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## CALLED TO ETERNAL LIFE





### LIKE CHERRY TREES IN BLOOM

Dearest Sisters,

I am writing to you just a few days after the celebration of Easter, the central event of our Faith, as I prepare to begin my Fraternal Visit to the Province of Japan.

In my Paschal greetings to you, I spoke about concretizing the *buoyant news of the resurrection* in our daily lives. It seems to me that this buoyant spirit is aptly conveyed by the image of the cherry trees that are bursting into bloom in Japan in this season—splendid pictures transmitted around the globe by TV news channels at the beginning of April. Writing about his people, 18<sup>th</sup>-century poet Motori Norigata, said: “If you want to get to know the spirit of Japan, then think of a cherry tree in bloom, shining in the sun.” For the Japanese, the blossoming cherry tree symbolizes the radiant arrival of the long-awaited spring season after a rigid winter. It is a sign of their hope for a renewed and abundant life.

Thus Easter can be compared to the *buoyancy of a cherry tree in bloom*, accompanied by the ever-growing awareness that we need this buoyant spirit. In my Easter message, I suggested that we cast off everything that shackles, burdens, restricts and wounds us, and thank God for the gift of life, rejoicing in who we are, in who our sisters are, in what each of us does, and in the world around us—not only the parts of it that are closest to us but also those that are farther away.

We need to experience the buoyant, positive and joyous feelings of this season and communicate them to others. We need the Word to dwell within us—to take on flesh in us—so as to transfigure every reality with the Gospel. Today, the instruments of communication amplify news that is increasingly distressing and depressing. Scenes of violence and death bounce from one news channel to another.

But there is another item of news that is just as real and that many people can witness to, thank God, but that unfortunately few newscasters make the effort to publicize. It is the news that God loves the world and is at work in it. In this world, he continues to carry the cross of oppression and abandonment; he continues to communicate life and disseminate beauty. It is in our present-day world that we meet him. And because of this, every Sunday is Easter.

Sisters, during this Easter season, let us live like *children of the resurrection*, fixing our gaze “on the things that are above” (Col. 3:1). This means, as St. Paul goes on to explain, clothing ourselves in “heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. [It means] bearing with and forgiving one another.... [It means] putting on over all these clothes, the perfect bond of love” (cf. Col. 3:12-14).



According to the Apostle Paul—and also Fr. Alberione, who describes our life in the Spirit in the third part of *Donec Formetur*—we participate in the resurrection of Christ if we live the theological virtues of *faith, hope and love*, the sign of the risen Christ in us. At the pinnacle is love, which is eternal. When we love, we participate here and now in eternal life, and every act we perform out of love bears the stamp of eternity.

Dear sisters, let us move ahead together, aware that, having risen with Christ, we are now called to “unleash” the resurrection, his continual gift to us—a gift that is nourished at the Table of the Word and the Eucharist. In this way, the leaven of the risen Christ will permeate the message we proclaim, and love—the true fruit of the Spirit—will fecundate it.

In affectionate and prayerful communion with all of you,

*Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato*  
Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato  
Superior General

Rome, 12 April 2012

**THE HEART OF WISDOM**



Sr Veronica Song, fsp, of the Korean province, successfully defended her dissertation for a Licentiate in Biblical Theology at the Gregorian University of Rome with a thesis whose very title is intriguing: why the “heart of wisdom” and not “wisdom of heart”?

Enlightened by the direction of her Supervisor, Professor Bruna Costacurta, the thesis is a study of wisdom psalm 90 (89) which prayerfully and trustingly reflects the human and religious experience of Israel. Meditating on the fragility of life, Israel asks the Lord, our firm and eternal refuge, the troubling question of the meaning of life and death.

But the psalm is also approached with a “sapiential” spirit by the author of the thesis, who seeks to reach “the heart of wisdom” through a theological exegesis of the biblical text.

What exactly is the heart of this wisdom?

Human life unfold between life and death.

“Teach us to number our days,” that is, our limitations, our transitory nature, “and we will gain wisdom of heart.” God, knowledge and time are the trajectories analyzed in the thesis, and it is these which direct life along a path that is suitable for achieving its end. Seeing our finitude before the Infinite God – our mortality before the Immortal God – helps to change our way of thinking and living.

To know God, the Being outside of time.

To know oneself as a “being within time,” in a space which embraces life and death, acting in such a way that death is a part of life because it is its conclusion. The awareness of our finitude brings us back to our origins before the Eternal God, helping us understand why we are born, live, work and return to him.

To know time as a limit, but also as the meeting point with the Eternal God; to accept limitation not with tired resignation, but as the possibility of surrendering to the meaning of life.

It is in this contemplative framework that the heart of wisdom dwells.

At the conclusion of her study and research, the author affirms that the reawakening of a profound and joyous awareness – one which discovers in creaturely limitations an orientation toward the goal of an encounter with the Creator – brings wisdom to the heart and helps to anchor daily living in this awareness in expectation of the blessed hope to come.

At the same time, it could indicate how current this psalm is for post-modern human beings, lost in meaninglessness or nihilism, who – more or less consciously – feel the need of a more secure, less “liquid” point of stability, of anchorage. In reading contemporary reality, even Heidegger, an unbeliever, concluded, “Only God can save us.”

