

**“My
collaborators
for the sake
of the
Gospel”**

Rome, 29 June 2017

Opening of the Centenary of the Pauline Cooperators

To All the Sisters

Dearest Sisters,

This year, the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul takes on a particular meaning for us because we are celebrating the Centenary of the Pauline Cooperators in the Church. In fact, on 29 June 1917, the *Union of Cooperators for the Good Press* was set up with the consent of Bishop Francesco Re of Alba, and on 29 September 1918 it received canonical recognition through the approval of its Statute. On 24 October of the same year, Fr. Alberione blessed 10,000 copies of the first issue of the Pauline Cooperators Bulletin and stacked them in piles in front of the Blessed Sacrament. And on 31 December 1921, he wrote to the Bishop of Alba:

There are more than 500 Cooperators and some are extremely zealous.... A number of them have offered their lives for the development of the Pious Society of St. Paul and they literally deprive themselves of bread for the cause of the good press.

By 1925, there were already 15,000 Cooperators. Chronicles of those times remind us that the laity were considered to be an indispensable element in fulfilling the Pauline mission. Fr. Alberione considered them to be part of the family. He kept them informed about the progress and problems of the “House,” and involved the Cooperators in its apostolic and spiritual ideal. It was often the Cooperators who paved the way for our various foundations, who wrote articles for the local press, who promoted vocation work, who looked after the book deposits in the parishes.... As early as 1926, our Founder expressed his regret that not enough attention was being given to the family of Cooperators. And in 1958 (closer to our own time), he implored:

Doesn't it seem to you that we really need to leave behind us men and women who will continue our apostolate? You all work very hard individually. I would like to see you pour a little more effort into raising up apostles.... I want you to pray very hard for this intention. You must not only *be* apostles: you must *raise up* apostles! (FSP58, p.289)


“Raise up apostles”...in the spirit of the Apostle Paul, who set up a network of collaborators so that the proclamation of the Gospel would extend beyond every border.

“Raise up apostles”...so that the divine Word will be multiplied by the press, appear on TV and cinema screens, echo over the radio, take advantage of the extraordinary potentials of information highways, bounce off social networks, be the center of cultural events.....

“Raise up apostles”...and *move ahead together*, according to the dynamics of *synodality*, the fruit of the ecclesiology of communion, in always greater collaboration, utilizing our diverse charisms with respect for the different gifts the Lord has bestowed on his Church.

My warmest best wishes and sincere gratitude to each of our Cooperators and collaborators, who participate in the grace we received to proclaim the joy of salvation and to be “*branded by the mission* to bring light, bless, enliven, raise up, heal and free” (cf. EG 273). May St. Paul obtain for all of us his ardent heart so that we might move in accord with the breath of the Spirit and “wake up the world with the light of the Gospel.”

With affection and gratitude,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General