.1. Pauline formation must educate the **entire personality**: “Religious formation must be integral” (I,253); “Piety, study, apostolate of the editions, education and poverty are of capital importance to form the Pauline religious” (II,190); “The unitary formation includes the human, religious, clerical and apostolic life, so that a perfect man in Christ may be presented. The perfect Master will form perfect men in Jesus Christ” (II,191).

In taking care of the totality there is also a **priority** so as not to “construct” in an inconclusive way: “The religious life is a perfecting of the Christian life and the latter is a perfecting of human life. ...The religious life and the priestly life require beforehand a good Christian life; the Christian life requires a good human life” (IV,28)

5.2.2. The entire personality must mould itself as **Christocentric**: “Formation will be achieved when the image and the elements which constitute Jesus Christ will be reproduced, such that it can be said ‘the Pauline is another Master’” (II,190); “In Christocentric formation the Pauline will also become in due proportions way, truth and life, according to the spirit of the Constitutions; conditions necessary for sanctification and the apostolate. In this well-balanced fusion of all the elements one can talk and must talk of the *summit of life*” (II,191).

5.2.3. The scope of formation in all the constitutive elements of the Pauline life is to be qualified for the **apostolate**: “A general principle: the whole of formation must be formulated and ordained in a special way for studies with respect to the apostolate proper of the Pauline Family. Such an end is to be born in mind right upon entrance in our Institute: whether in the school, or in the giving of advices, in meditations, in preachings; so that one does not communicate a generic life, but a doctrine, a piety, and a religious life that is eminently Pauline” (II,193).

5.2.4. The pedagogy indicated by the Primo Maestro for the Pauline formation does not make appeal for an external discipline, but for a maturation of **interior convictions**, which he defines as “**idea-virtues**”: “In general, the preventive, positive and optimistic system is preferable to the repressive, pessimistic and negative system. It is very wise to imprint idea-virtues so as to form a robust will so that ... one arrives at a well-balanced and complete sanctity” (II,192).

A convinced well-balanced formation leads to a **responsible personality**: “The educator must little by little render himself useless: as far as the government of himself is concerned, the religious has his conscience as guide. As long as, instead, he needs the eyes of his superior to regulate himself well, he will not be formed” (I,252).

5.3. Updating

5.3.1. Important **references** in order to follow the process of creative fidelity to the indications of the Founder regarding Pauline integral formation are: the *Chapter Documents* of 1969-1971 (523-622), the *Constitutions and Directory* (art. 89-156), the *Ratio Formationis* (37-176, 196-246), the Acts of the International Seminar “*Pauline formation for mission*” (Ariccia, 12-23 October 1994)³³ and, to be adapted to the

³³ *Pauline formation for mission*. Acts of the International Seminar on the Pauline Formation, Casa Generalizia della Società San Paolo, 1995.

Pauline charism, the indications contained in the post-synodal apostolic *Vita consecrata* (63-71).

5.3.2. The **result** of the Pauline formation must push harder, in every period, the proposal insisted on by the Founder: to educate man, the Christian, the religious and the Pauline to obtain **an apostle who makes himself “way, truth and life” in evangelization through communication in every epoch.**

In addressing all the religious, *Vita consecrata* says: “If therefore it is true that the renewal of the consecrated life depends mainly on formation, it is likewise true that this in turn is tied to the capacity to propose a method rich in spiritual and pedagogical wisdom that gradually leads one who aspires to consecrate himself to assume the sentiments of Christ the Lord. Formation is a vital process through which the person converts to the Word of God from the depths of his being and at the same time learns the art of searching for the signs of God in the realities of the world” (VC 68).

“Christocentric” formation includes in an indissoluble way the equilibrium between listening to God in his Word and in history. Hence, in order to reflect in creative fidelity on the Pauline **“Christocentric formation”** which the Founder has also explained by having printed and meditated on an extract of the *Theology of Christian Perfection* by P. Royo Marín³⁴ (the pages that present configuration to Christ Way, Truth and Life), we must pay attention to the **“integral”** presentation of the formation indicated by the exhortation *Vita consecrata*: listening to God in his Word and listening to God in history. The Pauline apostle makes himself “similar” to Christ who in turn has made himself “similar” to men to be for them Way, Truth and Life.

5.3.3. The concern of the Primo Maestro so that the **whole of formation be finalized to the apostolate**, to form the Pauline “apostle,” finds confirmation in the documents of Vatican II (cf *Optatam totius*, 14; *Perfectæ caritatis*, 8) and in the postconciliar Vatican directives: “There is no, in concrete, religious life existing “in itself” to which would graft, like a subsidiary adjunct, the specific end and the particular charism of every Institute. In the Institutes dedicated to the apostolate there is no search for sanctity or the profession of the evangelical counsels or of a life vowed to God and to his service, that is not inherently tied to the service of the Church and of the world” (*Potissimum institutioni. Directives on formation in religious institutes*, 17).

Making up to date the clear indications of the Primo Maestro that find confirmation in the Church, it follows that the involvement in the apostolic activities of the aspirant to the Pauline life **must be an integrating part** of every stage of formation; and it is dutiful that the educators in charge be Paulines with a significant apostolic experience and committed in the apostolate.

If a young man who aspires to the Pauline life, above all if he finds himself in the stage of the juniorate, is not attracted to the apostolate, it is good that he be **directed elsewhere** because: “For the Paulines love for the apostolate is a positive sign and at the same time a guarantee of perseverance” (I,118).

Considering love for the apostolate as a **“sign”** of Pauline vocation not only means forming the young man in “work to gain his bread,” which is also a Pauline value

³⁴ Antonio Royo Marín, *Teologia della perfezione cristiana*, Edizioni Paoline, Rome 1960 (re-edited several times; 11th edition, San Paolo 2003). – The cited *Extract* is available in www.alberione.org/operaomnia.

strongly inculcated by the Founder. Thinking more deeply, commitment in one of the various forms of the Pauline apostolate means the realization of the Pauline vocation which has in communication its specific “**way**” of expression.

In the vocational proposal and during formation the Pauline must be presented and formed as a believer that lives his faith in Christ on the model of Saint Paul, to give witness to others of his experience, making use of the forms and languages of communication. **His testimony of Christ is in communication employing communication**, and therefore the communication is not done during the time of his “apostolic work,” but it characterizes his spirituality, his practices of piety, his study, his community life, his manner of living the religious vows. His mission as apostle of communication is “the key to reading” all the aspects of his life.

5.3.4. We also have the duty to **update the pedagogical method** of the Founder who invites the formators to “little by little make themselves useless,” because they have formed in the young men deep “idea-virtues” and not “conditioned reflexes,” fruit of an external discipline.

In the redaction of the *Iter formativo*, adapted to the vocational and formative reality of the circumscription, it is necessary to accompany every young man in the various formative stages with a “**personalized project**,” respectful of his age, of his preparation received before entering the community, of his specific formative journey in the field of what is valid for all, of the skills to be valued by means of apostolic specializations.

Once with the participation of all those responsible and of that of the interested party the “formative project” has been elaborated, the role of the formator and of the community is that of favoring its realization, accompanying the young man and respecting what has been established.

6. THE PAULINE STUDY

6.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

6.1.1. The importance of study is explained above all during the second week, but there are also other cross-references and allusions:

- * I, *Pastorality*: 415, 416, 417, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428;
- * II, *Study*: 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177;
Pauline formation: 193;
Norms for our studies: 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214;
Studies and apostolate: 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238;
Study of the disciples: 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253.

6.1.2. In order to understand better the affirmations of Fr. Alberione we should bear in mind the **context of studies** as it was realized in the Congregation in the 1960’s, above all in Italy. The studies of the aspirants were assured in the community by Pauline teachers; the curriculum of the studies differed for the clerical aspirants and the brother aspirants; moreover, for the theological studies the clerics of the Congregation met together in Rome in the *Pauline International College* affiliated to the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University (cf II, 195-196, 229).

The reflections on study are based much on the text *Ratio studiorum* (approved by the Holy See on 3 March 1959) and willed by the Founder as integration of the Constitutions (cf II,176, 190, 195, 209, 212, 214). On 26 February 1990 the *Ratio studiorum* has been substituted by the *Ratio formationis*.

6.2. Pauline values

6.2.1. Studies are an aspect of the global commitment of the Pauline religious: “**apply oneself to perfection**” (II,169) and must be programmed and realized **in view of the apostolate**: “*Purpose*: studies have their own purpose, even a double purpose: to perfect the gift of nature, intelligence; and to prepare oneself to accomplish the mission entrusted by God. One will have to teach using the tongue, paper, the film, the screen, the image, etc. Know what must be communicated, know the manner and the means to give it: the language, the technique, etc. ...Study therefore has two tasks: the intellectual part and the technical part. The technique for the Paulines equals the tongue of the orator and of the Master” (II,169). “Study for the Pauline has for immediate end the apostolate which is already a ‘royal priesthood,’ and the apostolate with the ministry for one who aspires to the priesthood” (II,172).

