

8TH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL (2004)
“*To be St. Paul alive today. A Congregation that strains forward*”

Very dear brothers and sisters,

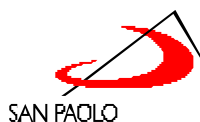
The General Chapter delegates of the Society of St. Paul are extending to you their greetings in exchange and in gratitude for the numerous prayers and wishes that reached us from every part of the world. The difficulties bound to the granting of visas and of air travel have not impeded the 65 members of the Chapter to be present at the inaugural address of Fr. Pietro Campus, Superior General, in the afternoon of April 19. Our first remembrance was that of Fr. Felipe Gutiérrez, delegate of the Mexico Province, who would have been among us had not the Father called him unexpectedly to Himself.

The first three days were dedicated for reflection on the Chapter’s theme, beginning from the solid exegesis on St. Paul and his times, followed by an attentive look at his newness projected ‘today’ and then moved on to Alberione’s reading of the figure of Paul, thereby reaching the implications he has in the Congregation’s today, so as to have such spiritual and charismatic roots.

Msgr. Romano Penna, bible scholar of the Lateran Pontifical University, started off by comparing Luther with Alberione, with both having drawn inspiration from Paul but with divergent points of view: the first paid attention on the individual person, the second on universality and on missionary spirit. The overwhelming encounter with the Redeemer pushes Paul towards the gentiles, while breaking the barrier of Phariseism, in order to become everything to everyone, with the only interest of communicating the gospel to man as well as to the religious-cultural status of those to whom he addresses himself.

The approach of **Fr. José Bortolini**, ssp, bible scholar, has had the merit of making Paul alive today by taking up themes such as: Paul, model of the consecrated person, formed after Jesus servant, bearer of a different priesthood, with a multi-cultural training, citizen of the world, discoverer of a new form of evangelization (the letters), having a language enculturated in the big cities, open to the mentality of his time and to working with women, with an egalitarian vision of society.

To **Fr. Antonio da Silva**, ssp, of the Center of Pauline Spirituality, has been entrusted a view on Fr. Alberione as the new Paul of his own time. Fr. da Silva presented Alberione’s unpublished notebook of 1918, entitled *Un mese a San Paolo (A month for St. Paul)*, where many affirmations of charismatic importance, later reaffirmed, are found and Alberione’s effort to introduce himself to his time in order to draw inspiration for a healthy modernity, in order to expand ‘from Alba to all peoples’, in order to avail with holiness and knowledge in order to become an apostle, attentive to the culture and the language of the last ones and the distant ones.



Fr. Silvio Sassi, ssp, expert on communication, observed in his conference how Fr. Alberione had not only adopted a means (the press) but also drew a complete project of evangelization. To us belongs the duty of integrating this unitary project with the further study of Vatican Council II and of the Church's Magisterium on communication and evangelization on one hand and on the other hand, the ongoing profound social changes, from post-modernity to digital communication. We need the audacity of Alberione and of St. Paul in order to draw a global project capable of enculturating the Gospel today, in these social-ecclesial conditions, so changed compared to different contexts.

The preciousness of these studies has suggested their publication on the Chapter's website whose the address is: www.sanpaolo.org/capitologenerale2004/.

With this phase of reflection over, on 23 April, Fr. Pietro Campus officially declared open the 8th General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul and so the election of organisms followed, after the approval of the rules of regulations and an exchange of opinions on the expectations from this congregational event. **Bro. Walter Rodríguez** and **Fr. Paulo Bazaglia**, the two youngest among the delegates, were elected scrutineers. **Fr. Silvio Sassi** was as well elected as the Chapter's Secretary with **Fr. Antonio Maroño**, **Fr. Jose Pottayil** and **Fr. Manoel Quinta** as members of the Central Commission. Elected as information secretary was **Bro. Lorenzo Vezzani** and as actuaries, **Fr. Agatino Gugliara** and **Fr. Sante Sabatucci**. In the evening of 23 April, a solemn Eucharistic celebration was held where, united with the Chapter Delegates, there was a large and welcomed representation from the General Governments of the Pauline Family and of the Communities found in the area. With the casting of ballots on the Chapter bodies over in the morning, the presentation of reports from the Circumscriptions was started. This is expected to end on the 27th or 28th of this month, with the report of the Superior General. The invitation of the Preparatory Commission to make this moment more effectively communicated was welcomed by the Major Superiors who are presenting their circumscription realities by utilizing advantageously Power Point, Flash and DVD prepared for the moment. The atmosphere among the Chapter Delegates is very serene and positive. This clearly emerges from the wealth and the number of interventions that further enrich the discussions in the Chapter Hall. United in prayer, we greet you in St. Paul, our father.

*The Information Secretary
Bro. Lorenzo Vezzani*

Ariccia (Rome), 27 April 2004,
First Anniversary of the Beatification of Don Giacomo Alberione

Email: capitologenerale2004@stpauls.it
Fax: +39 06 93 31 224

