

**These situations
have caused sister earth, along with
all the abandoned of our world,
to cry out, pleading that we take
another course. LS. 53**



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The Medium and Message of Authentic Communication

THE PAULINE FAMILY

Happy Anniversary, World Communications Day!

Logo of Communications Week 2016

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CALLED TO ETERNAL LIFE

**THAILAND,
LAND OF SMILES**



Dearest Sisters,
Let me take you on an imaginary trip to Thailand—a land of smiles and kindness, of vivid orchids and the exotic scent of incense.

The Daughters of St. Paul have been present since 1994 in this predominantly Buddhist country, in which Catholics make up only about 300,000 (1%) of the 70-million population. Our small and very inculturated community there is composed of Sr. Cora Damalerio, a Filipina, who has been in charge of the National Social Communications Center since 1996; Sr. Veritas Abe, a Japanese sister, and Sr. Mercy Rosano, another Filipina. The sisters staff a small book center in the St. Louis Hospital complex, a Catholic health-care facility located in the heart of the capital. They also carry out the publishing apostolate and pastoral work for vocations with great enthusiasm. And in spite of the nation’s very slight number of Catholics, the Lord is blessing their hard work with the gift of beautiful vocations. Right now, two Thai­landese Juniors are finishing their theology studies in Manila, Philippines, one novice in Lipa is preparing to make her first profession, and three Thai­landese postulants are part of our pre-novi­tiate program in Pasay City.

It is interesting and moving to listen to the vocation stories of these young women, some of whom were attracted by the religious

texts in comic-book format that the FSPs of Thailand have been publishing from the very beginning, given the fact that the Thai­landese people are not avid readers. To date, our sisters have produced 45 titles that have been disseminated all over the country, including a children’s

Bible, the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles, biographies and books on formation. Some of our formandees were fascinated by the biography of Maestra Thecla, while others came to know the Daughters of St. Paul while they were still very young, drawn by the contagious joy of the sisters who held book displays in their parishes. All the young women understood that our Congregation carries out a special mission, different from that of other Institutes and they willingly accepted the need to undergo their initial formation in another country in order to correspond to the invitation of Jesus Master.

Except for our first Thai­landese vocation, Sr. Palm, who comes from the Bangkok area, the other young women live in parts of the country that lie as much as a 20-hour bus trip from the capital. And yet even in those remote regions, a booklet bearing the name of our Institute and our local address fell into their hands: seeds that the Lord used to kindle in them a desire, a vocational aspiration, an answer to their restlessness.



These Thai­landese FSPs are a luminous example of the vocations that the Lord can raise up everywhere, in very different ways. Let us never tire of sowing seeds, of “infecting” young women with the passion that fires us, in the knowledge that only the Good Shepherd can make our work fruitful.

Let us cling firmly to the certitude that in this century too there are “generous persons who will feel what our Founder felt” and who yearn to share the joyous passion that Paul, Alberione and Thecla felt for Christ and for humanity.

Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan



BRAZIL

RECOGNITION FOR COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL ACTIVITIES



In its solemn closing session for 2015 and in accord with the proposal of Fabio Costantino Palacio (regional councilor), the municipality of Sao Caetano do Sud (SP) presented awards to two institutes for their commitment to diffusing the Word of God. Jardel Nascimento accepted the award in the name of the Biblical Federation of Brazil, and Sr. Maria Antonieta Bruscato in the name of the Daughters of St. Paul. In her acceptance speech, Sr. M. Antonieta sketched out the biblical activities of the FSPs in Brazil and throughout the world. To disseminate, understand and live the message of the Bible: these three words, she said, sum up our mission.

KENYA

PRESENTATION OF THE CIVIC EDUCATION SERIES



Sr. Olga Massango of Paulines Publications Africa recently presented the Bishops of Kenya with a series of 12 booklets and an equal amount of short documentaries on civic education. The presentation was broadcast live by the Kenya Television Network (KTN) and other local TV stations.

The Civic Education Project sprang from a reflection that took place during the 2013 Continental Meeting held in view of forming a Christian African culture and was realized with

the help of persons qualified in the field and the heads of various national departments.

The 12 documentaries, instead, are the fruit of a two-year course of formation in the field of communications in which 6 of the circumscription's African sisters and two lay employees participated. The course, conducted by the Verona-based organization *Lights in the World*, was sponsored by the Italian Episcopal Conference.

The Bishops deeply appreciated the booklets and documentaries, saying that they are timely and urgent for the formation of youth. The President of the Episcopal Conference, Bishop Philip Anyolo, then thanked the Daughters of St. Paul for their intensive apostolic activities in Kenya and throughout Africa.

ITALY

THE CATECHETICAL VOCATION OF THE FSPs



To rediscover the biblical, catechetical and ecumenical dimension that has always characterized the vocational identity of the Daughters of St. Paul: this is one of the "dreams" that emerged during the celebration of the Institute's Centenary.

Sr. Agnes Quaglini has contributed to fulfilling this dream by recounting the story of the catechetical vocation of the FSPs: how it began and developed according to the thought of the Founder in the Institute's foundation period and the years immediately after it through the writing of catechism texts and periodicals, and the holding of Biblical and Catechetical Weeks all over Italy and throughout the world. Her account of this apostolic work, entitled *The Catechetical Vocation of the Daughters of St. Paul*, required intensive study and research to trace out how this dimension of the Pauline charism and other similar initiatives developed in the Church and accompanied an entire century of pastoral activities in this field.

The text reveals the faith and far-sightedness of Fr. Alberione, who entrusted the FSPs with this very important apostolate and encouraged them to continually expand their horizons. In fact it was he, along with Mae-

stra Thecla, who insisted on setting up an FSP community of catechetical writers in the conviction that the Institute had received the mandate to teach.

