

**"TO COMMUNICATE THE FAMILY"  
...AND THE PAULINE FAMILY**



The family is at the center of ecclesial reflection and at the center of the Pope's Message for World Communications Day 2015. How can we fail to remember the meaning our family of origin has for all of us, as well as the religious Family in which

the Lord has placed us? Paraphrasing the words of Pope Francis, we could say that our Pauline Family too is a place "where we learn to live with others despite our differences" (EG 66); a place where we come to understand the significance of communicating "with people who did not choose one another yet are so important to each other."

In a family, the Pope writes, we come to understand what communication truly is: the discovery and building of close bonds with one another. The family, he says, is the privileged environment in which we offer one another gratuitous love. It is the first place in which we learn to communicate with one another and forgive one another, and thus it helps us become experts in dialogue and reconciliation. "The perfect family does not exist," the Holy Father says. "But we should not be fearful of imperfections, weakness or even conflict. Instead, we should learn how to deal with them constructively."

All these statements prompt us to hone our ability to live in a spirit of forgiveness, encounter, gratuitousness and wonder—qualities that should characterize our living together in community and also our living together as the Pauline Family.

In these last decades, our awareness of being a Family has grown steadily through initiatives that have as-



sumed an institutional dimension: the annual meeting of our General Governments and periodic meetings of our Superiors General; collaboration among our various Institutes in the areas of formation and the apostolate; the formation course on the charism of the Pauline Family; various congresses and encounters; the spirit of solidarity that is manifested whenever one or another of our Institutes is in need.... Nevertheless we still have a long way to go when it comes to implementing the Founder's repeated invitation to *think, program and work from the perspective of a Family* so as to respond to the challenges of evangelization.

During this Centenary Year, let us allow ourselves to be urged on and questioned by the words of Blessed James Alberione, who in 1963 said regretfully: "We still do not understand the Pauline Family in its globality, nor in its individual parts, nor its mission in the world. It is God who wanted it...."

From the perspective of the ecclesiology of communion, we are called to understand the meaning of our Family's unity in diversity and in the specific features of each Institute so as to come to an always deeper realization that each new Institute founded by Fr. Alberione came into being "so as to complete the Pauline Family."

May the Holy Spirit help us treasure the grace of belonging to this "admirable Family"—a many-faceted and universal Family that extends across the earth. And may he enable us to respond *all together* to the challenges involved in evangelizing the contemporary world, which has truly become our "parish."

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