

*8th General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul
– Ariccia 20 April – 20 May 2004*

TO BE ST. PAUL ALIVE TODAY
A Congregation that strains forward

.....
“NEW WINE INTO FRESH WINESKINS” (Mk 2:22)

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0. Introduction

0.1. *“No one patches an old cloak with a piece of unshrunk cloth, for its fullness pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. People do not put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Rather, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved” (Mt 9: 16-17).*

With these images drawn from daily life, the Evangelist Matthew describes the relationship between the “old,” represented by the meticulous practices of Judaism turned into a component element of faith and the “new” personified by Christ. Also Mark and Luke in the parallel passages (*Mk 2:21-22* and *Lk 5:36-39*), although with different nuances, agree with Matthew in interpreting Christ as “newness” confronted with a religion turned tradition of rites, ever tempted to border fanaticism.

With the due proportions done and invoking God’s Spirit who may guide us in the Father’s will, let us, too, want to assume this mentality of “newness of life” in order to apply it to the charism of the Primo Maestro and of our Congregation. It is a matter of wisely putting together the indispensable richness of the past with the situation of the present in order to project ourselves courageously and hopefully into the future.

0.2. The hermeneutic interpretation of the identity of our Congregation in the context of history is a duty already forcefully formulated by Vatican Council II (cf. *Perfectae caritatis*, 28/10/1965, no. 3) and reaffirmed by Paul VI (cf. *Evangelica testificatio*, 29/06/1971, nos. 51-52).

John Paul II in the post-Synod exhortation *Vita consecrata* (25/03/1996) defines this necessary updating as “creative fidelity”: “Institutes of Consecrated Life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today’s world.” (no. 37); the need to strain forward into the future comes back under the form of an appeal at the conclusion of the text: “You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also *a great history still to be accomplished!* Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things” (no. 110).

0.3. Our reflection revolves around three phrases drawn from the experience of faith of our Father, St. Paul: 1. **“... yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me”** (Gal 2:20); 2. **“I have become all things to all”** (1Cor 9:22); 3. **“... straining forward to what lies ahead”** (Phil 3:13).

1. “... yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20)

1.1. This bold affirmation of St. Paul is to be understood, above all, in the **immediate context** of the Letter's passage. Inasmuch as the Apostle, and along with him every Christian, can affirm: "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:19) in order to express the value of baptism that produces engrafting into the Paschal dynamics of Christ's death and resurrection, the Christian's earthly life acquires meaning entirely from the resurrection. Paul has died to his own idea of religion and of salvation and lives his new life in exclusive reference to Christ: "... insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me" (Gal 2:21).

Christ's presence in Paul's life is not a divine possession that eliminates human personality nor is it a mystical ecstasy, though this is present in the Apostles life (cf. 2Cor 12: 1-5), that places him at a certain time in an extraordinary situation of intimacy with God. Here, it is a matter of a permanent condition of Paul's existence that has certainly been influenced by the episode on the way to Damascus where he felt "taken possession of by Christ" (cf. Phil 3:12), but he remained autonomous in his decisions and in his response. Faith does not lead into the fusion of the human person with the divine, but it makes one aware of the dialogue with the other, which is the entire reason for living.

1.2. The Christ who lives in Paul has to be understood in the **context of the entire Letter to the Galatians** that develops two important themes of the Pauline reflection: *justification* does not take place by means of the law, but thanks to the death and resurrection of Christ; Christ places the baptized person in a condition of *liberty* from the function of the law.

In order to arrive at this conviction, Paul had to live the strong experience of encounter with Christ. Before then, Paul's faith is defined by the circumstance of birth and by willed choices: "Circumcised on the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the law a Pharisee, in zeal I persecuted the church, in the righteousness based on the law I was blameless" (Phil 3:5-6).

The awareness of this spiritual state of advantage is also a reason of the jealous defense of the traditions and of the persecution of the Christians by Saul. The change after the encounter with Christ is extraordinary: "[But] whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted as loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having any righteousness of my own based on the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith..." (Phil 3:7-10).

1.3. Paul's vital reference to Christ is to be further understood with other affirmations of the **Pauline Letters**. "**For me life is Christ, and death is gain**" (Phil 1:21): Christ is the cause, the mover, the meaning, the energy, the motivating reason, the hinge, the center, and the propeller of the Apostle's entire existence.

In the **Letter to the Galatians**, after the articulated argumentation against those who want to convince the Christians of the need of integrating the observance of the law with Christian life, Paul changes tone in order to refer to the memories of his presence among the Galatians. Taking leverage on his sentiments, Paul assumes an almost maternal tone and exclaims: "My children, for whom I am again in labor **until Christ be formed in you**" (Gal 4:19). The proclamation of the faith is like a progressive formation of Christ in the faithful. Reflecting on the meaning of earthly existence, Paul in the **Letter to the Romans** affirms: "For those he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, so

that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). The call to humanity to participate in the divine life passes through a process of being like into Christ, the image of reference since he is the firstborn.

From these references of Paul’s reflection, we can deduce the vital relationship between the Apostle and every baptized person, and Christ **is thought of and lived through God’s initiative and by the love of Christ** and it is not the result of an ascetic method or the conquest of a voluntaristic spiritual strategy. Paul reaffirms the need of taking into consideration the primacy of God and of Christ’s love and to flee from the temptation of letting flourish a Christianity that resembles the old justification through the observance of the Jewish law.

1.4. In Paul, to live of Christ has in the end to be understood **in the context of the Apostle’s entire existence** characterized by strong permutations. To the certainty that man is “justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law” (Gal 2:16), admiration, face to face with the “mystery” of the **vocation of the pagans to the faith in Christ**, is united: “the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier. When you read this you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this I became a minister by the gift of God’s grace that was granted me in accord with the exercise of his power” (Eph 3:3-7).

Paul’s encounter with Christ is a **vocation for a particular mission**: “To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8).

