

NEWS

Italy: Vatican City: New Prospects for Communications in the Church (2009-03-12)



Focus The Pontifical Council for Social Communications has announced that it will soon be releasing a document on the new challenges to communications. In an article printed in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the President of the Council, Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, reminded everyone that *Aetatis Novae* was written 17 years ago and, given the gigantic steps the world of communications has taken in that period, a new document is necessary—one that, “in the footsteps of *Inter Mirifica*, *Communio et Progressio* and *Aetatis Novae* itself, will introduce the communications of the Church into the world of digital technology.”

The journey toward realizing this document is a complex one, made up of different stages. The first of these initiated on 9 March, when the persons in charge of social communications in the Episcopal Conferences throughout the world gathered at the headquarters of the Pontifical Council in Vatican City to participate in a 5-day seminar entitled, “*New Prospects for Communication in the Church*.” “It is the first seminar of its kind,” Archbishop Celli said. “The Holy See invited those responsible for social communications in the world’s Episcopal Conferences to gather together and work together to help the bishops acquire a deeper knowledge of the media by becoming aware of problems of an anthropological, human and cultural nature that are emerging with the use of the new technologies.”

The recommendations that emerge from the seminar (which closes on 13 March) will be studied during the plenary assembly of bishops in October and will be taken into consideration when drawing up the new document, which the Archbishop said he hoped would be released by the end of this year. The hope has been expressed that a Synod of Bishops will be held on the theme of communications. “It’s a good idea,” Archbishop Celli commented. “We’ll see....”

<http://uk.youtube.com/vatican>

Brazil: Viçosa - A Vocation “Tent” for Discovering the Gift of God (2009-03-11)



From 21-24 February 2009, about 5,000 adults, teens and children gathered in Viçosa (Archdiocese of Mariana), for the 21st vocation encounter organized by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. The theme of the encounter was: *God showed me immense grace and mercy* (cf. 1 Tm. 1:13-14).

The Vocation Animation Service of Viçosa, in collaboration with the organization team, prepared a “vocation tent” in which different religious Congregations had the chance to share the wealth of their charisms with everyone, above all with the young people participating in the event. Many meetings and conversations took place in this tent, sowing abundant seeds in the hope that these young people will open their hearts to welcome God’s proposals to them.

The Daughters of St. Paul of Belo Horizonte participated in the event, carrying out an intensive itinerary of vocation animation.

Italy: Rome - A Fairy Tale About Abuse (2009-03-06)



On When people suffer abuse, they often keep silent about the experience out of shame or fear. And the most frequent victims of abuse today are children. Because of this, the Children’s Movement in Rome, Italy has organized a public meeting to discuss the subject on 7 March 2009.

One of the key elements of the meeting will be a narration of the fairy tale *Il vento della verità* (“*The Wind of Truth*”), written by Valentina Rizzi and published as a CD by the FSP Audiovisual Department of Rome. The suggestion has already been made to turn the fairy tale into a play and perform it at schools so as to teach children how to defend themselves from those seeking to profit from their innocence.

The tale recounts the story of Rosina, a rosebud who is dirtied by Cocco Secretillo, an evil crocodile who is a master at creating trouble and confusing people. Rosina withdraws into a shell of silence after her ugly encounter with the crocodile and it is only thanks to the voice of Mother Nature that she finds the interior courage to publicly accuse him of what he did to her.

The purpose of the story is to help children develop self-confidence and find the strength to break the chains of fear, shame, guilt and distrust forged by abuse, because it is precisely these feelings that prevent the victims of violence from rebelling against their situations. According to the fairy tale, it is the “wind of the truth” that can transform suffering into a positive resource.

Romania: Bucharest - Ecumenical Meeting on Scripture in the Life of St. Paul (2009-03-05)



On 23 February 2009, the FSPs of Bucharest opened the doors of their book center to welcome the public to their Second Biblical-Ecumenical Meeting—part of an itinerary organized to celebrate the Pauline Year.

This second stage of their journey was guided by Fr. Tarcizio Serban, a Roman Catholic biblical scholar from the Bucharest Archdiocese, who competently discussed the theme: “*Whatever was written in former days, was written for our instruction*” (Rm.

15:4): *The Role of Scripture in the Life of the Apostle Paul*.

The conference was enriched by the viewing of a segment of the documentary *Paul: From Tarsus to the World*, a DVD produced by the FSPs of Rome, Italy. Entitled, “In the School of Gamaliel,” the film segment helped the participants enter the fascinating world of Paul so as to reflect more deeply on his relationship with the Scriptures.

