

*The apostolate of prayer
is simple, easy, obligatory,
suitable for everyone.*

Giuseppe Forlai, igs



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MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER



Dearest Sisters,

The announcement of God's faithful and merciful love that becomes forgiveness is at the heart of the message of Lent and the Jubilee Year.

That God is mercy is the "good news" that Jesus communicated to us: not a God interested in receiving honors and angry with those who transgress his commands, not an implacable judge who punishes the wicked and rewards the good, not a God indifferent or distant from his creatures... The image of God that Jesus prefers and gives us is that of a Father who feels towards us what a mother feels towards the child she carries in her womb, in Hebrew *rahamin*. And it is the image that Jesus also applies to himself, inspiring his disciples, as Paul attests in his letter to the Philippians: "God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the *affections* of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:8). The Son, like the Father, is "touched" deeply by the suffering of humanity, he has compassion for it, he suffers with us.

For this reason, in the dramatic season of our history, the first *charity of truth* that we are called to do is to help our contemporaries (and ourselves) to correct the idea that they have (and we have) of God:

... not a God who looks down on the world and decides what will happen today, establishes who to punish and who to pardon... But a God who is mortally wounded, brutally killed, who suffers with us and cries out: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" A God who does not try to explain anything to us, he just cries. He cries for every victim and together with every man or woman, he sheds tears for each one.... He is a God who has one desire, one obsession: he wants to save everyone and does not want to lose anyone¹.

The Gospels testify that Christ's passion for God translates into compassion for the human being. The Father's mercy itself pushes him towards the least, the victims, the excluded, the sinners but also those who consider

themselves righteous.... In the synagogue of Nazareth, on the day that inaugurates his prophetic ministry, it is the "Spirit of the Lord" who prompts this direction in his actions towards those who are most in need of mercy, compassion, and tenderness. Attributing to himself the text of Isaiah 61:1-2, Jesus reveals: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18-19).

Jesus himself outlined the dynamics of mercy in the parable of the "Good Samaritan." If the priest and the Levite had stopped before the man who was the victim of robbers, if they would have bent over him, knelt before his pain, if they had looked him in the eyes, they too would have felt compassion and would have shown him mercy. The Samaritan looks at the wounded man with empathic love, he does not ask who the stranger is, what his race is, his moral situation, his political orientation... He simply approaches and becomes his neighbor, because the neighbor is the one I decide to meet. The real urgency is the decision of proximity to the other, no matter who he or she is.



This is what Jesus did and taught: he met men and women, often anonymously, during his life's tireless journey. Jesus would stop and look at each person with deep attention. From this gaze came his closeness: he drew near to them, or allowed them to draw near to him. By listening, he came to understand the specific needs and sufferings each person faced. The spiritual or existential *periphery* in which they dwelt was revealed to Jesus in the encounter and the dialogue; these were not predetermined.

¹ G. Cossovich, # PrayforParis but is it still possible to pray? in Vinonuuovo.it.

How can we be faithful, in the times in which we live, to the words of Jesus: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36)? How can we follow the path of mercy to build a more just and fraternal world, a more human and credible Church?

Pope Francis, since the beginning of his pontificate, has described and interpreted today’s world as an *open world* of relationships and dialogue, and has spoken of the Church as a *field hospital* that lives its mission of salvation and healing in the world.

But is it possible to speak of an *open world* today? In recent years, months, weeks we have entered a chaos that prevents us from understanding what direction the world should take to escape the abyss into which it seems to be falling. Wars, divisions, closures, exclusions remain, and are even intensifying... But for Pope Francis, all of this can be overcome by rediscovering an authentic mercy that “makes us more open to dialogue to better know and understand each other; eliminates every form of closure and contempt and expels every form of violence and discrimination.”

In his address to the diplomatic corps in 2016, Francis spoke of the “*diplomacy of mercy*,” which is essential for resolving conflicts by uniting “contrasting ideas, opposing political positions, and distant religious visions.” The diplomacy of mercy, as explained by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, involves “never considering anything or anyone as definitively lost in relations between nations, peoples, and States”; hence, diplomacy as the “art of patience” and “craftsmanship of hope.”

The Church as a *field hospital*, not seen as power but as service, is therefore “the father’s

house where there is a place for each person with their burdensome life” (EG 47). It is a Church capable of drawing near, of meeting the other in a spirit of exchange and dialogue, overcoming prejudices, hardships, mistrust, *descending into their night, into their darkness without getting lost*. A Church that makes “mercy happen.” A Church “in which the audacity to do new things will be stronger than the habit of doing things as before... in which everyone will be able to pray in their own language, express themselves in their own culture, and exist with their own history” (A. Casati).

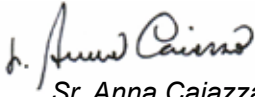
Making “mercy happen” is also our task as workers of mercy with our apostolate, as the Founder exhorts us:

Show mercy, love: you will find the mercy of Jesus. “Forgive and you will be forgiven” (Lk 6:37). Love. Console those who suffer. Instruct: bring the Gospel, the greatest good to others. And everything will penetrate the minds of others and yours... (FSP 1950-1953, p. 398).

Dearest, I would be very happy to receive the gift of your reflections and sharing, even communitarian reflections, on this theme so important and essential in our days.

Let us embrace the Holy Father with affection and intense prayer, gratefully welcoming the precious teaching of fragility which he expresses in his mission at the service of the Church today.

In communion of joy and hope.


Sr. Anna Caiazza
Superior General

CALENDAR OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

March - June 2025

10 march - 10 april 2025	Preparatory Commission Encounter for 12 CG	Sr. Clarice Wisniewski Sr. Bruna Fregni
18-29 march 2025	Visit to Pakistan	Sr. Annamaria Gasser
21 april - 1° May 2025	Visit to Australia	Sr. Anna Caiazza
2-11 May 2025	Visit to China	Sr. Anna Caiazza
24 May - 11 June 2025	Fraternal Visit in Madagascar	Sr. Anna Caiazza

INDIA

THE PEN TO DEFEND HUMILIATED AND ABUSED WOMEN



The tragic story of a woman in the Indian state of Kerala shook Sr. Lissy Maruthanaky, 67, of the Daughters of St. Paul, who has spent fifty years committed to announcing the Gospel, especially, but not only, through apostolic service in the mass media. “Last February, we celebrated our Jubilee of consecrated life in community with prayers, reflections, fraternal sharing, mutual gifts, and an atmosphere of enthusiasm and gratitude.”