1.5. The mercy that God used towards Paul becomes the content of his “gospel” of which he has been made minister to the pagans by Christ himself. The mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection is the hinge of his **theology**; his **Christology** gives preference to the titles of Christ that create more the relationship with the believers: Christ, Lord, Son of God; the efficacy of Christ’s work is a **salvation** that is fruit of love; by virtue of the resurrection, **anthropology** becomes the disappearance of the old man and the birth of the new; the gathering of believers produces an **ecclesiology** of communion thus forming Christ’s mystical body; Christ’s resurrection is the “pledge” of an **eschatology** in full realization.

1.6. When Paul affirms, “*Christ lives in me*” and “*For me to live is Christ*” he presents a **vital synthesis** of his relationship with Christ which, begun on the way to Damascus, characterizes his existence, spent for the proclamation of the Gospel to the pagans and concluded with martyrdom.

The Apostle’s affirmations express the **composite of the novelties** that Christ has produced in Saul: justification is not a conquest of human exertion in the blameless observance of the Mosaic law but a free gift of God and of Christ’s love; Christ’s salvation is not exclusive of the Hebrew people but is open to all pagan peoples; Saul’s vocation is in view of the evangelization of pagans which requires an elaboration fit to the faith proposal capable of overcoming the need of the initiation to the Mosaic law.

It is in welcoming as gift Christ’s revelation that Paul gives a new meaning to existence, gathers the universal dimension of the death and resurrection of Christ and accepts to become an apostle for the pagans as to what he has learned and fully lives. **His essential rela-**

tionship with Christ is at the root of a life of new faith, of a new theological elaboration and of a new apostolic mission.

1.7. The solemn recognition of the Church which beatifies **Don Giacomo Alberione** is the official guarantee of a life spent for Christ, characterized by a faith relationship which we may partly reconstruct from the outside, based on the work and the writings of the Founder. On the occasion of the forty years of the Society of St. Paul's foundation, Don Alberione, while drafting some notes to remember the beginnings of his foundations, "*Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*" (=AD), is aware of a dual story, "the story of God's mercy" and "the humiliating story of his lack of correspondence to the overabundance of divine love" (AD, no.1). "As for his poor self: he has accomplished part of God's will, but he must fade from the scene and from people's memories, even though, because he was older, he had to take from the Lord and give to others" (AD, no. 2).

As conclusion of these memoirs, Don Alberione notes: "I feel the gravity, before God and men, of the mission the Lord has entrusted to me; who, if he had found a person more unworthy and incapable, he would have preferred him. Nonetheless, it is for me and for all a guarantee that the Lord has willed and he himself has let done" (AD, no. 209).

In the text *Paolo Apostolo*, a fruit of a course of a persona spiritual exercises in 1947, Don Alberione writes: "Infinite is your mercy: I shall never comprehend it completely. I want to adore it more than scrutinize it. How come you have chosen to be a priest, homo Dei, such a worthless being, a great sinner, whom you foresaw would have betrayed you in your expectations?... It was wholly and only your mercy. **I am God's miracle!** Your infinite mercies have brought me to the priesthood" (no.18).

1.8. The relationship of faith with the Most Holy Trinity is described by Don Alberione himself as a **dual story**: the faithfulness of God and the human unworthiness which, however, collaborated either in the Founder's person in order to give him worth as man, either as Christian and priest, or in the whole of his efforts for the Pauline foundational work.

Don Alberione's **personal life** – as he himself allowed at times to reveal – is the fruit of a progressive maturation, a gift of the loving Providence that is ever so delicate that it seems as if hidden: "to act in such a natural way as to be unable to easily distinguish grace from nature, but certainly, [employing] both..." (AD, no. 43).

At the age of six, to the question his teacher raised to her pupils as to what they intended to become when grown up, Alberione replies: "I shall become a priest": "It was the first clear light... The upshot of this was that he geared his studies, his piety and his behavior, even his recreation periods, toward this goal" (AD, no. 9).

After the disappointing stay in the seminary of Bra, at sixteen years old, in the cathedral of Alba, the seminarian Alberione lives another illumination: "His mind and heart became so fixed on the Eucharist, the Gospel, the Pope, the new century, the new means, on Count Paganuzzi's thinking regarding the Church and the need for a new band of apostles, that from then on these things always dominated his thoughts, his prayer, his spiritual work and his yearnings. He felt an obligation to serve the Church, the women and men of the new age, and to work with others in an organized way" (AD, no. 20).

1.9. These programmatic impulses for a life entirely spent "to do something for the Lord and the women and men of the new century" (AD, no. 15) has to take into account the personality of a young man still in search of what appears well described in the *Diario* (=D). Even only to give importance to what is left to us of these notes of the seminarian Alberione at

age 18, we can better understand how the solution to personal problems has been eventually valued by Alberione as founder.

The notes of the *Diario* are the reflection of a young seminarian still in search of a human identity: drawn from time to time by the profile of a man of passions (*D*, nos. 9-12) and of the innocent man (*D*, nos. 13-15), aware, with the feelings of guilt, of the past (*D*, nos. 93, 101), easy to give in to dreams of the imagination (*D*, nos. 31, 54, 73, 74), inconstant in character (*D*, nos. 21, 23, 39, 44, 56 57, 75), with a decision to doing something that seems to elude the consequent works (*D*, nos. 23, 24, 29, 31, 42, 50, 104).

In order to get out of this uncertain existence, broken by contradictory episodes, fragmented without any project that gives sense and satisfaction, inconclusive because without a method that allows maturation, the young Alberione finds, incarnated in persons of his life environment and in ideals drawn from philosophical reflections, a human profile that allows him to reorganize completely.

“But why is one thing beautiful? It is because it has order. Now if in man the senses and the world, and the flesh and the intellect, and the will rule and one rebels against the other, and this does not subjugate him, then there is disorder and hence there is no beauty. Hence work in order to establish the will as lord of your deeds. Love and sacrifice yourself. The will, supported by the intellect, leads man to his goal, does not make him feel sorry and hesitant in every moment of his action, but it makes him happy” (*D*, no. 32).

“Do you believe? And for what reason can you oppose? Are you a man now? Well, man knows the truth through the intellect, loves it and with the will desires it. Hence, place in yourself, as the sovereign of your action the will because it is only in this manner shall there be order in you, in order there is beauty willed by God in beings” (*D*, no. 37). “I am a man for reason... Man has three most noble faculties: intellect, will and sentiments” (*D*, no. 60).