**BLESSED ARE YOU:
TOWARDS KRAKOW IN 2016...
WITH THE COURAGE TO BE HAPPY**



In preparation for World Youth Day in Krakow (26-31 July 2016), the Youth Pastoral Vocational team of the Daughters of St. Paul in Italy is offering young people an itinerary of reflection inspired by the Beatitudes: *Blessed are you: Towards Krakow in 2016 ... with the courage to be happy.*

Online are six monthly leaflets with four proposed steps aimed to promote preparation and participation (also through social networks).

Among the lineup of initiatives of the PGV team for 2016 are:

- Vocation Weekends for youth in some Pauline communities.
- A Jubilee pilgrimage from Castagnito to Alba, in the wake of the great experience "In the footsteps of Tecla" that took place in 2015.

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THECLA:
SECOND PILGRIMAGE
FROM CASTAGNITO TO ALBA**



On Saturday, 9 April 2016, the Daughters of St. Paul held for the second consecutive year a pilgrimage on foot from Castagnito to Alba in honor of Venerable Thecla Merlo, who was born in Castagnito, and also so as

to go through the Holy Door of the Cathedral of Alba to celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy.

In contrast to the bad weather forecast, the day proved to be beautiful and sunny, facilitating the trek of the large group of pilgrims, who hailed from Castagnito, neighboring towns and even as far afield as Turin. At the age of 21, Teresa (later, Thecla) Merlo, the first Daughter of St. Paul and the faithful collaborator of Blessed James Alberione, Founder of the Pauline Family, made this same trip on 27 June 1915. She was headed for the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Alba, where she had an appointment with Fr. Alberione, who invited her to become a "Sister of the Good Press." Her acceptance of this invitation helped the Founder take his first steps in concretizing his dream of "doing something for the people of his time" by placing the fruits of technological progress at the service of humanity. Thecla's pilgrimage blazed a trail for countless young women all over the world who, after her example, made the decision to follow the Lord like St. Paul and proclaim the Gospel in the culture of communications.

Saturday's pilgrimage included 20 young Daughters of St. Paul from all over the world (Uganda, Nigeria, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Pakistan, Korea, Taiwan, Spain, Romania, Czech Republic, Congo, United States, Philippines and Malaysia) who are preparing to make their perpetual professions in the Institute. Their joyous songs in many different languages resounded along the 10-km. (6-mile) journey, creating an atmosphere of joy, cordiality and universality.

**PRESENTING THE POPE WITH
THE *BIBLE AFRICAINE***



On 3 March 2016, Pope Francis had a private audience with Cardinal Robert Sarah and FSPs Sr. Pelagiè Banze and Sr. Noemi Bergamin, who presented him with a copy of the newly-published *Bible Africaine*.

The edition is the fruit of extensive collaboration between the Daughters of St. Paul of our Congo and East Africa circumscriptions. The FSPs of East Africa, who published the original *African Bible* in English and hold the rights to it, generously allowed our sisters of the Congo to use the critical apparatus of their edition for the French translation. Other major collaborators in the project were the French Bible Society and a team of biblical and theological scholars from French-speaking Africa.

In presenting the Bible to the Pope, Cardinal Sarah pointed out the special characteristics of the text, whose pastoral notes, introductions, commentaries and graphics were all prepared with scrupulous attention, making the most of the cultures and values of the Africa people. Pope Francis listened attentively and commented: "This is truly an inculturation of the Word for the benefit of the people." Sr. Pelagiè then offered him a gift copy of the Bible, which he accepted with surprise and gratitude. He then posed with the group for a picture to commemorate this significant occasion.

MADAGASCAR

ENCYCLICAL *LAUDATO SI'*



In response to the plea of Pope Francis to protect the earth, our common home, the Episcopal Conference of Madagascar designated 5 February as a day of reflection on the Encyclical *Laudato si'*. Three of the Conference's Commissions (Social Communications, Catholic Education and the Apostolate of the Laity) organized the event, inviting guest speakers to present several important and timely aspects of the document's theme. Bishop Paolo Rocco Gualtieri, Apostolic Nuncio to Madagascar, sketched out the theological aspect of the encyclical; the Secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission helped everyone reflect on the ethical dimension of

the document and on justice toward the environment, and the last speaker—a member of the Scout movement—called attention to the environmental challenges facing the country and offered suggestions as to how to tackle them in a practical way, for instance: by recycling garbage, setting aside agricultural zones in urban areas, and implementing reforestation projects.

The Daughters of St. Paul contributed to the event by publishing the Pope's encyclical and disseminating it among the people.

CZECH REPUBLIC

MEETINGS OF DIOCESAN CATECHISTS



This year, the community of the Daughters of St. Paul of Prague participated in the meetings of the diocesan catechists, continuing their participation which started at the National Congress of Catechists of the Czech Republic.

The first aim of their participation is, of course, to be present by way of the productions of our Pauline publishing house. It is always very nice and engaging to talk personally with the people. Even more effective are the informal meetings, where one can hear directly from individual catechists what they are using, what they are looking for and what they need. These needs are then transformed into editorial decisions by the FSPs.

In these meetings the Paulines are also invited to give their input on the use of social media, and how to make the hour of adoration and *lectio divina*. All are valuable opportunities to communicate the joy of the Gospel and the beauty of the Pauline charism.

INDIA

SR. SCHOLASTICA D'SOUZA CELEBRATES HER 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

On the Feast of St. Joseph 2016, the Daughters of St Paul of India gathered in



their chapel in Bandra, Mumbai, to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Profession of Sr. Scholastica D'Souza, the first Indian FSP vocation, who is known lovingly to all as the "first flower" of the Province.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration highlighted the beauty of the Pauline vocation and Sr. Scholastica's 60 years of total commitment to the Lord throughout those challenging years. About 20 relatives and friends joined the sisters and formandees for the Eucharistic Liturgy, by means of which they thanked and praised God for the gift of Sr. Scholastica to their circumscription. A subsequent exchange of greetings and good wishes increased the joy and festivity of the occasion.

