

NEWS

Pakistan: Lahore - With the Fervor and Courage of the Apostle Paul (30-01-2009)



The FSPs of Pakistan celebrated the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul by means of a very meaningful and courageous initiative that was strongly supported by the local bishops and priests and also by our Protestant brothers and sisters. The initiative was *meaningful* because it consisted of the launch of a new VCD and DVD on the Apostle Paul. It was *courageous*, given the delicate situation of the country at this moment. But the fortitude and zeal of our sisters helped them conquer every fear. In just one morning, they disseminated 350 copies in Urdu in the parishes they visited in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi! Their juniors, novices and aspirants were ecstatic. In fact, all our sisters were surprised by the enthusiasm of the people, who joyfully welcomed the chance to get to better know the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

Mexico: Mexico City - The Family Rediscovered Its Role as Formator (29-01-2009)



Families from all the world's continents gathered in Mexico City from 14-18 January 2009 for the 6th World Meeting of Families—an event in which more than 10,000 people participated. The meeting was preceded by an International Theological-Pastoral Congress on the theme of the family. During the first part of the World Meeting, experts underscored the family as the “fundamental cell” of society. The second part of the encounter centered around a “day of witness,” during which families from all over the world described how they live and transmit human and Christian values in diverse socio-cultural contexts. The closing Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican Secretary of State.

At the end of the Liturgy, Pope Benedict XVI, who watched the live broadcast from Italy via Vatican TV, spoke in a video address to the participants, emphasizing that “the family is an indispensable foundation for society and for peoples, just as it is an irreplaceable good for children, whose coming into the world as the fruit of love, of the total and generous gift of their parents, deserve to be born.” He then went on to say, “Today more than ever the witness and public commitment of all the baptized is necessary to reaffirm the dignity and the unique, irreplaceable value of the family.” At the end of his address, the Pope announced that the 7th World Meeting of Families will be held in Milan, Italy in 2012 on the theme: “The Family: Work and Celebration.”

The principal topics discussed at the World Meeting were: the family as the context in which children learn values and human virtues; the need for families to improve the way their members live together and communicate with one another, and the need to incite governments to safeguard the family by fostering laws and policies that take the family as their point of reference. The President of the Mexican Episcopal Conference stressed that the family is humanity's heritage and a school of faith. He pointed out that families today are threatened by ethical relativism, poverty and hostile legislation, and urged everyone to make the family a priority and work on its behalf. He concluded by saying that the Church's mission to form families must focus more specifically on helping fathers come to a greater awareness of their responsibility to educate their children.

Paraguay: Asuncion - FSPs Receive the "Thomas More 2008" Award (28-01-2009)



Within the framework of the Pauline Year and in recognition of our Institute's apostolic activities in Paraguay over the past 15 years, the Board of Directors of the Thomas More Institute of Our Lady of the Assumption University conferred its "Thomas More 2008" award on the Daughters of St. Paul in the category "Service to the Church and World."

The award ceremony, which took place on 4 December 2008 at the Archbishop's headquarters, was presided over by the Archbishop himself, His Excellency Pastor Cuquejo, and was attended by a large crowd of people.

Sr. Julieta Stoffel, FSP provincial superior, thanked everyone present for diocese's warm reception of our sisters and collaboration with them throughout the years. She also thanked the Daughters of St. Paul who, since 1994, have carried out the Pauline mission in this part of the world with great dedication.

Italy: Rome - Collaboration Between the FSPs and the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy (27-01-2009)



Adoration, Reparation and the Spiritual Maternity of the Priesthood: this is the title of the text prepared by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy to promote Eucharistic adoration aimed at reparation and the sanctification of the clergy.

Aware of the specific mission of the FSPs throughout the world and of our distribution network, the Sacred Congregation asked our Institute to help it print and disseminate the document.

The FSP International Secretariat for the Apostolate (SIA) agreed to coordinate the project, which it did both efficiently and effectively. The text was printed by the Daughters of St. Paul in 14 different countries and by other Catholic institutes in

nations where we are not present.

We are sure that collaboration with this project will give an even-greater "ecclesial color" to our apostolate.