The **anthropological model** that the young Alberione proposes as an ideal for getting out of a condition of psychological and existential fragmentation is composed of three faculties: **mind, heart and will**; but order among them must be established: the mind illumines the will and both govern the heart. It is a matter of organizing one’s personality where reason is the most noble and priority component; the will has the task of making consequent choices with logical lucidity; the sentiment is an almost primitive force that has to be enlightened by reason and controlled by the will.

1.10. The anthropological model then is transported to the **religious level**: “Hence, love the most sublime object: and this is the Word, that is, God’s truth and in you shall be reproduced the image of the Trinity, that is being, that is existing intellectual essence: the knowledge of the Divine Word, that is the truth” (*D*, no. 3). “Now, we must love God and do what He wills, but this does not happen if we do not love what He loves, that is the truth and in our case that defined way. Hence, we must love and know first and then follow the way” (*D*, no. 16); “Then, he who does not take this path cannot love the truth; and he who does not love the truth cannot love God” (*D*, n.17).

“*Sitio* (*I thirst*), because you alone appease the intellect, the will, the heart; bring man out of illusion, into objects infinite and worth of immense pure, love, infinite in time and greatness” (*D*, no. 85). Addressing himself to Mary, he prays: “Show me the path, the way” (*D*, n.101); “Jesus is our end. If he is so then he knows the paths through which one certainly arrives there. He desires that we go to him (who has created us in order to love him). Hence the paths that he pointed out to us are true, they lead us to the goal” (*D*, no. 102).

“Reason is God’s voice. In fact it expresses the truth; now God is truth himself. Hence reason is God’s voice. But God’s voice is that which leads us to Him, hence we must follow it” (D, n.104).

The **human and religious experiences** of the young Alberione bring him to attune **the components of human personality (mind, will and heart) and relationship with God which is for man truth and way that give life.**

1.11. These anthropological and religious reflections have certainly been influenced also by the content of the encyclical *Tametsi futura* (1/11/1900) that Leo XIII addresses to the Church and to society as they approached the new century. The Pope illustrates the three necessary principles for every salvation: Christ way – Christ truth -- Christ life, while concluding: “The common welfare, then, urgently demands a return to Him from whom we should never have gone astray; to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, -- and this on the part not only of individuals but of society as a whole” (no. 12).

On January 1955, Don Alberione spoke to the Pastorelle Sisters about Christ, way, truth and life: “I do not know if I already told you: **from Christmas of 1900 to the end of January 1901**, this devotion was preached for the first time to us clerics, by the seminary Rector, who nourished a special love towards Jesus Christ: when he spoke, he always spoke of Him. At the end I experienced **like a revelation**. I understood that this practice involved **the whole of man’s life** and I felt the desire that everyone knew, practiced and lived this devotion: to communicate and share what is good is the best one can do” (PA I, 12).

1.12. On 29 June 1907, seminarian Alberione is ordained priest and for nine months he was sent as vice curate to Narzole; at the end of 1908, the Bishop calls him back to the seminary to entrust to him the office of spiritual director (which he would hold until July 1920) and teacher of some subjects, among which also was *Pastoral*.

A decisive step for the passage to maturation of personal faith and to a commitment to evangelization coincides with the period **1908-1913** entirely spent in the seminary. However, some testimonies coming directly from Don Alberione show that he nurtured within a **personal project**: “He started to pray for the Pastorelle Sisters in **1908**, but this Congregation came into being only thirty years later” (AD, no. 46). “His initial idea was for a Catholic organization of writers, technical people, book-sellers and retailers; Catholics to whom he would give direction, work and a spirit of apostolate... **Toward 1910** he took a definitive step. It became much clearer that the writers, technical personnel and promoters [would have to be] *religious men and women*” (AD, no. 23).

1.13. During the 1911-1912 school year, Don Alberione, seeking the collaboration of 18 priests already involved in parish life and assisted by books and periodicals, drafted the text of the *Appunti di teologia pastorale [Notes in Pastoral Theology]* (=ATP) addressed to young priests who began their parish ministry. The first edition, typewritten, is dated 1 August 1912; the second edition, instead, was printed in Turin in 1915.

Don Alberione’s main interest is to educate young priests, who begin in the parish ministry, in view of a proper idea of the priesthood. Referring to the *Esortazione al clero (Exhortation to the clergy)* of 1908 by Pius X, that recommends to the priest not to attend only to “an individual sanctification, forgetting the pulpit, the confessional and the sick,” Don Alberione clarifies: “The priest cannot be a priest who lives for himself: he cannot have as a motto the words *I-God*. It is an absolute must that he worked for the salvation of others, that he writes on his flag *I-God-People*” (ATP, p. 9). “The Priest therefore is not merely *learned*:

he is neither a *saint* alone: he is, instead, a *learned-saint*, who avails with science and of holiness in order to become an *apostle*, that is, in order to save souls” (ATP, p. 10).

Describing pastoral action in general, Don Alberione writes: “...Pastoral action aims at letting Christianity live among men: to turn **man Christian in mind, in heart, in deeds**. Christianity is not made up by a setup of ceremonies, of external acts, of bows, etc., *it is a new life*”(ATP, p. 106).

1.14. “[As] for the Sisters, he had, already in 1911, started drafting the book, *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale [Women associated with priestly zeal]* (=DA) to show what women can do in collaboration with priests” (AD, n. 109). The book was published in 1915 addressed especially to *the clergy and to women*.

In the *Introduction*, Alberione explains how he was impressed by a statement of Msgr. Mermillod addressed to young women: “You have to be apostles” and an opportunity that Frassinetti points out to single women: that they are called “to be quasi-priests, to a real apostolate”.

The first chapter describes *The Priest’s Mission* that draws what the author already has written in the two editions of *Appunti di teologia pastorale*. “What is the priest’s mission on earth? – To save himself? Too little. – To become a saint? Still too little. – What then? To save himself, but by saving others” (DA, no. 14). The entire chapter clarifies the definition of the priest as someone sent to save souls; and on this mission that the value of collaboration of woman is made a part. The work of women, while collaborating with the priest dedicated to the salvation of souls, is an important help. Don Alberione gives value, for the parish priestly mission, to the figure of women which in society was strongly underlined by the feminist movement.

