

Rome, 5 February 2024

*In memory of Maestra Thecla*

Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,

Today we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the death of Prima Maestra Thecla, but our hearts are not filled with grief because we always feel our Mother beside us, walking with us. The Founder himself urged us not to suffer too much for her absence when, on 18 March 1964, he wrote:

I don't want you to grieve too much because she is not absent, she is present! Present first of all in the spirit you have received and want to preserve and live. (...) In addition, Prima Maestra received an abundance of graces. She understood religious life, but especially—and this was exceptional—she understood what today we call the apostolate of social communications, that is, the technical means that serve to communicate thought to others. What a great gift this was!

Maestra Thecla incarnated and witnessed to the ideal lived by Paul and Alberione, translating it into day-to-day wisdom that gave depth to our roots and impetus to the Congregation's missionary development. Those roots of communion and apostolic passion draw life-giving lymph from our intimate union with the Lord, frequent contact with his Word, and efforts to live and speak as he did:

Let us read the Gospel and follow the example of Jesus. May we put the Gospel into practice before proclaiming it! (CSAS 18/14).

A recurring theme in the conversations and writings of Prima Maestra is the realization that if the Lord has made us "light for the world" by calling us to the grace of the apostolate, then it is our duty to take the Word of life to those who are waiting for it or who have not yet received it:

The more I travel, the more I come to understand the breadth and beauty of our apostolate and the need to take the Gospel to everyone. Let us thank the Lord for calling us, as Christians, to carry out this apostolate, adapting it to all times and peoples (VPC 88).

In speaking about Maestra Thecla, Fr. Alberione remarked: "How many times she mentioned the need to do a little good to souls; to bring a little light to the world." The missionary dimension of Maestra Thecla's faith was translated into apostolic solicitude toward the Church and all humanity:

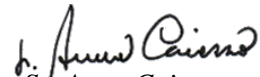
In the world there are millions of people racing here and there, but how many of them know and love the Lord? We must feel the needs of those souls. Let us ask the Lord to enlighten them and help them get to know him and his redemption so that they can be saved. In order to do good to others, we must be holy. Our apostolate is to do good; therefore, we should feel tormented by the needs of souls! (CSAS 143/13).

For Maestra Thecla, *holiness* is the essential and distinctive feature of Christ's missionaries.

It is not the number of people who work in the Lord's vineyard that counts. What counts is how holy they are.... Let us ask the Divine Master to give saints to our Congregation. Only in this way will we do good (VPC 124).

"The saints in heaven continue their mission according to the power they are given by the Lord" said Fr. Alberione in reference to Maestra Thecla. And so today, 30 years after the launch of our Pauline Publishing Trademark, we entrust to her heavenly mission our *renewed apostolic Trademark* and *new Institutional Logo*, in order to commemorate our history and relaunch our apostolate in the world today.

With deep affection,



Sr. Anna Caiazza  
Superiora General