

NEWS

Bolivia: La Paz - Workshop: *In the Footsteps of Paul* (2009-03-31)



For Paul, “Christ” and “the people” were an inseparable binomial. It was Christ who spurred the Apostle on to carry out his evangelization activities. In synthesis, this was the theme of a workshop that the FSPs of La Paz, Bolivia conducted from 7-14 March. Entitled “*In the Footsteps of Paul*,” the workshop offered its participants conferences on: *A Prayerful Reading of the Bible; Paul: From Persecutor to Persecuted; and Paul: Disciple and Missionary*. Biblical scholar Gaby Herrero and Sr.

Maria Paz Hoyos, fsp, guided the group with expertise and enthusiasm toward a knowledge of Paul aimed at helping everyone become, like the Apostle, disciples of Christ and heralds of the message of salvation. The Pauline phrases that re-echoed most frequently in those days were: “For me, life is Christ”; “Who will separate me from the love of Christ?”; and “First and foremost—love!”

In evaluating the workshop, the participants said that it had fully met their expectations: that the two days of reflection and sharing had helped them come to see the life and activities of Paul in a new light, and that the conferences also helped them discover (or rediscover) the fact that the Apostle always sought out co-workers, including many women, to help him carry out his mission (something very notable in his letters to the Philippians and Romans).

At the request of the group, our sisters are planning to organize more workshops of this type in the future, using their book center as a meeting place.

Germany: Bamberg - Woman's Day (2009-03-30)



Every year, between the last Saturday of February and the first Saturday of March, the diocese of Bamberg, Germany celebrates the feast of its patron saint, the Empress Cunegunda. The day is known as “Woman's Day in the Church of Bamberg.”

This year, in honor of the Pauline Year, the day centered on the figure of Paul, and for the first time the Daughters of St. Paul of Nuremberg were invited by the person responsible for religious women in the diocese to help organize the day's various

events: a solemn Eucharistic Celebration in the cathedral, presided over by Archbishop Ludwig Schick, an afternoon conference and a prayer service in what is known as the “Chapel of the Nails.”

The organizers met several times before the feast to plan together how to make the day not only enjoyable but also an occasion to help everyone grow in faith. The theme of the day, “*Reflecting on Our Vocation in the Light of the Vocation of the Apostle Paul*,” was based on St. Paul's recommendation in 1 Corinthians 1:26. This was also the subject of the conference delivered by Professor Barbara Hal-lensleben.

The solemn Eucharistic Liturgy gave prominence to the Offertory Procession, which opened with a “dance of light” performed by Sr. Sahaya Irudayam, fsp. Besides bread and wine, the seven letters of St. Paul were also carried to the altar. Last November, five different religious Institutes were asked to transcribe by hand five of the Apostle's letters: 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. The Letter to the Romans and the one to Philemon were transcribed by the FSPs of Nuremberg. At the end of the Eucharistic Celebration, the letters were donated to the parishes of the diocese that are under the patronage of St. Paul, while the letter to Philemon (which had been transcribed in Japanese) was given to the Archbishop in his role as representative of the Universal Church.

The Christological Hymn in the Letter to the Philippians was used in the afternoon prayer service held in the Chapel of the Nails. About 150 people participated in the service, while about 1,200 people attended Professor Hallensleben's conference.

Italy: The Miracle of Marcellino (2009-03-28)



From January-May 2009, the musical *Il Miracolo di Marcellino* (*The Miracle of Marcellino*) will be playing at Rome's Sistine Theater.

We can say that the Daughters of St. Paul will be "present" at every performance because their Audiovisual Department has published a CD of all the musical's songs.

The script of the musical is a free interpretation of the book by José Sanchez-Silva, on which the popular film *Marcellino, pane e vino* was based.