MALAWI

INAUGURATION OF OUR NEW FSP FOUNDATION



The Daughters of St. Paul of Malawi inaugurated the Institute's newest foundation on the Feast of the Annunciation, which this year was celebrated on 2 April 2016. Sr. Praxides, a member of the community, informs us that the Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by His Grace Tarcizio Ziyaye, the Archbishop of Lilongwe, who entrusted their little community and its apostolate to the Lord and the Blessed Mother.

As an introduction to the Mass, the sisters gave the participants a short history of the Congregation, its charism and apostolate.

"In his homily," Sr. Praxides writes, "the Archbishop linked the mystery of the Incarnation to the Pauline apostolate, saying that with the annunciation of the Lord, the history of the salvation of humanity begins.

"Mary's yes is the yes of the Daughters of St Paul too, who through their mission say yes to the Lord so that the Word of God may become incarnate in their own lives. The Archbishop concluded that it is only when the word become flesh in us that we are able to give Jesus to the world."

The Eucharistic Liturgy was followed by refreshments with the Archbishop, priests and the laity.

Our sisters thank God and all the FSPs for their supportive prayers during this foundation period. And we too rejoice with our missionaries, who are helping to concretize the Founder's dream to bring the Gospel to every people and nation in the knowledge that *our boundaries are those of the world.*

Calendar of the General Government

11-19 April	Canada	Fraternal Visit	Sr. Anna Caiazza Sr. Shalimar Rubia
4-19 April	Spain	Fraternal Visit	Sr. Lucia Kim Sr. Karen Anderson Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
29 April - 9 May	Rome/Generalate	Seminar on Apostolic Mysticism	General Government
9-13 May	Rome	UISG Assembly	Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
21 May - 11 June	Colombia	Visit for a Specific Purpose	Sr. Gabriella Santon
23 May - 8 June	Southern Africa	Fraternal Visit	Sr. Lucia Kim Sr. Karen Anderson
23 May - 3 June	Portugal	Fraternal Visit	Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan

INTEGRAL YOUTH FORMATION: A NECESSITY FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

BY JOSEPHINE IDOWU OLUFUNMILAYO, FSP



Sr. Josephine's choice of theme for her thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry is very important for the mission of the Daughters of St. Paul in Africa.

Since Africa is a young continent, there is an urgent need to face the problem of the integral formation of its younger generations in view of the future of both society and the Church.

The thesis is divided into four parts: Chapter One reflects on the problems facing African youth today and the consequences of this on the Local Church. Chapter Two consists of a literature review and an examination of the agents of youth formation in Africa, while Chapter Three presents the prophetic role of youth in the Church.

The core of the thesis lies in Chapter Four, in which the author offers recommendations and a plan for pastoral action concerning the formation of young people on the economic, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual levels. The Church must "wake up," she says, and make the effort to meet young people in their concrete situations. She then offers a number of practical suggestions concerning how to develop a program for integral youth formation—one that will allow them to put their Christian ideals into meaningful action.

The thesis concludes with the observation that to form young people to face the challenges of the contemporary world is to offer them the greatest tool for their development as human beings, and the Church must not back away from this responsibility.

The author's research and reflections can be of benefit to the Daughters of St. Paul in helping us to better contextualize our program for aspirants on the continent and develop an inculturated formation program that responds to the concrete needs of young people today.

THE CONCEPT OF CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IN ST. PAUL (GA. 2:20)

BY ANDREA RUIZ ESPITIA, FSP



In her thesis, presented to the Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure University, Bogota, Colombia, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Biblical Theology, Sr. Andrea reflects more deeply on

St. Paul's words to the Galatians, which are the heart of the Pauline spirituality: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

The author develops her work in three parts. Chapter One is an exegesis of the text: an analysis of its structure and literary context, followed by an analysis of the verse itself. Chapter Two explains the theological terminology concerning the concept of conformity to Christ. Chapter Three analyzes the hermeneutical construction of the text and presents a proposal for conformity to Christ based on the Pauline experience of Blessed James Alberione, Founder of the Pauline Family.

In her conclusion, the author states that St. Paul's conformity to Christ was expressed in his choice to follow him and become his disciple, dying to self so as to proclaim Christ to everyone. Thus, to be "other Christs" means that we must die to everything that separates us from the Lord's thoughts and feelings so as to put into practice the Christian and religious proposal, namely: to live in Christ and work to establish the kingdom of God in the world.

The thesis is enriched by a good bibliography of texts for deeper reflection on the theme, especially titles that offer Pauline thought on the subject.



INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: HOW TO HEAL DECAY

The first Pope named Francis gifted the Church and world with its first encyclical on the environment, entitled *“Laudato Si: On the Care of Our Common Home”*—a very “Franciscan” title. Indeed, the document opens with the first lines of St. Francis’ “Canticle of the Creatures.”

POORER AND EVER-MORE IMPOVERISHED EARTH

The Pope’s courageous text relaunches the timeliness of the saint of Assisi, the form of evangelical life he practiced, and his successful attempt to reform the Church from within through the demanding choices of poverty and the poor. And today who is poorer and ever-more impoverished than the earth? In fact, “the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (n. 2). We well know that our planet is undergoing systematic abuse and even though Pope Francis makes a point of avoiding the use of apocalyptic terminology, he has no fear of pointing out bitter truths, declaring that “the exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits” (n. 27), which are, in fact “reaching a breaking point” (n. 61)—the famous “point of no return” regarding the sustainability of human life.