1.15. Ordained priest and assigned to teach in the seminary, Don Alberione’s synthesis (the components of the human person that meets the contents of the faith), acquires a **missionary dimension** in the description of the identity of the priest engaged in saving the souls entrusted to him in a parish. The task of the priest in the parish can find a great help by giving importance to the work of women. And it is thanks to **pastoral** that it becomes possible “to give God to souls and souls to God”. It is from the parish pastoral that one has to begin setting the remedy underlined by Leo XIII at the start of the 20th century: the abandonment of the faith and of the Church by the masses.

The formation of the priest who may not only be *learned and holy* but also a **pastor** and the involvement of women in the pastoral activities of the priest, is the **operational translation of the missionary faith** of Don Alberione who points out a very serious inconvenience in the pastoral of his time: The priest-pastor “must direct himself to the mass of the people. In so many places... let not the parish priest be concerned only of a small group of devote souls... The parish priest is pastor of all: he must as well leave the ninety-nine secure sheep in order to trace the only one lost: more so if the secure sheep are a *pusillus grex* and those lost are the more numerous.” (ATP, pp. 112-113).

1.16. Agreeing, on 9 September 1913, to the designation of Don Alberione as director of *Gazzetta d’Alba*, the bishop “struck the hour of God” (AD, n. 30) for the Pauline apostolate; on 18/02/1914 Don Alberione acquires the ownership of the diocesan newspaper. On 13 July of the same year Don Alberione asked the bishop the go signal for him to buy a printing press “in order to train good and zealous promoters who would work in the press, doing conferences, doing Catholic works”.

Starting from the **early years of the 1920's** Don Alberione could dedicate himself to his project of a new missionary form of the faith; holding on to the treasure of the personal maturation of his faith and on the new profile of the priest in the parish, he elaborates with ever greater clarity a **global project of evangelization connected with the press**.

The point of departure is the awareness of the **moving away of the masses from the faith** and attendance in the parish: "The few pious women who take Communion every morning, the few young people who gather around the Parish Priest every evening, these are not the entire town, they are not the whole people: many other persons are out of the fold and they do not go to the shepherd because they do not know him, perhaps they avoid him because they do not know him. We need to save all souls: it is a must that the Shepherd goes to them: today these souls can be reached through the press." (*Unione Cooperatori della Buona Stampa* (=UCBS), A 4, n. 12 –28/09/1922).

This new mission is undertaken outside the parish confines, there where people who do not come to church live: "the world needs a **new, long and profound evangelization**. ... The deep source of evil lies in rotten intelligence and in perverted will. We need to rework intellects and change the will. It is a difficult, long and laborious work. We need proportionate means and souls burning in faith. The suitable means cannot be furnished except by the press and ardent apostles cannot provide them if not the youth.... It has become necessary anew today, just as during the early times of Christianity, the **new missionaries** for this new and fruitful apostolate" (*UCBS* A 8, no. 8 – 20 August 1926). In order that "the new apostolic times should be revived", adequate devotions are necessary: Jesus Divine Master, Mary Queen of the Apostles and St. Paul are the **devotions held suitable** by Don Alberione for "**these times of the apostolate**" (*UCBS* – A 4, n.9, 10 August 1922).

1.17. In view of the press apostolate, Don Alberione does not limit himself in taking up a new tool of pastoral, but he **draws a global project of a new evangelization**.

Starting from all his preceding experience, personal, and bound to the figure of the diocesan priest in the parish, Don Alberione, experiencing Christ's longing "come to me all of you" (Mt 11:28), in order to allow, in the context of his time, the encounter of faith, draws, in a corresponding form, a **theology** and an **anthropology**.

Face to face the real and lasting situation of a **faith** often proposed under the form of truth to believe formulated starting from theological schools and in the Latin language; of a **liturgy** concerned about ceremonies in Latin and far from the people's participation; of a **Christian life** described above all as an ethical commitment in the observance of the commandments, Don Alberione, coining the Christological definition of **Jesus Master, way, truth and life**, wanted to draw a theological synthesis that guarantees the presentation of the **whole Christ**. The contents of the faith have to go back to the sources by being centered on Christ himself understood in his totality (Sacred Scriptures, liturgy, Christian commitment in history).

This theological synthesis, however, would be ineffective if it did not pay attention to address itself to all of man's faculties: mind, will and heart. If the partial Christ cannot be salvation, also an incomplete person cannot be saved in its totality. **The integral Christ has to correspond with the totality of the human person**.

To allow in fact the meeting of this correspondence of a theological synthesis and an anthropological definition, Don Alberione draws a new **ecclesiology**: as the perpetuator of Christ, the essential commitment of the Church (priesthood and hierarchy) is pastoral zeal, the salvation of souls, the apostolate: being cultured or being personally holy are not enough. The time "to seek souls" outside the churches and of sacristies has come back, by finding them where they live. The phenomenon of desertion of churches is too important: the

crowds and the masses are far from Christ and only a few have remained in church to listen to the priest. The parable of the Good Shepherd has been overturned in percentages: there are 99 sheep out; only 1 is left!

The priest is the persons officially designated for this evangelization and on the parish level, his role before the people needs to be well defined; the religious men and women, the lay persons and in particular the women, as well, can offer a defining contribution to the “priestly zeal.”

The **recipients of evangelization**, starting from the parish activity, cannot be anonymous persons or groups: “an exact knowledge of the miseries and of the needs, acquired by dealing directly with the people. At times it happens for one to find priests that are totally separated from the mass of people!... **How can one ever do good to anyone he does not know?**” (*ATP*, p. 110).

The new evangelization is completed by a **new pastoral**: alongside the activity of oral preaching of the territorial parish, needed is the printed preaching that has as its limit the boundaries of the public, the parish of paper.

