



Rome, 5 March 2014  
Ash Wednesday

### To All the Sisters

Dearest Sisters,


In this year in which we are celebrating the Centenary of the Pauline Family, we are now beginning our Lenten journey—a time that will be characterized by more intense listening to the Word, contemplation of the “style of God” (which is revealed in weakness and poverty), and a rediscovery of *Baptism*. In fact, the Gospel readings for Year A were used from earliest Christianity to express the stages of Christian initiation and the significance of Baptism as *water* gushing forth for eternal life (the Samaritan woman), *light* (the man born blind), and *new life* (the resurrection of Lazarus). We will be contemplating Jesus, tempted and transfigured, who called himself the living water, the light of the world, the resurrection and the life. And we will be invited to immerse ourselves in his death in resurrection; to strip ourselves of self so as to be clothed in him. The Lenten itinerary offers us a precious opportunity to allow ourselves to be touched, **to allow the Word to dwell within us**, so that it will generate in us a Pauline mentality, relationships that are more evangelical, and a proclamation that is bold and prophetic (cf. *Chapter Document, First Guideline*).

The Word is one of the “abundant riches” poured out by the Lord on the Pauline Family. As Fr. Alberione says: “There was a time when he received further enlightenment about a great treasure that the Lord willed to grant to the Pauline Family: the distribution of the Gospel” (AD 136). The Founder wanted the sacred text displayed everywhere. He wanted school lessons to always begin with the reading of a Gospel text. And he confided: “The Gospel that he carried on his person for 32 years was a truly effective prayer” (AD 145). He made the following resolution for 1936-37: “A scriptural mentality in Christ, according to the teachings of St. Paul. The Pauline Letters. Scriptural prayer in Christ in the redemptive Pauline spirit so as to allow Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, to live, think, speak and love in me.”

For us, meditation and the Eucharistic Visit are significant moments for assimilating the Word and adopting a scriptural mentality: “During the hour of adoration the soul enters into communication with God so as to develop, assimilate and apply what it has learned” (AD 146). Pope Francis underscores the importance of assimilating the Word, urging everyone to take time to study it with great care, patience, interest, gratuitous dedication and above all love, so as to practice a true “reverence for the truth” (EG 146). The Pope goes on to say that preachers “ought first of all to develop a great personal familiarity with the Word of God...approaching it with a docile and prayerful heart so that it may deeply penetrate their thoughts and feelings and bring about a new outlook in them.... Those who want to preach must be the first to let the Word of God move them deeply and become incarnate in their daily lives.... We need to let ourselves be penetrated by that Word, which is destined to also penetrate others. In this way preaching will consist in the intense and fruitful activity of communicating to others what one has contemplated” (cf. EG 149, 150).

Let us ask the Spirit to touch and move us so that, inhabited by the Word, we can share the “hour” of Jesus—his “hour” of darkness, abandonment and solitude, but also the hour of love, friendship and spousal intimacy. In this way, we will share the Master’s self-offering up to the fullness of love and pour out our life at his feet, like Mary of Bethany, in an act of profound adoration, becoming “two persons with one life,” as our Founder loved to say. Let us ask for one another the faith of Mary, Our Lady of Holy Saturday: a humble and vibrant faith that enables us to surrender ourselves into the hands of the Father; a faith that hopes against all evidence to the contrary and in the dark night awaits the dawn of Easter.

Affectionately,

  
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan  
Superior General