Sr. Lissy shared with Vatican Media, “While I rejoiced in being a consecrated woman, a little voice inside me asked: What about the women engaged in the most humble jobs, those who are abused, who fight for survival, or for a bit of recognition and dignity?” In moments when one experiences the contradictions of a life that may seem comfortable, the need for authenticity in vocation resurfaces. “As a Pauline Sister, I learned from Blessed James Alberione that the pen is mightier than the sword. My immediate desire was to continue writing, to bring their stories to light, but also to support them in their liberation and social advancement.” From the written word to video, Sr. Lissy’s ultimate goal is always to share the love of Christ with those who do not yet know Him.

ITALY

THE RELIC OF SAINT BERNADETTE DISPLAYED AT REGINA APOSTOLORUM HOSPITAL IN ALBANO

From March 12 to 14, the Regina Apostolorum Hospital in Albano hosted the Grand Reliquary of Saint Bernadette Soubirous, brought from the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. The relic, a symbol of Saint Bernadette’s unwavering faith, was displayed for three days in the hospital’s church, where the Daughters of St. Paul are present.



This event held great spiritual significance for the local community and all the faithful who wished to pay homage to the saint of Lourdes. The relic, symbolizing steadfast faith and Christian witness, contains a rib of the saint, taken in 1925 when her body was exhumed for beatification.

The reliquary arrived on Wednesday, March 12, at 11:30 AM and remained until 3:30 PM on Friday, March 14. Regina Apostolorum Hospital, the only hospital in Italy to host the relic, welcomed with great joy all those who wished to take part in this meaningful moment of reflection, prayer, and devotion.

During the three days, the faithful had the opportunity to participate in prayer services, Eucharistic celebrations, and moments of catechesis and reflection, led by the Pauline Family and pastoral animators.

THE BIBLE: AN INFINITE BOOK: A DIALOGUE WITH TWO EXCEPTIONAL SPEAKERS



On February 13, 2025, at the LUMSA University headquarters (University of Mary Most Holy of the Assumption), the International Pauline Book Centre (Via del Mascherino 94, Rome), in collaboration with the university, hosted a highly significant cultural event featuring Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Holy See’s Dicastery for Culture and Education, and Aldo Cazzullo, a renowned journalist and writer.

The event, moderated by the biblical scholar Rosanna Virgili, began with formal greetings from Professor Francesco Bonini, rector of LUMSA University. At the heart of the debate - titled *The Bible: An Infinite Book*, were the works of the two speakers: *The Inestimable Reading* by Tolentino and *The God of Our Fathers* by Cazzullo.

Through a rich and stimulating discussion, the speakers explored the role of faith in the formation of cultural and personal identity, highlighting how the past can dialogue with the present. Furthermore, they underlined the importance of reading as a tool for growth, both individual and collective.

In conclusion, both authors reiterated the need for authentic dialogue, capable of enhancing biblical roots without locking them into a static vision.

The God of our Fathers, as Cazzullo essentially summarized, can also be the God of our sons and daughters, if we know how to transmit God's essence without fear of the future. It was a message that left the audience with a renewed awareness of the value of biblical tradition and its relevance, so that we can all find a path of hope, as Cardinal Tolentino concluded, in every situation of life.

JUBILEE OF THE WORLD OF COMMUNICATION



On the morning of Saturday, January 25, in celebration of the Jubilee of the World of Communication, a large group of Pauline priests, brothers and sisters participated in a pilgrimage to the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica. The event was marked by an atmosphere of fraternal communion and profound emotion. Together, the participants prayerfully processed up the Via della Conciliazione from the newly transformed Piazza Pia, reflecting on

the vital role and responsibility of communication in today's world. The pilgrimage reached its spiritual peak as the group passed through the Holy Door.

Inside the basilica, the pilgrims experienced a moment of prayer and recollection, rediscovering the Pauline mission as communicators of hope and truth. This sacred time reinforced their commitment to spreading messages of faith and encouragement in a complex and ever-changing world.

As part of the day's celebrations, the poster series *Communicating Hope: A New Approach to Information is Possible* was inaugurated at the entrance to the Paul VI Audience Hall (Aula Nervi) inside Vatican City. This initiative, spearheaded by the Daughters of St. Paul and the Society of St. Paul, was created by the Mediacor Agency and promoted under the auspices of the Dicastery for Evangelization and the Dicastery for Communication. Various associations dedicated to the field of communication offered their support as well.

The Pauline Jubilee initiatives continued in the afternoon at the Basilica of St. Mary Queen of Apostles where a second display of the poster exhibition was held. In the following months, the exhibition will go on tour, extending its message to a broader audience. Visitors were invited to engage with the exhibit in multiple languages through a special QR code. The exhibit encourages participants to reflect on their personal roles in serving the community and by celebrating the legacy of Fr. James Alberione and Sr. Tecla Merlo, founders of the Pauline mission.

IN A CHANGING WORLD, A CHANGING ECONOMY

The treasurers from all our circumscriptions gathered via Zoom for several days of formation during this crucial time for the global economy, which also deeply impacts our community and apostolic realities.

The formation days (February 17-24), prepared by the international economics team, established in December 2023 by the General Government and coordinated by the General Bursar, focused on key topics with the help of expert economists and administrators.

In the first phase of the meetings, Professor Stefano Zamagni offered an overview of market economics in a globalized world. He highlighted how the economy has shifted all its parameters in recent times, with rising in-



equality, ongoing war, misuse of the environment, and growing individualism.

Professor Luigino Bruni reminded us that economic choices must be made considering each congregation's unique charism. He made several references to the Bible, which is a roadmap written in times of crisis and exile. As those who continue the prophetic mission within the Church, we are called to be living witnesses of poverty, the criterion of truth in our lives.