1.18. Don Alberione, at the start of the 1900’s, describes the Pauline charism, progressively drawn in the light of the Spirit, as a **global project of new evangelization**. It would be a real injustice to describe the Pauline charism in an instrumental form: the mere adoption of the press and then of the other means of social communication in order to evangelize. How one can historically document, the **Pauline charism** -- a gift of the Trinity to Don Alberione -- **is a development that includes the articulation between faith and the human personality of the young seminarian, the elaboration of a missionary faith through the profile of the diocesan priest engaged in pastoral and the formulation of a project of new evangelization bound to the press as preaching.**

1.19. It is the **unity** of a well-defined project that allows one to understand the importance of the formulation of the **spirituality** of Christ, Master, way, truth and life and a life held by the Founder as the discriminating aspect for one to “be or not to be Pauline”. It is not a matter of devotion or a composite of practices of piety or of an ascetic methodology; he considers it as the “**style**” of a **total life** that characterizes all the dimensions of the Pauline vocation and mission: spirituality, studies and formation, apostolic activities, community life, evangelical counsels and the exercise of authority. From 1914 to the early years of the 1920’s, in the developing community Christ was present as **Sacred Heart**, the Blessed Virgin as the **Immaculate**. When Don Alberione is in the condition of formulating a spirituality suited to the new apostolic mission, he intends to create synchronization between the experience of faith and preaching through the press. Just as for every other Congregation, to a **particular mission**, there is a corresponding **specific spirituality**.

1.20. The Alberione project of a new evangelization bound to the press, considered in the historical context wherein it is formulated, possesses the merit of being original, to draw one to the sources of Christian life and to carry out this new mission of the Church and in the society of the times. Without exaggerating, one can say that it **achieves**, at the dimension of an ecclesial group, **much of what Vatican Council II enacts** in 1962-1965 for the entire Church. The proof of this attuning between the Pauline charism and the results of Vatican II can be found in the declarations of Don Alberione participating in the Council and writing comments and reflections.

The approval of the decree *Inter mirifica* fills him with great emotion: “The Pauline activity is declared an apostolate, alongside with oral preaching, proclaimed in high esteem before the Church and before the world” (*San Paolo*, December 1963). Then, illustrating the Council’s will, Don Alberione underlines: “All the arguments are considered under the light of **pastoral**, beginning with the means of social communication to the missions in all parts of the world” (*San Paolo*, September-December 1964).

Don Alberione appreciates the results of the Council not only for the explicit and solemn recognition given to the means of social communication, but for the **pastoral concern** of evangelizing people of today; the same motivation that has stimulated Don Alberione’s entire life and activity. Simplifying, one could say that during the years of Vatican Council II, the pastoral project of the Council and the global project of the new evangelization of Don Alberione **have flowed into a symbiosis**. A statement that circulated during those years among the communities of the Society of St. Paul was: “We are already what the Council wants us to be; we do not need so much updating!”

1.21. The **Special Chapter** of the Society of St. Paul (1969-1971), wherein, still alive, although very much tired, Don Alberione managed to participate for some time, has had the merit of reflecting on the **entire Alberione global project under the light of the Vatican II documents**, thus accomplishing, on the level of elaboration of the texts, a precious work. The void left by the death of the Founder on 26/11/1971 perhaps had impressed, for some years, on the behavior of many Paulines who had not given importance to the labors of the Special Chapter and have continued to live with the certainty of being, above all because of the means of apostolate, in full attunement with Vatican Council II, without feeling the need of an in-depth rethinking.

With the passing of years, after the closure of Vatican II, the Church community has become more aware that the Council’s worth was not **only pastoral**, but it also had reawakened a **general reflection** on the entire Christian life through the 16 approved documents: centrality of the Sacred Scriptures and of Christ, liturgical renewal, the giving importance to earthly reality and the Christian’s commitment in history, a new understanding of the Church and her mission, the importance of the person and the value of conscience, a better definition of the bishop, the priest and the laity, etc. The **pastoral concern has brought about the reflection on all the contents of the faith**.

The global Alberione project, in its simple way, gets recognized and certainly approved, but also improved, broadened and overtaken much by the capacity of reflection and by the authority of all the Fathers and the participants of Vatican II.

Forty years after Vatican II, taking into consideration the richness of teachings and of all the ecclesial reflection after the Council, the **Alberione project** is no longer either on the front-lines nor in full attunement, but it is openly spurred to launch itself anew towards the future by drawing from the authoritative indications of the Church.

The global project of new evangelization articulated by Don Alberione around Christ Master, way, truth and life that has to be introduced to all the person’s faculties cannot only be studied and repeated as such because today it runs the risk of being **obvious**.

1.22. The effort spent by Don Alberione to give a spirituality to the Society of St. Paul and to all the Pauline Family is precisely witnessed to by himself: after having taken into consideration different spiritualities and after having considered them “partial”, he moves on to the **study of St. Paul** who “presents the whole Christ to us as he had already proclaimed himself to be: Way, Truth and Life...This angle contains religion, dogma, morals and wor-

ship; this perspective encompasses the whole Christ; through this devotion Jesus Christ completely embraces and conquers the human person” (AD, nos. 159-160).

Thus we have the confirmation that the foundation work of Don Alberione is the complete formulation of a project that creates **indispensable unity** between the spirituality of Christ Master, way, truth and life, mediated by the interpretation of St. Paul, and evangelization through the press.

Inasmuch as the Pauline charism is a unity with two faces that cannot exist if not one with the other, like a sheet of paper or a coin, whatever changes in one of the two components comport a consequent modification on the other. The change of communication affects also the formulation of the other. The mutation of communication affects as well the formulation of spirituality and the changes in spirituality affects the apostolate of communication through the media. In any case, the need of **watchfulness and synchronization** in order to avoid the risk either of a spirituality that is too delayed with respect to the state of communication or of a communication very much detached from spirituality.

Difficulties in the charism can originate so much from a block, a delay or a faulty formulation of spirituality, as much as from a flight ahead by communication, technology and culture. **Without a global spirituality project, one cannot accomplish a communication plan and obtain as a result a global project of new evangelization for the third millennium.**

1.23. The documented **hermeneutic** study of the global project of a new evangelization formulated by Don Alberione, starting from the 1920's, ought to put us in the condition of not repeating formulae, but, preserving the **methodology** adopted by the Founder, push us to elaborate with the **same criteria**, though in a context of society, of Church and of radically different communication, a **new global Pauline plan**. Without this **new theological and pastoral synthesis**, we cannot offer a relevant understanding of the spirituality of Christ Master, way, truth and life, with negative consequences in all the aspects of Pauline life.