Czech Republic: Prague - New Book Center in the Heart of the City (20-01-2009)



On 10 January, the FSPs of Prague inaugurated their new book center, thus realizing a 15-year-old dream. After undergoing major renovations, the locale, ceded to them by the Franciscan Fathers, is now a bright and modern Pauline "pulpit," accessible to everyone.

His Eminence Miloslav Vlk, Cardinal of Prague, presided over the blessing ceremony. Also present for the occasion were Bishop Diego Causero, Apostolic

Nuncio to the Czech Republic, and many FSP collaborators, clients and friends.

A significant moment of the ceremony was the enthronement of a copy of the first edition of the Bible printed in the Czech language (early 1500's). The act of enshrining the Word of God in the heart of the new center symbolized the continuity of our mission to proclaim Christ in this Local Church through the instruments of communication.

Italy: Rome - Theater Performance "Am I Not Free?" (15-01-2009)



In preparation for the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Velletri Prison's Compagnia *Il Ponte Magico (The Magic Bridge Company)*, in collaboration with the FSP Center for Culture and Communications, will perform the play "Am I Not Free?" in the Queen of Apostles Sanctuary, Rome, on 18 January.

After about 2 years of theater training within the prison precincts, the Company, thanks to the understanding and collaboration of prison director Dr. Giuseppe Makovec and the Department for Prisoner Supervision, is now ready to stage public performances that show how important and even essential the theater can be in helping prisoners reinsert themselves in society.

Antonio Lauritano, the director of the Company and author of the script, says that the purpose of his play is not to present a historical account of the life of St. Paul but rather to establish a dialogue between the Apostle and people today that brings to the fore the doubts, questions, desperations and

uncertainties of every human being and the compelling answers offered by this great evangelizer, revealing the timeliness of his words for contemporary individuals in their concrete situations. Besides the special meaning of a play of this type performed by prisoners, it is interesting to underscore another aspect of the initiative, namely, the collaboration between the FSPs and the national detention system to stage this performance. In fact, the costumes used in the play were all created by prisoners in the Latina zone, a first step toward expanding participation in this artistic endeavor and improving it by creating a “joint venture” between the prisons of this region and the FSP Center for Culture and Communications. Besides the play’s cast and technical production staff (all prisoners), the performance has been enriched by the contribution of many excellent musicians such as Maurizio Vatania, Federico Carra, Ilaria Innocenti, Terry Gisi, and the help of Rita Gisi, Silvia Venti, Rocco Duca and Alessandro Morbidelli.

NEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Interview with sr. Milagros Miranda Superior of the FSP Delegation of Venezuela–Puerto Rico–Dominican Republic



Sr. Milagros Miranda, Superior of our Delegation of Venezuela–Puerto Rico–Dominican Republic, came to Rome to participate in the enlarged council meeting on the theme of redesigning our FSP presences throughout the world. In the interview that follows, Sr. Milagros was asked to briefly describe the situation of her circumscription, the challenges to the Pauline mission there, and her hopes for the future.

General Councilors Sr. Luz Helena Arroyave and Sr. Anna Caiazza made the Fraternal Visit to the Delegation from 5 November–5 December 2008.

Sr. Milagros, can you give us a concise overview of our Venezuela–Puerto Rico–Dominican Republic Delegation?

The delegation is currently made up of 31 members (28 perpetual professed and 3 temporary professed sisters), subdivided into 8 communities. Our primary way of carrying out the Pauline mission is through book center diffusion: we have five very well-stocked book and media centers in Venezuela, two in Puerto Rico and two in the Dominican Republic. In recent years, we have also given new thrust to our publishing sector (books and multimedia) and have launched out into cyberspace through websites and blogs so as to carry out an apostolate in step with the times. We also organize and guide Bible animations and proclaim the Word of God via radio.

In short, a small but very active Delegation.....

Very true. Every day we see with our own eyes how the loving hand of God enables us to accomplish “big” things, in spite of our poverty. The Local Churches deeply appreciate our apostolic presence and often invite us to collaborate with them, especially in the areas of Bible study, catechetical instruction, pastoral work with the instruments of communications and formation.

What challenges face the Pauline mission in these countries?