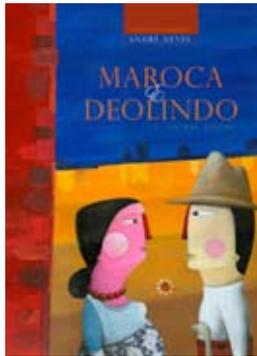
Our Studies

Calendar of the General Government			
10-17 April	Moscow	Special Visit	Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato (until 13 April) Sr. Gabriella Santon
12 April – 12 May	Japan	Fraternal Visit	Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato Sr. Francesca Matsuoka Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan Sr. Luz Helena Arroyave Sr. Gabriella Santon (from 27 April)
20-22 April 2012	Bucharest	Special Visit	Sr. Gabriella Santon
20-30 May 2012	Nairobi	Continental Meeting Apostolate-Economy	Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato Sr. Anna Caiazza Sr. Gabriella Santon

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## BRAZIL

**PAULINE PUBLISHING  
IN THE WHITE RAVENS 2012 CATALOG**



From Brazil came an original proposal from the writer-illustrator André Neves: *Maroca e Deolindo*. This Pauline publication was chosen for the *White Ravens 2012* catalog, whose sole purpose is to call attention to children's books that deserve worldwide recognition because of their universal themes and unique and innovative styles. *Maroca e Deolindo*, launched at the Bologna (Italy) Book Fair, is a beautiful journey through Brazil's calendar of feast-days and cultural/popular customs. It lovingly paints with broad strokes a world that is ready to be discovered.

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## COLOMBIA-ECUADOR

**BIRTH OF A NEW  
PAULINE SPIRITUALITY CENTER**



As a response to the thirst of the people of God of Latin America and to the pastoral needs highlighted by the Episcopal Conference of Aparecida, the Daughters of St. Paul of Colombia/Ecuador launched a new Pauline Spirituality Center: *Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life*.

This initiative was born from their profound desire to collaborate with the evangelizing mission of the Church and to promote the spiritual, biblical and theological formation of the people of God. The first onsite course to be organized was *Spirituality and the New Evangelization*, which will be followed by a virtual version and online courses.

In the future, special attention will be given to the importance of the *Lectio Divina* and some of the works of Blessed James Alberione, which will be studied on the level of the Pauline Family.

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## GERMANY

**NEW BOOK CENTER IN DUSSELDORF**



The Daughters of St. Paul of Germany have opened a new book center—*Paulus Buchhandlung*—just a few minutes away from Düsseldorf's busy main train station. Present for the inauguration were representatives of the various branches of the Pauline Family resident in the country, as well as other priests, religious, collaborators and friends.

The ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Manfred Melzer, the Bishop of Cologne, who said with great optimism: "Sacred Scripture, the Living Word, is the soul of the Pauline Book Center. That Word becomes visible when it comes in contact with the Center's customers, offering them light. I hope and pray that this new book center will become the heart and soul of Düsseldorf."

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## PORTUGAL

**SEMINAR ON  
ESOTERICISM, MAGIC AND THE OCCULT**

Numerous Christians, including many who call themselves practicing Catholics, frequently have recourse to magic, fortune-tellers, soothsayers and witches, thus contributing to an immense economic cycle. Why do they turn to magic? What meaning does all this have for a Christian?

In order to respond directly to these questions, the Montijo Parish of Lisbon, in collaboration with the Daughters of St. Paul of the capital city, launched a seminar to promote the



awareness and deepening of the burning issues of esotericism, magic and the occult. The goal was to help people free themselves from superstition and defend themselves from the errors that frequently hide behind the practice of magic and witchcraft. Currently in western society, it appears that the number of soothsayers is rapidly increasing. Father Francesco Bamonte conducted the seminar with competence and testimony.

The FSP book and audiovisual display gave the participants access to appropriate and illuminating material on the topics. Our sisters also used the occasion to launch several specific books by Father Francesco Bamonte in Portuguese.

For more information:

[www.paulinas.pt](http://www.paulinas.pt) - [www.danniocultismo.it](http://www.danniocultismo.it)

## TAIWAN

### PRIZE FOR BEST BOOK COVER



At the recent International Book Fair held in Taiwan, an international jury made up of highly-qualified members from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and France, awarded the FSP publication *Healing the Eight Stages of Life* first prize for best book cover and graphics. 455 books were in the running for the prize and this was the first time it was awarded to a Catholic publishing house—an honor conferred, through the Daughters of St. Paul, on the Local Church of Taiwan. The Secretary of the Episcopal Conference was present at

the awards ceremony, while the Archbishop stopped by our sisters' stand later to express his pleasure and gratitude.

The prize-winning cover depicts the profile of an elderly woman, who appears to be lost in thought. Alongside her face is the title of the book in Chinese calligraphy, the stylized characters seeming to repeat the countless age lines carved into her face. Across the woman's cheekbone is an artificial red gash, like a tear, simulating an open wound. The message is clear and eloquent: the love of Jesus enters a person's wounds, penetrates the depths of his/her soul and heals it. The gash allows us to glimpse the work of grace, which can transform human wounds into rainbows.