The first of the document’s six chapters (*What is happening to our common home*), reviews the various aspects of the ecological crisis: pollution, waste, global warming, the loss of biodiversity, climate change...but with a unique twist in that it highlights how “the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together” (n. 48; cf. no. 56). As a result, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach” (n. 49; cf. nn. 93, 139). In other words, questioning ourselves about the created world always means questioning ourselves about the meaning and purpose of the human being within that framework: whether or not we are acting responsibly in this regard. In short, environmental ecology goes hand-in-hand with human ecology. Furthermore, the latter raises global issues like hunger, the universal distribution of goods, social inclusion, and blossoms spontaneously into a social ecology based on fraternity.

A TRULY GLOBAL DIMENSION

All too often, the cry of the poor echoes the cry of the earth since it is the poor who pay the highest price in the ecological crisis: “These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course” (n. 53). The weaving together of the three forms of ecology (environmental, human and social) gives the encyclical a tru-

ly global dimension. The document is very innovative: it does not get bogged down in sectorial issues but urges human beings to adopt a new way of looking at things, a new way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality in opposition to the technocratic paradigm (cf. n. 111).

NATURE OR CREATION?

Do Christians have anything authoritative to say about the environmental crisis? The encyclical seems to say yes. It takes advantage of the *Gospel of Creation* (Chapter Two) to move from the wisdom of the biblical accounts of creation to the admiration and tenderness with which Jesus gazed upon the world, human beings and all creatures (nn. 62-100). It clarifies that the word “creation” has a broader meaning than just “nature” (n. 76), saying that creation should not be divinized (cf. n. 8); that every creature has its own purpose and that “soil, water, mountains: everything is a caress of God” (n. 84). The Pope cites St. Thomas in sustaining that “God’s goodness cannot be represented fittingly by any one creature” but he also does not fail to point out the singular place human beings hold among creatures. However, he warns, this “pre-eminence” must not be exercised despotically but instead must be united to responsibility (cf. nn. 90, 220). Without this awareness, we fall into a “misguided anthropocentrism” (n. 118)—the prevailing attitude of a certain modern mentality that was the primary cause and accelerator of the serious ecological crisis we are facing today (Chapter 3: *The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis*).

From this problematic background, the encyclical rises up to point out positive ways of approaching ecological decay: first, by adopting the concept of integral ecology, that is, by viewing environmental, cultural and social ecology as a whole (Chapter 4), presupposing that the way we approach the problem is itself a part of the solution.

Faced with the glaring impasse of public dialogue on ecology (meetings of political leaders, summits, international conferences...), the fifth chapter (*Lines of Approach and Action*) calls for “a more responsible overall approach” (n. 175) that should lead to a new governance of creation. In what sense? Not only through the backing of the



most authoritative international bodies but also through policies that are not subject to the economy, and an economy that is freed from the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy (cf. n. 189).

The encyclical concludes with a reflection on “ecological conversion” (Chapter 6: *Ecological Education and Spirituality*), which, in the Christian experience, is neither optional nor secondary. This conversion will be profound and enduring to the degree that it is integral, that is, to the degree that it involves all the areas of life of every person and community. In short, an authentic and converted Christian life is the best antidote to the ecological crisis.

Fr. Ugo Sartorio

OFM delegate on the themes of
Justice, Peace and the Safeguarding of Creation

EARTH DAY 2016

Earth Day, celebrated annually on 22 April—a month and two days after the Spring Equinox—was launched in 1970 for students of all grade levels (including university) to sensitize young people to environmental protection. Over the years, it has become an educational and informative event. Groups of ecologists take advantage of the occasion to evaluate the earth’s environmental problems: air, water and soil pollution; the destruction of ecosystems; the thousands of plant and animal species that are becoming extinct; the depletion of non-renewable resources...

On Earth Day 2016 a landmark agreement on climate change, adopted in Paris last December with the consensus of nearly 200 nations, was signed at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, U.S.A.

MAESTRA THECLA AND MY GARDEN



I could compare my relationship with Prima Maestra Thecla—a rapport of affection, trust and docility on my part—to a beautiful garden filled with flowers of all different sizes and colors. During my years of formation (1949-1956), many little “buds” sprouted in the form of chance encounters during which the two of us would exchange simple greetings and smiles, or else in the form of the short conferences she delivered to our formation group. A lovely “flower” that stands out in my memory was the one I received from her on 6 February 1957. I was leaving for Australia and I went to say goodbye to her (at that time, Maestra Thecla was a patient at Albano). She wanted to greet me on her feet, even though her nurses were not in favor of this. Prima Maestra gave me a warm hug and exclaimed with a smile, “A Pauline missionary should always be welcomed like this!”

Several years later I was transferred back to Rome and I spent a few months in the Generalate. I remember in particular our wonderful recreations, in which Prima Maestra always took part. I noted the naturalness with which she “stole” a few minutes from prayer to throw herself wholeheartedly into our joyous conviviality. One evening I was seated next to her in the courtyard. She looked at me intently and said in the Piedmontese dialect three times, each time more forcefully: “We have to become saints. We have to become *saints*. We have to become SAINTS.... If we don’t, then we should be beaten!” The next moment, she was immersed in the cheerful chatter swirling around us.

Prima Maestra was perpetually urged on by the yearning to give glory to God and do good to souls. In the early 1960’s the FSPs began to hold catechetical weeks, especially in the Ancona diocese. It was essential to prepare guides and study aids at very reduced prices so as to guarantee a good diffusion of this material. I had the joy of accompanying Maestra Assunta when she went to ask Maestra Thecla for advice about this initiative and permission to carry it out. The core of the matter was that we had a lot of expenses, yet the project required low prices. Maestra The-

cla listened attentively to the problem laid out before her and then asked a single question: “But will it do good?” Maestra Assunta replied: “There’s no doubt about that—it’s all Christian doctrine.” And Maestra Thecla said decisively: “Then go ahead. Don’t lose any time preparing the things that will do good to souls!”