Sister Annunziata Remossi, an official at the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, reminded us that temporal goods belong to the Church and are meant for the mission. Therefore, leadership decisions must be clearly defined and not driven solely by economics or resources. The works we do are not the charism itself, but the charism is expressed through well-managed works. By remaining poor, we can enrich the world by using goods with detachment.

In the second phase, we explored more technical topics to help guide our decision-making. With Professor Rafael Escamilla, we examined the economic resources available to us, planning, and sustainable management, so that even if resources are limited, our charism does not lose its strength. Professor Steve Zielinski emphasized the importance of financial resource management, especially as there is decreasing external oversight regarding how funds are used. This brings with it a greater responsibility to ensure that we remain faithful to the principles of ethical finance. Attention was also given to the real estate assets currently under our management. Sister Annamaria Gasser, General Bursar, highlighted the congregation's vast property holdings and urged that we dedicate our full attention to ensuring their proper and effective use.

The third phase, especially the final two days, was devoted to dialogue and the sharing of experiences from each circumscription.

The Superior General was present throughout all sessions, emphasizing the "ap-

ostolic" dimension of the service of bursars or administrators. She invited each sister to live and carry out her service as an authentic apostolate, giving her full apostolic energy to this delicate and vital mission.

The presentation of the posters was succeeded by a conference titled *From Competition to Collaboration: New Media as Paths of Hope for Young People in a Conflicted World*. This was followed by a moment of prayer for communicators and the Celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by His Excellency Mons. Valdir José De Castro, SSP, Bishop of Campo Limpo in São Paulo, Brazil, and a member of the Dicastery for Communication.

PORTUGAL

MEETING FOR THE RELAUNCH OF THE PAULINE BOOKSTORES



With the aim of *informing and training for an efficient and effective mission*, collaborators and Daughters of St. Paul gathered at the Apostolic Center of Prior Velho, in Lisbon, to reflect, share ideas, and relaunch the apostolate through the seven bookstores of the Portuguese delegation.

The one-and-a-half-day meeting (February 15–16) was the first in a series of online sessions planned throughout the year to ensure continuity in the process of redesigning the apostolate—a priority assigned to the Delegation by the General Government during the fraternal visit of 2021.

The main theme, *The Brick-and-Mortar (traditional) Bookstore in the Digital Age*, proved to be very timely and, especially in an era marked by the crisis in the book industry and the exponential growth of digital media. Another key topic was that of *Digital Marketing at the Service of Diffusion through the Bookstores*, presented by the Paulinas Communication and Marketing team.

Additionally, participants showed great interest in the presentation of this year's new editorial releases. The report on sales through external channels, delivered by the head of this apostolic sector, was also highly appreciated.

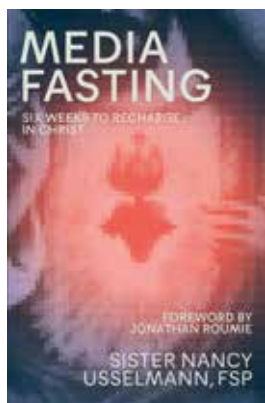
This meeting, dedicated to bookstore management and staff, included a reflection on economics and administrative management.

Before concluding, the participants had the opportunity to ask questions and share suggestions to support the ongoing revitalization of the bookstores, particularly through a strategic plan, which each bookstore will be tasked with developing in the coming months.

The meeting concluded with a profound moment of prayer and a group photo, leaving all participants with a sense of enrichment and renewed motivation for an ever more effective and efficient mission.

UNITED STATES

MEDIA FASTING: SIX WEEKS TO RECHARGE IN CHRIST



“Media Fasting: Six Weeks to Recharge in Christ” was published just in time for Lent as a guide for people who live, work, and have their being in our digital, mediated world. Written by Sr. Nancy Usslemann, F.S.P., Director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los

Angeles, CA., with a foreword by the actor Jonathan Roumie (“The Chosen”), the book is divided into two parts:

Part One explains fasting, how to do a media fast, and the many benefits of fasting for the mind, body, and spirit. It includes a guide on how to create a personal fasting plan.

Part Two guides the reader through six weeks of daily mindful moments focused on media usage, enhancing one’s spiritual life, and providing suggestions to support a media fasting plan. Each week is centered around a theme:

Paring Down to the Essentials:

- Choosing the Good Life
- Being Media Mindful

- Becoming Cultural Mystics
- Creating Communion, and
- Transforming the Culture.

Media fasting is an energy boost in our journey toward a healthy and holy existence within the media culture. This book is a guide to recharge our lives in Christ and challenge us to live more meaningfully, especially during Lent.

KOREA

JUBILEE OF WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY



On March 22, the Korean Pauline Family celebrated the Jubilee of World Communication Day following the recommendations of the Superior Generals of the Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul. The event, organized by the Pauline Family, was attended by Father Thomas Aquinas JIN Seul Ki, Deputy Director of the Office for Culture and Public Relations for the Archdiocese of Seoul, and more than 60 members of the Association for Catholic Communication, as well as the provincial government of the Daughters of St. Paul and the sisters of the Miari house, the Pauline brothers, the provincial superior and a councilor of the Pious Disciples and the Pastorelle.

The Pauline Family reflected on the meaning of the Jubilee and shared communion with communication professionals through conferences, Holy Mass and dinner. Communication professionals were encouraged to carry out their journalistic and radio-television activities in a responsible manner by communicating the values of Christ.

The Paulines promised to support with them in prayer so that their activities may bring glory to God and good to people.

ONLY GOD IS GOOD!

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSECRATED LIFE BEGINNING FROM THE RICH YOUNG MAN

SILVÂNIA FREIRE DA SILVA, FSP



This thesis was presented by Sr. Silvânia Freire da Silva, from the province of Brazil, as a partial requirement for obtaining her Bachelor's Degree in Theology at the Department of Theology of PUC-Rio.

The title of the bibliographic research

covers in essence the theme: *Only God is Good*.