## ITALY

### SHAHBAZ BHATTI: LIFE AND MARTYRDOM OF A CHRISTIAN IN PAKISTAN



One year after the death of *Shahbaz Bhatti*, the Daughters of St Paul in Italy published a book on his life written by Roberto Zuccolini and Roberto Pietrolucci. "It is the story of a Christian who did not surrender to those who assume that it is impossible for people to live together in Pakistan. It is the story of a man who fought this error on the front lines and died a martyr.

"His story helps us enter into the mystery of a life lived for others up to the very end. It is a precious story, not only for Christians but for everyone in Pakistan, which has been seeking ways for peaceful coexistence since 1947, and for the whole world, still the scene of too many political, ethnic and religious conflicts" (from the presentation by Andrea Riccardi).

The book launch took place on Friday, March 16, 2012, in the highly symbolic setting of the Basilica of St. Bartholomew on the Tiberina Island in Rome, the shrine of the "new martyrs" and a privileged space for interreligious dialogue and ecumenism. The church conserves among its precious keepsakes the personal Bible of Shahbaz Bhatti.

## ITALY

### THE COURTYARD OF THE GENTILES IN THE FSP PALERMO BOOK CENTER



After stops in Bologna, Paris, Bucharest, Florence, Rome and Tiranna, the *Courtyard of the Gentiles* (a forum for dialogue between Christians and non-believers), promoted by the Pontifical Council for Culture in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Palermo and Palermo University, made a stop-over in Sicily. There, Christians and non-Christians alike played a lead role in meeting a crucial challenge: to respond to the highly-organized crime syndicates in this part of the world through efforts to promote a culture of dialogue and the defense of human rights. The high point of the two-day event was the gathering on 30 March in the piazza of the Palermo Cathedral. The program included testimonies, pictures, music, songs and dances emphasizing the commitment of ordinary citizens to fostering not only dialogue but also law and order. A new feature of the Courtyard, launched during the Palermo stopover, was the *Children's Courtyard*, held on 30 March in the FSP book center. There, hundreds of pictures sent in by children from all over the island were on display—an extension and enrichment of the 30-meter-long picture also drawn by children and displayed in the Cathedral piazza. In addition to the *Children's Courtyard*, the FSP book center offered visitors the chance to participate in the communications process through live TV and radio broadcasts.

## UNITED STATES

### A NEW GATHERING ON THE LEVEL OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

The Pauline Family held its first spirituality day in the new conference hall of the Soci-



ety of St. Paul on Staten Island (New York). In addition to members of the Pauline Congregations, about 60 lay persons took part in the event. The day was organized with a twofold goal: to introduce the laity to the ecclesial, apostolic and spiritual dimensions of the Pauline Family, and at the same time to strengthen the bonds of communion within the Pauline Family itself. The positive outcome has already led our sisters and brothers to program a second encounter for this coming August. It promises to be a joyful preparation for the Centenary of the birth of the Pauline Family.

## SPAIN

### PAULINE BOOK CENTER OF VALLADOLID



The Pauline Book Center of Valladolid, with over 50 years of service in this city of enormous historical and cultural importance for Spain, has been completely renovated in order to offer improved service to the people of the city and the district. The lighting, new design and shelving all help to create a broader and brighter space that offers a wealth of books, music, DVDs. This has helped concretize the indispensable structural transformation and communicates the vibrancy and welcome that characterize our apostolic service: "The book center is a temple; the staff are preachers; light, sanctity and joy in Jesus Christ and Christian life are the fruits sought; the service desk is a pulpit of truth" (Bl. James Alberione).



Francesca Pratllo, fsp

## FAITH AS A RELATIONSHIP

**H**ow should we view faith today? In our modern technological age, faith seems to be a mysterious, unknown planet and the Living God irremediably lost.... But what if God has only been eclipsed? A solar eclipse does not mean that the sun has been extinguished. Tomorrow, any obstacles between God and myself could be removed, giving rise to the hope of his return. His “disappearance” from in my life could be triggered by the cloud of haste, superficiality, and a feeling of emptiness that prevents me from sensing and seeing the Other and others.

The result is an ever-more fragmented and uninhabitable world. Genuine dialogue, and therefore every genuine relationship, always leads to a profound and unconditional welcome of the “otherness” of God and of the people I meet in the course of life.

Faith accompanies my existence from the outset and takes on different forms as I grow. Initially, its object is the persons and things I need for survival and thus is based exclusively on the witness of those who nurture my life. As I grow my horizons expand, and my faith reaches maturity when I discover that no person, thing or situation on earth can adequately satisfy my interior yearnings. Only at this point do I begin to seek God and faith autonomously. Because it is a relationship, faith’s sole goal is *contact with the Other [God]* and this contact, in turn, enables me to enter into communion with the many “others” around me.

In speaking about faith, divine Revelation uses two words laden with meaning: the He-

brew word *’emunah* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *pistis* in the New Testament. These are two different but complementary aspects of faith. When the Bible speaks about the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Job, etc., it uses the word *’emunah*, which means “to trust Someone.” A person of faith is one who is “promised and entrusted to the Living God.” And God, on his part, sustains and protects that individual.