My garden is filled with many more flowers—I wish you could visit it so as to see them for yourselves. But how? Unfortunately, the garden is sealed shut!

Elisabetta Capello, fsp

PRIMA MAESTRA IS YOUR MODEL



Prima Maestra is not only your Mother, she is also your model. Every Daughter of St. Paul who wants to be worthy of this name should examine herself in the looking glass of the one who was always and everywhere, in everything and at all cost, the model of the perfect Pauline. It can truly be said that a person could no longer see any defects in her. We all have defects, there’s no doubt about that, because only God is perfect. But in Prima Maestra all these defects, compared with our smallness, seemed to be virtues—virtues that did not enable her to do everything she yearned to do, however, in that they did not embrace all the points [she felt] God wanted....

Prima Maestra is your true model. Imitate her. You might be offended if I repeat this, but your indignation is sweet because it incites you to greater and greater filial fidelity. You have your model: Look at yourself in the mirror of her life; do what Prima Maestra did. Now, from heaven, she can say to you along with St. Paul: “Imitate me like I imitate Christ!”

Prima Maestra was your Mother.... You think of her, remember her, and feel that she is still alive. She was truly a lovable, kind and maternal person. Take her as your perfect model. “I believe in eternal life”: we believe in eternal life and consider Prima Maestra as being always alive in God.

Cardinal Arcadio Larraona

**PURSUED BY THE
HOUND OF HEAVEN...**

MY VOCATION STORY



Avocation is a response to the gift and mystery of God's call: "You did not choose me; I chose you" (Jn. 15:15).

I am Sr. Carmencita Garcia, a Filipina missionary in Italy. Looking back on my journey of faith and my relationship of love with the Master in this 24th year of my religious profession is indeed a privilege.

I am the oldest of five children and I grew up in a Catholic family. My parents, especially my mother, paved the way for my vocation. When I was small, my mother used to take me to the local Carmelite monastery every year on my birthday to light a candle in thanksgiving (I was born on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel). That yearly practice ignited my curiosity about the sisters hidden behind the cloister grille, who sang like angels.

But as I grew up, I put thoughts about the convent aside and concentrated on my school life. In college, I majored in chemical engineering and eventually forgot about those sisters behind the grille. Because I was very determined to succeed in my profession, I started to dream and plan for the future. In view of this, I began to seek positions in big companies around the country even before I graduated from the university.

After passing the State board examination for chemical engineers, I began working as an apprentice engineer, but I was interiorly restless. This disturbed me and I asked God what he was trying to tell me.

I felt drawn like a magnet to daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration. I joined various Catholic organizations (the Youth Charismatic Group and the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima) and took an active part in them.

In the midst of my searching, I thought back to those trips to the Carmelite monastery with my mother. Inspired by this, I went to a nearby monastery, hoping to talk to one of the nuns. God sent me the right one—a very patient Sister who took the time to speak with me and answer my questions. That was the beginning of my renewed interest in the religious life.

Soon afterward, I went back to my hometown, found a job in the city and made new friends. Deep within me, the aching sense of emptiness and restlessness continued, but I tried to ignore it because my determination to make it "big" in my profession was still very strong and I was almost at the peak of my goals.

One day, as I was walking down the street, I saw an arrow pointing to an open door. Out of curiosity, I went in and found myself in a big room filled with girls and two Sisters. They all welcomed me with big smiles. The gathering was a "search in"—a day of recollection guided by the Daughters of St. Paul. I felt very much at home among the participants and I was impressed by the kindness and hospitality of the Sisters.

That unplanned visit became a monthly commitment. Things happened very quickly after that: I filled out forms and wrote a letter asking to join the Institute's group of aspirants for that year (1987). I started gathering the things I needed to bring to the convent, told my parents about my decision and resigned my job. Both my parents were very supportive.

Everything was ready, but then, a few days before I was due to leave, I got cold feet and



decided I did not want to become a nun after all. I wrote a letter to the FSP Provincial Superior, telling her I had decided not to enter the convent because I felt I could serve God in other ways. In fact, I considered joining a lay missionary group working with indigenous tribes or else volunteering for one of the non-governmental groups working for the poor. I had many plans about how to serve others without becoming a religious sister....

In the meantime, I tried to avoid meeting the Daughters of St. Paul. I stopped visiting them and no longer attended their monthly retreats. Every time I received an invitation from them, I would send my younger sisters—and even my brother!—in my place. I would find alibis and even go out of town in order not to meet the Sisters. For more than a year, I “hid” from them.

But on Good Friday 1988, while I was standing in line for confession, somebody behind me tapped me on the shoulder and I knew right away that it was a Daughter of St. Paul (I had caught a glimpse of her blue habit out of the corner of my eye). It was one of the smiling Sisters whom I had met on my first encounter with them. The Sister did not ask me anything but warmly invited me to visit them again. Deep inside I resisted her invitation but I could not say so. A week after that unexpected meeting, I attended a welcome

celebration for our new Bishop, who was the former parish priest of my mother’s hometown. Of all the places available in the room, we were given seats right next to the Daughters of St. Paul! I knew then that I could not avoid them anymore.

I was very interested in their life but at the same time it terrified me! The whole idea of leaving everything behind made my stomach flutter, yet in my more honest (and stronger) moments, I had to admit that it was the place that attracted me the most.

I believed God was calling me, but how could I leave my family, my engineering career and my dreams about the future? This was the beginning of my real discernment. I spent a lot of time in Eucharistic Adoration, where I always found peace and the courage to go forward.