In her work, Sr. Silvânia analyzes the characteristics of consecrated life from the viewpoint of the rich young man in Mt 19:21. From this biblical passage emerges themes such as: Jesus the Master, the goodness of God, eternal life, the commandments, the new Law, perfection, poverty, eternity, following Jesus, responding to the call and wealth.

The aim of the thesis is to return to the essence of consecrated life starting from Jesus' invitation to the rich young man: "If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mt 19:21).

In the first chapter entitled: *The rich young man and Jesus*, are highlighted the elements that shaped the religious identity of the rich young man, his dialogue with Jesus and his refusal to follow him. From this perspective, in the second chapter entitled *The Uniqueness of the Gospel and the Apostle Paul*, are examined some characteristics of God's call to the Pharisee Saul who became the Apostle Paul.

The third chapter, *The Religious Elements at the Basis of Consecrated Religious Life today* is an analyses of the vows as the foundation of consecration to Christ from the perspective of returning to the sources of one's respective charism so as to be aware of the fact that on our journey of fragility Jesus builds the human person.

ASCETICISM AND LIFE IN CHRIST

FOR AN EVANGELIZATION OF THE INTERIOR LIFE BEGINNING FROM THE WORK *DONEC FORMETUR CHRISTUS IN VOBIS* BY FATHER JAMES ALBERIONE (1884-1971)

ANA PAULA RAMALHO, FSP



This is the title of the doctoral dissertation in Spiritual Theology by Sr. Ana Paula Ramalho defended on December 11, 2024 at the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome.

ASCETICISM:

AN ANCIENT RESOURCE FOR AN EVER-NEW LIFE

Asceticism, a concept often associated with ancient practices, is today more relevant than ever, constituting an ancient resource for an ever-new life. The term which derives from the Greek *áskēsis* (training, exercise), has over time taken on the connotation of discipline for spiritual growth. Today we prefer to speak of Christian asceticism as a "mystery of love and commitment". Asceticism is not an end in itself, but only a means to reach charity, the true goal of the spiritual life.

ASCETICISM:

COLLABORATION WITH GRACE

This dissertation highlights asceticism in the process of Christification, rereading *Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis* in this light. Asceticism is cooperation with grace, a concrete way of responding to the Father's invitation to participate in the banquet in which one is offered Eucharistic-Gospel food, Jesus Christ Master, Way, Truth and Life (cf. DF, 11). For Alberione, this cooperation is expressed in meditation, examination of conscience, confession and spiritual direction. The path leads from meditation on the

Gospel to confrontation with one's life, and into reconciliation and spiritual accompaniment. The goal is maturity in Christ (cf. Eph 4.13), through active abandonment to grace: "we are indeed collaborators with God" (1Cor 3.9). Or, as Alberione states in another passage of the *DF*, "to become saints, to embody God in us; we need to do our part: we are with God" (*DF*, 36).

**ASCETICISM:
EVANGELIZATION OF THE INTERIOR LIFE**

Furthermore, this study proposes asceticism as "evangelization of the interior life". That is, allowing the Gospel to reach and transform the most hidden areas of the mind, will and heart.

In an era characterized by distractions and superficiality, rediscovering interiority and the need to evangelize is essential for a profound and fruitful spiritual life. In this way *DF* is configured as a concrete itinerary for this process, to become credible witnesses of the beauty of Christ alive in us.

**THE SILENCE OF GOD:
THE THEOLOGY OF HUMAN
AND DIVINE SUFFERING
IN JÜRGEN MOLTMANN**

SHEILA SILVA ARAÚJO, FSP



Sr. Sheila Silva Araújo, Daughter of St. Paul, studied Theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) Brazil.

Her final thesis is on the topic: *The Silence of God: The Theology of Human and Divine Suffering in Jürgen Moltmann*, a topic chosen after having studied human and divine suffering in depth, especially according to the theology of Jürgen Moltmann.

The silence of God in the face of human suffering goes far beyond words and can only be perceived through faith, which creates a profound encounter between the silence of the creature and the silence of its Creator. However, the silence of God can sometimes be misunderstood as distant, in-

different, apathetic towards the suffering of his creature, as a silence that only transmits absence and causes a great emptiness in the person.

This study asks several questions: Where is God? Why does he allow his creature to suffer like this? Is God indifferent to suffering? Does he care about human suffering?

We find, however, that it is in pain that we feel his presence and connect with the cry of Christ on the cross, because it is through the sufferings of Christ that we discover the compassionate God who welcomes our suffering.

**FIRST PROFESSION
January 2025**

LAHORE-PAKISTAN

25 January 2025

Rabishna Zulfiqar
Dashi Wilson
Tomsina Shairal Rehmat

PASAY CITY, PHILIPPINES,

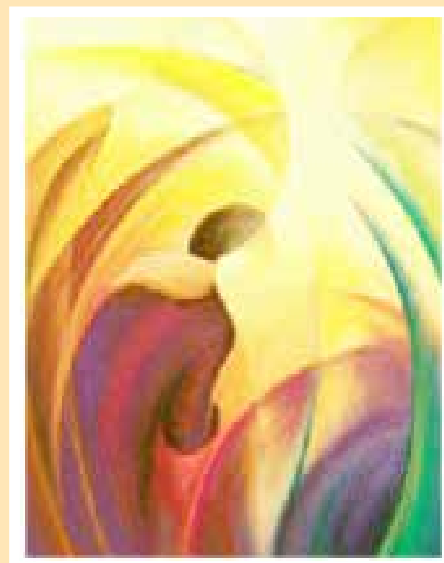
25 January 2025

Anne Loraine Santos

MUMBAI, INDIA

25 January 2025

Glorinda Teronpi
R.K. Panmei Sachuingamliu



MARY, MODEL OF THE COMMUNITARIAN MYSTIC

APOSTLE OF PRAYER



MARY IS THE «APOSTLE» WITH «PRAYER»

Mary is the Apostle who prays: because she prayed more than everyone, and better than everyone. A holy life is the most perfect and effective prayer.