6.2.2. Study is for the apostolate and all of the apostolate is “**preaching**” because the Congregation is a “**teacher**,” officially charged by the Church to evangelize using the press and the other means of communication: “Our Institute has teaching for role. She makes her own the truths and the teachings of the Church; to present them to souls through the word and the technical means for the Priest; through technical means only for the Disciple, together with the Priest; aiming at souls: ‘*Doing the truth in charity.*’ The Institute teaches everything: firstly, that which helps to go directly to heaven, that is, faith, morals and cult; and then all ‘that is good, that is true’ (cf Phil 4,8)” (II,172).

The “Pauline preaching” ‘teaches’ through the **combination of the competences** of the Priest and the Disciple; needed are: “science, language, technique; the first is that which constitutes the complex of truths to be communicated; the second the means of diffusion; and the third the complex of instruments that produce fast and efficacious fruits” (II,193). The Disciples through their union with the Priest in the apostolate of the editions enter into a mission unheard of in past centuries and vested with a new and characteristic nobility” (I,427).

6.2.3. The directives contained in the apostolic constitution of Pius XII *Sedes Sapientiae* which prescribes the renewal of priestly and religious formation in “**pastoral**” perspective are quickly received and applied by the Primo Maestro to the formation and studies of the Pauline. Quoting what is written in *San Paolo* of December 1958, the Founder explains in detail the meaning and the contents of the “**pastoral year**” for the Pauline priest (cf I,416-417, 420-428). “The instruction to be imparted especially concerns... basic pastoral theology, which today has reached the dignity of a true science, while in times past it was rather a complex of practical advices. The Priest has need of two sciences: to know what he must give to the faithful and to the not faithful; and, additionally, the manner of giving it. To the first are intended the theological studies, to the second the year of pastoral” (I,423).

In concrete, “our dear newly-ordained Priests are to set out practically for school, for redaction, for the formation of the aspirants, to guide the technical and propaganda apostolate, for cinema, radio, television, according to the possibilities; and to all the new forms

of apostolate that the times require; in an ever widening horizon, considering the various nations and continents” (I,422). Everything because the Priest – Fr. Alberione reminds – “must be as Saint Paul says: ‘*perfectus homo Dei ad omne opus bonum instructus* (=a complete man of God, well-prepared for every good work)’ (2Tim 3,17)” (I,423).

The “**pastoral**” dimension is **constitutive of the Pauline charism**: “The Pious Society of Saint Paul has always given very special importance to Pastoral; anticipating the times, the book *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale* (Notes of Pastoral Theology) had been prepared, published in two editions. It has come out again completely redone. ...The periodical *Vita Pastorale* has always been published” (I,424). “That it has always been the thought and pastoral purpose of our apostolate also results from this fact: in the Pauline Family there is an Institute called Jesus the Good Shepherd, as called to mind: they are the humble cooperators of priestly zeal” (I,427).

6.3. Updating

6.3.1. The Pauline values to be rethought and lived in creative fidelity are: **studies have for their aim preparation for the Pauline apostolate; the Pauline apostolate is a complete true preaching; even the novelty of the Pauline preaching must be pastoral**: “always bear in mind the needs of souls” (I,428).

With respect to 1960 the situation today is totally different: in many Circumscriptions the studies of the Paulines, in particular the studies in theology, are done in faculties, universities and specialized external centers. The **curriculum** of the studies in philosophy and theology for future priests, diocesan and religious, after what has been established by Vatican II (cf *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 7 December 1965 and *Optatam totius*, 28 October 1965) is regulated by the norms emanated in several texts by the Congregation for Catholic Education.

Among them meriting accurate attention is the instruction *La collaborazione inter-istituti per la formazione* (Collaboration among Institutes for Formation) of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life (8 December 1998), that suits well our concern for creative fidelity to the indications about the studies received by Fr. Alberione. The document starts from the assumption that many religious institutions cannot allow for themselves an **autonomy** for the cultural formation of their candidates and unite their forces, giving life to a common center of studies frequented by students of varying Orders and Congregations. Thus is being organized among institutes **collaboration** in the various phases of formation, in the institutes of religious sciences and philosophical and theological formation, in the formation of formators, men or women.

Reflecting on the experience of our Congregation, it is necessary to admit that very often the level of the studies of philosophy and theology in the centers frequented by the young Paulines enjoys quality, even if every academic institution has its particular vision of the contents and method of teaching.

The content of the cited document can be synthesized in this **important recall**: “In every form of collaboration among institutes it is necessary put into effect the due distinction between the forming community and the inter-institute center. The forming community is the primary instance of reference that no center can substitute. It is the environment in which grow and become mature, in the spirit of the respective Founders, the personal identity and the response to the vocation received” (n. 10b).

The studies of philosophy and theology that the young Paulines frequent in external centers have need of **an integration with the Pauline charism**, and must be programmed and realized in the community: the contents of philosophy and theology are proposed to all the students, but the assimilation and the reelaboration for the Pauline students must be connected to our apostolate.

6.3.2. Since the philosophical and theological contents must be **translated** and **proposed** through the forms and languages of communication in order to become evangelization, the young Paulines, clerics and disciples, must receive a **formation in communication** that in the majority of cases cannot be identified with the hours of apostolate that if ever can constitute the practical application of a quite wider initiation.

This initiation includes: a study of the various aspects of the phenomenon of present-day communication, above all the digital one, the **year of the apostolate** which before the perpetual profession is required of every candidate to the Pauline life, and the study of languages.³⁵

It is to be remembered, for good memory, that the Founder has given the example by requiring a kind of “**attitudinal examination**” for the future Pauline priests: he was not admitted to the sacred orders who had not written or at least translated a book to be printed.

6.3.3. Starting from the Special General Chapter of 1969-71, the study, the research and the teaching of communication are **integrated** in a more evident and motivated manner in the Pauline charism (cf DC 576). Our actual Constitutions delineate the essential lines of this form of apostolate (art. 74). **Priority 1.3** of the IX General Chapter asks to “Strengthen the “pedagogical choice” of becoming formators in the field of communication, at the service of the Church.”

After the pioneering activity of the *Studio Paolino Internazionale della Comunicazione Sociale* (SPICS), the Congregation actually is committed, in a significant way, in the pedagogy of communication through the *COMFIL*, approved as faculty on 21 May 1993 (Mexico); through the faculty *FAPCOM*, inaugurated in Brazil in 2006, and through the *St Paul Seminary Foundation* (Philippines-Macau).

In order to develop a creative fidelity to the directives of the Founder regarding the studies for the mission, it is necessary to put into practice also **priority 3.2** of the IX General Chapter: “Elevate the general cultural level of the Congregation and ‘create thought’.” The Documents of the IX General Chapter have approved **the operative lines 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4, 3.2.3** and **4.1.2** that indicate the need for well-programmed **specializations** that harmonize both the needs of the individual Circumscriptions and those of the whole Congregation.

Even the initiatives of **continuing formation** should draw inspiration in a creative way from the indications of the Primo Maestro: “Each one must always commit himself for religious instruction, to better know God and make better service to Him. Each one must always better himself, through instruction, in his office, in his social relations, in ministry and apostolate” (II,168-169).

6.3.4. The deepenings in **pastoral theology**, that have developed until today starting from Vatican II, are of help to us for a creative fidelity in thinking and living the unchangeable element of the **pastoral character** of our charism.

³⁵ Cf Document of the General Government, 5-6, in *Formazione paolina per la missione*, cit., p. 189.

After putting aside a purely “**executive**” consideration of pastoral as “an assortment of practical means” to be invented in order to transmit the contents of evangelization, pastoral for some time has given itself an **ecclesiological** foundation, including all the process of evangelization, not only the practical means that can be of help to it.

The new ecclesiological vision of pastoral, when it is applied to the evangelization proper of the Pauline charism, even supports the **change of the communications model**. Having recourse to the press and to the other mass media, the reflection of the Church and in a certain measure even the thought of the Primo Maestro, described the recourse to communication in order to evangelize as a simple “use of new means.” Today the ecclesial research talks of the “culture of communication.”

In the communication of mass media of the 1960’s already it was opined that “the medium is the message”; present-day digital communication makes impossible the traditional separation between “contents” and “technology.” The characteristic of the pastoral of the Pauline charism is the **priority for the recipients**: “don’t wait for the people in church or in the sacristy, but go search for them where they live.”

7. THE PAULINE RELIGIOUS VOWS

7.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

7.1.1. It is during the first week that Fr. Alberione explains the religious vows:

- * **I**, *Poverty*: 446-463;
Chastity: 486-499;
Obedience: 516-527;

* **II**, *Fidelity to the Pope*, only recalled with the *Constitutions*: 189, 204.