I finally resumed my visits to the Sisters and a few months later I entered the Congregation. Despite the bumps and humps along the way, I have never regretted that decision because I am convinced that God has called me to the life that is best for me. Like the *Hound of Heaven* described by the poet, Francis Thompson, the Lord continues to pursue me with his ever-patient understanding and his unconditional, faithful love.

Sr. Carmencita Garcia, fsp

CATHOLICS IN THE WORLD



According to Vatican sources (the *Annuario Pontificio 2016* and the *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae 2014*), there are an estimated 1.3 billion Catholics throughout the world, making up 17.8% of the global population. The number of baptized in

Africa has increased by 40%, in Asia, by 20%, in the Americas, by 11% and in Europe, by 2%. The number of bishops and priests has also increased but the latter, after experiencing a progressive growth rate up until 2011, are now in slow decline.

As for religious: in 2014 there were 683,000 professed sisters, 54,000 professed men religious (excluding priests), and 44,500 permanent deacons. The deacons are the group expanding most noticeably: from 33,000 in 2005 to 45,000 in 2014—a growth rate of 33.5%. This data reveals a substantial diversity according to geographical areas: Africa and Asia are experiencing notable growth, while the Americas are basically stable and Europe is in decline.

THE MEDIUM AND MESSAGE OF AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION



The Pope's Message for World Communications Day 2016 is part of a trilogy that should be read as a whole, not restricted to the framework of the Jubilee Year.

The relationship between communication and mercy was already present in the icon of the Good Samaritan: if we let it touch our hearts, we cannot help but take action, allowing it to make us multipliers of "closeness to others." But the initiative springs from the pleas of the other person, not from the fact that we are "good." God is always the priority. Mercy is not a case of "you must be" [a command] but "you should be" [an invitation]. It is a love that seizes us and takes us to places we wouldn't be able to reach under our own power.

Last year's Message, based on the icon of the Visitation, cast light on two other aspects of communication: to take the initiative to share the Good News, communicating it with one's whole being, and above all to realize that communication is possible because we are already "in relationship" even before being "individuals." Because of this, the maternal womb is the first school of communication and the family is the second.

This year's Message should be understood against the background of a truth deeply cherished by Pope Francis and that is ontological, anthropological and theological at one and the same time. Or, to put it even more briefly: it is mystical. And that truth is: "everything is connected" (*Laudato si*, 16).

It is the mercy of God, his "stooping down to us," that holds the world together. Without his

infinitely forgiving love, the world would not exist. And love, we read in the Pope's Message, is by its very nature communication. It "infects" people and sets things in motion, activating resources and energies. But it is possible for us to be merciful only because we have received mercy.

With mercy, communication shortens distances on the horizontal plane and is enriched with a new dimension: the vertical movement of God bending over us, which transforms radical distance into closeness. This is a revolutionary icon in a time that believes that every asymmetry is a premise for domination and that the sole alternative is an equality that eliminates every diversity. Pope Francis says something very different. He says that the alternative to domination is mercy—the greatest serving the least.

Mercy is a very specific response to the anthropological challenges of our times. For this reason, it is wrong to accuse mercy of being "hopelessly idealistic or excessively indulgent" because on the one hand it is very demanding, and on the other it is not an escape but a privileged portal to the flesh of reality. The capacity to take care of one another leads to a profound and concrete understanding that is capable of pointing out paths of action that are both respectful and effective.

Here are three more points I would like to briefly underscore:

First, mercy is the love of God for the human being in his/her entirety; it restores dignity to every dimension of the person. Its language is that of warmth and tenderness. Consequently, communication is always integral. It is not only a transmission of thought but the language of a "living body," immersed in a network of affection and directed to the whole person—the antithesis of a depersonalized and depersonalizing communication.

A second important aspect: to communicate in a relationship of closeness gives rise to "positive and creative boldness." Instead, negative communications "stoke the flames of mistrust, fear and hatred"; they create division and conflict; they dig pits and trenches; they betray the mandate to foster the growth of communion.

Finally, every last trace of "digital dualism" is eliminated, given that "even emails, text messages, social networks and chats can be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology that determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart." Mercy takes on a power that is also political and contributes to building a healthy society that is open to sharing.

Chiara Giaccardi

Professor of Media Sociology and Anthropology,
Sacred Heart University, Milan, Italy



ITALY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY!

Meetings, discussion groups, workshops, concerts, congresses, theater performances, animations, cineforums, round table sessions, exhibits, contests, reading competitions, press conferences, meetings with authors, awards, prayer vigils, *lectios*, Eucharistic Celebrations, live TV coverage, social talk, Happy Books....

This is the colorful kaleidoscope of initiatives offered by the SSPs and FSPs during the Communications Weeks and Communications Festivals they have been holding in Italy for the past eleven years with the encouragement and support of the Social Communications Office of the Italian Bishops' Conference.

The purpose of the annual event is to utilize the bond between communications and culture as a strategic environment for pastoral renewal and evangelization in contemporary society.

To circulate ideas, give life to creative dynamics and dialogue, heighten sensitivity to WCD, augment a circular flow of relations between ecclesial and socio-cultural organisms, offer spaces and motives for reflection on life, on interpersonal and media-generated communications, on the Church, on God,

on the wealth of values and potentials in our cities that can make human encounters beautiful and fruitful.... This is undoubtedly the best way to heighten awareness concerning the pastoral importance and significance of World Communications Day—a Day established by the Church in response to the solicitations of Vatican Council II and which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

LOGO OF COMMUNICATIONS WEEK 2016



The logo of Communications Week 2016 was designed by Marco Zanchi. The event will take place this year in Arezzo from 1-8 May, together with the Festival and many itinerant activities organized within the Week. The

logo depicts two people embracing each other in forgiveness. From this embrace emerges a trail where women, children, refugees, friends, brothers, and singles, without distinction of origin or age, meet together.