Mary attracted the incarnate Son of God with the enchantment of her beauty: "My dove, my perfect one, is only one" (Song of Songs 6:9). For this reason, the Holy Spirit was copiously poured out into Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." Mary, with the perfume of her virtues attracted her Beloved to come to her, to delight in the garden of her heart, as is written in the Song of Songs.

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church agree in affirming that Mary hastened the hour of the coming of the Redeemer with her prayers. In God's plan, Mary had to carry within herself the three ages of the world: to appear before Jesus did in the Old Testament; to live with him, and to be grafted into the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church. Therefore, she awaited the Messiah, with the most chosen souls of the Old Testament. She adored him with the Shepherds, the Magi, and Joseph; and after the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven she became the holiest and most venerated member of the Church.

In the preparatory period, Mary's role stands out best. The awaiting of the Redeemer was the constant concern of the Jewish people; a concern that became more alive as time progressed. Among the Jews no one was as enlightened and holy as the most privileged creature, Mary.

The Biblical commentaries heard in the Temple opened up great and ever new perspectives on the greatness of the Messiah, on his supreme beauty and on his mission among men. He understood the abyss of error, vices and idolatry into which humanity had fallen. Mary invoked the Savior with the most ardent accents of the Patriarchs, "Come and do not delay; come and save your people."

These voices were a power in God's plans, that of hastening the incarnation of his Son. Prayer influences the Heart of the heavenly Father; especially when it comes from a humble heart, from innocence, from charity. Heav-

en responds to these pleas. And behold: one day, in which Mary's soul had prolonged itself in these elevations and invocations, the Archangel Gabriel appears and greets her: "Hail full of grace... He who will be born from you will be called the Holy One." The weight of Mary's prayer had tipped God's scale towards mercy.

This is the apostolate that obtains vigor, constancy, effectiveness for the preacher, the writer, the teacher, the catechist, the missionary, the lecturer... for all those who exercise an apostolate of works or words, written or printed. Therefore, Saint Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians (3:1) writes: "Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph."

A preacher had made a pact with a very humble soul, "during the sermon you remain in adoration so that it may bear fruits of conversion."

APOSTOLATE OF ALL



The apostolate of prayer is simple, easy, obligatory, suitable for everyone.

If the prayer of a fervent soul is worth so much, how much more is that of many souls who come together to ask! "If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:19-20).

Pray with Mary, so that the Kingdom of God may increase, so that the Church may expand its conquests, so that one may be the flock and one the shepherd.

Come, oh Lord. Bless the Catholic missions!

Let us pray with Mary as a child in Nazareth; as a young girl at the Temple, as an adolescent when she felt more and more clearly in her soul the working of the Holy Spirit who was preparing her for the great mystery of divine Motherhood.

Giuseppe Forlai, igs

THECLA MERLO LIVED THE TWO SECRETS OF THE SAINTS AND APOSTLES: HUMILITY AND FAITH



In 1960, Thecla Merlo, co-founder of the Daughters of St. Paul, visited Brazil for the last time. Her purpose was to encourage and inspire her daughters to follow Jesus, the Divine Master, Way, Truth, and Life, in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul and to communicate the Gospel through the media. At the time, the field of communication was evolving rapidly, and she faithfully followed the guidance of the “Theologian,” Blessed James Alberione. He described this mission as a new form of evangelization in the Catholic Church: to live and share Jesus as Way, Truth, and Life through modern media.

At that time, I was only 14 years old and had just entered the Congregation in the community of Porto Alegre, Brazil. We were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Sr. Thecla Merlo, who was traveling from Rome to visit and support us. There were 120 of us aspirants—teenage girls and young women—filled with the desire to consecrate our lives to God. Her arrival was a true celebration, a moment I still remember with deep emotion.

A chair was placed for her in the courtyard of our house where she personally welcomed each of us aspirants. She traced the sign of the cross on our foreheads, one by one. At the time, I did not realize that I was receiving the blessing of such a holy woman! Nor did I, as a young girl, fully grasp the meaning of that gesture that has remained etched in my heart, the grace of an encounter with a woman of God. That blessing was more than just a touch, it was a sign of divine love, sealing my call to follow Him.

The holiness of Sr. Thecla Merlo, which I only came to understand fully over time, was built day by day in the simplicity of a life completely open to the action of the Trinity. Her fidelity to the Gospel was absolute—she allowed herself to be transformed daily by Jesus, the Divine Master. According to the words of our founder, Sr. Thecla lived out the two secrets of the saints and apostles: humility and

faith. Her humility made her wholly receptive to God’s will, while her faith sustained her in constant prayer. Though physically fragile, she was strong in spirit, tenacious and obedient, even to the point of sacrifice. She lived as if she could see the invisible, as one of her daughters, Sr. M. Luiza Ricciardi, later described in a hymn she wrote “Como se visse o invisível” (“Gazing upon the invisible”) Her entire life was dedicated to inspiring her daughters, encouraging them to spread the message of the Good News through the media, in accordance with the teachings of Blessed James Alberione.

At that time, the world of communications was still in its infancy, and everything seemed new and complex. Perhaps Sr. Thecla had not known all the technical details needed to establish a small printing press, but she possessed an unshakable faith. She obeyed with trust and instilled in the Sisters worldwide a deep love for the apostolate, urging them to be creative and to explore new opportunities made possible by advancements in communication.

She often said, “We have one heart and one soul in our various communities.... I carry you all in my heart.” Fr. Alberione spoke of her with profound admiration: “Prima Maestra is never absent. She is always present. She does not watch from afar but remains watchful—close, active, engaged in thought, desire, and life.”

Thecla Merlo was a living example of everyday holiness for her daughters, uniting action and contemplation. She demonstrated that the effectiveness of the apostolate depends

on the depth of one’s spiritual life, which must be nourished by the Eucharist and the Word of God. Only through this deep foundation can apostolic work be filled with the Holy Spirit and truly transform the lives of those who receive the message communicated by the Daughters of St. Paul. Today, the Congregation is present in more than 50 countries, and we are known worldwide as the Paulines.

For each of us, Sr. Thecla Merlo lived a holy life. Indeed, the Church officially recognized her life of heroic virtue by proclaiming her Venerable in 1991.