7.1.2. In the presentation of the religious vows, the Founder makes use of a **common schema**: the biblical basis (Jesus Master, Queen of the Apostles, Saint Paul); the example of the saints, the papal magisterium (above all the encyclical *Sacra Virginitas*, 25 March 1954, and the apostolic constitution *Sedes Sapientiae* of Pius XII; indications of Pius X), the distinction between “vow” and “virtue” and the requirements for the Pauline charism.

7.2. Pauline values

7.2.1. The general vision of the three vows aims at a **different and positive use** of the principal human “concupiscences”: “The religious by means of the three vows transforms passion into virtue and as a force in the apostolate; it is a secret of eternal happiness. ...Poverty is the greatest wealth. ...Chastity is the greatest love. ...Obedience is the greatest liberty” (I,517).

7.2.2. The vow of **poverty** is closely connected with **work**: “The saints are all workers” (I,456). But the work of the Pauline, lived as poverty, has the value of **evangelization**: “The work of the Pauline (Priest or Disciple) has a characteristic: Jesus the Worker in his work produced humble things; Saint Paul produced military mats called cilice; on the contrary the Pauline exercises a direct apostolate, giving by his work the truth, doing a work of preaching that has become a mission and approved by the Church” (I,458).

7.2.3. The vow of **chastity** is the destination of all the energies “in order to attend more freely to the things of heaven” (I,489). The vow of chastity is not to devote oneself to **iso-**

lation: “The heart of one consecrated to God does not live in solitude; rather, it lives in an immensely superior love, comforted by greater communications with God” (I,491).

7.2.4. The vow of **obedience** is facilitated by the **formation of conscience:** “The Superior has to make himself little by little useless: because the religious already has a life of his own based on eternal principles; and in the various contingencies he has recourse to prayer” (I,519).

The scope of the vow of obedience is to discover and live the **will of God:** “Obedience is the union of our will with the will of God” (I,521): “the will of the Lord shows itself by his word, through the Superiors, in events and in things” (I,522). Through his profession, the religious gives himself to the Congregation: “I am not mine anymore, but of the Institute” (I,527).

7.3. Updating

7.3.1. The vision of the religious vows, presented by the Primo Maestro, mirrors the formulations of his time, but the **method** used by him to illustrate them is still valid for actualizing them with creative fidelity: biblical recallings; theology of the religious life that can be obtained, starting from Vatican Council II, from some texts of the universal Magisterium, from the reflections that have emerged in the semestral Assemblies of the Union of General Superiors and from the continental organisms of the religious, from publications of books and magazines, etc. The material available is abundant and useful.

7.3.2. Since the religious vows in a Congregation are necessarily characterized by its specific mission, the actual general vision of the vows goes to be thought, deepened, adapted and harmonized with the “**Pauline**” characteristics so as to imprint on the individual vows a “social” and “communitarian” dimension.

The Primo Maestro connects the vow of **poverty** to the human, Christian and apostolic value of “**work.**” It is an important indication on which to reflect even today starting from the original identification: Pauline work is not only honest human hard work for material sustenance, but it is above all **energy spent for the Gospel.**

With the progress of the apostolic activities, the integration of the lay collaborators and the changes in the method of organization of labor, the value of Pauline work is not only in the laborious availability of the individual, but also in the capacity of organizing and living work as a “**group.**”

The concern for a correct centralized **administrative organization** of the communities and of the apostolic activities and the application of a clear **organigram** and **manual of functions** are to be considered as concrete forms to live the vow of poverty.

7.3.3. The vow of **chastity** lived in reference to the Pauline apostolate, besides the necessary religious motivation and human maturity, is to be appreciated as total dedication to **creativity**, to the concern to realize apostolic works that in fact promote **life** for those who make use of it.

Although our apostolate does not have the immediate human consolations of “direct” pastoral, with close personal contact with the people, only an exact knowledge of the needs of our public can favor the efficacy of our hard work.

7.3.4. The vow of **obedience** interpreted for our evangelizing mission can be deepened starting from the fact that “**the mission is entrusted to the community**” (*Constitutions*, art. 15), not to individuals who can realize it according to individual choices. If

it is true that “nobody has the right to appropriate for himself an apostolic activity, as if he were its owner,” it is equally true and dutiful that “each one is to lend his collaboration” in the realization of an apostolate that is, at the same time, support for the life of the community and evangelization.

The elaboration of an *Apostolic Project* capable of coordinating in the programming the “work of all” is also a help to live the vow of obedience.

8. THE PAULINE COMMUNITY LIFE

8.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

8.1.1. The topic about community life is explained by complementary viewpoints in different weeks:

* **I, Common life:** 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292;

* **III, Pauline charity:** 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37;
The Pauline fund: 54;

* **IV, Charity and family spirit:** 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221.

8.1.2. Life in the diocesan seminary and the successive foundation of the institutions of the Pauline Family have allowed Fr. Alberione an **experience** that draws from what is lived the wisdom that inspires his indications regarding common life.

8.2. Pauline values

8.2.1. The **quality of communitarian life** affects all the other aspects of the Pauline charism: “A fundamental task of this course of Exercises is union, unity: know it, feel it, live it. There is no true common life, although people live together: in a hotel, college, pension house, hospital, prison, barracks, etc. Because there is no unity of purpose, thought, hearts: each one finds himself in those places for a motive or for a special temporary need, while passing, or for a personal purpose; there is no duty of obedience coming from the vows. On the contrary, common life, in the religious sense, depends on the nature of the society, be it congregation, institute, religious family: it is always an association of persons who want to help each other to attain sanctity”; community life “is an organism, not a mechanism” (I,284).

8.2.2. Community life is defined from a **supernatural point of view**: “Though we are many, we form just one body in Christ,” Saint Paul says (Rom 12,5). “We are members of other members; and all are members of the *Mystical Body of Christ*” (I,282). This dimension of faith, however, necessitates founding on a human reality that favors it: the Congregation is like a **family**: “The religious family is likened to and has foundations similar to that of a natural family, which is a natural society. But it is immensely superior” (IV,212). A religious community where a spirit of family reigns is a paradise on earth; while the one that lacks this spirit risks being a hell” (IV,215).

8.2.3. The Pauline community life, lived as a “mystical body” and as a “family,” is not closed in itself, but is **apostolic**: “The ‘common life’ does not always have the same profound meaning. For example, in the Benedictine abbey it has a very vast and important task and it informs the Christian life itself of the members, both in their personal sanctity and their apostolic irradiation. On the contrary, for many regular clerics and even for us, ‘common life’ is born of the apostolate and in view of the apostolate:

...‘we are at the service of souls’: religious-apostles; give what you have received, following the example of the Divine Master” (I,285).

“The Pauline apostolate requires a strong group of redactors, technicians, propagandists. All must be in agreement like the artists who present a beautiful work. How many determinations and energies, disconnected and disorganized, are exhausted in desires, attempts and delusions! It is necessary that all together prepare the bread of the spirit and of truth” (I,288).

8.2.4. The Pauline community is lived at **various levels**: from the “local” community to the communities of the same language, up to the entire Congregation. At any level the **rule for living together** is fixed by Saint Paul (cf 1Cor 13) in his description of the characteristics of Christian charity (III,31, 33).

“An indication of charity: linkage for the editions among the nations of the same language. Example: nations of the Spanish language, nations of the English language, nations of the French language, nations of the Portuguese language. That in the measure that is possible, but the principle should be followed; the apostolate and the members will derive advantages from it” (III,34).

The need for **help among the Circumscriptions** is exemplified, in context, by the request from the Province of Italy to “lead the way both for the necessary sustenance and development and for supplying of personnel to other Provinces. The General House then has expenses all particularly its own, expenses that are not known” (III,35).

Even the “**Pauline fund**,” willed by the first General Chapter of 1957, is to be interpreted in the context of the solidarity among the Circumscriptions coordinated by the General House (III,54).

8.2.5. In several parts of the instructions dedicated to community life, the Founder underlines dangers and failures, defects and virtues, positive and negative characteristics of Pauline common life.

“There are, in the first place, general dangers and common dangers: danger of conservatism with hypertrophy of the particulars; inability to collaborate with the others; pettiness in the manner of fighting for an ideal; misunderstanding of the ideal and apostolate of the others, etc.” (I,286). Even failures have their own manifestations: “So then a depressed life, of discontented people who live of historical memories, of pessimism, of inconclusive criticisms, among religious and religious; and, sometimes, even between house and house” (I,287).

The description of community life becomes detailed, because fruit of experience: sociability is needed, but not gregariousness (I,288); charity and not egoism (I,289); docility, not infantilism (I,290); obedience, not divisions (I,291).

Unity is a value that indispensable to the Pauline charism: “Internal divisions in an Institute lead to the most grave consequences: divisions in thought, in direction, in character, in doctrine, in works, etc. Unity is such a good thing that for its sake goods and particular views ought to be sacrificed. Very bad is the division among Major Superiors, the General Council, the Provincial Superiors. Of great edification, on the contrary, is cordial accord” (I,291).