“People of diverse faiths and cultures, coming into this trail of love, do not stop and wait, but initiate encounters of peace and solidarity.”

WINDOW ON THE CHURCH

ETHIOPIA: THE JUBILEE OF MERCY
VIA RADIO WAVES



To make use of all available tools to spread knowledge on the themes of the extraordinary Holy Year indicted by Pope Francis, and encourage everyone to put them into practice.

In response to this appeal, the Ethiopian Bishops' Conference, through its Executive Secretariat (ECS), is using several national radio networks to air special programs on the themes of the Jubilee. These networks have great impact in a country with 100 million inhabitants scattered throughout large urban centers like Addis Abeba and isolated rural areas. The Bishops' Conference is also taking advantage of this opportunity to share reflections linked to the Pope's encyclical *Laudato si.*'

Three radio networks in particular (those with the highest audience figures) have aired most of the programs in Aramaic, the official language commonly spoken throughout the various communities of Ethiopia. As the ECS spokesperson explained in a press release: "Following the words of the Holy Father, we decided to communicate the message of mercy not only to Catholics but also to all people of good will, that is, the population as a whole. That is why we have opted for a media tool like the radio, which can be easily accessed throughout the country. Ethiopian communities living across the borders can listen to the programs through live streaming online."

POPE FRANCIS: THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR LEADER

According to a poll taken by WIN/Gallup International, a giant of sociological research, Pope Francis is the world's most popular



public figure. The poll also reveals that while Catholics and Jews are the religious groups that have the highest opinion of the pontiff, more than half of all Protestants and the vast majority of atheists and agnostics view him favorably. The survey conducted was based on a sampling of men and women in 64 countries, representing various religions, ages, income groups and races. Jean-Marc Leger, president of WIN/Gallup International, says: "Pope Francis is a leader who transcends his own religion. Our studies show that a large majority of the world's citizens from many different religious affiliations and from all parts of the planet have a favorable image of him."

POPE FRANCIS ON INSTAGRAM



After the experience of his Twitter@Pontifex account, which is followed by more than 25 million people in 9 languages, Pope Francis has now joined Instagram under the name "Franciscus."

Instagram is a social network that allows users to take pictures and videos and share them on many other social services. It is thus a new frontier that will allow the Pope to reach the world—especially the world of youth, since many young people are enthusiastic Instagram users.

"Instagram will help recount the papacy through images, to enable all those who wish to accompany and know more about

Pope Francis's pontificate to encounter his gestures of tenderness and mercy," said Dario Viganò, the Vatican's prefect of the Secretariat for Communications.

Msgr. Viganò concluded his press release by citing the words of the Pope in his Bull launching the Jubilee Year of Mercy, saying he hoped that the Holy Father's presence on this social network "will open us [all] to more fervent dialogue so that we might come to know and understand one another better" (MV 23).

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

SEOUL, SEOSOMUN CATHOLIC SHRINE TO BECOME A CULTURE PARK



The Jung District of the South Korean capital has decided to transform into a *historical and cultural park* the Catholic shrine of Seosomun, dedicated to the memory of the first martyrs of Korean Christianity. This is the place where the canonization of the holy martyrs of Korea took place in 1985, through the efforts of John Paul II. It will be renovated and incorporated into the park dedicated to the Joseon dynasty, which ruled the country for almost eight centuries. While providing continuity in Korea, it also carried out brutal persecutions against Christians.

LEBANON: NEW TV CHANNEL TO DECLARE "WAR ON WAR"



A new satellite channel dedicated entirely to information, with news presented in the light of Church precepts, aims to build bridges of peace, to provide points of reference for those who want to work for the

common good and to "make war on war" in the heart of the Middle East, which is torn by bloody conflicts.

This is the ambitious program adopted by all-news television network *Noursat-Tele Lumiere*, inaugurated in its headquarters in Dora, in the north-eastern suburb of Beirut, during a ceremony that was attended by Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, apostolic Nuncio to Lebanon, and Boulos Matar, Maronite Archbishop of Beirut.

WIKIPEDIA CELEBRATES ITS 15TH BIRTHDAY



Founded 15 years ago, *Wikipedia* has become the Internet's largest and most popular search engine. Students and teachers, journalists and experts, professionals or the simply curious are all unable to resist the shortcuts to information offered by this general reference work.

As stated on its home page, *Wikipedia* is "a free-access, free-content Internet encyclopedia." Available in more than 280 languages, it offers information typical of traditional encyclopedias, plus data found in almanacs, atlases and specialized publications.

The managers of the website say that most of the articles in the encyclopedia can be freely edited; anyone can contribute information to already-existing articles or else can create new ones.

To celebrate its fifteenth birthday, the Wikipedia Foundation has launched two initiatives: the first is a question posted on its home page, asking users: *What does Wikipedia mean to you?* And the second is a press release with a list of the fifteen pages that have been changed the most in its history.

The only two religious voices on the list are: *Catholic Church*, with 26,000 changes, and *Jesus Christ*, with 25,000 changes.

WINDOW ON COMMUNICATIONS

PRAYER APP: CLICK TO PRAY



A click to pray or, better yet, a click to unite one’s prayers to those of countless brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world. The innovative app, already in operation, is a digital platform promoted by the Apostleship of Prayer. As Fr. Frederic Fornos, SJ, international director of the Association, explains: “The initiative came into being to help people pray according to the intentions of the Pope, particularly during this Year of Mercy. We wanted a simple app that would encourage people to commit themselves to praying for the challenges of the world and the mission of the Church.”

