

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,

As we had informed you earlier, on the evening of 6 May, the Bishop of Albano, Msgr. Agostino Vallini, wanted to be with us in order to witness to his closeness to us. In his homily, he recalled the overwhelming event of Damascus while comparing Paul's experience with Don Alberione's experience of light on the night of passage between the centuries. He continued by inviting us to recognize in our life a 'Damascus,' a 'night of light' because today the world needs Christians who live intensely, with the temperature of the lava that, going out incandescent from the volcano, overwhelms everything.

In the afternoon of 7 May, the discernment process prior to the election stage began. The Claretian Fr. José Cristo Rey García Paredes of Madrid brought our attention on the meaning of the words 'to serve' and 'authority'. True authority lets grow in profundity, in intensity, in unleashing and in emptying. One ought to let die, abandon everything that blocks the charism in order to open up to the future.

On Saturday, 8 May, the discernment on the election of the Superior General and his Council was pursued further considering the election from the historical-theological, symbolic and charismatic perspective. The interesting reflection was further continued with an invitation to openness to the novelty of the Spirit and to the deepening on the constitutional and symbolic profile of the candidate, the human and spiritual profile of the leader. All these were done in an atmosphere of reflection and spiritual meditation.

On Sunday, 9 May, we began with the solemn celebration of the Eucharist presided by Fr. Pietro Campus. At 10 a.m., we went to the session hall in order to begin the stage of the elections. After the oath, prescribed by the Constitution, by the president and of the scrutineers and of all the Chapter delegates, the casting of ballots began. With our Constitutions allowing a maximum of four casting of ballots a day for this election, the Central Commission decided to allow two in the morning and two in the afternoon, with the suitable interval between the two casting of votes. At the fifth balloting, Monday, 19 May, at 9:20, **Fr. Silvio Sassi** had garnered the qualified majority of votes (2/3) and, after having made the promise of faith, he officially became the Superior General of the Society of St. Paul for the next six-year period 2004-2010.

Immediately after, Fr. Silvio Sassi asked the Assembly to express their own gratitude to Fr. Pietro Campus and Fr. Silvio Pignotti, as Superiors General emeritus. Then he, one by one, fraternally greeted all the Chapter Delegates.

A moving embrace expressed, in the name of all, the condolences to Fr. José Luis Quintana, Provincial Superior of Mexico, for the demise of his mother last Saturday, 8 May.

Then, the Chapter had to move on to the election of the new Chapter Secretary inasmuch as Fr. Silvio Sassi had to assume the Presidency. Elected was Fr. Antonio Masoño who left another empty another place in the Central Commission. His place was taken over by Fr. Juan Manuel Galaviz, who was as well elected with the absolute majority of votes

This afternoon, 10 May, we continue with the election of the Councilor. Till next time.

*The Secretary of Information
Bro. Lorenzo Vezzani*

Ariccìa (Rome), 10 May 2004, at 3:00 p.m.