8.2.6. Because community life is by its nature “**social**” (cf IV,215) and finds its pole of aggregation in its “**specific spirit**”: “Every Congregation has a spirit and a “gift proper to it”; spirit that is its soul and its principle of fruitfulness; and even its reason for being, approved by the Holy See. If the members of the Congregation, in studying this spirit, will become enthusiastic of this gift of God, then they will feel the family spirit in

a more intense degree. Moreover, from this family spirit the religious themselves will have care for and defend their spirit. Therefore only they will be the true religious who live the soul itself of the Institute and assure its fervent vitality” (IV,215).

The unity of the common spirit is coordinated by the **service of authority**: “In every religious Circumscription and community we have a family of God. The Superiors ought to be fathers and mothers and not captains of enterprises; the subjects are not their employees, but their children. This principle determines the mutual relations” (IV,216).

8.3. Updating

8.3.1. In view of the creative fidelity and of the updating of Pauline community life, the presentation made by the Primo Maestro requires an attentive reading, both personal and communitarian, of the pages indicated above and a resulting examination of conscience. I believe that neither the passage of time nor the actual situation of our communities have rendered obsolete or dated the thought of the Founder regarding the Pauline community life in the **dimensions** considered: mystical body, family on various levels, a grouping of apostles of communication, a human group that needs personal and social virtues in order to exist and to be a propitious environment wherein to taste the joy of being a part.

8.3.2. The IX General Chapter in order to “revitalize the gift received” has indicated **priority 2.1**: “Remotivate our communities so that they may become a space for communication with God, with ourselves and with others, grow in fraternity and be capable of receiving and enthusing young men through the witness of the Pauline charism.”

Operative line 2.1.1 establishes: “The Major Superior is to urge every community to elaborate its own community project and, after having approved it, verify its realization every six months.”

The **Community Project**, bearing in mind the exact physiognomy of every community, must be elaborated in reference to the **Apostolic Project** and the **Iter Formativo** of the circumscription, based on the question: “How can our community collaborate in this exact place in the project of the Province or of the Region? The unity created by the **Community Project** realizes in practice **priority 2.2** of the IX General Chapter: “Revitalize the fraternity in order to become credible witnesses of our vocation and mission” and **operative line 2.2.1** that enjoins to “give value to all the persons of the Congregation, involving even the elderly or ailing confreres.”

9. PAULINE SPIRITUALITY AND PRACTICES OF PIETY

9.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

9.1.1. The topic is explained from various points of view in different moments, above all during the second week:

* **I**, *Spiritual exercises and vocation*: 187;

* **II**, *Understanding and practice of prayer*: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17;

Eucharistic celebration: 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36;

Meditation: 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63;

Examination of conscience: 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81;

Eucharistic visit: 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 18, 109, 110, 111;

Other forms of prayer: 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128;

The Divine Master Way, Truth and Life: 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161;

* **IV**, *Mary, Disciple and Teacher:* 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244;

Mary, Queen of Apostles: 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278.

9.1.2. **Saint Paul** is named in

* **I**, 11, 20, 43, 148, 149, 313;

* **II**, 148, 149;

* **III**, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62;

* **IV**, 118, 123.

and constitutes the model of reference for the Pauline spirituality. Already in *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ* the Founder synthesizes the Pauline spirituality: “think and nourish yourselves of every phrase of the gospel, according to the spirit of Saint Paul” (AD 95).

9.2. Pauline values

9.2.1. The spirituality is not identified with the practices of piety, but the acts of piety, whether daily, weekly, monthly and yearly are the nourishment of spirituality; because of this the “**practice of prayer**” is indispensable: “He does not merit the name of religious, and in fact he is not, who does not put in the very first place prayer. ...Leaving prayer to do more works is a ruinous remedy. Work made at the expense of prayer does not help us, neither others, because it takes away what is due to God” (II,9).

9.2.2. The **Pauline spirituality** is centered on Jesus Christ, the Divine Master Way, Truth and Life, but as **Saint Paul** has thought of him, lived him, written about him and preached him: “Saint Paul is the principal interpreter of the Divine Master, who taught him directly, as he had been directly converted by him” (II,148).

Simplifying at best, the **theological convictions** that justify the Pauline spirituality according to Fr. Alberione can be outlined in this way. Making reference to Bossuet,³⁶ the Founder starts his reflection by defining **man** “as an incarnate trinity, image of the creative Trinity; God is power, wisdom, infinite love, and a divine nature in three infinite Persons, distinct and necessary, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (II,173, cf 192; I,368-369).

Since man is the “image of God,” “so look at man as *one*, inasmuch as person and image of the One God; but each of the three Divine Persons have something of their own and each is represented by man with his three faculties: the Father by his will, the Son by his mind, the Spirit by his sentiment: man, a little trinity, image of the Triune God. Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, all of man was ‘changed for the worse’: his mind inclined to error, his will to vice, his sentiment to superstition, false cults and eternal death. Jesus Christ came sent by the Father. He restored man, making of him a much better second edition. Thus man, passing through Christ the Mediator, will be presented to God purified and holy in his mind, will and sentiment. All of Christianity is here: faith in Jesus Christ, morality in Jesus Christ, cult in Jesus Christ. Here is the entirety of our most holy religion: dogma, morals and cult... The devotion to Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life leads to the perfect cult of God. The more the Pauline lives it, the more he is similar to the Divine Exemplar Jesus Christ” (II,149-150).

³⁶ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), Catholic bishop, theologian and apologist, writer and French preacher. He was one of the great religious orators of the 1600’s, famous for his sermons.

The **model** that the Primo Maestro has taken up from the beginning to “understand and live our spirituality” is **Saint Paul**, who “presents to us the total Christ, as he has already defined himself: Way, Truth and Life. ...In this vision religion is found, dogma, morals and cult; there is in this vision the integral Jesus Christ; because of this devotion the entire man is seized and conquered in Jesus Christ” (AD, 159-160).

Starting from the experience of Saint Paul: “It is not I anymore that lives, but the Christ in me” (Gal 2,20), the Primo Maestro defines the Pauline spirituality as a manner of thinking, living and witnessing faith in Christ: a progressive “**Christification**” for personal sanctity and for the apostolate.

Without Saint Paul the spirituality willed by Fr. Alberione for the whole Pauline Family does not exist; the Pauline spirituality, without Saint Paul, does not only lose the adjective that binds us to our apostolate, but also renders incomprehensible the reference to the “integral” Christ proposed with insistence by the Founder, far from every spirituality that presents itself as a “sectionalized” and “partial” Christ.

Since Saint Paul explains the Christian baptism through the image of the grafting of a wild olive to an olive that gives fruits (cf Rom 11,24), the Pauline spirituality is described by Fr. Alberione as a progressive “**grafting in Christ**” of the totality of the person: “Establish oneself totally in Jesus Master Way (will), Truth (mind) and Life (sentiment); even arrive to the supreme height of our personality: I think in Jesus Christ, I love in Jesus Christ, I will in Jesus Christ; or Christ who thinks in me, loves in me, wills in me” (I,187). “If this grafting is followed fully by the Christian, he will be able to say: ‘Christ lives in me.’ It is the great teaching of Saint Paul” (II,149)

9.2.3. Since the Pauline spirituality is a “**precious mission** entrusted to the Pauline Family” and is “of very great advantage for the Church and for all of humanity” (II,243), also other expressions of the Primo Maestro deserve to be mentioned: “The devotion to the divine Master reassumes and completes all devotions. In fact, it presents Jesus Truth to be believed, Jesus Way to be followed, Jesus Life to be shared. It is necessary to consider the complete divine Master” (*Vademecum*, 579).

“The devotion to the divine Master is not an accessory devotion: it invests all our spiritual life, all our studies, all our apostolate, all our external activities: everything” (*Id.* 587). The devotion to Jesus Master: “... is not a beautiful expression, not an advice: it is the substance of the Congregation; it is to be or not to be Paulines. Discussions cannot be made!” (*Id.* 588). “Our devotion to the divine Master must be applied to our spiritual work, to our study, to our apostolate and to all of the religious life. ...The devotion to Jesus Master must not be limited to piety, but must extend itself to all of the apostolic life because the fruit of our apostolate is proportionate to this: present Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life” (*Id.* 590).

Without ever forgetting that **Saint Paul** is the model of reference to extend to every aspect of the Pauline life the spirituality of Christ the Master Way, Truth and Life, we must understand well that our spirituality united to evangelization employing communication forms the novelty of the Pauline charism in the life of the Church: **a style of apostolic life modeled in everything on Saint Paul**. The desire of the Founder is that we be “**Saint Paul living today**” in the ecclesial community.