The text was revised by Paolo Galli and set to music by Riccardo Trucci under the direction of Msgr. Marco Frisina. The story line and dialogue—at once profound, moving and funny—is capable of reawakening people to human and religious values and can serve as "leaven" for many socio-educational activities such as meetings, multi-ethnic gatherings, round table discussions for adults of all faiths, and group sessions for children.

Italy: Papal Appeal Inflames Africa (2009-03-27)



On "People of God in Angola and all Africa, arise!" This cry, launched by Benedict XVI at the end of the Eucharistic Liturgy he celebrated in Luanda, best sums up the meaning of his visit to Angola and Cameroon. The Pope offered the people of Africa strong encouragement but also urged them to shape their own destiny, saying that the Catholic Church must take a front-line role in this endeavor through

its witness of love, its efforts to promote and defend human dignity, and its message of reconciliation and forgiveness. If the Pope took to Cameroon the preparatory document for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on Africa (to be held in Vatican City this October), in Angola he above all pointed an accusing finger at poor administration, social injustice, political corruption and neo-colonialism, all of which are ravaging the continent, enriching a tiny oligarchy while leaving millions of people marginalized and destitute. The Pope's words were clear and paternal and the massive crowds that flocked to hear him witnessed to the sincere affection they have for him. Here in Europe, some voices tried to reduce the papal trip to polemics concerning the use of condoms, but even here the Pope's message was unequivocal: condoms never have been and never will be an instrument for defeating AIDS. Both the statistics and common sense bear this out. What is necessary is change on the moral level. This is the frontier on which the Church is fighting today. With deeds.

(Aldo Maria Valli, Reporter on Vatican affairs for Italian news channel Tg1 and special correspondent to Angola)

Romania: Horgesti - "Together for the Sake of the Gospel" (2009-03-25)



From 26 July to 3 August 2009, the words of the Apostle Paul, "*I do everything for the sake of the Gospel,*" will vigorously ring throughout the Christian community of Horgesti, Romania. It is precisely Paul, the missionary without boundaries, who has motivated the FSPs of Bucharest, two Romanian priests (the pastor of Horgesti and a priest-journalist), the SSPs of Vicenza, Italy and several young people from both countries to combine their energies to pro-claim the Gospel in a fresh, simple and creative way to the people of Horgesti (Diocese of Iasi), located on the shores of a beautiful lake in the northern part of the country.

By the word "together," the evangelization team means that they want to work both with and for others, placing themselves at the service of the Church so as to share with the local Christian community the bread of the Word, times of prayer and manual labor, biblical animations, moments of ecumenical dialogue with brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Faith, and also moments of festivity and celebration...all so as to discover, with the Apostle Paul, *the beauty of being disciples of a single Master, children of the same Father.*

P.S. Those who would like to support this initiative through their prayers, offerings and messages can write to:

The Daughters of St. Paul of Bucharest
Fr. Domenico Soliman
Sr. Rosalba Lobresco
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Italy: Vatican City - Benedict XVI Calls for a "Priestly Year" (2009-03-23)



On 16 March, Pope Benedict XVI announced that to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars, the Church will celebrate a special "Year for Priests" from 19 June 2009 to 19 June 2010. The year, whose theme will be *Faithfulness of Christ, Faithfulness of Priests*, will promote initiatives that will "highlight the role and mission of the clergy in the Church and in modern society." During this Jubilee Year, a directory for confessors and spiritual directors will be published, along with a booklet entitled, *Adoration, Reparation and Spiritual Maternity for Priests*. The purpose of the latter text is the promotion of Eucharistic adoration in reparation and for the sanctification of the clergy. The Vatican has asked the Daughters of St. Paul to collaborate in the dissemination of this booklet throughout the world. In keeping with this, our International Secretariat for the Apostolate (SIA) is coordinating the printing of the document by the FSPs in 14 different countries and is trying to recruit the help of various Catholic institutions to print the document in areas where we are not present.

