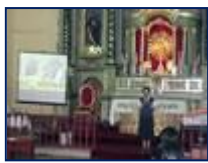


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## NEWS

### Peru: Lima - Week of Prayer for Vocations (13-05-2009)



The FSPs of Lima joined forces with the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles to organize a Week of Prayer for Vocations, which was held from 27 April–3 May 2009. The event opened with an encounter entitled, *The Religious Vocation and Young People in the Light of "Aparecida,"* held in the conference hall attached to our Pauline Book Center.

Guest speaker Fr. José Espinoza spoke about the challenging situations young people face today; Fr. José Humerto, msa, talked about the vocation to the religious life, and Fr. Carlo Castillo guided a reflection on Aparecida's "option for youth" according to the "watch, judge and implement" method (which is also the title of his most recent book).

The rest of the Week was held at Blessed Trinity Sanctuary (the national Sanctuary of Prayer for Vocations), where the many other events on the program were enriched by vocational testimonies and perpetual adoration. This beautiful experience, attended by numerous young people, concluded with a Eucharistic Celebration on 3 May.

### Philippines: Pauline Month for FSP Formandeas (12-05-2009)



Fired with the desire to live the Pauline Spirit more intensely during this year dedicated to St. Paul and with the yearning to make St. Paul known to as many people as possible, the young women in formation in our PMPT Province recently participated in a "Pauline Month entitled, *"Till Christ is formed in you"* (Gal 4:19).

The initiative opened with a 2-week mission in the towns of Pitogo and Calauag (Quezon province), held from 15-30 April 2009. The program consisted of visits to the families, Bible enthronements, catechesis sessions for adults and children, and book displays. The high point of the activities was a Family Festival that included a Media Literacy Education session.

On the way back to Manila on 1 May, the 30 young formandeas stopped at designated Pauline Jubilee churches for a pilgrimage. On 2 May (the day preceding World Day of Prayer for Vocations), they traveled to Olongapo for a Diocesan Youth and Biblical Gathering, where they helped to animate the 400 participants through songs, small group sharing sessions, and the sharing of their vocation stories.

From May 5-8, the formandeas listened to a series of talks on *Paul: Prayer and St. Paul, Paul's Vocation Story, "Till Christ is formed in you," Formation Journey to Pauline Holiness and The Mystery of Suffering and St. Paul.*

All of these activities have strengthened our young women's love for our Father and Patron and have made them proud to be his daughters.

### Brazil: Fortaleza - Close to the Sick, Up to the End (11-05-2009)



On 28 April Fortaleza Unimed, a health insurance company, held an interesting round table discussion on the subject of oncology, inviting as its main speaker Fr. Leo Passini, a Camillian priest. A moral theologian and expert in bioethics, Fr. Passini is the author of many book published by Pauline editions and has contributed numerous articles to *Familia Cristã Magazine.*

About 70 health-care workers attended the encounter, including doctors and hospital directors. The event was enriched by an FSP exhibit of books written by the various participants in the round-table discussion, whose lively debate centered on the therapeutic care of terminally-ill patients. Fr. Passini vigorously insisted on the importance of ensuring that health-care workers receive a

proper formation for their ministry so as to guarantee a good quality of life for their patients and their families, especially individuals suffering from malignant tumors or chronic illnesses.

Fr. Passini praised the efforts of Fortaleza Unimed to give this type of formation to its employees. Underscoring that its formation program focuses on caring for patients on all levels—not only physical, but also spiritual and social—he reaffirmed the importance of this approach, especially in the terminal stages of an illness because it is precisely at that point that greater concern about the human and spiritual aspects of the person is necessary.

### **Ecuador: Otavalo - Missionary Experience for FSP Postulants (07-05-2009)**



The postulants of our Colombian Province recently participated in a very significant missionary experience in San Pablo del Lago parish, Otavalo, Ecuador—a city located 2,660 m. above sea level. They were warmly welcomed by Fr. Nelson Garcia, the pastor of the parish, and by his parishioners, most of whom are farmers. During their stay, the young women discovered that the local people, although deeply respectful of “Mother Earth,” yearn to improve the quality of their lives.

The postulants, who arrived in Otavalo on Palm Sunday, lived Holy Week with great fervor, striving to get to know the culture and customs of the people. They also had a chance to participate in their sufferings when an unexpected landslide in the area caused the death of one person and left more than fifty others homeless. With great solidarity, the postulants worked side by side with the local residents to help clear blocked roads and buildings. Their spirit of prayer and fraternity, together with their willingness to labor alongside everyone else, filled the people with courage and hope.