The short texts invite people to participate in a spiritual experience by entering the “school of Jesus” from the perspective of the Pope’s prayer intentions. In addition to being an app, *Click To Pray* is also a social network platform.

**UNESCO:
RADIO IS THE VOICE OF LIFE AND OF HOPE**



A virtual world tour caravan through music in just over two hours: this is the initiative promoted by EBU (European Broadcasting Union) on the occasion of the World Day of Radio. Launched by UNESCO, the Day is celebrated on 13 February. The theme for

2016: *The Radio in Times of Emergency and Disaster.*

“Among the ruins of an emergency situation, the radio is often the first means of survival. Immediacy, simplicity and low cost”, emphasizes Irina Bukova, Director-General of UNESCO, in a message for the occasion, “make the radio a tool that promotes community life and strengthens social ties, allowing, for example, separated families to reunite and recover hope.”

VOICE OF PEACE RADIO



In 2010, the community radio station *Voice of Peace*, one of the new stations of the Catholic Radio Network (CRN) set up by the Episcopal Conference of Sudan, began broadcasting in the small village of Gidel. The purpose of the transmissions is to disseminate peace in the Nubian mountain region on the border between Sudan and South Sudan—the epicenter of one of the longest-running and most ignored wars on the African continent. *Voice of Peace* has become a genuine point of reference for the people of the area, not only for its news (which is broadcast in English, Arabic and three local languages), but also for its programs on literacy, health, civic education and pastoral accompaniment.

The hope of the station is that one day it will be able to broadcast the news that peace has finally been established in this martyred Sudanese region.



**"I am the resurrection
and the life.
The ones who believe
in me will live,
even though they die.**

John 11:25

DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL

Sr. M. Flavia Leonilla Ferrari—age 86—27.01.2016, Alba, Italy
Sr. M. Paola Giuseppina Di Girolamo—age 72—10.02.2016, Rome, Italy
Sr. M. Cristina Maria de Jesus Ochoa Monje—age 76—13.02.2016, Mexico City, Mexico
Sr. M. Tarcisia Ippolita Pasquale—age 79—14.02.2016, Albano, Italy
Sr. Laurina (Laura) Profazi—age 91—25.02.2016, Albano GA, Italy
Sr. Giovanna Onorina Isidora Val—age 88—26.02.2016, Alba, Italy
Sr. Maria Rosa Piensi—age 70—03.03.2016, Albano, Italy
Sr. Giacinta Nerina De Stefani—age 99—10.03.2016, Alba, Italy
Sr. M. Amalia Grazia Esposito—age 94—19.03.2016, Albano GA, Italy
Sr. Agnes Maria Tamiko Motomura—age 77—30.03.2016, Hiratsuka, Japan
Sr. M. Gabriella Maria Angela Martini—age 99—31.03.2016, Alba, Italy
Sr. M. Gabriella Sumiko Motomura—age 87—08.04.2016, Hiratsuka, Japan
Sr. M. Ermelinda Addolorata Malaculeo—age 83—16.04.2016, Albano GA, Italy

PARENTS OF OUR SISTERS

Sr. Liliana Campos Charry (Father, Ramiro), of the Cucuta, Colombia community
Sr. Rose Melkulangara (Father, Matthew), of the Albano GA, Italy community
Sr. Mimma Margeriti (Mother, Anna), of the Alba SG, Italy community
Sr. Carmen Billones (Mother, Inocencia), of the Bacolod, Philippines community
Sr. Maria Josefa San Luis (Mother, Teresita Nadia), of the Pasay RA, Philippines community
Sr. Evangeline Lushikuna (Father, Ngoy Modeste), of the Kisangani, Congo community
Sr. Lucilla Chang (Mother, Ini Bona), of the Seoul-Miari, Korea community
Sr. Suman Jacinta Tigga (Mother, Luisa), of the Nagpur, India community
Sr. Gladys Odigwe (Mother, Virginia), of the Nairobi GH, Kenya community
Sr Karen Theresa Eng (Father, Heok Ngee) of the Singapore community

PAULINE FAMILY

Br. Natale Angelo Pellizzari, ssp, age 70—23.01.2016—Alba, Italy
Br. Aldo Pier Daniele Toppan, ssp, age 86—23.01.2016—Alba, Italy
Br. Antonio Alberto Parlavecchio, ssp, age 67—25.01.2016—Alba, Italy
Sr. M. Alfonsa Theresa D'Souza, pddm, age 76—02.02.2016—Bangalore, India
Sr. Piera Agnese Rossetto, sjbp, age 70—02.02.2016—Negrar, Italy
Sr. M. Egidia Celina Maccioni, pddm, age 81—14.02.2016—Albano Laziale, Italy
Fr. Servillano III Martin Sinoy, ssp, age 52—26.02.2016—Cagayan De Oro, Philippines
Sr. M. Karla M. Elena Castro Valenzuela, pddm, age 61—09.03.2016—Mexico City, Mexico
Sr. M. Tarcisia Araceli Pacheco Camargo, pddm, age 72—16.03.2016—Bogotá, Colombia
Br. Eliécer Antonio Lopez Sarmiento, ssp, age 75—19.03.2016—Bogotá, Colombia
Fr. Giuseppe Attilio Dadomo, ssp, age 93—27.03.2016—Rome, Italy
Sr. M. Amalia Villa Garcia, pddm, age 76—31.03.2016—Madrid, Spain
Br. Vittorio Stefano Cristofori, ssp, age 85—03.04.2016—Rome, Italy
Fr. Aurelio Paolo Marzilli, ssp, age 86—05.04.2016—Arccia, Italy
Sr. M. Crescenza Giuseppa Spina, pddm, age 81—17.04.2016—Palermo, Italy
Sr. M. Flavia Concetta Liberto, pddm, age 76—19.04.2016—Albano Laziale, Italy