Madagascar: Antananarive - Moving Toward Civil War? (2009-03-19)



In the face of Madagascar's worsening political crisis, the country's President, Marc Ravalomanana has resigned, handing his power over to the military, which supports opposition leader Andry Rajoelina. In fact, the traditionally-neutral army has helped Rajoelina take control of the city. The country, which has fallen prey to anarchy, chaos and violence, is in a very serious situation.

The Daughters of St. Paul who live and work in Madagascar write: "The crisis goes on and on...and things are getting worse. Our book center is located in the main square of the city, where all the demonstrations and protests take place. When things are calm, we open the center for a few hours each day but not many people come in. Most of them are afraid to leave their homes and—apart from that—the economic slump is getting worse. For the moment, no hope can be seen for a resolution to the country's political crisis because both parties are very stubborn. Both sides continue to reassure the people that all will be well, but...civil war is looming on the horizon. The other night, an attempt was made to set fire to the Archbishop's residence. In many parishes, the faithful take turns keeping vigil throughout the night to protect the churches. Let us pray that common sense prevails!"

Congo R. D.: Kisangani - Nine New Pauline Cooperators (2009-03-18)



During a solemn Eucharistic Celebration on 15 February in a parish dedicated to *Blessed Anuarite*, a Congolese martyr, Céline Umiya, Donat Mwamba, Honorine Ntahobavuka, Julienne Lisongi, Léonard Amuri, Louis Uryema, Norbert Bolangi, Paul Marcel Bolakonga and Jean Lambert Wetsi (who has been collaborating with the Daughters of St. Paul since 1990), made their *Promises* as Pauline Cooperators. For the nine, it was the culmination of a three-year journey of intensive biblical and charismatic formation. The Pauline Cooperators Association is an international ecclesial Association for the laity founded by Blessed James Alberione.

The purpose of the Association is to proclaim Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life with the instruments of social communication in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.

During the induction rite, each new member received a copy of the Bible, the Statute of the Association and a membership card. A Pauline Cooperator from the Kinshasa diocese attended the ceremony as a delegate.

At the end of the Liturgy, the new Cooperators sang the Association's hymn with great fervor and then thanked the Daughters of St. Paul and the local priests who had accompanied their formation journey.

DATA BANK

Section Pauline Mission – Apostolate: *The Debt of the Gospel, The meaning of apostolic passion*

“We are debtors to the Gospel for all”

Our Founder borrowed this phrase from St. Paul (Cf. Rm 1,14) and made it his own as a program of life, repeating it many times when he spoke to his sons and daughters. I heard him use it for the first time while I was still very young, at Alba. Although I did not totally understand, it was etched on my child's mind because he used it with such intensity during a spiritual retreat.

With the commitment and enthusiasm so characteristic of those foundational years during which I was discovering the Pauline vocation, I pondered on this phrase for a long time. I wanted to understand in the fullness with which it was preached, what our Founder was passing on to us. Certainly I reflected on it in prayer, but this came later, when I better understood the Gospel as the generous gift of the Lord that it is and as a gift, one meant for all peoples. I began to intuit that with this expression the Founder wanted to ignite within us an apostolic passion that knew no borders.

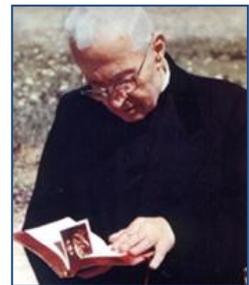
I participated wholeheartedly, and often with emotion, in the development of our great Family, its spread throughout the world, the new apostolic initiatives, the departures of our missionaries for distant lands. I watched this with great admiration and began to understand that in some way our "debt to the Gospel" was being paid and in all of us, as if by spread a healthy contagion, apostolic and missionary passion was growing.

Our Founder's dream, narrated at the beginning of *Abundantes Divitiae*, that compared the little Pauline Family to "a flowing stream, swollen by the rains, the spring thaws, and the many rivulets that joined it", was gradually coming true.