After the example of Don Alberione, this new formulation has above all to establish in relationship, starting from today's historical situation, the specific condition of the person and of society (**anthropology and sociology**) with the integrality of the person and of the message of Christ (**theology, Christology**) in a **pastoral project** follows the current languages and forms of communication in order to witness to the experience of faith in a **culture of communication**.

With the help of the Spirit and after the example of St. Paul and of Blessed Don Alberione, **we Paulines of the third millennium** must take hold of **the quality of individual faith that finds in Christ the reason of being of our personal and community way of living, with two immediate effects; to elaborate a missionary faith that, starting from man and from today's society, knows how to translate the integral experience of Christ into languages, in the forms and in the culture of communication.**

2. “I have become all things to all” (1Cor 9:22)

2.1. *“Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law—within the law of Christ—to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over*

the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it. (1Cor 9:19-23).

The passage is inserted into the **immediate context** where Paul, dealing with the topic of banquets with food sacrificed to idols, invites the “strong” Christians, having a conscience that sees but mere food in that meat, not to eat it if this would scandalize the “weak,” those who hold that eating such a meal is an act of idolatry. Rather than causing scandal, it is better not to use one’s own freedom of action.

Paul develops the same theme by applying it to himself, as to how **he sacrifices his own rights for the welfare of others**. Being an apostle, he could avail with what the Law of Moses prescribes and the Lord himself: those who sow spiritual goods harvest material goods and those who proclaim the Gospel, may they live of the Gospel. The Word of God and “as do the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Kephass” (1Cor 9:5) and of being supported by the community to which he preaches; Paul categorically refuses to avail with this right, while providing for his own needs through work, “in order not to place an obstacle to the gospel of Christ” (1Cor 9:12).

2.2. In the context of the **entire first Letter to the Corinthians**, the significance of this passage is it’s being an ecclesiological reflection, the solution to concrete problems in relationships within the Christian community while offering to everyone **charity** and love as criterion. The relationships among believers can not be dictated only by the strength of right convictions elaborated with intelligence and mental lucidity, but also by respect towards those who do not possess these capacities. Within the Christian community, life of faith is not lived only with one’s own certainties, but also by using charity so that one’s personality may not be an obstacle to others.

2.3. Also in the **first letter to the Thessalonians**, Paul reminds that in order to put credibility to his work of evangelization, he supported himself by his own hands: “You recall, brothers, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God” (1Thes 2:9). Taking into consideration the customs of the other apostles of Christ and the usages of the Greek world to live on one’s preaching and teaching, Paul willingly chooses, in some communities, not to receive any form of compensation in order to remove any eventual obstacle to evangelization. If Paul behaves autonomously, it is not because he is not an apostle, much less because he does not want to put into practice the indications of the Word of God on the matter, but because he wants to preserve the proclamation from whatever element of disturbance to his listeners.

2.4. Turning into “becoming all things for all” synthesizes Paul’s **missionary style**. At the origin of his evangelization activity, there is the encounter with Christ: “If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship” (1Cor 9:16-17).

Paul’s faith and the gratuity of his ministry to preach the Gospel both spring from the encounter with Christ. At the instant he perceives himself as “servant of Christ,” Paul also becomes “servant of all” for the sake of the Gospel. Paul’s experience of faith is **complete** from the start: an encounter with the person of Christ and the discovery of the life of faith as gift and not as conquest through the observance of the Law; stewardship to be an apostle in a special manner before the pagans while taking into consideration their religious diversity with respect to the Jews.

2.5. Paul lives faith in Christ as missionary because, above all, of his **theological conviction**: God in Christ offers his salvation not only to the Jewish people but to all peoples on earth. From such certainty also follows an **ecclesiological** rethinking: salvation is only one for all, but all must be saved starting from their state, rather, the apostle cannot demand that all should adjust to his proclamation, but it is the apostle himself who must place himself in the condition of the different recipients of his proclamation. Also the Gospel, preached outside the Jewish environment, can and must be lived based on the freedom offered by Christ and not passing through Jewish religious forms that demand, for example, circumcision.

2.6. Described in **terms of communication**, the missionary proclamation of Paul has to be presented above all as **a composite** lived simultaneously: Christ's person enters into Paul's religious experience transforming him into an apostle for the pagans. In practice, this unitary experience can be described in a **manner, linear** and successive: Christ assigns Paul to be the messenger of his new experience of faith before the pagans. Every aspect of this communication model (transmitter—message—recipient) is defined in relation with the others. Paul is **transmitter** because he is Christ's apostle (it is not his teaching, but a mission received); Paul's **message** is the gift of a new understanding (all peoples are called to the faith in Christ); the **recipient** is last only in the act of proclamation (it is already included in the task of transmitter and in the experience of the content to communicate).

In other words, the recipient is not only the end of the communication process, but he is the **reason of being** of Paul's entire proclamation; he's not the end, but the motor that starts off the entire process. Paul defines himself, "Christ's servant" and "servant of all his listeners". One cannot isolate the priority of Christ, the role of the apostle and the identity of the recipient: Paul's preaching considers as integrated all these elements.

Paul is called by Christ because going through the experience of a new faith, he becomes its messenger to the pagan peoples. **Paul's apostolic mission coincides with his experience of faith in Christ; at the same time the charge of being the apostle to the pagans gives value to the new faith, by specifying the contents of the message and leading to the choice of a suitable missionary style.**

2.7. We know the prevalence that the phenomenon of the massive **distancing of the masses** from the religious practices at the start of the 1900 had over the religious and priestly formation of **Don Alberione**. It is a reality that he could observe around him, encounter described in conferences, the writings of Catholic sociologists and meditate in the indications of Leo XIII and of other men of the church. Face to face with this so relevant abandonment, the young Alberione feels the urgency of Christ's invitation: "**Come to me all you...**" (Mt 11:28). At the height of his adolescence, he "felt an obligation to serve the church, the women and men of the new age and to work with others in an organized way" (*AD*, n. 20).