9.2.4. Calling to mind the importance that during this extraordinary course of exercises Fr. Alberione attributes to the **Book of prayers** and in particular to the *introductions* to the individual practices of piety (cf I,47, 311), we can affirm that the presenta-

tion of the practices of piety (eucharistic celebration, meditation, examination of conscience, eucharistic visit) and of the other exercises of prayer (devotions of the first week, monthly retreat, yearly spiritual exercises, etc.) aim at involving “the commitment of all the forces of the soul for an all-encompassing development of the person. In the Mass and Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, that are at the center of all our spiritual life, the method ‘way-truth-life,’ to which corresponds well the commitment of the *mind*, *will* and *heart*, is ever more clearing and deepening itself to all” (II,11).

The ways and degrees of participation in the **eucharistic celebration** are illustrated by the Founder in II,32-34; the method of **meditation** is presented in II,60-63; the method of the **examination of conscience** is specified in II,74-80; the “way-truth-life” method of the **eucharistic visit** is explained in II,106-108; the daily prayers, the weekly devotions, the weekly, monthly and annual practices are always described as lived with the mind, will and heart. The **Alberionian synopsis** forms equivalences in spirituality and in all of the Pauline life: Christ the truth – dogma – the mind; Christ the life – cult – heart; Christ the way – morals – will, tending to reach the **objective** “life is transformed into prayer, prayer gives life” (II,111).

The totality of the Pauline life – piety, study, apostolate, poverty – is synthesized by the Primo Maestro through the image of a **cart**: “The four wheels of the cart are the ones that must go ahead together, without shocks, without too many risks of the weight that they are transporting. ...If one wheel is forgotten, either one does not proceed, or the entire cart heads to the precipice” (II,117-118).

9.2.5. The **principal characteristics** of the Pauline spirituality, which by the will of the Founder qualify our charism, are: Christocentric, as it has been understood, lived and preached by Saint Paul; eucharistic (cf II,10), apostolic (cf II,12) and marian (cf IV,234-244; 267-278).

The filial marian devotion that the Primo Maestro has lived and has wanted to unite closely to the Pauline charism is expressed in the title **Queen of the Apostles**: “Mary was created for the apostolate of giving Jesus Christ to the world: He, the Way, the Truth and the Life” (IV,267); “It is the hour of the Queen of Apostles. Today, the apostolates are multiplying; and we have the consoling reawakening of the apostolate of the laity” (IV, 268).

9.3. Updating

9.3.1. The first duty of creative fidelity is to locate the synthesis of the Pauline spirituality elaborated by Fr. Alberione in the context of his **research** for a spirituality suited to the Society of Saint Paul and to the whole Pauline Family. His testimony in *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ* regarding his study of the various spiritualities, which he then puts aside to concentrate himself on Saint Paul, remains a valid teaching for us (cf AD 159-160).

Through the teaching and example of Saint Paul, the Primo Maestro, unlike the many spiritual schools and devotions of his time, realizes in fact a research of the **essential in spiritual experience**, when concentrating his attention on the Bible, the Gospel and letters of Saint Paul, the person of Christ, the eucharist, the liturgy, the catechism, mariology, the study of the Fathers, the need for a new evangelization, fruit of a pastoral attentive to his contemporaries and capable of using the necessary means to reach them, the press being the first among them.

It is necessary to realize in a documented way how at the start of the 1900's was lived the religious experience in the teaching of dogma, in the manner of living the liturgy and in requiring an ethical life in order to understand why the Founder fights for an **“integral and not fragmented” Christ**, for an evangelization that is proposed for the **totality of the person**, for the use of **means** dictated by a pastoral that “goes in search of the lost sheep.”

Fr. Alberione rightfully insists that the Pauline spirituality does not only deal with the practices of piety and the life of prayer, because by means of it he in fact imposes a **“a style”** that incorporates all the components of the Pauline life: spirituality, study, apostolate, common life and the religious vows.

To hear it said that the Christian faith includes dogma, morals and cult, that the experience of faith must be proposed and lived with the totality of the person and that evangelization can make use of all the forms of communication, does not sound as a great novelty to our ears. From Vatican Council II and thereafter, these are affirmations that are almost discounted, at least for the majority of believers, even if they are formulated in different terms.

To the merit of being among those who have contributed to what Vatican Council II will declare as valid for the entire Catholic community, Fr. Alberione adds that of the **originality** of thinking, living and proposing all that “in the spirit of Saint Paul.” **The reference to Saint Paul is so innovative as the convinced affirmation regarding the “written preaching side by side with oral preaching.”**

For our creative fidelity we must assume with commitment the strong and constant indication of the Founder that “...all must consider as the only father, teacher, exemplar and founder Saint Paul the Apostle. Through him the Pauline Family is born, by him it was nourished and made to grow, from him it has taken the spirit” (AD 2). Upon receiving the participants to the extraordinary course of exercises, he says: “Saint Paul our father, teacher and protector receives you: how much has he loved us, protected us, supported us! And you have carried his doctrine, devotion and name, glorifying him in the various nations. He was a father and mother for all his children and brought up the Pauline Family that is his. Truly, if even you had ten thousand teachers, one is your father: ‘I have generated you by means of the Gospel’ (1Cor 4,15)” (I,11).

In order to rekindle the Pauline charism, all the Paulines must “rekindle” their knowledge, love, prayer and imitation of Saint Paul. The contents of the **Seminar on Saint Paul**³⁷ can be of help.

9.3.2. In the theological thought of Fr. Alberione Saint Paul is the apostle who has best understood, lived and preached Christ, the divine Master Way, Truth and Life. It is **common knowledge** that among the Christological titles with which he designates Christ, the Apostle never uses “Master,” which is current above all in the synoptic gospels, neither do we find in the Pauline letters the trinomial “way-truth-life,” exclusive of the Gospel of Saint John as the autodefinition of Christ.

The exegetical and theological interpretation of the Founder toward Saint Paul is debtor to the things known in his time, for which the exactness of fidelity to the Apostle is to be searched in valorizing the same for the elaboration of the Pauline charism.

³⁷ Cf note 22.

The Pauline text that has allowed the Primo Maestro to interpret the Apostle, not as an expert exegete or a theologian, but as a depository of the Pauline charism, lived by the 10 Institutions of the Pauline Family, is Gal 2,20: “It is not anymore I that lives, but the Christ in me.” This is **the firm point**, the base of all the thought and foundational work of blessed James Alberione.

From this deep personal experience, also expressed by “for me to live is Christ” (Phil 1,21), comes the mission to evangelize: “Woe to me if I don’t announce the Gospel!” and “I have made myself all to all” (1Cor 9,22). On the model of the Apostle, the Founder elaborates a spirituality that involves the “Christification” of the totality of the person, moulding its integral formation in a progressive way, so as to have persons, communities – an entire Family – motivated for a new evangelization by means of converging apostolates.

9.3.3. The description of the human personality (mind, heart, will), the theology of the Trinity, the presentation of liturgical and sacramental theology, the explanation of the method way-truth-life applied to the practices of piety, the ecclesiology and the mariology used by the Primo Maestro to formulate a spirituality that is “**a complete style of life**,” find in the abundant and various conciliar and postconciliar production contents and instruments for reflections and deepenings that are indispensable and fruitful.

10. THE PAULINE APOSTOLATE

10.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

10.1.1. The presentation of the Pauline apostolate takes place in diverse weeks and with different topics:

- * **I, *Use and abuse of the means of communication***: 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322;
- * **III, *Editions, first of all the Bible***: 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17;
Zeal and dedication: 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62;
Apostolate of the editions: 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134;
Technical means of the apostolate: 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209;
- * **IV, *Popular libraries***: 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70;
Propaganda-diffusion: 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97;
Attention to the needs of the world: 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124;
Rational propaganda: 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151;
Bookstores: 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173;
Identity of the apostle: 278.

10.1.2. The Primo Maestro makes explicit reference to his volume **The Publishing Apostolate**, in the edition of 1944 (cf I,318), which repropose, in an updated form, ideas and contents already expressed in the first edition with title **Press Apostolate** (1933).

10.2. Pauline values

10.2.1. The Pauline apostolate is true preaching and true evangelization: **written preaching alongside oral preaching**: “Through the name of our apostolate we mean a true mission that can be defined as preaching through technical means the divine word

by means of editions. ...It is the announcement of the good news, of the truth; therefore a true evangelization. Evangelization to be accomplished for all times and in every place, according to the divine command. ...Just like oral preaching, so the written one or the printed one spreads the Gospel, multiplies it, makes it arrive everywhere: thus God himself gave us the divine word preached orally and thus he gave us the seventy-two books of the Scriptures. In the same way the Church has done at all times: Popes, Bishops, Priests talk and write” (III,123-124).