On their part, our candidates say they deeply admired the citizens of Otavalo, whose inner strength and capacity for self-offering showed them how to live Good Friday in a different yet very profound and meaningful way. The songs in Quechua and the local liturgical practices helped our young women understand that for the people of this area Easter is a symbol of the need to embrace the will of God and entrust oneself to him so as to give and receive forgiveness.

The postulants say that this missionary experience, complete with unexpected events, helped them broaden their horizons and face the challenges and problems of life in a new way, with renewed passion for Christ and for humanity, in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.

### **India: Vasai - Drama on St. Paul (06-05-2009)**



The Pauline Year is drawing to an end, but the creativity and enthusiastic desire of the Daughters of St. Paul around the world to incarnate the Apostle in their diverse apostolic contexts remains high. Our sisters of Vasai, India tell us that they recently carried out a very interesting initiative to help make St. Paul known to the people of their area. “25 April 2009 will remain a red letter day not only for us but also for the whole FSP Indian Province, during this Year dedicated to St. Paul,” they write.

This is because with courage, dedication and a true missionary spirit, Sr. Stella and the rest of the Vasai community, with the help of some lay parishioners, wrote and produced a 2½ hour drama in Marathi, the local language, entitled “*Parivartan Shaulacha*” (“*The Conversion of Saul*”), which was performed on the grounds of St. Michael’s parish. The young man cast as Paul played his role with great authenticity, as did the rest of the cast, and the props, sound and lighting were taken care of by professional technicians. The drama will now be performed in other parishes in Vasai and then in Mumbai.

Our sisters tell us that besides teaching people about Paul and his message of Christ, the play has also become an excellent instrument for vocation work.

### **Italy: Albano - Pauline Pilgrimage in Regina Apostolorum Hospital (04-05-2009)**



This pilgrimage coincided with the week of preparation (27 April–3 May) for the 46th World Day of Prayer for Vocations and with the traveling exhibit on St. Paul, which the hospital is hosting from 1-8 May.

The program of the Pauline Pilgrimage was adapted to the situation of a medical care facility. On its journey through the hospital, the icon of the Apostle Paul was carried by two sisters and accompanied by the chaplain, the rest of the FSP community, and many of the hospital’s personnel, patients and visitors. On the way, the pilgrims sang hymns, recited prayers and listened to readings from the Bible and from the writings of Blessed James Alberione, the venerated Founder of the Pauline Family.

The procession slowly made its way from the chapel to the front entrance of the building and then back to the chapel by way of the hospital’s various wings and departments. As the icon moved from

sector to sector, including the St. Raphael Infirmary (a wing reserved for the sick and elderly members of the FSP Albano community), Paul spread the “sweet perfume of Christ” everywhere (2 Co. 2:14-15), offering everyone the peace, comfort, light and spiritual strength they need to bear their sufferings and medical treatment. The pilgrimage ended with a solemn votive Mass in honor of St. Paul. During the homily, everyone felt the Apostle present among them through the power of the Word he himself had vibrantly proclaimed to the entire world.

Paul’s “sojourn” at Queen of Apostles Hospital has encouraged everyone associated with this health care facility to get to better know and love Christ and to imitate the Apostle’s apostolic charity: “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Co. 11:1). All those who visit the chapel in these days can pause before the icon of St. Paul to converse intimately with the Apostle, listen to his words and assimilate them, recalling that he said, “It is when I am weak that I am strong” (2 Co. 12:10).

## **DATA BANK**

### **Section Communication**

**The Pauline Community: a Community of Communicators** (Second part – sr. M. A. Quaglino, fsp)

#### SUMMARY

#### **III. A Community that Welcomes the Word**

#### **IV. A Community Transformed into “Living Word”**

#### **V. A Community Sent Out by the Word**

### **III. A COMMUNITY THAT WELCOMES THE WORD**

#### **1. The Word and the Obedience of Faith**

“The ‘obedience of faith’ must be given to God as he reveals himself.” Thus *Dei Verbum* n. 5 invites us to listen to the Word of God and welcome it in a loving and filial way. Listening to that Word and holding fast to it in faith are indispensable conditions for membership in the family of God and for communicating with him, with the world, and among ourselves.

In pointing out the basic attitudes of the first Christian community, the Acts of the Apostles gives primacy to the teachings of the apostles (cf. Acts 1:14). The members of the first Christian community were united among themselves because they shared the same Gospel (which they received in loving faith), because they participated together in the Lord’s Supper, and because they witnessed to the Lord’s resurrection (cf. Acts 4:33). These elements, which are the distinguishing features of every Christian community, must be lived in a very clear way by religious communities.