The overcoming of his human situation with the will of bringing to realization a model of a person structured on the primacy of the intelligence and of the will that guide the sentiment and the determined orientation toward a life of faith attuned with human personality, allowed him to motivate his priestly choice as the better part of a **missionary faith** that cannot hold entirely by itself the experience of God.

2.8. Thinking over how to react to the phenomenon of de-Christianization, Don Alberione develops this **theological certainty**: "Redemption has been accomplished. It is like a spring; but if we do not go to draw from it or to drink, it shall hence be useless for us. [We have]

immense treasures of heaven, but it is a must that they are distributed. Redemption is done, but if the priest does not preach and baptize, the pagans remain ignorant and in spiritual darkness and in the shadow of death.

“The world has been redeemed, but if the redemption is not applied to men, what would it be worth? It would be as if a treasure closed in a box, while misery dominates. It would be bread in abundance and wanted, but with no one to break it; souls die of hunger and of want. “This is how we ought to conclude: Help Jesus Christ, with our zeal, to save souls. Bring redemption to fulfillment. He wants to save people through people” (October 1946, in *Alle Figlie di San Paolo* 1946-1949, p. 330).

2.9. Face to face with the situation of flight from the church, Don Alberione is convinced that this does not depend on the contents of the faith because it is like a spring that gives water abundantly; the problem is that there are so many thirsty people and they do not know that the spring exists and that its water could quench their thirst. Hence, there is the need “to distribute,” “to apply,” to “break”, to bring redemption to people: **pastoral zeal** must get to work in order to lead people of today to be in contact with the redemption that has already taken place and its application to them.

During his teaching ministry in the Seminary, Don Alberione draws and promotes this **pastoral strategy** among the young priests: the priest in the parish cannot content himself with the usual people who go to church and who come to him; he must reach out to all his parishioners and to seek above all those who never come to church. Pastoral zeal’s commitment is to let “all” parishioners know Christ and be saved. The model of this pastoral dynamism is the figure described in the parable of the good shepherd. The first reply to the crisis of faith is a **new image** of the priest concerned over all his faithful.

2.10. Since Don Alberione was designated director of **Gazzetta d’Alba**, he could completely dedicate himself to the formulation of a project thought of already for years: **to use the press in order to complete the work of the priest in the parish**. We need to underline much this idea founded on a **theological thought**: the press is a material reality placed at the service of achieving a spiritual objective. It is, indeed, a true “**sacramental**” in view of a supernatural effect. In fact, the Society of St. Paul chooses to preach through the priest, just as the Priests preach the word, the Christian truths, in order to sanctify her members and to save souls and let Jesus Christ reign over the world” (*UCBS*, A. 7, N.10 – 20 August 1925). The heart of Don Alberione’s charism is this **equalization** that he formulates between “**oral preaching and written preaching**”; as one can see, he does not think of the press as a mere “**aid**” in the pastoral sphere, but it is a **new form of preaching** in the context of evangelization. Forgetting and taking for granted this truth of Don Alberione means to negate the originality of his charism: **conceiving a new “means” for evangelizing, he meant to give life to a “new evangelization,”** articulated in all its aspects.

In the terminology used, the same Don Alberione, emphasizes the “novelty”: “The apostolate of the press is a **means** for saving souls, for preaching divine truths; it is **one of the means** of molding the things to believe, the things to do and the worship to raise to the Lord... It is **one of the manners** of helping souls to be saved. There can be help rendered through the living word, through catechism, through missions, or through the press, the book, the image, the printed figure on paper, on tin, on canvas, on sheepskin: each time has its own ways” (*Haec meditare II*, 4 (1944), p. 165).

2.11. The **theological vision**, and not simply the **instrumental validity**, that Don Alberione develops for the press apostolate, he would extend also to **other means of communication** as he sharply emphasizes it on 26 November 1950 on the occasion of the General Congress of the States of Perfection: “Let us form for ourselves a conscience sensitive and realistic of the times and of our duties towards souls. Today, the wide world, the youth, the ruling class, each day receive other teachings, listen to other theories, over the radio; they view all sorts of entertainment in the movies, they view television, for things that are most likely amoral and immoral. ...It would be useful to take into consideration the words of Card. Elia Dalla Costa: ‘O, we now see the urgent need of a radical turning of mentality and of method; and yet in the space of a few years we would have created a desert around the Master of life; and life, rightly, will eliminate us as withered, useless, cluttering branches’” (*San Paolo*, November 1950). Prudently, Don Alberione quotes the words of the then Cardinal of Florence because they are strong: the Church, if she wants to evangelize today, must proceed with “**a radical turning of mentality and of method**”; the alternative is the desert around the Church and the uselessness of the Church.

2.12. It is the sensitivity Don Alberione nurtures towards “**history**” that pushes him to be in favor of a radical change in evangelization: “We must ever lead souls to paradise: but we must lead them not with those means used ten or more centuries ago, but those that are current today. We need to take the world and people the way they are, in order to do good today” (*ATP* p. 93). “Ours is the 20th century: and it is precisely in this century that we ought to live and act. We must belong to this century, that is: to try to understand its needs and to see to them” (*DA*, p. 248).

“One must prepare himself for the apostolate, because we must work in modern society, taking it for what it is, considering it in its current position. It is necessary that we adapt ourselves to the various dispositions either in the editorial sector or in diffusion: the world will understand us if we use the current means in communicating with it... With the passing of the years, we must adopt ourselves to the conditions of the times wherein we live” (*Meditazioni e istruzioni alle Figlie di San Paolo*, 1968).

Don Alberione’s apostolic strategy is “to adapt ourselves to the changing times,” not to pretend that the times will adapt themselves to us or that they be what we want them to be.

2.13. To cultivate **a social conscience** is to equip ourselves with a tool for living and serving the society to which we offer salvation: “Today, more than in times past, an adequate study of **sociology** is necessary. Our life is most notably spent in society; and in it is in society that one must exercise the apostolate and sanctify relationships” (*Alle Famiglie Paoline*, 1954, p. 21). Also the spiritual life must have this opening: “Attend **the Mass** with a social conscience and transform into most lively apostolate. (*Vademecum*, n. 1093).