“Come to me all of you”

whom we venerate today as Blessed, during the "night of light" that brought in the new century felt with extraordinary power the vocation to the apostolate.

"A particular light shone from the holy Host, a greater understanding of the invitation of Jesus: Come to me all of you (Mt. 11:28); he seemed to understand the heart of the great Pope, the calls of the Church, the true mission of the priest. What Toniolo had said about the duty of being Apostles of today and taking up the means already used by the enemy seemed so clear to him. He felt a deep obligation to prepare himself to do something for the Lord and the people of the new century with whom he would live. He was sufficiently aware of his own nothingness, but at the same time he heard the words: I am with you all days, until the consummation of the world (Mt. 28:20)...".



Fr. James Alberione

The spiritual and apostolic fruitfulness of Father Alberione was founded on his generous response to this call. His universal vision for an apostolate without borders was already his when he began to hear the voice of God revealing itself in many different ways, and, as he himself affirmed, he began preparations to carry out what God would make him understand as time went on.

His feeling of being "obliged to do something" is the source of his sense of indebtedness to bring the Gospel to all and his commitment to seek many collaborators who would work with him to repay this debt. Thus, in humility and extraordinary simplicity, joined to a great ability to envision the future, the work was born; he would find in the Apostle Paul an ideal model to propose to the Pauline Family.

Our Founder felt that he had been assailed with an enormous mission: to assist all peoples to discover the presence of God in all things, so that they could make their way to Him. His vision of the world, of the peoples of every continent, impelled him to ask himself: "Where is this humanity going?", and to go on without stopping to look back at what was achieved, but straining forward with courage and apostolic creativity to meet those peoples who awaited the message.

This spiritual dynamism and apostolic passion gave him no rest and forced him to bring forth abundant energies and to produce powerful media from the air, as it were. He transmitted to those who followed him the impetus to go towards even the most distant lands, without any other baggage than their faith and the compelling need to share it with all those they met. He found an army of followers, women and men, intrepid, generous, above all full of faith. Like Abraham they went where God sent them, not knowing what they would encounter, but trusting in God. They left without purse and without baggage, carrying only a few small things, often without even an address to look up on their arrival. But they entrusted themselves completely to the God who cared for every sparrow and the lilies of the field. They went without knowledge of the language of the people of the place, but with a firm will to learn it quickly in order to begin their mission and bring to these people the message of the Gospel.

They did not hold back on sacrifices, so results were not long in coming, and the Pauline Family flourished in hundreds of countries. But this was not enough. Father Alberione taught them not to pause to calculate what they accomplished, but to see what remained to be done, the peoples that still were waiting for the announcement of Christ the Savior.

Paul the Apostle model and father

An apostolic and missionary passion that knew no impediments or borders could not but burst forth in an unlimited trust in God who had called him and with whom he had forged a binding covenant.

At the center of our story of salvation is the reality of the covenant. The terms of our Pact are the project of God for us, and ask unconditional adherence on our part. As it was for Abraham and Paul, so it was for Alberione. He set down with God, for himself and for all of us, the agreement that rested on our efforts to multiply our commitment to adhere to Christ our Master, recognized as the "highest and only Good"; we admitted our own weakness, and we entrusted ourselves fully to Him who said "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, you will receive". As a response to God, we took on the solemn commitment to "seek in all things only and always God's glory" and in exchange we asked that the gifts of his mercy and the fruits of our spiritual work, our study, our apostolate, our poverty, and our efforts to give all to the mission following the example of St. Paul would be multiplied.

The conviction that Father Alberione had of his inadequacy to fulfill what was asked of him by God, led him to formulate this Pact and to affirm strongly the paternity of Saint Paul for the Congregation: "From him it was born, by him it has been nourished and grown, from him it has taken the spirit ..." (AD 2). He felt profoundly the gravity of the mission entrusted to him, recognizing his unworthiness, but also affirming: "This is above all for me and for us all a guarantee that the Lord has willed it (Congregation) and has made it his own..."(AD 350). His self awareness allowed him to open himself to the Absolute in a completely radical way. It was the same experience that Paul had:"It is when I am weak that I am also strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

The Pact of our covenant with God would grow, carrying us towards fulfillment of God's design of love at the time chosen by him during the unfolding of history.