10.2.2. Like the oral preaching, also written preaching is officially entrusted by the Church to the Pauline priest who is a “**priest-writer**”; however, since the written preaching, to reach the public, needs two other indispensable actions, technical production and diffusion, in the Society of Saint Paul the Pauline priestly ministry is completed by the work of the **Disciple. The Pauline apostolate is the unity of the actions of the Priest and the Disciple.** “The official mission of evangelization has been entrusted by the Divine Master to the Priest. ...To this official mission is joined a mission that is subordinate, complementary, universal and regulated by the Church: the one of the laity; as Jesus chose the seventy-two disciples” (III,125-126).

After having presented how in the institutes the collaboration between “priests” and “lay persons” is realized in a different way, the Founder specifies: “The Pauline Institute, on the contrary, is quite diverse; and it has a net superiority: Priest and Disciple concur in doing the same apostolate of the editions. In fact, this one has three parts: redaction, technique and diffusion; but the three parts form just one and only apostolate. In it the first part, redaction, is proper of the Priest; the second and the third, that is, technique and diffusion, are proper of the Disciple. Priest and Disciple united together in the editions merit therefore the name of Apostles. On the contrary, the writer does not make Pauline apostolate alone, he is a simple writer; the Disciple without the Priest-writer is a simple worker, even if he produces with his technique what is really good. ...Disciple, therefore, who constitutes and exercises with the Priest an identical mission: thus elevated to the “royal priesthood” (1Pt 2,9); in the Christian order it is the most that he can reach, he cannot go beyond” (III,127-128).

This three-formed setup of the Pauline preaching using the press and traditional mass media (cf III,128) motivates the idea of the Founder on the composition of the Pauline personnel: **1/3 of Priests and 2/3 of Disciples** (cf III,132).

10.2.3. The complementary unity of Priest and Disciple who form the single Pauline Apostle, requires acting together to realize a **common project** in favor of the **recipients**: “The Institute is a moral Person; in the Institute, particularly in the apostolic part, it is necessary to feel the social body, unity. The Institute can be likened to an immense Parish; of which the Superior is the spiritual head. That Institute must know the moral and spiritual conditions of all the souls: the faithful, the non-faithful, the fervent Christians, the indifferent Christians, the heretics, the honest, the dishonest, the pagans, the adversaries, the elect souls, the obstinate souls, children, the youth, the adults, the elderly, the professionals, artists, farmers, workers, etc. To everyone and to each it must provide the bread of the spirit, breaking it generously and adapting it to the needs of individuals” (III,133-134).

The Pauline apostle must “have a heart wider than the seas and the oceans. ...Love all, think of all, operate with the spirit of the Gospel which is universality and mercy: *Come ye all to me* (Mt 11,28). Like the spirit of Saint Paul the Apostle, always tending

towards the peoples that did not yet have the light of Jesus Christ” (IV,117-118). “The apostle of the editions makes himself all to all” (IV,120).

Since “Jesus Christ taught not to wait for men, but to go in search of them” (IV,89), even the initiative of the **popular libraries** in a parish, school, municipality, or circulating libraries, are forms of apostolate that can respond to the needs of the people: “It is the hour of the libraries. You can feel it everywhere” (IV,64).

10.2.4. Talking in April of 1960, when the conciliar decree *Inter mirifica*³⁸ had not yet been approved, the Founder has recourse to the universal magisterium of the Popes, above all of Pius XI and Pius XII, to assure that “written preaching” is urged and approved by the **Church as true evangelization**.

After having reminded that the Pauline apostolate described in the second article of the Constitutions “corresponds to the thought of Pius XII in his Apostolic Letter (12 January 1951)³⁹ in which he proclaimed Saint Gabriel the Archangel as the protector of all the inventions apt to communicate thought,” Fr. Alberione continues: The press, cinema, radio, television constitute today the most urgent, rapid and effective works of the Catholic apostolate. It is possible that the times may reserve for us other means that are better. But at present it seems that the heart of the apostle cannot desire something better to give God to souls and souls to God” (I,313).

10.2.5. The technologies of communication used by the apostle become “**material elements for a supernatural effectiveness**,” more than the sacramentals: “When these means of progress serve evangelization they receive a consecration, they are elevated to the greatest dignity. The office of the writer, the premises of technology, the bookstore become a church and a pulpit. The person who works there surges to the dignity of an apostle. One who, *with innocent hands and pure heart* (Ps 24[23],4), works there, communicates to the ordinary means a supernatural power that contributes to illumination and intimate action due to the divine breath that accompanies them” (I,316).

It is however necessary that the identity of the one who makes use of the communicative technologies to evangelize be well defined; and the Founder traces the **profile of the Pauline apostle** on the model of Saint Paul (III,54-62) and in his instruction about Mary Queen of the Apostles (cf IV,277-278).

Applying the same apostolic vision to the **bookseller** and to the **Pauline bookstore**, the Founder emphasizes: “The bookstore is a temple; the bookseller, a preacher; light, sanctity, joy in Jesus Christ and the Christian life are the fruits that are being sought. The bookshelf is a pulpit of truth” (IV,162).

10.2.6. Since all the Pauline editorial activity is evangelization, the Pauline apostle must give **priority to the Bible**: “The Pauline has three special motives for venerating and reading the Bible, besides the motives that are valid for all: 1) the Bible contains the message of salvation that we must give to souls, ...it is therefore the most pastoral book; 2) the Bible is the model book to which the apostle-writer must conform himself; ...3) the Society of Saint Paul, with its international mission, will have to bring the Bible, the word of God, anywhere it will arrive” (III,10).

³⁸ *Inter mirifica*, Decree on the means of social communication, Ecumenical Council Vatican II, 4 December 1963.

³⁹ It is the Apostolic Brief of Pius XII “*Quoniam omne datum*,” 12 January 1951.

“In the apostolate of the editions, proper of our Institute, the book that we must in particular disseminate is the Bible: more than all the others and before all others, and always. Now, for a wider and more organized propaganda, the International Catholic Bible Society has been promoted” (III,12).

“The commentary on the Bible has two purposes that must always be born in mind: 1) let the text be understood and interpreted according to the thought of the Church; 2) make practical the teaching of the text. Having the duty to give the Bible to all men, the commentaries will have to be proportioned and adapted to the mentality and needs of the various classes of persons who often differ in culture. In short: a Bible full of Catechism and Liturgy, a Catechism full of Bible and Liturgy; a Liturgy full of Catechism and Bible” (III,17).

10.2.7. If we put together the three instructions, *Propaganda-diffusion*, *Rational propaganda* and *The bookstores*, we can observe how the Founder already in the 1960's had understood the strategic importance of **diffusion** for the Pauline apostolate.

“Propaganda is the third part of the press apostolate, to which are ordained the first two: redaction and technique. Understand its nature, its importance and the means” (IV,85). “Propaganda represents the great problem of the apostle of the press. To it are ordained redaction and technique. It can be said as the channel through which the truths that flow from the heart of the apostle arrive to souls” (IV,87).

“The apostolate of the press without diffusion can be compared to a family without children. ...A wide propaganda is index of a truly apostolic soul, and guarantee of copious fruits” (IV,88). Also the “**Gospel days and weeks**” are a form of diffusion of Pauline preaching (cf IV, 91-97).

Without cravings for studies in publicity and marketing, but starting from his “pastoral anxiety to arrive to all,” the Primo Maestro has promoted in the Society of Saint Paul and in the Daughters of Saint Paul a threefold manner of diffusion: **the capillary, the collective and rational propaganda**.

“Rational propaganda is the study of what must be taught for the salvation and upliftment of men in general; the particular examination of the conditions and needs of the populations to whom you are sent. Prepare in redaction what is useful, necessary and suitable for such population. Before starting propaganda take exact knowledge of the nation, region, diocese, parish, association and persons to whom you are sent. Choose, bring, offer in a due manner what you have that is convenient. Use the fastest and most effective means so that the word of God may arrive to all as much as possible” (IV,140).

“To no one among the Paulines it appears strange to hear that Jesus is a Master of propaganda. You give the same message, that of salvation; you are moved by the same motive of charity; you act according to the needs of men and in a suitable way; you are supported by the example of his grace. Our apostolate is in Jesus Christ” (IV,140).

The same detailed description of the “Pauline bookstore” (cf IV,164-173) integrates “**spiritual**” values: “The centers of diffusion are sacred places like the church and the school” (IV,168), together with the necessary “**human**” preparation for their handling: “The good functioning of the centers of diffusion or bookstores requires: knowledge of the environment and of the printed products, in a way to attract the faithful” (IV,168).

10.3. Updating

10.3.1. A Christocentric spirituality interpreted by Saint Paul; a new lifestyle of consecrated life dedicated full time to sanctity with a new social mission, and a new evangelization that adopts all the languages of communication are the **three originalities** that blessed James Alberione, enlightened by the Spirit and with the official approval of the Church, has put inside the Pauline charism. He knows partially the Primo Maestro who identifies him with the pure determination to put the press and the other mass media at the service of evangelization: in this work he has not had either historical precedence or monopoly. His true originality is taken in the slow and progressive harmonization of all the elements in the Pauline charism.