First of all, taking into account Venezuela’s complex political situation and also the international economic crisis, we are challenged to make apostolic choices coherent with the prophetic dimension of the Pauline mission. These choices must be prudent and suited to the contexts in which we live and work. Another big challenge we face is to organize ourselves well. A third—and very important—challenge is to provide our lay co-workers with the formation they need to carry out the Pauline apostolate effectively and to also be ready to adopt new ways of collaborating with them.

And what are your dreams for the future?

I have several. I dream that our communities will manifest a stronger spirit of fraternity; that they will be places in which our Gospel-based spirituality is lived “at high tension”; and that they will be environments in which we can live our vocation and grow in it in a climate of communion and collaboration, making the most of the gifts of each sister. I also dream that we will be able to communicate to young people today the beauty of the Pauline consecrated life. This means that each of us must be ready to take an active part in vocation initiatives and that we must also strive to better understand our identity as apostles of Jesus Christ in the world of communication.

DATABASE

Section Co-workers – San Paolo: Paul’s writings and co-workers on his third missionary trip



Efeso

Apollos, a Jewish Christian with a firm grasp the Hebrew Scriptures, carried out his evangelizing activities in Ephesus. An eloquent and convincing speaker, he attracted many followers. After Aquila and Priscilla completed his Christian formation, he left Ephesus and went to Corinth, where once again he explained the Scriptures to the Jews, demonstrating that Jesus was truly their long-awaited Messiah. Luke says that Apollos “greatly helped those who through grace had become believers” (Acts 18:27b). However, some of the Christians of Corinth were not spiritually mature and were drawn to Apollos because of his polished speech. They were full of enthusiasm for him as a person, considering him to be a leader of the Christian community, rivaling Paul, Peter and even Jesus for this position. In his first Letter to the Corinthians, Paul emphatically states that the Christians have only one leader: Jesus Christ. Everyone else is simply his minister and a servant of the community (cf. 1 Co. 1:12; 3:4-5; 3:22). In clarifying this, the Apostle defines Apollos as “the one who watered” what Paul had planted. In short, each of them needed the other.

Tyrannus, an Ephesian Christian, allowed Paul to hold meetings in his lecture room for two years after the Apostle was banned from the local synagogue. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him to Macedonia, while other unnamed co-workers remained with him in Ephesus. Luke writes: “He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia (Acts 19:22). It is very probable that Titus was one of these co-workers. The fact that Paul left Ephesus accompanied by Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus makes it quite clear that the Apostle did not live and work alone!

Paul stayed in Ephesus for about three years. While he was there he wrote a letter to the Galatians and several letters to the Corinthians, although only two of the latter have come down to us. He also wrote to the Philippians and to Philemon.

While in Corinth, he wrote to the Romans (Acts 20:3), stating his intention to visit Rome, which was considered the center of the world, and from there to go on to Spain, the edge of the then-known world. He said, however, that there were serious obstacles to fulfilling this goal:

“When I have completed this [visit to Jerusalem] and have delivered to them [the alms] that were collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God’s will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company” (Rm. 15.28-32).

Paul’s letter to the Philippians, probably written while he was in prison in Ephesus, reveals his profound bond with the Christians of Philippi. With these friends, he candidly shares his exhilarating experience of Christ whom, in this letter alone, he ardently refers to as “my Lord” (cf. Phil. 3:7). The letter mentions Epaphroditus, whom the Christians of Philippi sent to help Paul during his imprisonment. Paul calls him a brother, co-worker, fellow soldier and minister of the Gospel. He also mentions Euodia and Syntyche who, along with Clement, were in charge of the Christian community of Philippi.

Paul names both men and women as his co-workers in the difficult Corinthian community. He speaks about the families of Chloe and Stephanus, calling them “the first fruits of Achaia,” which most likely means they were among the first families to embrace the Christian faith and that their homes served as “domestic churches.” Paul urges the Corinthians to esteem and collaborate with these ministers of the Lord because they “have devoted themselves to the service of God’s holy people” (1 Co. 16.15). He also mentions Fortunatus and Achaicus. Other homes in Corinth that served as domestic churches for the Christians were that of Aquila and Priscilla and of Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae (Rm. 16:1), a district of Corinth. Paul says that it is Phoebe who will take his letter to Rome and he asks the Christians there to give her a warm welcome, just as she herself wholeheartedly welcomed Paul and the believers of Corinth.