The enthusiastic participation of the Catholic laity, as well as members of the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches, helped everyone in the group rediscover how beautiful it is to gather around the Word of God in a spirit of unity and communion.

The occasion was further enhanced by the discreet and authoritative presence of the Metropolitan of Bucharest, His Excellency Ioan Robu, who has ceaselessly encouraged the Daughters of St. Paul to explore new paths to help unite the different Christian denominations present in his Archdiocese.

Those who would like to follow these encounters via the Internet can visit the Archdiocese’s website www.arcb.ro, and those who would like to watch a video clip of this second meeting can click on <http://www.arcb.ro/actualitate/arhiva/februarie2009/stiri18.html>.

Colombia: Bogota - Meeting for FSP Department Heads in Latin America (2009-03-04)



“To study, reflect and analyze things in the light of the latest documents of the Church, our apostolic activities and their rapport with the cultures of our territory, so as to determine new ways to effectively unify our apostolic action and thus respond to the challenges of today.” This was the theme proposed to the FSPs who participated in a meeting held in Bogota, Colombia from 17-20 February 2009. Coordinated by SAL’s

executive committee, the encounter was for representatives from the various apostolic departments of all our Latin American circumscriptions: Argentina-Paraguay-Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia-Ecuador, Chile, Peru-Bolivia, Mexico and Venezuela-Puerto Rico-Dominican Republic.

Convinced of the importance of continuity in reorganizing the apostolate so as to integrate and make the most of our human, structural and economic resources, our sisters reflected on the spirituality of communications within institutions and businesses under the guidance of Sr. Luz Marina Plata, fsp.

Our Institute has returned to this theme repeatedly over the last few years, in the conviction that leadership should not be wielded as a power but rather as a service that makes every business activity more human and dynamic.

Several experts from the business field offered the participants concrete input for drawing up several innovative proposals that must now be compared and integrated with the working guidelines launched by SAL.

In carrying out their work, our sisters turned to Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, for inspiration regarding the apostolic future of the vast and challenging continent on which they live and work.

Italy: Palermo - Presentation of the Book, “Chiara Lubich: Her Heritage” (2009-03-03)



The “peaceful revolution” launched by Chiara Lubich, foundress of the Focolari Movement, reached millions of people in the 20th century: lay persons, consecrated men and women, married couples, Christians and non-Christians, bishops, politicians, slum dwellers.... *Will the Focolarini continue to follow the path traced out by their foundress? Will they launch new initiatives, find new ways of being present among the people, and discover new horizons in our changing world? With these questions, Franca Zambonini, a reporter and news commentator for Famiglia Cristiana Magazine, introduced the book “Chiara Lubich: La sua eredità” (“Chiara Lubich: Her Heritage”), published by FSP Editions Milan.*

The new book, released a year after Lubich’s death (14 March 2008), reveals a little-known side of the woman. It contains unpublished writings, including an account of the mystical experience she confided in 1949 to her first young followers and to Iginio Giordani, a politician and writer of international repute. The book also recounts the spiritual trials, problems, obstacles and crosses Lubich encountered during her life, all of which served to nourish the roots of her Movement and make it extraordinarily fruitful.

On 5 March the FSPs of Palermo, at the request of the Focolarini, will discuss the book with its author, Eli Folonari, one of Chiara’s first collaborators; Antonio Raspanti, who was her secretary since 1953 and who is currently the dean of the Theological Faculty of Sicily, and Luigi Arcidiacono, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Catania. The presentation will be coordinated by Sr. Fernanda Di Monte, fsp, a journalist and the head of the FSP Center for Communications and Culture.

France: Lyons - Meeting for FSP Book Center Personnel (2009-03-02)



Where should we channel the Congregation’s resources so as to respond to the Pauline mission today? What significant experiences have we had in this area? The FSPs who work in our Lyons and Marseilles book centers reflected on this subject during their meeting from 15-16 February with Sr. Ana Maria Killing, who is in charge of the Congregation’s International Sector for the Laity (SIL).

Sr. Ana Maria presented the participants with a brief overview of the Institute’s journey with regard to collaboration with the laity, taking advantage of the input and results of the Enlarged Council Meeting held in Rome from 15-25 January 2009. During that encounter, 25 circumscriptions underscored the importance of collaborating with the laity. One of our most significant experiences in this area is the fact that 40 FSP book centers are currently under lay management.

Sr. Ana Maria emphasized that while a willingness to develop this type of collaboration allows us to expand our charism, it is also very important to carefully choose the persons to whom we entrust different aspects of the apostolate and to ensure that they receive the formation they need to carry out their service well. As for the joint formation of FSPs and the laity—this is a path we have barely begun to explore. In conclusion, Sr. Ana Maria highlighted the need for clarity on the organizational level and stressed that particular attention should be given to the management of our economic resources.