The Pauline community, as we have said, has an intimate relationship with the Word of God. This is evident in its worship, contemplation, discernment, study, testimony, apostolate, and the searches which its members carry out together.

The early Christian communities discovered in the Word a spring to quench their thirst and give meaning to their life and mission. It is Paul who shows us the degree to which we must hold fast to this Word and let it inspire our life and mission: our Pauline communities must be modeled on his example if we are to be disciples of the Lord.

#### **2. Questioned by the Word**

According to Paul, proclaiming the Word means proclaiming Christ to everyone, but this Word must first be interiorized by its heralds, transforming their lives. Indeed, the Word of God sits in judgment on us. John says very clearly: “He who rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already: the word itself that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

Superficial listening is not sufficient; we must let ourselves be shaped by the Word. “If anyone loves me he will keep my word...” (Jn. 14:23).

By following the Word, we live in fidelity to the Lord of our life, who has chosen us, brought us together, and consecrated us to carry out a mission. We must also live in fidelity to God’s revelations of himself in our personal history and in the living history of our community. This fidelity should not be restricted to a slavish observance of rules and regulations, but should lead us to rediscover their significance in the Spirit, who continually renews all things.

God's judgment prompts us to carry out a communitarian discernment regarding the present moment of history. It opens us to genuine freedom, creative spontaneity, fortitude and perseverance. It transforms our community into a place of fraternal love, mutual encouragement, reciprocal forgiveness, joy, and active hope.

### 3. Called by the Word to Continual Conversion

In the Bible, conversion is often seen as a return to community and covenant, or as "metanoia": a change of life for the sake of the Kingdom. "Be converted," Peter urged the crowds that gathered to listen to him on Pentecost. For Paul, it was the Damascus event that triggered his journey of conversion and conformity to Christ, to the point of total identification with him.

For the religious community and for the apostle, conversion is an integral part of life. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Paul VI says that the community of believers must "constantly hear the truths in which she believes, the grounds on which her hope is based and the new command of mutual love.... To put the matter briefly, if the Church is to preserve the freshness, the ardor and the strength of her own work of preaching the Gospel she must herself be continuously evangelized" (n. 15).

Our Founder commanded us to "live in continual conversion." Conversion means going out to meet Christ, holding fast to him, and surrendering to the power of his Spirit, so as to come to an always fuller experience of God both personally and as a community.

The community journeys between the two poles of the "already" and the "not yet." It bears within itself the demands for continual conversion through an always clearer realization of its sins. It also bears within itself the earnest solicitations, sufferings and aspirations to freedom of the people of its time, so as to take these upon itself, speak out concerning them, make appeals in their regard, and transform them by the action of the Spirit.

*The Pauline community communicates Christ and makes him visible by living a process of continual conversion and reconciliation manifested in its style of life, in the reasons for its choices, and in its communitarian and apostolic project. Liberating itself from every form of slavery, it becomes a sign of freedom to others, a permanent denunciation of all the idolatries that prevent people from making Christ their only Lord (cf. Eph. 4:5).*

### 4. Introduced by the Word into the Paschal Mystery

If a community is to concretely live in a spirit of reconciliation and communion, then its members must participate in the Lord's Paschal Mystery. They must recognize the power of that Mystery to shape their lives and must allow it to carry out its work in themselves and in the group as a whole. They must accept the conditions and implications of this unique and revolutionary event, namely, the Paschal Mystery lived in human history.

The Word of God introduces us to this mystery of death and resurrection, as it did for the disciples at Emmaus. These followers of the Lord were able to recognize him in the breaking of the bread as a consequence of their conversation with Christ, the living Word.

The Paschal Mystery is the heart of the Word. It underscores the fact that the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is shaped by his relationship with the Father: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him..." (Jn. 6:56). In the Paschal Mystery, Christ pours out on humanity the life of the Trinity. Through a process of communication that involved his entire life and reached its culminating point in his death on the cross, he invites everyone to enter into communion with him.

#### *A Paschal Community*

A community does not come into being in the Church as the result of human plans and the desire to achieve certain goals together. Rather, it comes into being as a consequence of the paschal event. Such a community is built up by continually submitting itself to the dynamics of death, purification and growth, so as to be authentic, free and creative. In this process, the members of the community shed the residues of adolescence that remain in them so as to attain the fullness of Christ.

Fraternal charity is the atmosphere in which the Word takes on flesh. It is the atmosphere in which we break bread together, concretize our prayer in the following of the Lord, and day by day expand the horizons of our apostolic zeal.