Faith is mutual exchange in a spirit of dialogue. It is not a rule book that tells me what I must do. Concretely speaking, to live in a spirit of *’emunah* means to stand on my own two feet, to be steadfast, to persevere wholeheartedly under the gaze of the living God. Faith as a relationship reaches its fulfillment in the New Testament. Only when I reach the point of *pistis* (absolute truth) do I realize that it is not enough to simply trust God. I must acknowledge him as the Absolute Truth of my life.

A trusting relationship (*’emunah*) springs from contact with the One I trust, while the New Testament relationship of acknowledgment is based on complete acceptance of what I know is true. To acknowledge the truth of God in Jesus means to cling to him, to recognize and rediscover myself in him, taking as my starting point a relationship of unprecedented intimacy with him. Jesus of Nazareth gives faith a body, a face, a heart, a name. Thus, to have faith in God means to have total trust in him (*’emunah*), acknowledging him as the Absolute Truth (*pistis*) through profound assimilation of the thoughts and feelings of Christ Jesus (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).



### “THE TRINITY IS MY FAMILY”

Maestra Thecla was fully aware that “it is Jesus who lives in me, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. To remain united to the Divine Master....”

As early as October 1951, she wrote: “The Trinity is my family.”

Guided by her spiritual director, Blessed James Alberione, Maestra Thecla opened her life to the mystery of the Trinity dwelling within her. This is confirmed in her spiritual notes, where she reminds herself:

To live in intimacy with the Divine Master: mind, will, heart, works, senses, hands, feet, eyes, hearing—everything for him and with him. To reach the point of “it is no longer I who live but Jesus who lives in me.”

Starting in 1950, her sole resolution was to surrender herself completely to the Lord. Her spiritual life simplified and acquired a Trinitarian dimension. She herself reveals this to us when she says:

Holiness! That is what I want. To live a Trinitarian life like Mary Most Holy. To trust the heavenly Father. To love his Son, who came to save me. To confide in the grace of the Holy Spirit. The heavenly Father is always close to me. He is within me, thinking of me and providing for everything. Jesus is with me; the Holy Spirit sanctifies me. To live in union with the three divine Persons.

For M. Thecla, holiness consisted of intimate union with the Trinity dwelling within her. She seemed to live in the divine presence as if in her own home: “To often reflect on the fact that the Blessed Trinity is within me. Adoration, union, recollection and...keeping such an important Guest company.”

Prima Maestra strove to intensify her union with the Triune God to the point of merging into the Trinity like a drop of water merges into the ocean. “My God,” she wrote, “I want to hide myself in you, lose myself in you, like a

drop of water in the ocean.” This desire reached the point of self-immolation in the form of offering her life to God on the Feast of the Holy Trinity 1961.

Her yearning to dwell in the Trinity, her great longing for the Eternal, was expressed by the word *heaven*, which occurred over and over again in her conversations. This was the “place” where all one’s efforts would be rewarded, but, even more than that, she considered it the place of complete communion: “We will be with the Lord forever.”

In the last years of her life, Prima Maestra intensified her desire to conform herself to the will of God and live for his glory: “I want to become a saint only for the greater glory of God.” “I want to do everything only to please him.” The fact that she lived in the Holy Spirit can be glimpsed through her words:

Divine Holy Spirit, give me your love, your gifts. I want to allow you to work in me. I don’t want to block your sanctifying actions. Glory to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Her notebooks from the year 1963, which contain her spiritual reflections during her illness, reveal her firm resolve to embrace the will of God—an attitude that led her to unity with him:

I take everything from you, the good and the bad, physical and moral sufferings. I am united to you now and always (31.10.63).

To live in unity of life with Jesus Master (January 1963).

To imitate St. Paul’s union with the Divine Master: Who will separate me from the love of Christ? (24.01.63)

Today, greater intensity of life with Jesus Master. Everything with him: unity (27.01.63).

Lord, I am ready to do your holy will in everything. I don’t remember things or the names of people; I have trouble breathing; but I accept everything for your sake, out of love and in a spirit of penance, for all the needs of the Congregation, for the Pope, the Council, Primo Maestro and the whole Pauline Family.

## GAZING OUT THE WINDOW



Tell everyone my story? I often talk to myself about my hopes, dreams and yearnings; the compromises I have made; the things I am uncertain about; my successes and failures.... But talking about myself to others is not the same thing. My self-image,

my privacy, my fears and weaknesses, my secrets, my talents and even my awareness that God is truly at work in me all pose obstacles to this. To put it simply, I don't like to talk about myself to others, but since that is what I have been asked to do, I will try....

I had a happy childhood, even though, like most people, my mother and father were not "perfect" parents. They were children of their time and their first concern was to teach me to behave properly, to be a good example to others and to study hard in view of the future. They were less concerned with helping me develop my identity. At any rate, I am infinitely grateful to them because they loved me and saw to it that I had a happy youth.