The journey of collaboration with the laity is very challenging but it is one that allows us to glimpse new ways of living our charism and sharing it with our lay co-workers.

NEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Interview with sr. M. Justine Mpaka Babeki (2009-03-12)



Sr. M. Justine Mpaka Babeki is the Superior of our Congo-Ivory Coast Delegation. General Councilors Sr. Anna Caiazza and Sr. Samuela Gironi made the Fraternal Visit to this circumscription from 6 February – 4 March 2009. In the following interview, Sr. M. Justine speaks about our presence in this part of the world and the challenges to the Pauline mission that our sisters face there.

Sr. M. Justine, can you sketch out a picture of your Delegation’s situation?

The FSPs of the Congo-Ivory Coast live and work in an environment of continual war and political uncertainty, and because of this we can say with faith that our presence in this territory is truly willed by God. In fact, the words, “*I am with you,*” are not only part of our charismatic heritage but a reality that we experience every day. Each of us feels loved, chosen and sent out by God to carry out the Pauline mission in situations that demand great faith, courage and love for the people.

Our Delegation is currently made up of 32 sisters: 23 perpetual professed and 9 juniors. We have 5 communities, 6 book centers and 4 radio studios. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we carry out an apostolate of evangelization and human promotion that focuses in a particular way on the formation of young people and opinion leaders.

The Daughters of St. Paul have been in the Congo for 50 years and in the Ivory Coast for 14 years and in both countries the local people consider our presence to be a blessing. We are appreciated for our witness of life as consecrated women religious and for the material we disseminate, which helps everyone nourish their faith and grow on the human and cultural levels.

Awareness of our responsibility as apostles stimulates us to collaborate with the Pauline Family, the local Church and different social communications structures. With the valuable contribution of our lay collaborators, we prepare radio programs on the Gospel, on women and on youth that are broadcast on both secular and Catholic radio stations. The recent foundation of the Catholic Radio-TV network Elikya has now provided us with the chance to make a contribution to Catholic TV programming.

A promising future...

Our hopes for the future rest in the young women the Lord is sending us. We realize that it would be better if our vocation animators could dedicate more time to this extremely important apostolate, but there are so few of us.... Our future also lies with our lay collaborators, who are increasing throughout the Delegation.

We are trying to follow the guidelines set down by our 9th General Chapter. By this, I mean that we are working to improve the quality of our relationships and to assimilate and incarnate the Word of God in our lives so as to truly communicate with God and then communicate him to others. In our daily offering of ourselves to him through our mission, we rekindle our passion for Christ and for humanity. We are also striving to live in an attitude of continual discernment so as to understand God's plan for each one of us and accurately "read" the signs of the times.

What are your hopes for the future?

I hope we will continue to move ahead in faith, convinced that the Lord is calling us to be women of prayer: women who are rooted in his love and who proclaim him courageously. The African continent is yearning for reconciliation, justice and peace, and the Daughters of St. Paul are called to be a sign of love and hope for its peoples.

DATA BANK

Section Co-workers – Paul: Prisoner and Martyr (2009-03-03)



St. Paul by Rembrandt

When it was heard that Paul was approaching Rome along the Appian Way, a group of Christians went out to fraternally welcome him (Acts 28:15-16). Thus Paul made his first contact with a community he had not founded, even though he knew several of its members.

A little information about the foundation of the Christian community of Rome: St. Irenaeus of Lyons, an early Father of the Church, writes about "the church founded and established in Rome by the two glorious apostles Peter and Paul" (Adv. Haer. 3,3,2). But we know that neither Peter nor Paul founded the Church of Rome. Instead, it was the Church itself that wanted to associate itself to the two apostles. Other testimonies come from Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, who simply says that both Peter and Paul went to Rome, without specifying any particular dates. The founders of the Christian community of Rome can be traced back to the Jewish or pagan converts to Christianity who, from Palestine, Asia Minor and Greece, migrated to the Empire's capital. We have an example of this

in Priscilla and Aquila, whom Paul first met in Corinth and then again in Rome. The conclusion of Paul's letter to the Romans (16:1-16), written from Corinth during the mid-50's, lists some of the people who welcomed

Paul among them and bolstered his courage. The Apostle's mention of so many co-workers at the conclusion to his letter reveals his ability to involve everyone in his mission. He mentions 29 people—27 by name, including 8 women (plus another two who remain unnamed—the mother of Rufus and the sister of Nereus). Paul declares that some of the women referred to—Maria, Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis, who were probably slaves converted to Christianity—"worked hard in the Lord" for their brothers and sisters. His greetings also reveal the existence of small Christian communities that gathered in private homes—the so-called "domestic churches":

1. the home of Aquila and Priscilla (cf. 16:3-5: "My greetings to Prisca and Aquila...and to the church at their house");

2. the house of “Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers and sisters who are with them” (16:14);

3. the house of “Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all God’s holy people who are with them” (16:15).