Before proceeding to any updating, it is not out of place to call to mind what was the **situation** of the Society of Saint Paul in April of 1960 and compare it with the Congregation as she presents herself today, more than 50 years later. In the admirable elaboration of the Pauline charism done by Fr. Alberione, it is necessary to distinguish the physiognomy of the “**ideal charism**” and its “**realization**” that takes place in every historical era according to very different situations of persons, initiatives, patrimonies and projects.

The characteristics that constitute the “**genetic code**” of the Pauline charism are not bound to a historical period nor must they be repeated in an identical form in everything, because history, culture, the Church, communication and the Congregation itself evolves. “Creative fidelity” in fact has the task of rendering possible thinking and living the “ideal charism” in contexts that are “historically different,” keeping it young and fascinating. When the individuals and the Congregation lack this capacity, they run the risk of “traditionalism,” bound to formulas and slogans that little by little lose meaning, or of “innovation” which, losing its roots, ends up distorting the charism.

10.3.2. Let us take in consideration the principal “Pauline value” of the apostolate: it is a **new form of complete evangelization**. And yet still today, when the Pauline charism is presented in its primogenial intuition as “**written preaching alongside oral preaching**,” it is possible to arouse misunderstanding because there is one who continues to sustain that “true” evangelization becomes real only in the life of faith lived in the parish environment, and therefore communication is a simple help, an instrument, an aid. In that perspective, every activity inherent in the Pauline charism appears to be equivalent to the production of a Catholic publishing house that supplies the “religious” market with books, magazines, television, radio, musical and multimedia programs and presences in the web with Catholic contents.

Though respecting the work and the objectives of those who dedicate themselves to the production of works for the “religious market” and sharing in part its management methodology, the **will** of the Primo Maestro has not been to give birth to **another Catholic publishing house**, nor least of all, to an industrial activity with religious contents.

10.3.3. The intention of the Founder to give life to a “new form of evangelization” is based on his idea of the Pauline as “**editor**” and of the consequent “**apostolate of edition**” and, successively “**apostolate of the editions**” (in order not to indicate only the press, but also the cinema, radio, television).

The **Pauline editor** – in the thought of the Primo Maestro – is the one who, in a community apostolic project, “draws forth” his own experience of faith in the integral

Christ interpreted by Saint Paul, translates it in the various languages of communication (redaction) and, after having produced it (technique), proposes it to all (diffusion). Being editor, for the Founder, is not a “**trade**,” but a “**new form of witness**” to the Gospel, a “**new evangelization**,” both for the manner in which the Paulines make experience of it and for how they propose it to others: by means of communication.

10.3.4. On this interpretation of “editor,” Fr. Alberione elaborates the figure of the **Pauline apostle – Priest** (redaction) and **Disciple** (technique and diffusion) – as he who realizes all the stages of evangelization through the press and the other mass media. Precisely because it is not a matter of a simple editorial work but of a testimony of life, we know how unwillingly he has had to soften his idea about the **Pauline autarchy** in the personnel (only Paulines, no collaborator not consecrated) and in the contents (Pauline writers in redaction and Pauline works in the bookstores).

10.3.5. The finality of “new complete evangelization” affects also the **priority of editorial choices**. A publishing house that produces texts of Catholic faith can specialize itself in a particular sector (exegesis, catechesis, theology, etc.) or publish a bit of everything. The experience of integral faith that, on the model of Saint Paul, motivates the Pauline editorial activity, must keep watch over the **editorial lines** in order to offer, in a balanced manner and without shortages, “**dogma, morals and cult**” and “**the entire human reality in Christian perspective**.”

10.3.6. Moreover, the experience of integral faith of the apostle and of the Pauline community is proposed with **pastoral mentality**, which elaborates every editorial project starting from the needs of the **recipients**, preferably the popular masses and the educated persons who do not know Christ. A pastoral, therefore, that does not close itself in church and among the believers, but goes directly to the people through the **communication** proper of every historical epoch, which is not only “a means” or a “culture,” but – this applies especially to digital communication – “a new manner of living.”

10.3.7. At this point, after having summarized the principal ideas of the Primo Maestro on the profile of the “ideal Pauline charism,” I am pressed to underline with force the urgency of a **personal and communitarian reflection** that asks itself about how to think and live, in the present conditions of the Congregation, the **precious inheritance** presented by the Founder himself in the historical context of 1960: complete project of new evangelization; desire to share the personal and communitarian experience of faith in the integral Christ following the example of Saint Paul; the Pauline editor of Priest and Disciple; Pauline autarchy (indispensable presence of lay collaborators); editorial contents that are explicitly religious and including human values; pastoral mentality that makes plans starting from the needs of the recipients; forms and languages of communication to be adopted today.

A pause of reflection so demanding has need also of **instruments** to observe and ponder the differences that have taken place between the years 1960 and the years 2000: the innovative deepening of thought made by **Vatican II** about evangelization, the ministerial priesthood and that of the faithful, the theology of religious life, the role of the laity in the Church, the apostolic valuing of communication, the new presentation of the thought and apostolic work of **Saint Paul**, the evolution of **communication** from the times of Fr. Alberione to the explosion of present-day digital communication; the internal changes in the **Congregation** in the composition of the Pauline generations, in the organization of the apostolate, in the effective exercise of the Pauline prie-

sthood and in the profile of the disciple, in the realization of the formation of the young and in the concrete way of living common life.

11. PAULINE GOVERNMENT

11.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

11.1.1. The style of Pauline government is explained above all during the third week:

- * **I**, *The Congregation is a clerical Institute*: 156;
The residences of the Superiors: 309-310;
- * **III**, *Visits to the communities*: 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81;
Services of the General Government: 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228;
The Government of the Institute: 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250;
The General Council and the Regional Delegations: 277, 278, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286;
- * **IV**, *The Government of the Province*: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

11.1.2. It is obvious that the style of government is at the service of the life and mission. Hence entering again in this area are what have been said about the **Pauline religious vows**, the **Pauline community life** and the **Pauline apostolate** (cf *titles 7, 8, 10*). Moreover, it is to be born in mind that the text of reference of the Founder are the Constitutions approved in 1957, redacted in conformity with the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917.

11.2. Pauline values

11.2.1. The Pauline service of authority must be an **act of charity**: “The greatest principles: government is the exercise of charity. Love the Lord in representing his fatherly solicitude; as Saint Joseph did in the Holy Family of Nazareth, making the presence of the Heavenly Father felt.

Love the members of the Institute in guiding them to sanctity and in the works of the apostolate, according to the first two articles of the Constitutions.

Love the Congregation: 1) in procuring for her other sons, through the care of vocations; 2) through the uniting of forces to reach better her goals; 3) through service of all and of each one, in life, in death and after death.

Love the individuals as brothers; the word “superior” and the other “subject,” use them as little as possible and to them will be given the religious sense” (III,241).

Even the various types of “**visits**” to the communities are “encounters among Brothers” (III,76-81).

11.2.2. In explaining the **functions** of the Pauline authority according to the **method way-truth-life**, exemplified by the person of the Superior General (cf III,241-245), the Founder emphasizes that the Superior “is not for himself, but for the utility of the Society and of the members” (III,242).

So that the extraordinary course of exercises may be an **updating** also about government, being then passed in review, with reference to the Constitutions, are the functions of the General Government, of the Vicar General, of the Procurator General, of the Secretary General, of the Bursar General, of the Provincial Superior and of his Council, of the Regional Delegations and of the local Superiors.

11.3. Updating

11.3.1. The indication of the Founder to consider the community, local and circumscriptural, and the whole Congregation as a **family**, where the Superiors must be “fathers and mothers and not captains of an enterprise” (IV,216), remains valid and it is necessary to apply it with creative fidelity both to the community life and to the apostolic activity.

Our norms, above all in the management of the apostolic activities and in the organization of vocation promotion and formation, make use of the **ordinary canonical authority** (the Major Superior and his Council) and of the **delegated canonical authority** (the Director General and the Council of Apostolate, the General Coordinator of Formation and the Council of Formation).

Both are “canonical” and therefore have legitimate authority, but they are not two authorities of equal value: they have **different tasks** that must be known and respected. As a general principle, the role of ordinary canonical authority is to fix the objectives to be reached and to verify if, in the time foreseen, they have been reached; the role of the delegated canonical authority, after the fixed objectives have been transmitted to it, is to find the resources of every kind to reach them.

If it remains indisputable that we are all “brothers” in every moment of the Pauline life, it is equally true that the service of authority entrusted to a Pauline makes him “**responsible**” and it also connotes the mutual rapports. All are brothers, but with different responsibilities opposite the community, the circumscription, the constitutions of the Congregation, the laws of the Church and of civil society. The responsibility can be exemplified by saying that, when there will be something to give account about to a superior authority, not anybody will be called except the one who has had an exact mandate.