I reached a turning point in my life when I began to feel the need to "be myself" and make my own personal choices. To be sincere, it was stubbornness that helped me get to know the Daughters of St. Paul and when this happened things began to change for me. After a major interior battle, I abruptly came to a decision. I didn't receive any special inner illumination. Instead, I made a personal and deliberate choice to enter the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul—a path I set out on with great resolve, *almost* aware of what I was doing.... A person ventures onto a highway knowing that exit signs will not be too frequent and so I set out on my "adventure" serenely, without fear or regrets. Along the way, I discovered a new way of living, side routes that filled me with enthusiasm and marvelous panoramas at every turn of the road. On second thought, I *do* recall experiencing one regret: the fact that I would never be able to have a family and children of my own. But every time I felt the pang of this, I offered it to God and thus I was always happy. And I still am.

The first stage of my journey took me to Alba. The atmosphere was that of a convent, of course, but it was an atmosphere permeated with genuine joy. Relocating to Rome for my novitiate, I half-expected that the rules there would be more severe, that there would be more acts of self-denial

to make, that I would be spending more time on my knees.... Instead, I was surprised by how normal and simple things were. Maestra Nazarenza, my formation mistress, taught me a lot about life. I don't remember her theoretical lessons concerning the religious state but I *do* remember her simple and sincere acceptance of us, her focus on essentials and the humor with which she taught us even serious things—a very astute way of helping us remember them. During the novitiate, her stratagem for helping us get to know ourselves was to have us point out our defects to one another. I remember two in particular that were called to my attention, namely: *You like to gaze out the window*, and: *You never eat bread unless it's fresh*. I don't know why I can't remember any of the other observations made to me—and there were at least a dozen! But with the passing of time I have come to believe that these two comments that stuck in my mind were not really defects but rather outward signs of positive values. The first attitude led me to look beyond my own small world, to be receptive to others, to yearn to discover different situations and values, to want to get to know myself and others better. Without knowing it, Maestra Thecla helped me satisfy these desires by sending me as a missionary to Colombia. The second attitude is still typical of me in the sense that I am always yearning for "fresh bread," that is, for things that are new and dynamic.

My transfer to Bogota, Colombia offered me my first contact with a different culture. I arrived there laden with the "baggage" of my own culture, which I felt was superior to all others, and also the "baggage" of some theological training. I wanted to help the poor people to whom I had been sent—people whom I thought were less "civilized" than me and who were martyred by the effects of an unrelenting guerrilla warfare that had begun back in 1955. I had a lot of answers ready for my new "flock," unaware of the fact that perhaps the questions had changed. Asked to carry out the service of formator, I tried to establish good communications with the young women in my care. With great tact, I sought to teach them, offer them suggestions, insist on certain things.... Some of the things I tried to impart seemed to stick, but in most cases it was like banging heads against a wall. Having learned some basic Spanish, I began to learn in other areas too. The first lesson I learned was that I had to get to know our candidates and their personal life stories. Then I had to become familiar with their culture and their way of looking at people, situations and events because my personal "baggage" (no matter how attached I was to it) was not able to satisfy their needs. An even more important lesson I learned was that I could *nothing* without GOD.

This learning experience, which lasted not just days or months but *years*, freed me interiorly and

I found myself won over by our candidates as I became personally involved with them. It was not easy for me to change my ways of thinking and acting. Nor was it easy for me to give up the things that made me feel secure. Like Jesus, who became one of us, I wanted to become one of them, but something within me resisted this. Nevertheless, I gave the Spirit room to work within me and he helped me discover values that I was able to make my own because I was not forced to give up anything that made me *me*. In exchange, these values enriched me with qualities I hadn't possessed previously.

When I reached the point of feeling that I had learned something, that I had adopted a less rule-oriented mentality while still preserving essential values; when I had finally begun to feel comfortable in my new context, I was once again called to *gaze out the window* by accepting a transfer to Bolivia. Situated on a plateau over two miles high, La Paz was a fairytale city, especially at night against the backdrop of the Nevado Illimani—an impressive snow-capped mountain range.

Although I was no longer in Colombia, I was still in South America and I believed I was by now an expert on all its peoples and cultures. Unfortunately, an attitude adjustment was necessary here. I found myself inserted in a community that was apostolically more deeply involved with the indigenous people but which, at heart, was still very Italian.

It was here that I felt the first effects of Vatican Council II, which reached the Local Church through the Medellin meeting. It was a beautiful time of renewal, shared by many religious Institutes, as we all sought to express our faith and mission in an ever-more genuine way. Enriched by this experience and yearning to put into practice the lessons I had learned, I found myself once again *gazing out the window* in the form of another transfer, this time to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Once again I would still be in South America, but by now I knew that the context would be very different from the ones already familiar to me....

During my first days in Buenos Aires, I participated in a community meeting in which the sisters invited me to tell them how I felt. I promptly said that for the third time in my life I felt uprooted and lost. I told them I realized I would have to get to know them all and observe things attentively, and that only after I felt at home in my new context would I be able to voice my thoughts freely, collaborate with them and accomplish something. The sister sitting next to me reached over, squeezed my arm and exclaimed, "Thank you! That's exactly what we wanted to hear. We don't want you to impose anything on us. We want you to first of all get to know us so that we can then dialogue with one another and work together." Once again I felt that I was being invited to look

within myself, to change my parameters, to die to some things so as to make room for the new ones that would be offered me.