Paul’s short message to Philemon is precious because it reveals the Apostle’s ability to speak to the hearts of Gentile Christians. Philemon was a wealthy friend of Paul and Onesimus was his runaway slave. Paul met Onesimus while in prison and converted him. The slave then became his highly-esteemed co-worker (cf. Col. 4:9).

Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, telling the latter that he himself was ready to pay for the wrong the slave did to his master by running away. In his note,



Philemon

the Apostle begs his friend to welcome the fugitive back as a brother, as he would welcome Paul himself. He does not speak about freedom as a civil right to be defended with the sword or the force of authority, but reminds Philemon that Christians are all brothers and sisters in Christ and therefore no one is slave to another.

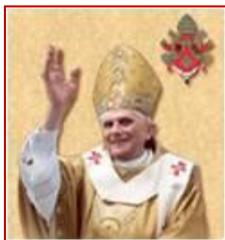
In his message, Paul also mentions Apphia, who is probably Philemon's wife, and Archippus, another co-worker. It is likely that Philemon's home also served as a domestic church.

FOR DEEPER REFLECTION

Read 1 Co. 1:11-16. Note the different people Paul refers to in these 5 verses and why he mentions them.

Read the Letter to Philemon, which can be found right before the Letter to the Hebrews. Note the individuals mentioned in it: who they are, what they do, and how Paul describes them. The Apostle calls the wealthy Philemon his friend (v. 17) and on the basis of this friendship he urges him to live the Christian faith radically because only in this way can social structures be changed so as to give rise to fraternity.

Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI for the 43rd World day of Communications (02-02-2009)



Dear Brothers and Sisters!

In anticipation of the forthcoming World Communications Day, I would like to address to you some reflections on the theme chosen for this year - New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship. The new digital technologies are, indeed, bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships. These changes are particularly evident among those young people who have grown up with the new technologies and are at home in a digital world that often seems quite foreign to those of us who, as adults, have had to learn to understand and appreciate the opportunities it has to offer for communications. In this year's message, I am conscious of those who constitute the so-called digital generation and I would like to share with them, in particular, some ideas concerning the extraordinary potential of the new technologies, if they are used to promote human understanding and solidarity. These technologies are truly a gift to humanity and we must endeavour to ensure that the benefits they offer are put at the service of all human individuals and communities, especially those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

The accessibility of mobile telephones and computers, combined with the global reach and penetration of the internet, has opened up a range of means of communication that permit the almost instantaneous communication of words and images across enormous distances and to some of the most isolated corners of the world; something that would have been unthinkable for previous generations. Young people, in particular, have grasped the enormous capacity of the new media to foster connectedness, communication and understanding between individuals and communities, and they are turning to them as means of communicating with existing friends, of meeting new friends, of forming communities and networks, of seeking information and news, and of sharing their ideas and opinions. Many benefits flow from this new culture of communication: families are able to maintain contact across great distances; students and researchers have more immediate and easier access to documents, sources and scientific discoveries, hence they can work collaboratively from different locations; moreover, the interactive nature of many of the new media facilitates more dynamic forms of learning and communication, thereby contributing to social progress.

While the speed with which the new technologies have evolved in terms of their efficiency and reliability is rightly a source of wonder, their popularity with users should not surprise us, as they respond to a fundamental desire of people to communicate and to relate to each other. This desire for communication and friendship is rooted in our very nature as human beings and cannot be adequately understood as a response to technical innovations. In the light of the biblical message, it should be seen primarily as a reflection of our participation in the communicative and unifying Love of God, who desires to make of all humanity one family. When we find ourselves drawn towards other people, when we want to know more about them and make ourselves known to them, we are responding to God's call - a call that is imprinted in our nature as beings created in the image and likeness of God, the God of communication and communion.

The desire for connectedness and the instinct for communication that are so obvious in contemporary culture are best understood as modern manifestations of the basic and enduring propensity of humans to reach beyond themselves and to seek communion with others. In reality, when we open ourselves to others, we are fulfilling our deepest need and becoming more fully human. Loving is, in fact, what we are designed for by our Creator. Naturally, I am not talking about fleeting, shallow relationships, I am talking about the real love that is at the very heart of Jesus' moral teaching: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" and "You must love your neighbour as yourself" (cf. Mk 12:30-31). In this light, reflecting on the significance of the new technologies, it is important to focus not just on their undoubted capacity to foster contact between people, but on the quality of the content that is put into circulation using these means. I would encourage all people of good will who are active in the emerging environment of digital communication to commit themselves to promoting a culture of respect, dialogue and friendship.