## *Able To Give Life*

Participating in the Eucharist, the celebration of the Lord's Paschal Mystery, we offer ourselves with Christ for the salvation of the world. We participate in his death, lovingly placing our entire existence in his hands so as to make it fruitful. This love enables us to forge bonds of solidarity with the weakest members of society—the suffering and the poor—who are always present both within our community and outside it. It enables us to serenely accept the sacrifices we must make in order to live together in communion.

In our daily living together, the act of giving life at times takes on forms that might seem illogical and baffling. But the quality of our community life is also measured by the evangelical way in which we live moments of conflict: with a heart always ready to forgive and to listen, with the ability to begin all over again as a community every day. In learning how to “lose our life so as to find it” (cf. Mk. 8:35; Mt. 16:25), we experience the Paschal Mystery of death and resurrection.

In both desert experiences and the joys of fraternal communion, we daily shape ourselves into new persons so as to become a presence of Christ's resurrection for others.

## **5. Prepared by the Word To Communicate with God**

The Word is dynamic and effective. It infuses life into our community and unifies it, helping it to incarnate itself in an always fresh way in the course of its ongoing journey. Our specific charism offers the Pauline community its own special way of expressing and serving the Word, and of letting itself be encompassed by its mystery through a more profound communication. Through our charism, we relate to God and communicate with him, with one another and with the world in a particular way.

### *Prayer Nourished by the Word*

The prayer of the Pauline community is nourished and sustained by the Word. Each member personally and as a group listens profoundly to the Word of God, prays it in the psalms, meditates on it assiduously every day, compares her life with it, and examines how she is responding to the call of God at this particular moment in time. In the Word and Eucharist, each and every Pauline seeks the light and strength to grow interiorly, as a community of faith, in the school of the Master, so as to proclaim to the world the specific Word expressed by our charism.

Our prayer becomes one of *praise and thanksgiving* for the marvels worked by God in and through our community and the entire Church. It becomes a prayer of *reparation* for our personal acts of infidelity and for those of all the people who reject the Word. It becomes *adoration*, in the name of the entire Church. It becomes *supplication*: the echo of the needs of every sister and of the entire community, as well as of all the wounds, yearnings, uncertainties, agonies and hopes of humanity.

### *Apostolic Prayer*

In prayer, the Pauline community finds the strength it needs to share the world's sufferings and to use its specific apostolate to sow in the heart of humanity the liberating and joyous power of the paschal event.

In apostolic prayer, the community asks: “Where is humanity going?” thus focusing in a concrete way on the receivers of its mission. In this way, a dynamic interaction between prayer and apostolic activity is established, with one enriching the other, and each becoming an expression of union with Christ and of our readiness to let ourselves be used according to his will for the good of all.

All the forms of Pauline prayer must be harmoniously integrated with our specific vocation. A type of common prayer modeled on the rhythm of the monastic day is not compatible with our lifestyle because it prevents us from carrying out our apostolic activities.

Apostolic prayer must be vibrantly rooted in the heart of the person who has been “seized” by Christ. The Pauline sister must let this conviction penetrate the deepest corners of her existence, with a serene attitude that is fostered by means of her daily duties and the presence of her sisters. Thus life becomes an ongoing liturgy that is continually nourished at the “two Tables.”

A community that prays with the Word and in the presence of the Word is not only a sign of fidelity to it but also a sign of how impossible it is to fully grasp that Word. The members' patient reflection on the Scriptures and continual effort to grasp them more deeply witness to the presence of God in the Word, as well as to the fact that his reality infinitely transcends his written revelation. Our prayer is always a childish stammering, in spite of our efforts to enter into genuine communication so as to arrive at authentic communitarian prayer.

Often we verbalize our prayer, give it a better exterior “wrapping,” but fail to interiorize the Word and communicate to one another the experience of God that this should evoke. Often we are not even capable of embracing silent prayer as a moment of contemplation of the Word and of the mystery it communicates to us.



*To proclaim the Word effectively, we must become more and more aware of the mystery it contains by cultivating a contemplative attitude and a sincere readiness to let it transform us. We must let ourselves be led by the Spirit with the docility of Mary, who welcomed the Word, meditated on it in her heart, clothed it with her virginal flesh so as to present it to humanity, and guided the prayer of the apostles in the Upper Room, asking that God's Word would transform the world.*

## **IV. A COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED INTO LIVING WORD**

### **1. A Communicating Sign in the Church**

The Pauline community is a community generated from on high so as to become a communicating sign in the Church. In order to be a “communicating sign” in keeping with our specific charism, we must become “living Words,” a narrative theology of the Gospel, through the power of Christ shining in our life.