We can perhaps add two more domestic churches to this list since Paul mentions “all the household of Aristobulus” and “those who belong to the Lord in the household of Narcissus” (16:10-11). These groups of people were probably the slaves of their respective masters, who gave them permission to meet together.

Since the house of an affluent person in those days could accommodate about 15-20 people at the most, we can calculate that in Paul’s time there were about 200 Christians in Rome, out of a total population of approximately 1 million. The Jews (about 40,000) were scattered in various parts of the city. Tradition tells us that Paul lived in a Jewish enclave located in the Trastevere area, near the Tiber River (the 14th and last district of the city). Priscilla and Aquila, who had returned to Rome from Ephesus, helped Paul find a place to stay.

We do not know if the Apostle was freed after two years of house arrest, thus enabling him to fulfill his dream of taking the Gospel to “the ends of the earth.” It can be assumed that if his case had not come to trial after two years, he was released because the time limit had expired. Two things might have happened afterward: either Paul was martyred during the persecution of the Christians under Nero, or else the Apostle did indeed go to Spain and was martyred after he returned to Rome.

Luke does not say anything about Paul’s death in Rome but his silence bears witness to the historical and symbolic dimension of the Apostle’s martyrdom. The Apostle’s death in the capital of the Empire is the fulfillment of the mission entrusted by the risen Lord to his disciples because, from this center, their testimony to the Christian Faith would spread throughout the world. Another reason

Luke does not recount the death of Paul could be because as long as disciples faithful to the Apostle remained, they would continue to proclaim his message to people of all times and to encourage Christians to be faithful to the Lord.



St. Paul’s Martyrdom
Icon of Teresa Groselj, fsp

According to Tradition, Paul was beheaded at the *Acque Salve* (also known as the “Three Fountains”) and was buried in the Ostiense district, where a basilica was erected in his honor. Eusebius of Caesarea says: “I can show you the trophies of the Apostles. If you go to the Vatican or to the Ostiense highway, you will find the relics of the founders of the Church.” Over the years, three basilicas were erected successively on the site of St. Paul’s tomb: the first by Emperor Constantine, the second by Emperor Theodosius (which was destroyed by fire on the night of 15 July 1823) and the current basilica. When reconstruction work was begun on the second basilica after the fire, workers uncovered the base of a column inscribed with the words *SALUS POPULI*, and two fragments of marble bearing the words *PAULO APOSTOLO MARTYR*. They also uncovered the remains of the first basilica. In December 2006, the sarcophagus of the Apostle Paul was discovered under the basilica and today it can be visited by pilgrims.

FOR DEEPER STUDY

Read Romans 1:1-14 and note how Paul presents himself (v. 1), whom he says he is announcing (vv. 2-4), how he views his mission (v. 5), how he wants to live it (v. 9), the audience he wants to reach and why (v. 14). Then read Romans 16:1-16 and note the individuals Paul names and what he says about each of them.

sr Filippa Castronovo, fsp

CALENDAR OF THE GOVERNMENT



17-18 marzo	Roma <i>Casa San Paolo</i>	Incontro con il Governo della Provincia italiana
19 marzo	Roma <i>Casa San Paolo</i>	Incontro con la Commissione per la Ridisegnazione delle presenze
MARZO-MAGGIO	PROVINCIA ITALIANA	VISITA FRATERNA
24-26 marzo 27-29 marzo 30 marzo-1° aprile 2-4 aprile	Ferrara Bologna Reggio Emilia Lodi	sr. Luz Helena Arroyave
25-27 marzo 28-30 marzo 31 marzo-2 aprile	Livorno Arezzo Perugia	sr. Francesca Matsuoka
24-26 marzo 27-29 marzo 30 marzo-1° aprile 2-4 aprile	Lugano Como Milano Pavia	sr. Anna Caiazza
24-26 marzo 27-29 marzo 30 marzo-1° aprile 2-4 aprile	Verona Brescia Milano Mantova	sr. Samuela Gironi
24-26 marzo 27-29 marzo 30 marzo-1° aprile 2-4 aprile	Trento/BZ Treviso Udine Trieste	sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

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