

Rome, 10 January 2016

FINAL MESSAGE

XXXIII MEETING OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

EVANGELII GAUDIUM INTERPELLATES THE PAULINE FAMILY **Fraternal Life**

Ariccia (Rome), Italy, Divine Master Retreat House, 7-10 January 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is with joy that we write to you at the end of the Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family—an important annual event that gives us the chance to reflect together and exchange ideas on subjects linked to the mission of this *admirable organism* of which we are living members, in the humility of the truth and in the search for the good that unites us to one another. Urged on by Fr. Valdir José De Castro, Superior General of the Society of St. Paul, it is precisely in this “family spirit” that we began our meeting with a moment of silent prayer in memory of Fr. Silvio Sassi.

Reminding us of the long, communal journey of the governments of the PF, Fr. Valdir called particular attention to the three years of preparation (2011-2013) for the Centenary of foundation of the SSP and of the whole Pauline Family and to the proposal to dedicate the 2014-2016 triennium to *communications in the digital age*. This initiative was suspended in 2015 due to the premature death of Fr. Silvio and the celebration of the SSP General Chapter.

The publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 2014), which centers on the renewal of the Church in her organic unity, prompted us to change direction and get involved in the pressing invitation of this programmatic document of Pope Francis so as to avoid the risk of “looking at things from *our own* windows,” and instead, in the light of the Gospel, to journey together with every component of the ecclesial community.

But *how should Evangelii Gaudium and its pleas be read?* We received some helpful insights into this question from Fr. Lorenzo Prezzi, a Dehonian priest and the director of the periodical *Testimoni*. According to Fr. Prezzi, rather than speaking about a crisis in the consecrated life, we should be speaking today about commitment to witnessing to the faith, which involves every baptized person. The Pope hopes that every consecrated person will carry out a primary role in the renewal of the Church and in the work of evangelization. But to boldly respond to modern-day challenges requires us to place the Word and fraternal communion at the center of our life and mission to an ever-increasing degree because they are indispensable conditions for proclaiming the Gospel.

Our second guest speaker, Professor Michelina Tenace from the Aletti Center, spoke passionately and straightforwardly about *fraternal life according to Evangelii Gaudium*. Pope Francis, she declared, urges all consecrated persons to rediscover the *mysticism of living together*. She then went on to say that this is possible only if we live the *mysticism of rebirth from on high* because consecrated men and women must help everyone “see” the Father and must witness to Trinitarian communion: “Their mission is not so much to do good as it is to become perfect in mercy and love,

like the Father: perfect in communion. Only as children and brothers and sisters do we reveal the true nature of the one and triune God.”

These incentives helped us identify several challenges that *Evangelii Gaudium* offers to our life as Institutes of the Pauline Family, all of which can be reduced in one way or another to witnessing in a visible manner to faith and communion, to mission as a creative expression of the overflowing abundance of the Spirit, to a change of mentality and to the courage to abandon routine....

Our comparison of ideas on the small group level was an effective premise to the penitential service that we celebrated on Friday, 8 January. During this time of prayer we voiced a number of communally-composed requests for forgiveness, invoking the mercy of the Lord on all the elements that still make our journey as a Family difficult and pose obstacles to our mission.

The serene and fraternal climate that characterized the first two days of our meeting intensified during a time of sharing in which the representatives of each Congregation informed the group about the initiatives each Institute has carried out or foresees implementing in the future. We “navigated” the Pauline world, allowing all these activities and new projects to fill us with enthusiasm, sharing one another’s problems and hopes.

In the days we spent together, we also received updates concerning the *Charism Course of the Pauline Family*, the situation of the canonical processes of our “saints,” and the updating of the www.alberione.org website and of the websites of our individual Congregations. Special attention was focused on the Centenary of the Pauline Cooperators (30 June 2017–30 June 2018). In this regard, a commission will be set up to offer proposals to the General Governments as to how to celebrate this significant event on an international level. Attention was also given to the *Statute and Directories of the Pauline Cooperators*—“ad experimentum” texts that were extended by the Superiors General for another 3-year period (that is, up to 25 January 2018).

Our meaningful time together at Ariccia was brought to completion on Sunday, 10 January, when all the participants returned to Rome to go through the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. Paul and pray at the tomb of the Apostle Paul, to whom we presented every sister and brother of the Pauline Family throughout the world, all our collaborators in the apostolate, as well as all our labors and yearnings. After a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Fr. Valdir in the subcrypt of the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary, we ended our Meeting with dinner at the Generalate of the Daughters of St. Paul, who are preparing to conclude their Centenary of foundation (5 February 2016).

Dear sisters and brothers, during these days of shared fraternity and communion, we felt the presence of each of our communities, each person entrusted to our care, and each expression of our variegated mission. We leave one another and we leave all of you with the best wishes and prayer that during this Jubilee Year we will all experience the mercy of God on a very profound level and pass it on to others.

Affectionately in Christ our Master and Shepherd,

**THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE
XXXIII MEETING OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE PAULINE FAMILY**