My opportunities to *gaze out the window* didn't stop here. After a time in Argentina, I returned to Colombia to travel paths I was already familiar with. Besides making new friends, I was reunited with sisters whom I had to get to know all over again because they had changed over the years. This was not surprising because I too had changed. We shared our stories with one another and discovered that we were more mature, more competent at managing our lives, more united to one another and more willing to journey together.

A final invitation to *gaze out the window*: my return to Italy—a painful event comprehensible only to those who have undergone a similar experience. Not that I disliked my homeland or its people. It was the interior uprooting and detachment that made me suffer because the human heart is so fragile. But I was not opposed to taking this step. Once again I found people who helped me to grow, who prepared me for my return—not the geographical relocation but the interior attitudes necessary to enable me to adapt to a culture I had left many years before and that was by now greatly changed.

And now I am here in Italy. Perhaps I could say that as the result of so many changes I am no longer myself...but that would be absolutely wrong. I am the same person I always was and I am happy my life unfolded as it did. Ideally speaking, if I could re-live my life, I would take today as my starting point and continue to grow. I would strive to live more authentically, freely and maturely; to be more aware of the journey being made by people today, to marvel at the creative power of God, and to continue to search for "newness of life."

As always, I seem to be yearning for "fresh bread." That is to say, I want to look beyond my current horizons. To paraphrase Alexander Solzhenitsyn, I could say: "Looking over my shoulder, I am amazed at the road I have traveled from the beginning up to now. I thank God for the joy of continually discovering myself afresh, of growing, and of being able to reflect his light."

It has made me happy to share these thoughts with all of you even though not every reader might find them interesting. Some might consider my reflections too superficial and they would be right. My more profound story—the one concerning my relationship with God and his work in me—remains "top secret."

Right now, I feel like a chick hatching out of its shell. I'm still in the process of being born....

Teresita Conti, fsp

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## TO THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL – 1956



A new volume in the Opera Omnia series has been released – a project on which the Daughters of St. Paul of the International Secretariat for Spirituality worked with great zest. The volume is a collection of the sermons of Blessed James Alberione during the year 1956, a time in which the Congregation was acquiring its mature form and in which the Founder recognized the need for a more enlightened formation and intensive and greater inculturation, manifested as unswerving fidelity to the Church and focus on the ways of humanity and of history.

These years saw the start of a better organization in the areas of formation, study and apostolate, and diffusion was better coordinated through the “Center of Apostolate.” The *Catechism House* at Grottaferrata (near Rome) was in full swing, allowing the Founder to fulfill a great dream: “When I see this house, my heart is moved at the thought of the special graces and the immense good that will go forth from here.”

This new text can provide us with enlightenment for the preparation of the first centenary of the Pauline Family and of our Congregation. It can promote a genuine rebirth founded on the faith of the sisters and brothers who gave life to an apostolic adventure brimming over with enthusiasm and of love.

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## REMEMBERING FR. BERNARD ANTONINI

27 March 2012 marked the tenth anniversary of the death of the Servant of God, Fr. Bernard Antonini, a true apostle of the ex-Soviet Republic. Cultural and religious events were held in Verona, Italy and in Fr. Antonini’s



hometown to celebrate this recurrence. Many members of the Pauline Family participated in the functions, including Fr. Domenic Cascasi, ex-Delegate of the Jesus the Priest Institute, Fr. José Antonio Perez, Postulator General of the Pauline Family, numerous Daughters of St. Paul, several Annunciationists and various members of the Holy Family Institute. All spoke of Fr. Antonini as a great-hearted, tireless apostle who felt the urgent need to bring Christ to the contemporary world with today’s instruments of communication. As a member of the Jesus the Priest Institute, which he joined in 1977, he intimately participated in St. Paul and Fr. James Alberione’s passion for Christ and souls. In keeping with his Pauline vocation, his spiritual life was centered on Christ the Master and he also nourished a deep love for Mary, Queen of Apostles, to whom he prayed with filial devotion throughout his life.

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## FR. BERNARD ANTONINI

Fr. Bernard Antonini was born in Cimego (Trent), Italy on 20 October 1932. Ordained a priest in the Verona diocese, he entered the Jesus the Priest Institute in 1977. The historic turnabout that occurred when Gorbaciov became president of the Soviet Union enabled Fr. Bernard to enter Russia. In 1993, he opened the first Catholic seminary in Moscow, dedicating it to Mary, Queen of Apostles. On 23 May 1999, after 70 years of communism, the first Catholic priests were ordained in the St. Petersburg Cathedral. On 27 March 2002, Fr. Antonini died unexpectedly in the Karaganda Seminary, Kazakhstan. Five years later, on 11 February, his cause for beatification was opened.