Through its life and activities, the Pauline community is called to reveal the face and mystery of Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, the eternal and definitive Word for all believers.

### **2. Communities Transparent to Christ**

In John 14:23, we read the following words: “If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him.”

It is stupendous to discover that we are the object of God’s love, to the point that he dwells within us in spite of our poverty. If God abides in us, then the power of his Word cannot help but manifest itself in our communities, making them transparent witnesses to the risen Christ who has reconciled us to himself and who continually reconciles us to one another and to the world to which we are sent. Through the power of his name, we are able to accomplish marvelous things.

St. Paul defines the early Church as “in Christ”—a “new creature” that he vivifies and leads into his Kingdom of peace and unity.

As disciples of the Lord in the school of Paul, we must witness to the fact that Christ is the true Lord of our life, to the point of being able to say with the Apostle: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me” (Ga. 2.20).

In living the evangelical counsels according to the original spirit of the Pauline charism, and in making a constant effort to compare our life with our Constitutions, we become capable of witnessing to the wealth of the Word of God at the source of our charism, and of letting the mystery of Christ shine in us in a specifically Pauline way so as to become a communicating sign in the Church. This means that we must preserve and develop the essential features of our charism: openness to the Word of God in history; apostolic thrust; creative and dynamic spontaneity; freedom and apostolic daring, and a total communication that also makes use of the various media technologies, in order that Christ might be “all to all.”

### **3. Our Life Together**

In following Christ, we are called to live with him and with those whom he has gathered together by means of the same Word. “He summoned those he wanted,” Mark remind us. “So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions” (3:13-14).

Christ is the living heart of our community. He is the relationship, the communication and the bond among its members. It is he who unites us to one another without imposing uniformity, respecting the character and gifts of each person. If we remain in him, he will create in our community a family atmosphere in which each member joyfully lives with the others and actively participates in community life and in the apostolate.

Fraternal communion is the most complete expression of our communion with Christ and the supreme witness of the religious life—its clearest word of evangelization.

The principles at the foundation of community life are: our common vocation; the identity conferred on us as a result of our consecration or configuration to Christ in a specific aspect of his ministry; the special apostolic mission we carry out together in the Church; our communal way of living the vows; our feeling of belonging to the Congregation and to the Pauline Family, and our effort to combine our energies to attain our apostolic goal.

Our mission requires that all the members of the community be ready to carry it out, committing to it all their energies, aspirations, gifts and personal charisms. However this pooling of gifts should not be an obstacle to plurality of expression, which is not a limitation but rather an enrichment of our community life and of the apostolate.

#### *Foundations of Fraternal Life*

Fraternal communion rests on sociability, mutual esteem, a respect for the truth, attention to others, acceptance of differences, and affective maturity—in short, the human foundations necessary for a person to establish interpersonal relationships and participate in the communication process. Fraternal communion also requires us to be aware of our identity: who we are, what we are doing, and the role we carry out in the Church.

This awareness should prompt us to seek what is truly essential in community life, without wasting our energies pursuing secondary things. It should lead us to preserve the vigor of our particular charism and to live the values of the consecrated life in simplicity, without a proliferation of rules and laws that hamper its authentic expression and often prevent us from carrying out our mission.

A community that is free, ready to make apostolic proposals, and truly dedicated to service must grant its members a certain amount of liberty. It cannot disregard the need to spend time together and share with one another, but at the same time it cannot expect its members to always follow a rigid schedule and program. This is a false spirit of community life.

However, this means that the members of the community must receive a proper formation with regard to both freedom and self-denial, which is indispensable if the sisters are to become adults and if the entire community is to grow and attract young women, who today desire responsibility and an active say in directing their lives.

#### *Participation and Collaboration*

Genuine community life involves not so much physical living together as creating a spirit of unity and communion among the members. It leads the sisters to willingly share with one another all that they are and all that they have, in a spirit of co-responsibility and participation, and to accept the intermediaries provided by the Institute on various levels.

Participation leads us to take an active and responsible part in the life of the community and to carry out the apostolate together. To do this, information, communication, dialogue and collaboration are necessary. To participate means to become involved in the decision-making process and its results. It does not mean remaining an anonymous cog in the machine—a member in name only, indifferent and without initiative.