Joana T. Puntel, fsp

MY 50 YEARS AMONG THE DAUGHTERS OF SAINT PAUL

On the occasion of my fiftieth anniversary of religious profession, which providentially coincides with the Jubilee Year, I would like to remember a passage from Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, which has accompanied me this year: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3). I carry the past within me like a precious treasure and I would like to underline that "Everything is the work of God, and with Mary I sing the Magnificat!"

In Elizabeth's house, overflowing with the joy of the Holy Spirit, Mary sang her Magnificat of praise and thanksgiving: "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Lk 1:46-47). Today I wish to join my voice to this hymn of the Virgin of Nazareth. Mary sings "The Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49) and with her I too praise the Lord for the great things he has accomplished for me in these 50 years of religious life. In this way I want to remember and reawaken my *memory and amazement*.

My *memory* takes me back 50 years when I said my first "yes" to the Lord. From that day I had a new identity: that of the Daughters of Saint Paul. Fifty years of religious life! This year, I have tried several times - without success - to take stock of my life and I had the impression that, as far as the passage of time is concerned, many years have passed since I left my family of origin to be part of the Pauline Family. A huge thank you to my



parents and my family, who helped me grow in faith.

Within my vocational journey a *double story* emerges *that of God's love for me and the story of my response to his love*. Today, I perceive with particular force a sense of the mystery of God's free love, which envelops my existence. He created me and called me to belong exclusively to his Son Jesus, beyond all my poverty and fragility; and he called me to serve him in the specific mission of the Daughters of Saint Paul.

The *amazement of the second call*: leaving my country and my Province of India and going to Italy for a mission different from that of a Pauline Sister, that is, to become a nurse. With the grace of God, little by little, everything changed. The enthusiasm to do God's will and do good to others took hold and I became a full-time professional nurse.

I thank the Lord for this life experience of many years in the community of the *Regina Apostolorum Hospital* in Albano Laziale, and in particular as a nurse in charge of the oncology/hematology department. Years of dedication, service and sacrifices in a world that suffers and struggles between life and death. Some things remain from this experience: the glances, the cries of pain and the need for help. I learned what it meant to give, offer and pray for the entire Pauline Family, as Blessed James Alberione desired. Thus, the Lord prepared me for another calling.

I look now with amazement at the *third call*, that of assisting the elderly and sick sisters in the James Alberione community of the Italian Province. To arrive at this third stage of my vocational story, a lot of faith and spir-



itual maturity was needed. And therefore, It was necessary to discover and believe in the words of the Divine Master, "Do not fear... I am with you."

Taking care of the elderly and sick sisters, both in terms of assistance and accompaniment towards their final journey, is a service that cannot be standardized or pigeonholed into a list of attitudes to be assumed, but must be born, matured and materialized in a personal "choice" that requires adherence of the mind, heart and will to the Lord. It must become "passion," which means the ability to share, stand alongside, love the sisters, and be supported by profound motivations. This is a challenge that requires dedication and ever-new energy.

With amazement comes thanksgiving for the small and large things that the Lord has accomplished in me and through me. I believe that many times we do not even notice the "current of grace" that passes through our presence, our words and many times, even

through our silence. I have experienced, as the years have passed, that not only the power of grace and its fidelity is increasingly manifested, but also my fragility and infidelity to his grace. Human frailty and the tiredness of everyday routine can paralyze one's initial enthusiasm.

I like to remember the words of Pope Francis: "There are two types of tiredness, a good tiredness that bears much fruit in life and makes us grow and brings us joy, but there is also that paralyzing tiredness that extinguishes the ability to dream, to desire great things, which prevents us from flying towards the high peaks of holiness and we remain in mediocrity." In this phase of my life I encounter a great challenge: to get up, set out and rediscover, with renewed amazement and enthusiasm, the beauty of this calling, which has animated my life for 50 years.

Rose Melkulamgara, fsp

WORLD POETRY DAY 2025



World Poetry Day was established in 1999 and has been celebrated on March 21st of each year.

Poetry is a form of expression that unites humanity. This day was

established in 1999 during the 30th UNESCO General Assembly, to recognize poetic expression as having a privileged role in promoting dialogue and intercultural understanding, linguistic diversity, communication and peace.

Practiced throughout history, in every culture and on every continent, poetry speaks of our common humanity and our shared values and continues to unite peoples on all continents.

World Poetry Day is an opportunity to promote the convergence of poetry and other arts such as theater, dance, music, and painting by increasing the visibility of poetry in the media.

FOUR TIPS FOR NURTURING YOUR FAITH IN THE DIGITAL WORLD



Have you ever felt that there is more to life than school, sports, video games and online existence?

How can we find the real focus? Or our purpose in all this noise?

How can we ensure that our relationship with God remains at the center of our lives?

Here are four practical tips to keep our faith alive and vibrant amid the turmoil of daily life.

1 - ESTABLISH A "SACRED ROUTINE"

Establishing a "sacred routine" is a powerful way to prioritize faith among the demands of school, extracurricular activities and, for some, work.

As we plan time for all these things, as we make an effective plan, we can set aside a specific time and place for prayer, Scripture reading and reflection each day.

Whether it is reciting a prayer of gratitude when we wake up in the morning or devoting ten or fifteen minutes in the evening for quiet contemplation, having a consistent routine helps us stay rooted in our faith amidst our hectic schedules.

2 - INTEGRATE FAITH INTO YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES

Rather than viewing faith as something separate from our school work, leisure or work, we can find ways to infuse faith into every aspect of our lives.

For example, we can seek God's help in academic challenges by praying for wisdom and guidance while studying. We can seek opportunities for service and commitment by using our talents and passions to assist others and positively influence the world. This

is God's love in action. The life of Blessed Carlos Acutis is an excellent example of how to be oneself as a digital disciple.

3 - GET HELP

We are not meant to walk our lives alone, nor are we meant to walk our faith alone.

Surrounding ourselves with a supportive community of those who share our values can provide encouragement, accountability and strength as we prioritize our faith among the demands of life.