An understanding of the experience that Father Alberione had of himself and of people allowed him to face the facts of history with freedom. He welcomed all peoples because he had experienced all in God. To welcome all peoples for him meant also that he would go out towards all. We can say that, like Paul, he had a perception of the entire universe: All must be useful to people in ordering all towards Christ, towards God, because "everything is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1Cor. 3:22-23) (AD 186).

It was with this store of experience that he entered into all aspects of the life of his times, and he entered as a major player. For Alberione all the sciences, inventions, and discoveries were chapters of the great book of creation; all make us understand more deeply the creative work of God and all must be used by people to go to God. He felt himself to loaded down with an enormous mission: to help people, all people to discover the presence of God in all things so that they could make their way to Him. His entire existence had no other goal than to widen the horizons of the mission and call others, many others, to live his life and the apostolic mission with his same passion. To St. Paul he continued to attribute the paternity of his works. He would say: the Pauline Family was instituted by St. Paul to continue his mission ~ to be one living Saint Paul made up today of many members. We did not choose Paul: it was he who chose us and called each one of us. He wants us to do what he would if he were in our places today.

A refound apostolic passion

The call of the Founder continues to echo in our hearts, and moves us to revive our faith in the vocation we have received, and to find always new ways to express the apostolic passion that will give meaning to our fundamental option for Christ and for the world with whom we want to share the gift of the Gospel. What is the vocation, if not entrusting ourselves to God who has burst into our lives? He calls us to collaborate, so that the course of history may be changed, and people will recognize the fatherhood of God and his plan of salvation. This request made to each of us, who are vessels of a special charism that makes us debtors of the Gospel to all, is a radical one. It asks us, not just for one day, but constantly, to know how to leave all behind, entrusting ourselves to his promise.



Sudan. Nuova Fondazione 2008

To leave a present in which we are perhaps well settled for a future that we can only glimpse. To ac-

cept change, the new things that come from God, may sometimes bring us to pull up the roots of our existence, to perhaps leave our home land, its culture, our dear ones, our habits, a work to which we have dedicated an important part of our life, to go to distant shores, with an open heart, a heart always young.

Youth is not a period of our life. One can be 70 or 80 years old while preserving a youthful spirit, with the elan of faith, the strength of will, the quality of imagination, and the victory that courage wins. We can always marvel and wonder, we can still put our life on the line in order to follow a great ideal like our mission with faith, hope, and openness to all that is beautiful, good, and leads us to God.

Abraham, like Paul and Alberione believed and set out, walking with this availability of soul. They show us the goal to which the Plan of God will lead us. Theirs was a dynamic faith, one that did not stand there waiting, but got moving to help bring about the fulfillment of the promise. Their active and tireless faith offered to God a concrete way to carry out his plan of love; it made their every work a ceaseless liturgy that glorified God always more and created communion. "Get up, do not fear; go!" The Lord repeats this to his disciples of every age. Let us take heart and accept this call with faith and in hope, to bring forth the truth in love, in the plan of God for our lives. He will send us to announce Him.

In unconditional trust in the Word of God and the vocation we have received, we will discover the secret of a refound or renewed apostolic passion, a missionary impetus that makes our own the dedication, spirit of sacrifice, and zeal of those who have gone before us. It brings forth in us the freshness of those who are open to grasp every opportunity offered by our times, so that the Word, with our small contribution, will run the pathways of the world and fly on the wings of the wind, reaching believers and nonbelievers, transforming their lives, making known the love of the Father who calls all people to become his children.

Sr M. Agnes Quaglino, fsp

Best wishes from the Paoline *Online* editorial team

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