#### *In Koinonia*

Intercommunication means that each one participates in the communication process, attains self-realization by means of it, and then helps others achieve the same goal. This is the way in which a community grows—not only the human community, but also the community of faith, hope, and experience of God: a community that shares everything it possesses in a spirit of love and friendship; a community that resembles the communion of the Trinity, which is infinite “koinonia”: “The Father and I are one” (Jn. 10:30).

The Trinity is the principle, model, and guarantor of every true community—the ideal context in which all human and supernatural communications unfold. Such a community gives rise to individuals who are able to interact with others in a profound, Gospel-oriented way, who manifest mature and fraternal love, and who are open to pluralism and collaboration with everyone. In such a community, each member feels herself to be truly a sister to the others and is able to interact with them in a mutual exchange characterized by respect, courtesy, understanding, trust and human warmth. It is a community in which each one makes the others the gift of her attention and time; in which each member participates in the joys and suffering of the others. It is a place where people are able to speak with sincerity and preserve confidences; where intentions are not judged, and where each member is ready to fraternally serve the others and forgive them when necessary.

A community is not made up of perfect persons but of sisters who have experienced the mercy of God in a radical way. And it is precisely for this reason that they are able to accept the others with all their shortcomings, each one taking upon herself the others’ burdens and sins so as to begin anew, each day, to build communion, learn to live it, and then transmit it in language that is understandable and credible to all.

#### 4. Growing in the Ability To “Go Beyond”

Community life develops under the action of the Spirit, who unifies the group and makes it perennially young. We beg him to renew us continually by means of his Word, which challenges us, progressively frees us, re-creates us, and urges us on toward the “more” and the “not yet.”

“Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit” (Ga. 5:25). Thus, day after day, the Pauline community grows in a style of life that renders it, in all its dimensions, a community of communication, of total announcement, a transparent bearer of the message it offers the world. Everything in the community becomes an expression of the Church and a communication of the mystery of Christ. While Jesus Christ is the “Word” in an absolute sense (the “Word made flesh”), a community faithful to the Spirit becomes a “total communication” not only because it uses modern systems of communication but because it is itself a “communication,” an effective sign of its special charism of evangelization in the Church.

##### *Straining Ahead*

In sharing with us his spiritual experience, Paul, who was seized by Christ to the point of conforming himself totally to him, recognizes that he has not yet attained the fullness of faith—that is, perfection—and exclaims: “I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me... Meanwhile, let us go forward on the road that has brought us to where we are” (Ph. 3:12, 16).

Inspired by these words, our Founder transmitted to us the entire dynamic of growth contained in this biblical text by means of his now famous phrase: “I strain ahead.” The phrase presupposes the commitment of the whole community and each individual member of it, but above all it conveys the message that we must always allow ourselves to be dynamically and creatively influenced by the Spirit.

##### *In Newness of Spirit*

Precisely because it is a charismatic reality generated from on high, the Pauline community must be continually animated by the Spirit. We must not “grieve the Spirit” (cf. Eph. 4:20) or resist him; neither must we “try to suppress him” (1 Th. 5:19).

The Spirit transforms the community into “God’s dwelling-place.” By the simple fact that it exists, the community is “Word” for the entire Church. With the vigor of its charism, and through the dynamics of its growth and openness to God’s plans for the future, it is an ongoing paschal experience that communicates to others the eternal newness of God.

This openness makes the community a place of *ongoing formation*, where all the members grow together and rediscover their identity by sharing their personal gifts and the “word” of the charism, which it must foster and bring up to date.

By means of community meetings, dialogue, various forms of communication such as celebrating the presence of God in one’s personal history, sharing the Word, moments of revision of life and evaluation, fraternal correction, discernment, and the drawing up of a communitarian and apostolic project, the community translates its spiritual experience into life experience, lives in fidelity to God’s plan, becomes a mediator of his communications, and witnesses to the eternal youth of the Spirit. It is thus transformed into a genuinely vocational community that exerts a powerful attraction on others as a result of its joyful fidelity to the Word.

*The grace of the Spirit does not allow us to take the easy way out (St. Ambrose). He continually urges us on, leading us where he desires, so that we might walk in newness of life, launch out onto the new paths he is opening to humanity, and thus become a community and Church that communicates to the fullest of its potential. By means of our lifestyle, our interpersonal relationships, and our way of living and sharing our spirituality and apostolate, we too become “Word made flesh” for the salvation of the world.*



## **V. A COMMUNITY SENT OUT BY THE WORD**

The Pauline community is the guardian of a charism that must bear fruit in the Church and be extended to the entire world.

No charism would have meaning if it were to remain confined within the walls of its Institute, least of all ours, whose model is Christ, Master and Communicator.

