

OPENING ADDRESS OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, FR. SILVIO SASSI, SSP
8TH CAP-ESW PLENARY MEETING, MAKATI CITY, METRO MANILA, (PHILS.) FEBRUARY 5-12, 2012

Dear brothers,

Together with the General Counselors here present, with the entire General Government, and in the name of the whole Congregation, I would like to welcome every one of you to this encounter of study and programming. As sons of Saint Paul, we know that “travelling” is part of our identity. And because we journey for the sake of the Gospel, our fatigue is a contribution to the good of the Congregation. The economic investment, above all at this time, ought to be an additional reason for us to work in order to bear fruits that our Brothers can expect.

In the name of all of you, I would like to give special greetings and particular thanks to **Fr. Jose Aripio**, the Provincial Superior of the Philippine-Macau Province, and his Counselors. The same goes to the community of Makati and all the Paulines of the Province. Thank you for the fraternal hospitality that allows us to receive help for any need, and to work in an ambience characterized by good feelings and encouragement.

In this meeting, the personal Delegates of the Superior General for the Region of Great Britain-Ireland, **Fr. Sebastian Karamvelil**, and for the Province of the United States of America, **Br. Richard Brunner**, would have attended. But due to health reasons, they couldn't make it. To them we are sending our wishes for good health. In ways possible, we shall get them updated of the developments in our work. Above all, we assure them that they will be informed of the conclusions made in our meeting.

1. The reason that justifies our reunion is a necessity we received from Blessed James Alberione: **organization**, understood as a **value of common life**. He wrote: “A manifestation of charity: union for publishing among nations of the same language. Example: nations of Spanish language, nations of English language, nations of French language, nations of Portuguese language. This in a way possible, but the principle ought to be because this will give advantages to the apostolate and to the members” (*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, III, 34).

Today, with **globalization** also brought about by information technologies, the value of organization has become more and more a necessity. It is enough to observe societies that operate on finance at the international and global level. The social context helps us to understand the urgency of thinking and programming together.

2. **Guideline 1.2.1** of the 9th General Chapter has given us a mandate: “The General Government is to review the Statutes of the International Apostolic Organisms so that they become more operative, and their activities be made known.”

Our meeting has also the task of evaluating the Statute of this body and of offering suggestions to the General Government so that it can prepare the text of a new Statute.

The General Government, with the collaboration of the International Technical Committee for the Apostolate (=CTIA) and the International Secretariat for Vocation Promotion and Formation (=SIF), has re-written the Statute of Europe-Congo Group (=GEC) and is preparing a revision of the Statute of the Iberio-American Center of Pauline Publishing (=CIDEP).

3. It is necessary to re-write the Statutes of the three continental-Linguistic Bodies in order to organize better the apostolic activity, but also to integrate in the Project the **work of formation**. We have received as heritage of the Founder the teaching that all aspects of Pauline life (the four “wheels”) are for the service of mission and of evangelization through communication. The contents and pedagogical methods of all stages of formation must strictly be in synchrony with the apostolate: Pauline formation is not generic, but must prepare “**apostles of communication**”; a formation where there is no gradual and systematic insertion in the apostolate does not prepare Paulines.

On the level of bodies of the Circumscriptions, the integration of the apostolate and formation is already in place: in the Council of Apostolate, the Coordinator of Formation is a member; and so is the Director of Apostolate in the Council of Formation.

The integration that operates on the level of continental-linguistic Body has to take into account the fact that formation has for its finality the apostolate. On the other hand, specific programming has also to take account of the diversity of apostolate directed to communication and of apostolate in formation. **Both are Pauline**, but with two sides with different mentality, methods and rules.

The apostolic and formative programming that a continental-linguistic Body has to elaborate includes the **following successive phases**:

First phase. On the level of a singular Circumscription, within one or more nations, often with diverse culture, tradition and Christian life, the identity of the Congregation has a certain particularity. This is formed by the year of foundation, the number and quality of Members, apostolic and formative activities, and the traditions within the local Churches. The report that everyone has prepared for this meeting is important for the project that we want to do together. Knowing the concrete reality of every Circumscription, we can point out what can be put together and what requires help from one or the other.

Second phase. On the level of **continental-linguistic Body**, be in apostolate or formation, it is important to bear in mind what has already been done together and is worthy to be pursued further, improving it. Others may have to be started because they don't exist as yet.

Collaboration done in the apostolate, for example in the diffusion, could be further enlarged in the editorial level through common projects. Exchange of experience in the use of “marketing means” could be an area for mutual help.

Bearing in mind cultural diversities, also the organization on initiatives in formation in its various stages, including ongoing formation, can suggest how we can unite our forces.

Third phase. The three continental-linguistic Bodies (CIDEP—GEC—CAP-ESW) are in close collaboration with the International Organisms of the General Government: **CTIA** and **SIF**. The latter are responsible of the apostolate and formation for the whole Congregation, bearing in mind the guidelines of the 9th General Chapter.

Both Bodies of the General Government, as soon as they were formed, went to work, coming out with projects that we have to examine here in order to know them, to further deepen them, and be available to actualize them in concrete.

5. Our meeting happens on the first year of the triennium of preparation for the Jubilee of the Pauline Charism: **20 August 2014**. In continuity with the theme of the 9th General Chapter, we would like to live this event as our contribution of “creative fidelity” to “**rekindle the gift received**” from the Spirit and from the Church through Blessed James Alberione. To promote “organization” in the apostolate and in formation is to re-unite the ideas, projects, human and financial resources in view of re-launching the Pauline Charism also in the CAP-ESW Circumscriptions.

Moreover, we would like to live our meeting as an “act of the Church,” a contribution which we are preparing to give to the celebration of the **Year of Faith** (11 October 2012—24 November 2013) called by Pope Benedict XVI. It is also our contribution to the **13th Ordinary Synod of Bishops** on *New Evangelization for the Transmission of Christian Faith* which will take place from 7 to 28 October 2012.

Let us thank all the Brothers who belong to the Circumscriptions represented here and all the Paulines throughout the world. They sustain us with prayers to the Holy Spirit and they accompany us, informing us through our Internet site how much we are doing for the good of the Congregation.