## WINDOW ON THE CHURCH

### SECOND SYMPOSIUM OF AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN BISHOPS



The Bishops of Africa and Europe held their Second Symposium from 13-17 February 2012, in Rome, Italy, on the theme: *Evangelization Today: communion and pastoral collaboration between Africa and Europe. The human person and God: the Church's mission to proclaim God's presence and love.* The Symposium, which was organized by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CEE), was part of a collaboration project between the two continental bodies which initiated after the First Symposium, held in Rome in November 2004. This collaboration is aimed at deepening the common responsibility of the African and European Bishops for the evangelization and human development of their respective continents in particular and the world in general.

### FIRST SYNOD OF THE LAITY IN INDIA



In the next few months, the *All India Catholic Union (AICU)*, one of the most important Catholic lay associations in India, will be involved in organizing the first Synod of Indian Catholics. This historic event for the country's 17 million Catholics will

be held, according to the organizers, in 2012, the 50th anniversary of Vatican II.

The plan, which foresees the participation of various ecclesial groups in India, was born from a reflection on the relationship between clergy and laity, the latter which have a still-marginal role in the local Church in contrast to the openness proposed in the conciliar documents.

## WINDOW ON THE WORLD

### WORLD DAY OF POETRY



The World Day of Poetry, established by the UNESCO General Conference in 1999, is today celebrated around the globe. The date, which coincides with the first day of spring, acknowledges that poetry holds a privileged place in the promotion of dialogue and intercultural understanding, of linguistic and cultural diversity, and of communication and peace. Over the years, UNESCO has focused on the encounter between the various creative arts as a way of facing the challenges that communication and culture have been going through in recent years.

Among the various forms of expression, in fact, every human society looks upon the ancient art of poetry as the guardian of human memory, the foundation of every other form of literary and artistic creativity.

### INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM FESTIVAL 2012

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Journalism Festival, open to journalists from all over the world, was held in Perugia, Italy from 25-29 April. Festival venues, located in



the historic buildings of the city's medieval downtown zone, hosted over 200 events and the more than 450 guest speakers who gathered to discuss journalism,

current events and issues pertaining to the world of information. Founded in 2006, the purpose of the Festival is to speak about the role of the media in society, freedom of the press and democracy in an informal and accessible way. An event that was born from the "grass roots," it is open to the public and provides a setting in which information protagonists and consumers can engage in dynamic dialogue and a comparison of ideas.

## WINDOW ON COMMUNICATIONS

### **BABYRADIO: THE FIRST ONLINE RADIO STATION FOR CHILDREN**



Born in Spain, *Babyradio* is the first online radio station with programming that caters exclusively to children. The goal is to make entertaining, educational programs accessible to very young children 24 hours a day.

Through songs, stories and music, the three Andalusian coordinators of this project hope to contribute to creating a pattern in the daily routines of children in the 0–6 age bracket. In less than five months, *Babyradio* has reached more than 390,000 listeners in more than 200 cities of Spain, as well as another 100 countries worldwide.

## MUSIC AND THEATER: COMMUNICATION AND EMOTION



The world of communications offers us infinite ways and means to send and receive messages, from the most simple and natural systems, such as gestures and words, to the most sophisticated technological ones.

Two of these means are music and theater—communication instruments that have not been overpowered by today's new technologies, but have instead been amplified and enriched by them.

What does music add to a text, to a message? And what does an actor's interpretation of a role add to a story? Above all, one extremely important element: emotion. Emotional "codes" allow us to not only receive, decode and understand a message, but to also interiorize it, make it our own, fix it in our memory. This significant aspect of communication should not be overlooked.

Music, a universal language, goes beyond verbal speech and communicates through vibrations, that is to say, combinations of sound, rhythm and tempo. To listen to music, create it and reproduce it with others is a human activity whose origins are lost in the shadows of time. It is a part of not only the cultural life of a people but also the emotional life of each person. It contributes to an individual's intellectual, communicational and emotional-affective development. For this reason, it is important that even very small children be taught to appreciate music and to decode its language correctly, without neglecting its many other potentials, particularly the first instrument at our disposition: the voice. It is not by chance that "one who sings prays twice," as the famous saying of St. Augustine goes.

Music serves as an important means of formation from early childhood onward: it facilitates both socialization and appreciation of the individual. We frequently lack an education to music, especially from the aspect of formation. The famous Hungarian composer and music teacher, Zoltan Kodaly, summed up the possibilities of this discipline with the motto: "One should not only be educated 'to' music but also 'with' music." And precisely because it bypasses the more traditional routes of communication, an appreciation of music should be transmitted to a child "nine months before birth." To sing a lullaby to a newborn calms the infant and induces sleep because the mother's tone of voice transmits a sense of peace and protection. This image illustrates well the effects music can have on a person.

The human voice is one of the many elements of another important instrument of communication: theater. But it is certainly not the sole, or even the most essential, one. Facial expressions, intonations, gestures, movements: the whole body is involved in the dramatic arts.

In ancient times, theater came into being as a rite, and inasmuch as it is a means of expression-communication, it requires someone to perform it (an actor) and someone to view it (a spectator).

Theater, too, is an exceptional instrument of general formation: it helps people get to know themselves and others, makes them more keenly aware of their physical movements, and is able to convey messages not only to the audience, but also and especially to the performers themselves.