Every gift we receive is meant to be shared, otherwise it would cease to be gift. Thus the spiritual experience centered on the Person of Christ the Master and his Word, which is lived and shared by the members of our community, becomes a message to be transmitted to our brothers and sisters with courage, creativity and a missionary spirit that urges us to reach out to everyone, even those furthest away. In doing this, we return to our community with new meaning because it is in carrying out the apostolate that we discover the face of God afresh and come to better understand his Word.

### **1. Centered on Christ**

Christ is the Word that the community must proclaim in the Church. He is the heart of the community: its projects, yearnings, and every apostolic initiative. He is the Word that continually regenerates the community; the Word that the community must bring to the world, giving it an always new incarnation so that it can manifest its wealth.

To communicate Christ is the essence of our mission as evangelizers. Our community does not exist for itself but for its mission. Our community attains complete self-realization through its missionary activity as long as Christ is always its center.

“Jesus himself, the Revelation of God, was the first and principal herald of the Gospel.... As such, he proclaimed first of all the kingdom of heaven, attributing such importance to this message that everything else became secondary, the ‘other things’ we will receive without asking” (EN 7, 8).

The announcement of the Kingdom, the proclamation that in Jesus Christ salvation is offered to every human being as a gift of grace and mercy, is the foundation, core and at the same time culmination of evangelization and holds primacy over every other announcement of human liberation, even though these too are necessary for personal and social growth since they also form part of the human vocation (cf. EN 27-34).

Speaking to the Daughters of St. Paul, Primo Maestro said: “Your mission is to ‘evangelize the poor.’ Go forth and preach according to your nature, according to what women are capable of doing. Take the Gospel in a special way to the masses, to those who are poor in heavenly wisdom” (ES, Sept. 1953).

Putting to good use its feminine traits, the Pauline community must become a totally transparent repository of the message it proclaims to the people of its time. In carrying out its mission, it must use all the media instruments and penetrate every sector of the communications field. By doing so, it will bear witness to the fact that it is possible to establish a total and totalizing symbiotic relationship between the Gospel and the world of the media.

### **2. Solidarity with the People of God**

Each Pauline community is situated in a particular geographical area, in a local Church, and its task is to accompany a portion of the people of God that has its own culture, aspirations, needs and projects. Each FSP community must be a communicating sign of the Word of salvation in the specific context in which it is anchored and must serve as a voice for every individual. The community's physical and spiritual cohabitation with the portion of the Church entrusted to it must be translated into concrete apostolic choices.

All the members must ask themselves: What is the best way to proclaim the Word of God today, in this particular context? What media languages should we use? To what audience should we give priority?

These are not easy decisions to make. Even though we rightly have great trust in our specific charism, our awareness of our poverty and inadequacy should lead us to renew as a community the spirit of the Pact, which is filial surrender to God: “From here I wish to enlighten.” But it should also prompt us to make a serious commitment with regard to study, a comparison of life, search and evaluation, in order that we might successfully incarnate the gift of God in different human situations. This will help us enter into true communion with the people of God and facilitate our efforts to carry out an ongoing process of inculturation on both the personal and communitarian levels. Such a situation will in turn lead to a more effective acculturation on our part, which takes into account the require-

ments of newly-emerging values and challenges. But all this demands continual conversion and fresh, dynamic and innovative fidelity on our part, if we are to enter into communication with everyone. Only thus will we be able to discern the signs of the times and grasp the evangelical challenges of new situations, and only thus will we diligently apply ourselves to devising new, ingenious and courageous apostolic projects (cf. EN 19).

### 3. Proclaiming the Whole Gospel

The evangelizing mission entrusted to us calls for fidelity and an ongoing spirit of renewal in spite of the advancing age of our members: fidelity to God, in the first place, but fidelity also to ourselves and to the people to whom we are sent. These three fidelities are three aspects of a single fidelity to the Word.

*Fidelity to God* means that the community must never cease its efforts to come to a deeper understanding of the Word and to help it penetrate various contexts, incarnating it in its entirety, without alterations. It means that the community must gradually attain the synthesis of life in Christ the Master mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2:20—a synthesis our Founder achieved in his own life and transmitted to his sons and daughters as a part of the Pauline heritage: the foundation of our spirit and the perpetual source of our apostolate.

“You must first possess it yourselves and then give it. You must first live it yourselves and then take it to the world, in imitation of St. Paul, who said: ‘It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me,’ and ‘I made myself all things to all people” (Pr. VV 230).