Consider joining a youth group, Bible study or prayer group where you can connect with others who share your beliefs and values. These communities can provide a sense of belonging and solidarity, helping us stay focused on what really matters.

4 - BE GRATEFUL

It is often easy to overlook the many blessings God has poured out on us. Taking time to practice gratitude and daily reflection can help us cultivate a deeper appreciation for the gift of faith and God's presence in our lives.

Consider keeping a gratitude journal where you jot down three things you are grateful for each day or devote a few moments of quiet reflection before going to bed, meditating on how God has worked in your life.

IN CONCLUSION

It is good to remember, in the turmoil of life, to stop, take a breath of air, reflect and reconnect with the source of our strength and purpose, and seek God in all things.

By establishing a sacred routine and integrating faith in the love Jesus has for us into daily activities, we will have time to be aware of the temptations and distractions that can pull us away from our faith, whether it is the lure of social media, the pressure to excel in studies or sports, or the temptation to take refuge only in the world of video games and online life.

Let us guard against these dangers and remain steadfast in putting God and others first. Why? Because this will bring us the joy and peace that only God can give.

Rose Pacatte, fsp
Tutoria | WECA

ITALY

PAULINES GATHER FOR A WORKSHOP ON REFLECTION, COMMUNICATION, AND GENERATING HOPE



Words to Proclaim: Meekness and Hope was the theme of the workshop organized by the Society of St. Paul on February 22, 2025, in Rome.

The event had a twofold purpose: first, to reflect on Pope Francis' message for the 59th World Communications Day (to be celebrated on June 1), which centers on the theme "Share with meekness the hope that is in your hearts" (cf. 1 Peter 3:15-16); and second, to translate insights and inspirations from this message into digital formats and productions.

"We wanted to engage with the message and the day in a fresh and innovative way,"

explained the workshop organizers, "by putting our Pauline charism into action—evangelizing and sharing the beauty and power of the Gospel through the 'most rapid and effective means,' as our Founder, Blessed Fr. James Alberione, encouraged us to do."

They also noted that for the past 20 years, our Institutes have promoted *Communication Week*, a pastoral and cultural initiative aimed at raising public awareness of World Communications Day. "Our goal," they added, "is to emphasize the growing impact of media on individual, family, and social life and to inspire a more conscious and responsible approach to communication."

WINDOW ON THE CHURCH

CATHOLICS INCREASE IN THE WORLD



The *Pontifical Yearbook 2025* and the *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae 2023* have been published, and edited by the Central Office of Church Statistics, of the Secretariat of State.

By examining the data reported in the *Pontifical Yearbook*, information can be obtained regarding the life of the Catholic Church in the world for 2024, while the *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae* offers a snapshot view of the main quantitative phenomena regarding the pastoral action of the Catholic Church in the world.

The Catholic population has grown on the five continents, with Africa recording the highest percentage increase (+ 3.31%). And again, in Africa and also in Asia there has been an increase in priests, while they have decreased in Europe and Oceania. There is a fluctuation in the number of professed men religious and men in the major seminaries.

Africa has 20% of the Catholics of the entire planet and is characterized by a very dynamic spread of the Catholic Church.

With a growth of 0.9%, in a two-year period, the Americas consolidate their position as the continents to which 47.8% of the world's Catholics belong.

The Asian continent records a growth of Catholics of 0.6% in a two-year period, it stands in 2023 at around 11% in the Catholic world.

Europe, despite hosting 20.4% of the world's Catholic community, remains the least dynamic area, with a growth in the number of Catholics in a two-year period of just 0.2%.

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



On International Women's Day and in the Jubilee Year, the young men and women Ambassadors of Hope from the Global Network Promoting *World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Human Trafficking*, launched a new and urgent Call to Action to address the growing global crisis of human trafficking.

"We have chosen this symbolic date of March 8th for our commitment to the fight against human trafficking, driven by the dramatic reality that 70% of trafficking victims are women and girls, according to the United Nations.

"This year, we are joining the global campaign #AccelerateAction, focusing on the theme of *International Women's Day* to give visibility to a crisis that requires immediate collective action."

The document, drafted on February 8, 2025, at the end of the 11th anniversary of this Day, invites young people from around the world to join the cause and take concrete action to stop this crime against humanity.

The World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking was established by Pope Francis in 2015 to raise awareness of the reality of trafficking and to promote collective action. The initiative is coordinated by Talitha Kum International, a network of religious Sisters committed to fighting trafficking around the world.

WINDOW ON COMMUNICATIONS

WORLD RADIO DAY

World Radio Day was celebrated on February 13, 2025. Established by UNESCO, this day recognizes the significance of radio as a powerful means of communication. The



date was not chosen at random: on February 13, 1946, the first United Nations radio broadcast aired, marking a historic milestone in global information dissemination. However, it was only in 2012 that the UN officially designated this day to emphasize the vital role of radio in society.

Each year, World Radio Day highlights a

specific theme to showcase radio's impact. For 2025, UNESCO has chosen *Radio and Climate Change*, underscoring radio's essential role in spreading information about the environmental crisis. As one of the most accessible and far-reaching media, radio can connect with isolated communities, deliver timely warnings, and raise public awareness about the urgent actions needed to combat global warming.

Despite competition from the internet and digital platforms, radio remains a cornerstone of communication. It is an immediate, reliable, and democratic tool that provides millions with access to news, culture, and entertainment. From music broadcasts to in-depth programs, radio continues to be a constant presence in our lives, accompanying us with its unmistakable voice.

HOPING TOGETHER



Hope is always a community project. Let us think for a moment of the grandeur of the message offered by this Year of Grace. We are all invited – all of us! – to start over again, to let God lift us up, to let him embrace us and shower us with mercy. In this regard, the personal and communal aspects are inseparably connected: we set out together, we journey alongside our many brothers and sisters, and we pass through the Holy Door together.