Those who are active in the production and dissemination of new media content, therefore, should strive to respect the dignity and worth of the human person. If the new technologies are to serve the good of individuals and of society, all users will avoid the sharing of words and images that are degrading of human beings, that promote hatred and intolerance, that debase the goodness and intimacy of human sexuality or that exploit the weak and vulnerable.

The new technologies have also opened the way for dialogue between people from different countries, cultures and religions. The new digital arena, the so-called cyberspace, allows them to encounter and to know each other's traditions and values. Such encounters, if they are to be fruitful, require honest and appropriate forms of expression together with attentive and respectful listening. The dialogue must be rooted in a genuine and mutual searching for truth if it is to realize its potential to promote growth in understanding and tolerance. Life is not just a succession of events or experiences: it is a search for the true, the good and the beautiful. It is to this end that we make our choices; it is for this that we exercise our freedom; it is in this - in truth, in goodness, and in beauty - that we find happiness and joy. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by those who see us merely as consumers in a market of undifferentiated possibilities, where choice itself becomes the good, novelty usurps beauty, and subjective experience displaces truth.

The concept of friendship has enjoyed a renewed prominence in the vocabulary of the new digital social networks that have emerged in the last few years. The concept is one of the noblest achievements of human culture. It is in and through our friendships that we grow and develop as humans. For this reason, true friendship has always been seen as one of the greatest goods any human person can experience. We should be careful, therefore, never to trivialize the concept or the experience of friendship. It would be sad if our desire to sustain and develop on-line friendships were to be at the cost of our availability to engage with our families, our neighbours and those we meet in the daily reality of our places of work, education and recreation. If the desire for virtual connectedness becomes obsessive, it may in fact function to isolate individuals from real social interaction while also disrupting the patterns of rest, silence and reflection that are necessary for healthy human development.

Friendship is a great human good, but it would be emptied of its ultimate value if it were to be understood as an end in itself. Friends should support and encourage each other in developing their gifts and talents and in putting them at the service of the human community. In this context, it is gratifying to note the emergence of new digital networks that seek to promote human solidarity, peace and justice, human rights and respect for human life and the good of creation. These networks can facilitate forms of co-operation between people from different geographical and cultural contexts that enable them to deepen their common humanity and their sense of shared responsibility for the good of all. We must, therefore, strive to ensure that the digital world, where such networks can be established, is a world that is truly open to all. It would be a tragedy for the future of humanity if the new instruments of communication, which permit the sharing of knowledge and information in a more rapid and effective manner, were not made accessible to those who are already economically and socially marginalized, or if it should contribute only to increasing the gap separating the poor from the new networks that are developing at the service of human socialization and information.

I would like to conclude this message by addressing myself, in particular, to young Catholic believers: to encourage them to bring the witness of their faith to the digital world. Dear Brothers and Sisters, I ask you to introduce into the culture of this new environment of communications and information technology the values on which you have built your lives. In the early life of the Church, the great Apostles and their disciples brought the Good News of Jesus to the Greek and Roman world. Just as, at that time, a fruitful evangelization required that careful attention be given to understanding the culture and customs of those pagan peoples so that the truth of the gospel would touch their hearts

and minds, so also today, the proclamation of Christ in the world of new technologies requires a profound knowledge of this world if the technologies are to serve our mission adequately. It falls, in particular, to young people, who have an almost spontaneous affinity for the new means of communication, to take on the responsibility for the evangelization of this "digital continent". Be sure to announce the Gospel to your contemporaries with enthusiasm. You know their fears and their hopes, their aspirations and their disappointments: the greatest gift you can give to them is to share with them the "Good News" of a God who became man, who suffered, died and rose again to save all people. Human hearts are yearning for a world where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion. Our faith can respond to these expectations: may you become its heralds! The Pope accompanies you with his prayers and his blessing.

Greetings from the **PaolineOnline** editorial team

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