Knowing well the single competences, and therefore to read, study, meditate and put into practice all the norms of the **Congregation** (Constitutions and Directory, Service of authority in the Society of Saint Paul. Manual, *Ratio formationis*) and of the **Church** (Code of Canon Law, the instruction *The service of authority and obedience*) is an **act of creative fidelity** to the style of Pauline government willed by the Primo Maestro.

11.3.2. We get another important teaching to realize when the Founder reminds that the Superiors represent the Lord, “but they must consider that the religious Institutes are a Society, wherein are united the forces for the attainment of two goals: the sanctification of the members and the apostolate-ministry. Therefore, it is a democratic government in which the members can make their thoughts heard by means of their Councilors in matters of most importance” (III,278).

He, expressing himself through the Constitutions in force in April 1960, presents the Council of the various levels of government as the result of a “**democratic**” act because the members are coopted to that role not because of nomination, but because of election. The present norms of the Congregation confirm that direction, but I think that also other forms of “democratic participation” in governing are to be called over.

If they are thought out well and interpreted, these are an **act of important participation**: availability to respond to questionnaires or inquiries on the occasion of the General Chapter, the Provincial Chapter and the Regional Assembly; giving one’s contribution in personal talks on the occasion of canonical visits; offering one’s view to elaborate the Apostolic Project, the Formation Project and the Community Project for the Circum-

scription and for the local community where one belongs. It is a matter of opportunities to valorize in order to express one's thought and to let flow together diverse opinions on the table of the one called to make a wise discernment, choices and decisions.

11.3.3. An indirect contribution, but of sure help to the style of Pauline government, is also to interpret today, for the Congregation, what the Founder recommends in II,238: the young Priests are to be accompanied during the first years of their ministry and that in every community there be every month "a solution for a case in morals and liturgy." In the present circumstances we can recognize these indications in the commitment of the Superiors of circumscription to follow the newly-ordained priests during the **first five years** of their ministry and to provide in the formative Project of the Circumscription and in the community Project the contents and times for a **continuing formation**.

12. PARTICULAR INITIATIVES

12.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that present particular initiatives

12.1.1. *Primary Pontifical Work of Religious Vocations*: I,121, 340;
Pious Union "Prayer, Suffering and Charity for all Vocations": IV,59.

For the creation of the first (1955), which is a papal institution, "meriting a big part of it is Fr. Federico Muzzarelli," recalls Primo Maestro. The second, officially approved in 1963, is an initiative of Fr. Alberione.

12.1.2. *International theological study of the Pious Society of Saint Paul*: II,195-196, 229. Starting 1951 the Founder gathers in Rome the clerics of theology coming from the various circumscriptions; among the other **motives**: that all may have a good formation, that the means of the apostolate may be learned better, that they may be guided to redaction and that they may be imbued with a universal spirit. The initiative stops at the end of the 60's.

12.1.3. *International Catholic Bible Society (=SOBICAIN)*: III,12-16. The SOBICAIN has been approved on 14 October 1960 and art. 3 of the Statute determines the **end**: "The purpose of the Catholic Bible Society is the study, production, diffusion and meditation of the Holy Bible, especially of the Gospel, to nourish faith, morals and Christian piety."

12.1.4. *General Association of Libraries (=AGB)*: IV,61-70. Founded by Fr. Alberione in 1921; the war years 1940-1945 are the cause of a strong streamlining of the activity; in 1961 there is a relaunching through the SAIE. Art. 2 describes the **finality** of the AGB: "Its purpose: to unite isolated efforts in order to favor and promote in every environment sound literary, scientific, professional, educative, moral and religious culture."

12.1.5. *Pious association apostolate of audiovisual techniques*: IV,232-233. Officially erected in Archsodality on 13 April 1962. The first article of the Statute specifies: "...it is a religious entity that has the scope of disseminating the doctrine of the Church through the audiovisual techniques (cinema-television-radio-discs) and in particular of translating into practical reality the teachings and exhortations of the Supreme Pontiffs" on the means of social communication for evangelization.

12.1.6. *Pious work sudden deaths*: IV,25-26. Approved on 10 February 1960 by Card. Eugenio Tisserant as titular of the dioceses of Ostia, Porto and S. Rufina. “The purpose of the *Pious work sudden deaths* is to implore the Lord so that all those who pass from this life to eternity suddenly and tragically may die in the grace of God.”

12.1.7. *Gospel days and weeks*: IV,91-97. Confirming what already has been written in AD 136 and 145, Fr. Alberione recalls that these days “started almost timidly in the first years of the Institute, are now celebrated in great numbers in Italy and abroad.” In the project of the Founder, these days and weeks are forms of diffusion of the word of God for the goal of promoting unity between the Gospel and the Eucharist in Christian life.

12.1.8. *The Pauline fund*: III,54. This work of solidarity between the Circumscriptions mediated by the General Government is a decision of the first General Chapter of the Congregation in 1957. It was defined better in the Special General Chapter of 1969-71 (cf DC 835-843; *Const.* art. 207.5).

13. PAULINE WITNESSES

13.1. Instructions of the Primo Maestro that deal with the theme

13.1.1. *Canon Francesco Chiesa*, IV,7: “Can. Francesco Chiesa has been the godfather of the Pauline Family. From him has been obtained the teaching, the spirit, the guidance, the daily help of many years and under many forms.”

13.1.2. *Fr. Timothy Giaccardo*, III,228-229, 240: “The Pauline Family owes much from Maestro Timothy Giaccardo, and under every respect. He had understood the need, the conditions, the effectiveness of the press apostolate in its various forms. He had understood well the spirit of the future Congregation even before joining it.”

13.1.3. *Maggiorino Vigolungo*, III,277: “The Lord has led to the Pauline Family many beautiful, generous and very faithful souls. Among them we remember the first flower that very quickly was transplanted into heaven: Vigolungo Maggiorino. ...Above all an interior light in knowing and loving the Lord, a generous giving of self in all his duties, a great delicacy of conscience, a clear vision of the apostolate of the good press.”

13.1.4. *Brother Andrea M. Borello*: Fr. Alberione does not talk about him in UPS, probably because the cause of his beatification is not yet underway; it will be introduced in 1964. The Founder will say on that occasion: “... he merits to be glorified and proposed as an example for all those who consecrate themselves to the apostolate of the means of social communication, but in a particular way to the Brother Disciples... who are like the backbone of the Congregation and have an important part in the apostolate of the editions. ...In the light of Saint Joseph, he made it his concern to inform all his life with an intense reparatory piety, with a habitual recollection and quietness, with a serene docility in generous participation in the apostolate by means of technique and propaganda, with a constant tension toward Pauline perfection.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *San Paolo*, June 1964; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, cit., p. 441; cf also UPS IV,189-190.

Dear brothers,

in concluding this my annual letter, I desire first of all to thank the Spirit of Christ for having granted me the gift to spend, adding up the times distributed in various weeks, an entire month in the reading, meditation, assimilation and actualization of this text which remains as **an irreplaceable reference** for the history of the Society of Saint Paul and even, for what concerns her, of the entire Pauline Family.

I now entrust this letter to each of you and to every community of the Congregation. My reading of UPS does not pretend to be exhaustive; I have only wanted to show an example that I wish may be transformed into a laboratory of thought which mobilizes all, taking advantage of the collaboration of each one.

I confirm the validity of the methodology of “**creative fidelity**.” In fact, without knowing and understanding comprehensively the thought of the Founder there comes to lack the indispensable premise for an effective creativity capable of interpreting his charism in the changes of the contexts wherein also the Congregation evolves.

Calling to mind the decision to proclaim the year 20 August 2012 – 20 August 2013 as the **Year of the Constitutions**, I invite you to carry out, even as a community, a **summary reading** of the articles of our present Constitutions with the corresponding themes treated in UPS.

I share with you the desire to program, in the time that separates us from the jubilee of 2014, a **month of spiritual exercises on the Alberionian style of UPS**. By experience I believe that this a gift to be invoked from Providence, because its realization is not easy; I am sure, however, that one of the results would be that of strengthening the awareness of one’s **happy belonging** to the Congregation, capable of renewing herself and remaining young so as to **fascinate** even the new generations.

Let us invoke the Spirit of the resurrection, so that those who are perhaps resigned to run to the sepulchre with the aroma of embalment because doubtful about the future of the Pauline charism, by reading, meditating and actualizing UPS they may live the strong experience of the two disciples of Emmaus and their eyes may be opened so as to recognize that “the hand of God” that has guided the Founder (cf I,17, 374) continues to guide the Congregation.

With fraternal affection.

Rome, 20 August 2012

98th of foundation of the Society of Saint Paul



Don Silvio Sassi

Fr. Silvio Sassi, SSP
Superior General