The Jubilee has many social implications. We can think, for example, of its message of mercy and hope for those who live

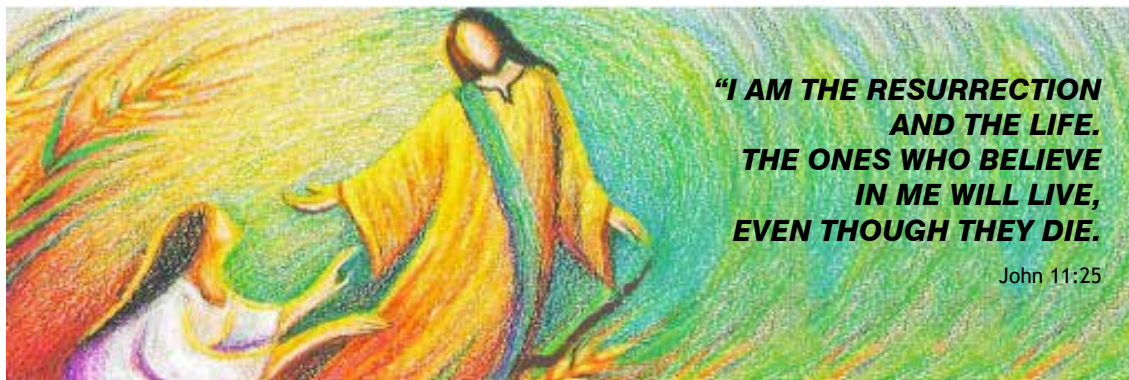
in prisons, or its call for closeness and tenderness towards those who suffer and are on the margins. The Jubilee reminds us that those who are peacemakers “will be called children of God” (*Mt 5:9*), and in this way it inspires hope, points us to the need for an attentive, gentle and reflective communication, capable of pointing out paths of dialogue.

For this reason, I encourage you to discover and make known the many stories of goodness hidden in the folds of the news, imitating those gold-prospectors who tirelessly sift the sand in search of a tiny nugget. It is good to seek out such seeds of hope and make them known. It helps our world to be a little less deaf to the cry of the poor, a little less indifferent, a little less closed in on itself.

May you always find those glimmers of goodness that inspire us to hope. This kind of communication can help to build communion, to make us feel less alone, to rediscover the importance of walking together.

Pope Francis

Message for the 59th World Day
of Social Communications 2025



DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL

- Sr Janith Tinong 55 years old - 19.01.2025 Pasay CP, Philippines
Sr Michela - Giuseppina Giordano 85 years old - 22.01.2025 Bra, Italy
Sr M. Paola - Angela Pena Royo 90 years old - 10.02.2025 Madrid, Spain
Sr Teresa de Jesus Fernandes Pedrosa 82 years old - 11.02.2025 Lisbon CD, Portugal
Sr M. Patrizia Masako Hara 96 years old - 18.02.2025 Kanagawa, Japan
Sr Olinda Catarina Biazus 88 years old - 01.03.2025 São Paulo CR, Brazil
Sr Maria - Filomena Lauda 93 years old - 08.03.2025 Albano GA, Italy
Sr M. Francesca - Camilla Valery 87 years old - 23.03.2025 Albano GA, Italy
Sr Esther - Helena Thomasi 96 years old - 27.03.2025 Curitiba, Brazil

PARENTS OF THE SISTERS

- Sr Digna Myeong Hee Kim (mother Magdalena - Tae Sun Oh) from the community of Seoul-Miari CP, Korea
Sr Ruah Eun A Lee (father Luca - Deok Nam) from the community of Seoul-Miari, Korea
Sr Maria Lourdes Bagalay (mother Antonia Bagalay) from the community of Pasay CP, Philippines
Sr Yeung Deok Magdalena - Gi Sun Bae (father Paolo Su Myong) from the community of Daegu, Korea
Sr Jentrix Nasirumbi Okuku (father Denis Barasa) from the community of Nairobi GH, Kenya
Sr Maria Park (mother Magdalena - Sang Keum Kim) died in 2014, Korea
Sr Catherine Bernadette Bennett (mother Bernadette Bennett) from the community of Boston, United States

PAULINE FAMILY

- Sr M Gabriella - Chino M. Hashiguchi pddm, 91 years old - 03.01.2025 Tokyo, Japan
Br Ivo Luigi Furcas ssp, 88 years old - 06.01.2025 Rome, Italy
Sr M. Natalia - Giovanna Donola pddm, 99 years old - 06.01.2025 California, United States
Fr. Deogratias Tuta Mukalay ssp, 43 years old - 09.01.2025 Lubumbashi, Congo
Sr M. Alfonsina - Maria Michela Angelini pddm, 82 years old - 18.01.2025 Sanfrè, Italy
Sr M. Angela Fé Escoto pddm, 89 years old - 19.01.2025 Antipolo, Philippines
Sr M. Lidia - Caterina Drudi pddm, 96 years old - 19.01.2025 Sanfrè, Italy
Sr Lucita Saligumba sjbp, 73 years old - 20.01.2025 Manila, Philippines
Sr Jacinta Palmerín Paniagua pddm, 81 years old - 21.01.2025 Mexico City, Mexico
Br. Salvatore Giovanni Daniele ssp, 95 years old - 24.01.2025 Rome, Italy
Fr. Carlo Cibien ssp, 72 years old - 26.01.2025, Milan, Italy
Sr M. Agnes - Kasue Teresia Shingai pddm, 87 years old - 03.02.2025 Tokyo, Japan
Fr. Arno José Brustolin ssp, 76 years old - 07.02.2025 São Paulo, Brazil
Fr. Clarence Anthony Warren ssp, 71 years old - 20.02.2025 Ohio, United States
Sr M. Apostolina - Rosa Mezjukanal pddm, 87 years old - 07.03.2025 Kerala, India
Sr M. Silvana - Teresa Gherlinzoni sjbp, 82 years old - 11.03.2025 Negrar, Italy
Sr M. Hortensia - Edita Puente pddm, 91 years old - 15.03.2025 Madrid, Spain
Fr. Ferruccio Pontarin ssp, 74 years old - 19.03.2025 Rome, Italy
Sr M. Alba - Luisa Gariboldi sjbp, 76 years old - 22.03.2025 Verona, Italy