



Rome, 30 June 2014  
Feast of St. Paul the Apostle

To All the Sisters

Dearest Sisters,

In this year that marks the Centenary of the Pauline Family, the Feast of St. Paul takes on special meaning because it reminds us of our true origins:

*"When the time came to begin the Institute, there were those who suggested one saint or another as a protector, but when it was announced that St. Paul would be our protector, there was a unanimous explosion of joy. Our horizons had expanded and everyone was very happy. From that day on, the name of St. Paul has spread everywhere thanks to your propagation of it in various regions. You have taken St. Paul to many places by means of a long and unique 'procession,' and you have placed him on a pedestal in your hearts"* (Fr. Alberione to the Daughters of St. Paul, 30 June 1961).

These are powerful words: if we welcome them with a sense of awe, they can trigger in us an effective desire to get to know our Father better so as to let ourselves be enveloped by the same grace that "seized him, dazzled him and inflamed him," as he put it so vividly.

*"The love of Christ, the love of the One who died for everyone, overwhelms us and urges us on..."* (cf. 2 Co. 5:14). Love was the mysterious inner force that compelled Paul to evangelize; a force that he couldn't and wouldn't avoid: *"Preaching the Gospel gives me nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion and I should be in trouble if I failed to do it"* (1 Co. 9:16).

Passion for Christ consumed him to the point that whenever he spoke of or thought about Christ, his heart was inflamed, his mind was enlightened and the pen in his hand sang.

In 1935, Fr. Alberione asked the Daughters of St. Paul:

*"Is our love for Jesus so strong that it urges us to do what he desires, to go where he wants us to go, and to say what is pleasing to him? Does it make us yearn for him alone? St. Paul reached this point and thus he could say in all truth: 'The love of Christ urges us on.' Love for Jesus urges us on in propaganda, in church, in study, in the apostolate.... We are carried in the arms of God: in him we live and move and have our being!"*

In this time, so packed with events, let us grow in the awareness that our life—like that of St. Paul—unfolds in a powerful current of grace. We too are poor clay vessels that hold the treasure of the Gospel. We too are urged on by a great love; we too have been conquered by the mysterious power of the Spirit, who guides us and sends us out to witness to and proclaim the Word of salvation to everyone. The fatigue and weakness that we often experience help to underscore the precious quality of the gift we have received: everything is the work of God, who prefers to use the most fragile instruments to accomplish his greatest deeds.

May St. Paul obtain for us the grace to fall in love with Christ. May the Apostle immerse us in his own spiritual experience and help us rediscover the root of our deepest identity.

In this climate of praise, we entrust to him our 15 novices in Nairobi, Kinshasa, Antananrive, Lipa, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires who are making their first vows, and also our 4 Juniors in Brazil who are preparing to celebrate their perpetual professions in the coming weeks. Warmest best wishes to these young sisters! Let us accompany them with our prayers, asking the Lord that they might grow in their vocation and live it creatively, enthusiastically and joyfully.

Sincere best wishes also to the sisters who on the Feast of St. Paul are celebrating their 25th, 50th or other anniversaries of profession. May their lives continue to be an irradiation of light, a witness to the faithful love of God, a fragrant perfume that continually rises to the Father for the salvation of many people.

An affectionate hug to all of you.

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General