



Rome, 5 February 2016

*Memorial of Maestra Thecla's birth to heaven
Conclusion of the Centenary Year*

ENTRUSTED WITH A PROMISE WE DREAM TOGETHER ABOUT THE FUTURE

*The Lord has given us the great grace
of a vocation—the Pauline vocation!*

And we have his promise that he is with us....

In our church are the words: "Do not be afraid. I am with you."

If the Lord is with us, then what do we have to fear?

Our vocation is so beautiful, so great!

(M. Thecla, CSAS 67)

Dearest Sisters,

Let us praise and thank the Lord for the year of grace that is ending—a year during which we contemplated and celebrated the gift of our Pauline vocation.

The “creativity of charity” was at work everywhere, making it impossible to list here the apostolic dynamism generated in each circumscription: the ingenuity with which we celebrated the grace of our vocation through congresses, performances, concerts, DVDs, CDs, book and magazines, radio and TV programs, the Internet and social networks....

United to one another, we thanked the Father for the “overflowing riches” he poured out on us and we rejoiced at the recognition we received from the Church, from its shepherds and from society for the immense good diffused throughout our history.

Everywhere, our Centenary afforded us the chance to raise a hymn of praise to God and, above all, to come to a fresh awareness of our call and ask ourselves how we are responding to it, so as to reaffirm **who we are** and above all **to Whom we belong**.

Like yesterday...so also today

Yesterday’s poverty was the “place” in which the Lord did great things for us. Consequently, we are sure that the poverty we are experiencing today can also be the “place” in which God reveals his omnipotence because “when we are weak, then we are strong” (cf. 2 Co. 12:7-10). The experience of our “weakness, ignorance and ineptitude” is the guarantee that we can do all things in the One who is our strength.

Sr. Giovannina Boffa, an FSP of the “first hour,” wrote:

We saw divine Providence at work in the twists and turns of our history, which was not lacking in defects, shortcomings and errors, but at the same time was an admirable [story]. We experienced God’s love, fidelity, splendor and mercy. And we grasped the signs of his preferential choice...of the small, of the poor, of those who, despite their many limitations, trusted in his power and generosity. We know that it is he alone who calls.... It is he who fructifies for the kingdom the seed of the Word that is scattered with a sincere heart in the soil of humanity. It is he who rewards....The trust of the Daughters of St. Paul of every era is based on this certitude.

The future is in the hands of the Father and we move ahead, trusting in his promise: “*Do not be afraid. I am with you.*” *From here—from your communities, from you yourselves, from your apostolic centers—I want to cast a radiant light....*

Dreaming together...

Perhaps in the course of this year we paused many times to dream....

What are my dreams for *my* Congregation? What are my community’s dreams for the Congregation?

What is the Father’s dream for all of us? In one of his homilies in the chapel of the Santa Marta Guest House, Pope Francis said: “God is in love with us and he has loving dreams for us.”

We want to discern *together* the new paths that the Spirit is opening today for the Church and thus for our Congregation. The Holy Spirit is at work in each one of us, therefore each of us is able to discern his paths. The Pope said that “a synodal Church is a Church of listening, keeping in mind that listening is more than simply hearing. It is a mutual attentiveness in which each person has something to learn.”

Feeling that we are *antennas* “attuned” to the seeds of innovation raised up by the Spirit, let us ask ourselves the question that set the pace of our journey: *Where does the Lord want to lead us today?* What does he want from our Congregation at this moment in history?

It would be a great gift to me to know your feelings in this regard: your worries, joys, hopes.... Together we can understand the appeals of the times, which are the same as the appeals of the Spirit.

If you like, you can send me your feedback (either personal or communitarian) by filling in the blanks below. I would be very happy to receive your reflections, which could be used to advantage in our upcoming Interchapter Meeting.

What is *the Father’s dream* for us today?

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What is *our dream* for the Pauline life?

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Thank you for this gift.

As we begin a new Centenary and prepare to celebrate our Interchapter Meeting in September, we want to nourish in our hearts the same hopes and availability to the Spirit that filled our first sisters. Like Fr. Alberione and Maestra Thecla, we want to be able to listen to the heart of God, the heart of the Church and the heart of humanity so as to become those *new apostles* who are open each day to hope and who, like Paul, delight in dreaming up new paths that will allow the Word to race ahead and spread everywhere.

With warmest best wishes and profound affection,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General