

8<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL  
“*To be St. Paul alive today. A Congregation that strains forward*”

Very dear brothers and sisters,

The Chapter lived an unforgettable moment with the papal audience of Thursday, 13 May. You must have read the text of the Supreme Pontiff published at the *Osservatore Romano* and in the Chapter’s web site (now translated to English and Spanish). Fr. Silvio Sassi invited the Chapter Delegates to take up that text and make of it an object of meditation, as it is a precious and enlightening testament.

Meanwhile, with the usual methodology that distributed our commitment into personal work, group and assembly discussions, we arrived at the drafting of our plan of action for the six-year period 2004-2010. The six language groups during the first drafting gave way to a reorganization into four groups, one in every area: Spirituality and Life in Community, Vocation Promotion and Formation, Apostolate and Poverty-Service of Authority-Administration. The drafting, however, had ended up building a “Pauline cart” with five wheels. Hence, in the final Document a fifth area came up: “Pauline Family.”

At this point, the constitution of the Drafting Commission proved very precious. Made up by Fr. Guido Gandolfo and Fr. Giuliano Saredi, the commission had to sew together the proposals of the study groups into one text, without letting anything get lost. Meanwhile, Fr. Juan Antonio Carrera arrived from São Paulo, thus bringing the number of the Chapter Delegates to sixty-six,

Furthermore, we examined the 37 motions that reached the Chapter from the Provincial Chapters and Regional Assemblies, from individual members and from Chapter Delegates. After the motivations of him who proposed it and the opinion of the established *ad hoc* commission were given, we voted upon them one by one.

In the morning of 19 May, the new General Council met for the first time, while the Circumscription Superiors took the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

Late in the morning, the new General Council met, in an open dialogue, with all the Chapter Delegates. After this, the President declared the 8<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul as concluded.

On Wednesday, 19 May, we will celebrate, at 4:00 p.m., a thanksgiving Mass with the whole Pauline Family at the crypt of the Regina Apostolorum Sanctuary in Rome, in order to express our gratitude for the gift of this event, celebrated in an atmosphere of great serenity, industriousness and a trustful openness to the future.

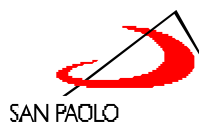
May hope, founded in faith in God and in the enthusiasm for our charism, enlighten our journey ahead so we may become worthy sons of St. Paul and of Blessed Alberione.

We are attaching with this last communiqué two Chapter Declarations that characterize well the Chapter reflection and the strongest concerns of the Assembly.

Best wishes.

*The Secretary of Information*  
*Bro. Lorenzo Vezzani*

*Ariccia (Rome), 19 May 2004, at 3:00 p.m.*





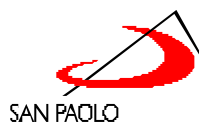
## CHAPTER DECLARATION ON THE PAULINE FAMILY

We, the members of the 8<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul, while reflecting on our vocation to be “St. Paul alive today,” recognize ourselves, in the name of the Congregation, to share this special vocation with the whole Pauline Family as well as the consequent duty of corresponding to such grace, by developing always ever more the spirit of Family willed by God for the whole of the Religious Congregations and of the Secular Institutions founded by Blessed Giacomo Alberione. He, in fact, exhorts us: “*May the Pauline Family, made up of many members, be Paul alive as a social body.*” (SP, ottobre 1954).

In particular:

1. We reaffirm our sense of belonging to this “social body” which is the Pauline Family, and the willingness to welcome the special gifts granted to it through its Institutions.
2. We recognize the duty of offering to the whole Pauline Family our special gifts and to serve it according to the correct meaning of the Congregation’s role of “altrice” given us by the Founder (cf. *Il ministero dell’unità nella Famiglia Paolina*, 1987).
3. We see in the composition of the Pauline Family an icon of the Church, with a variety of members who, although distinct by vocation and tasks, all have equal dignity and equal Pauline character, and all of them contribute to a single mission of giving Jesus Christ to today’s world.
4. We commit ourselves to seek the paths and the means for reaching, in the exercise of the apostolate, that “convergence of goals” (cf. *UPS*, III, p. 185) willed by Blessed Alberione for the various Institutions of the Pauline Family.
5. We resolve to further cultivate in our Circumscriptions, the knowledge, appreciation, promotion and formation guidance and animation of the Institute of the Consecrated Secular Life aggregated to the Society of St. Paul, the Association of Pauline Cooperators, foremost in the heart of Blessed Alberione (cf. AD, 25).

*The Chapter Assembly of the SSP  
Ariccìa, May 2004*





A PREFERENTIAL APOSTOLIC OPTION:  
TO HUMANIZE SO TO CHRISTIANIZE

Called to evangelize contemporary society with the universal heart of St Paul, we want to bring the message of salvation to the whole of humanity, without excluding any person, people or social category.

The Word of God shall be the Foundation and principal content of the message that we shall offer to society.

In order to incarnate such a message into history, we shall take into consideration the social situation of our recipients.

And, inasmuch as in the present world the signs of a *very strong crisis of humanity* prevail, our *preferential apostolic option* shall be that of contributing to the *humanization of society* as a primary condition for evangelizing it.

The aforementioned crisis of humanity is manifested in grave negative phenomena such as social injustice, war, terrorism, torture, the widened gap between the rich and the poor, the degradation of human dignity, reciprocal indifference among persons, the irresponsible damage to nature, the loss of the meaning of life, social disintegration, new forms of slavery and of dependence, and widespread depression.

In order to contrast such phenomena, as well as others that are equally negative, we assume as a preferential option the defense and promotion of human dignity in all its dimensions, of social justice, of universal brotherhood, of integral progress of every people and person, of peace and of authentic communication.

By means of our specific apostolate and our witnessing, we shall promote the culture of life; we shall courageously proclaim the truth and denounce whatever opposes it; we shall speak in the name of those who do not have any voice; we shall defend the genuine values of civilization and we shall sow the seeds of hope everywhere.

*The Chapter Assembly of the SSP  
Ariccia, May 2004*