*Fidelity to ourselves* means self-acceptance, continual conversion and progressive maturation. It means fidelity to our womanhood, a dimension of which is woman’s special ability to intuitively understand persons and situations. This gift must be concretized in specific proposals and prophetic choices, so as to open paths to women in particular, enabling them respond to the questions, needs, sufferings and aspirations of all human beings. But in order to do this, we must become creative and courageous women, rich in the ability to listen to others profoundly and to read the signs of the times. We must be women to the fullest of our feminine potential within the context of our charism of communication.

*Fidelity to others* requires that our community be profoundly rooted in the life and culture of the people among whom we live and work. Our community must have the opportunity to experience the company of men and women, young and old people, and to participate intensely in their hopes, dialoguing with them and prompting them to ask new questions about the meaning of life and death.

In this way, our Pauline community will become an echo, sign, presence and total communication of the Gospel in every situation, in the unfolding of history, in the midst of an ever-changing humanity, so as to sow in its midst the liberating and joyous power of the Word that saves, so as to give a voice to every person, so as to denounce every form of idolatry, negation or alteration of the truth, of the degradation of freedom and human dignity.

#### *Expert in Communion*

The Pauline community feels its obligation to preach the Gospel to everyone. It carries out its mission in a communitarian way, each member making her own contribution by means of the gifts she has received and the service she has been requested to perform at this particular time in her life. In this way, we imitate Christ, who showed his love for the Father by carrying out in union with him the work entrusted to him.

Communion within the community becomes a source of dynamic energy and apostolic fruitfulness for all the members, who in turn irradiate it to the rest of the Church and from there to the world. The Pauline community must be an open community if it is to share with others its particular gift—the charism of communication—which belongs to it only insofar as it strives to involve the wider Christian and human community in it.

The Father’s plan “that they all may be one” thus becomes the mission of the Pauline community, in which each one is called to become an expert in communion and a bearer of the Pauline spirituality to others. This spirituality includes a communitarian dimension—an aspect which seems to be emerging as the spirituality of the future.

### 4. Overflowing with Joy and with the Holy Spirit

#### *Witnesses of Joy*

Joy, a profoundly Christian virtue, must be the constant attitude of those who are called to be messengers of the Good News. In the events of daily life, in times of celebrating and fraternal good

cheer, in our common satisfaction for the results of the apostolate, in prayer, and in gratitude to God and to each other, the community shares its joy at being together. In this way, we create a festive and cordial atmosphere of welcome for those who enter our homes or apostolic centers—an atmosphere which manifests the presence of the Lord.

Each community has its own rhythm: its moments of growth and of staticity, of union and of conflict. It is therefore familiar with the light and dark sides of life. Although it is not of the world, each community bears within itself the solicitations, sufferings, tribulations, disillusionments, and yearnings of the people of its time. Because it springs from God, the community is called to take on all these realities and transform them in docility to the Spirit, to bear them in serenity and peace, so as to become an icon of the Trinity, of the life of communion and friendship characteristic of the three divine Persons.

#### *Community as Friendship*

“Religious life is a life of friendship,” said John Paul II (05.31.1980). Friendship with God and with one another. In every friendship, in every profound meeting between individuals, a unique experience takes place, just as it does when we come in contact with God.

Friendship is the most noble and enriching human/Christian experience. It is mutual love between God and the consecrated person. And it is this atmosphere and experience of friendship that we are striving to create in our communities.

A community whose members live in friendship with one another is a mature community, whose members have attained a certain degree of self-realization. The members’ mutual friendship is translated into fraternity, mutual encouragement, and increasingly profound fidelity to one’s vocation. Such friendship unites us to one another and reaches out to embrace those outside the community. It is a source of intense and contagious joy.

Where friendship exists, gratitude flourishes. We give thanks for every gift we have received and turn our thoughts longingly to that Love without end which is the love of God.

By its very nature, friendship is an act of communication, a communion of spirit and heart.

“It is like a lily in a field of wheat” (D. Bonhoffer). It is the poetry of life but also a motivating force, as it was for Mary Magdalene and the other women on Easter morning.

*The Pauline community, a community of women who--like Paul--have been grasped by Christ, witnesses by its life and by the Word it proclaims to the love-friendship of God, which urges us on to reach everyone.*

*It is a joyous community, open to the action of the Spirit who renews it each day, fills it with spiritual joy, and points it toward new horizons. The Spirit enables our community not only to announce the Word with all the instruments of communication but to be a transparent bearer of the message it announces, to be a total proclamation a sign and leavening agent in the midst of the new humanity inaugurated by Christ.*

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