The history of theater offers us a vast panorama of styles, techniques and genres that have evolved and changed over time, but which continue to be studied, re-examined and utilized. Theater is an art with a powerful anthropological imprint, precisely be-

cause it springs from the human need for self-expression and communication.

If we wonder how theater ever survived the advent of cinema and television, the answer lies in its unique mode of communication. In fact, theater requires the simultaneous presence of both broadcaster and receiver—here and now, "live."

People should not only attend theatrical performances frequently but should also, if possible, take part in plays. They should be taught to do this beginning in childhood, in educational environments such as parishes and schools, which are often the only places with enough space available to accommodate crowds. Acting out stories and events with others is not simply an enjoyable pastime. It contributes significantly to the overall development of the human personality. It involves rediscovering our natural inclination to "set a scene" by making the most of whatever is at hand. It is a way of getting to know something through physical analogy, that is, imitation.

What themes can be treated in a song or in a theatrical performance? Many—indeed, any. Even subjects useful for evangelization, such as the story of Jesus, the great themes of faith, existential questions and civic/ethical values. Naturally, the language must be suited to the art form: a topic treated in a classroom setting will not be treated the same way in a theater performance because the situations are very different. It is easy to picture how different the impact will be on a person who receives a message communicated by a teacher in a classroom and one who receives the same message in a play he/she attends. Often, the second form of communication is more meaningful and is more successful in reaching the depths of the person.

Music and theater are, then, timeless instruments of communication. From their remote beginnings up to our own day, their purpose and uniqueness have not been lost, even though to a certain extent they have been transformed.

The world is changing rapidly and today's new technologies allow us to convey our messages in an ever more advanced way. But let us never forget that the most effective message—the one that penetrates the depths of our being and changes us—is the one that touches not only our head but also our heart.

*Daniela Cologgi*





Foto: Emmanuel Alves, fsp

### DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL

Sr. Teresina Onorina Tacconelli, age 88 - 11.02.2012 - Albano, Italy  
Sr. Eliana Giuseppa Belli, age 102 - 25.02.2012 - Albano GA, Italy  
Sr. M. Marcellina Adele Trincucci, age 95 - 28.02.2012 - Rome AP, Italy  
Sr. M. del Socorro Mendez Moreno, age 80 - 29.02.2012 - Mexico City, Mexico  
Sr. M. Gabriella Giovanna Mana, age 89 - 05.03.2012 - Alba, Italy  
Sr. M. Enrica Lorenzina Paloschi, age 85 - 07.03.2012 - Albano GA, Italy  
Sr. Corazon Tariman, age 69 - 13.03.2012 - Pasay City, Philippines  
Sr. M. Fiorenza Teru Fukuoka, age 80 - 25.03.2012 - Hiratsuka, Japan  
Sr. M. Aurora Maria Catillo, age 85 - 25.03.2012 - Albano TM, Italy  
Sr. M. Piera Jole Pedercini, age 86 - 26.03.2012 - Albano, Italy  
Sr. Carla Ferrari, age 86 - 29.03.2012 - Rome AP, Italy  
Sr. Nilda Gimenez, age 87 - 02.04.2012 - Buenos Aires, Argentina

### PARENTS OF OUR SISTERS

Sr. Judy Zamar (Father, Dominador), of the Marikina-Manila community, Philippines  
Sr. Gaudentia Lee (Mother, Pong Suk Francesca Romana), of the Seoul community, Korea  
Sr. Clare Choo (Mother, Anna Yeo Koh), of the Singapore community  
Sr. Valentina Giugliodori (Mother, Olga), at home, Italy  
Sr. Lourdes Fachin (Mother, Catarina), of the São Paulo CR community, Brazil

### PAULINE FAMILY

Br. Calogero Stanislao Fabio, ssp, age 88 - 09.02.2012 - Rome, Italy  
Sr. M. Vittoria Giovanna Della Valle, pddm, age 95 - 10.02.2012 - Sanfrè, Italy  
Sr. M. Josangela Erminia Bassignana, pddm, age 85 - 11.02.2012 - Sanfrè, Italy  
Sr. M. Celestina Rita Gainelli, pddm, age 91 - 25.02.2012 - Sanfrè, Italy  
Sr. M. Agnès Marie Shamba, pddm, age 55 - 29.02.2012 - Kinshasa, Dem. Rep. Congo  
Sr. M. Fedele Margherita Olivero, pddm, age 81 - 05.03.2012 - Albano Laziale, Italy  
Sr. M. Erminia Amabile Cattapan, pddm, age 96 - 17.03.2012 - Cordoba, Argentina  
Sr. M. Leonia Luigia Torresan, pddm, age 96 - 19.03.2012 - Fresno, USA  
Sr. M. Nivea Ida Maestro, pddm, age 82 - 22.03.2012 - Sanfrè, Italy  
Sr. M. Stefanina Aquilina Imperato, pddm, age 98 - 26.03.2012 - Albano Laziale, Italy  
Sr. M. Teresa Gramaccia, sjbp, age 86 - 30.03.2012 - Albano Laziale, Italy