Observing society allows us to perceive its **dynamism** “The world is fast evolving: the inhabited centers, culture, commerce keep on changing places. Peaceful and speedy revolutions take place through the press, radio, the movies, television, aviation, political, social, industrial movements, atomic energy... It is a must that religion be always present; avail with everything in order to promote a better life on earth and glory in heaven. He who stops or slows down is overtaken; he shall work in a field where the enemy has already harvested” (*San Paolo*, May 1949).

With a sharp analysis, Don Alberione underlines that the means of communication marks society by producing **cultural changes**: “Press, movies, radio, television embrace the entire life: individual, family, social life; intellectual, moral, artistic; economic, political, interna-

tional life... Each medium is enough to produce advantages or immense damages. They strongly affect the masses; they can seriously make aware or greatly strengthen the hinges of human coexistence: the family the social order, the human-moral order” (*San Paolo*, November 1950).

2.14. As one can notice, the press and the other means of communication are seen by Don Alberione as **technical phenomena** that produce **cultural changes**, because of this also his conception for their use as a new form of preaching alongside with oral preaching is not a mere **diversity of means**, but a new form of expression, a **different language**: to the language of the spoken word, stands alongside the language of the written word, of images, of audiovisuals, of music, etc.

The means allow an **effective meeting** between God and man: “The press, the movies, radio, television today constitute the most urgent, the fastest and the most effective works of Catholic apostolate. It may happen that other times may have in store for us other better means. But at present it seems that the heart of the apostle cannot ask for something better in order to give God to souls and souls to God” (*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (=UPSHD), 1960, v. I, p. 313).

In this context, we need to understand the **equivalence with the pulpit**: “When these means of progress serve evangelization, they are consecrated, raised to the greatest dignity. The office of the writer, the place of the technician, the bookstore, these become church and pulpit” (*UPSHD*, v. I, p. 316). Furthermore: “The technical means, the machines, the types, all the radio equipment, etc., are sacred objects due to the end to which they are meant. Hence, the machine becomes pulpit; the places for typesetting, the machines and the means for diffusion become church wherein one should behave very respectfully as one does in school. If the school is a temple, how much more are the places of our apostolate” (*Predicted del Primo Maestro* 5, 1957, p. 138).

The idea of the means of communication as new pulpits underlines well that Don Alberione does not establish a mere comparison between the two pulpits (that of the churches and the means of social communication) but between **two different languages** that have differing characteristics; as a consequence the experience of faith proposed by these two varying pulpits is certainly the same, but subjected to an elaboration of autonomous languages. To verbally narrate a parable of the Gospel is certainly different from expressing it in a series of photographs, in a video clip, or a radio drama or in a televised, cinema and musical version.

2.15. To take up written preaching and that of the different media, comports the assumption of **the totality of the aspects** that concur in forming their languages. This is why Don Alberione adopts the complete cycle of the utilization of mass media: **editorial, technical and diffusion**; if one of these three components is wanting, the willed finished product is not made; every stage is indispensable and is connected to the others.

To the enthusiasm and the pioneering spirit, Don Alberione intends to add **proper training** in the languages of communication: “The apostolate requires common knowledge and then the knowledge of the means of communication: hence, we must arrive at editing not only of books and periodicals, but also of other areas of our apostolate: like the production of movies, programs for radio, TV, discs, etc... The Lord, however, asks us that there must be a group of saints using these means and that they do not sin” (*San Paolo*, March 1968).

The faith testimony offered through the Pauline apostolate is not a **mechanical decanting** into new containers (the means of communication) that does not involve the apostle’s personality. In order that it be told in the languages of communication the experience of per-

sonal and communitarian faith must possess the expressive qualities of communication: **professionalism** makes possible, humanly speaking, the effectiveness of **witnessing** through the Pauline preaching. Training for communication is an integrating part of the Pauline's formation and the verification of one's expressive ability with the languages of communication, in the history of the Congregation, went through the obligation of coming up with a written work before one could be ordained priest.

2.16. It is Don Alberione's conviction (the means of communication become material realities for allowing an encounter on the supernatural level) that explains also his change of idea as regards **the identity of the Pauline communicator**: he abandons the idea of a group of lay persons in order to aim at a new Congregation.

If, in fact, the press and the other means are a new form of complete preaching, this task, in the history of the Church, is entrusted to the priest who is officially established as the effective "bridge" for the encounter between God and the people.

Certainly, the preaching done by **the priest of the parish** can be seen as very much concentrated in the person of the priest himself, even if Don Alberione, writing *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale* anticipates what he would need in the foundation of the Pauline Family. Certainly the **Pauline preaching** will not be achieved in its totality by the Pauline priest and this explains the involvement that Don Alberione immediately sets to work for the lay consecrated Pauline, the Pauline Sisters, the Aggregated Institutes and of the Pauline laity.

First comes the press apostolate and then all the other apostolates of the Pauline Family have their **hinge**, according to Don Alberione, **on the Pauline priesthood** not because of supremacy of the clerical kind, but due to a **theological value**: all concur with different new apostolates in a priestly saving activity that is guaranteed in its supernatural efficacy.

After Vatican II, theological convictions are more lucid, but we cannot expect them to have been done by Don Alberione who, in fact, precedes the next official theological elaboration meant to fully give value to baptism. Nonetheless, also today, even with the deeper understanding of the **common priesthood** of the faithful, the thought of Don Alberione keeps all its novelty: the Pauline apostolate always remains to be an act of **ministerial priesthood**, as regards its effectiveness on the supernatural level.

2.17. Clearly and with but slight changes, Don Alberione has identified and repeated during his entire life the **contents** of Pauline preaching, giving priority to:

- the **catechism**: by different categories and varied languages of communication
- the **common theology** (dogma, morals, worship) offered to the masses
- the **Sacred Scriptures**, in particular the **Gospel** explained to different kinds of people, with notes dogmatic, moral and liturgical in character
- the **tradition of the Church**: patristic, magisterium, theological schools, hagiography, spirituality, pastoral, etc.
- the **human sciences**: "whatever is true, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely..." (Phil 4:8).

The priority for catechism is dictated by the preoccupation of reaching the greatest number of persons; in reality the unquestionable primacy for him who believes is, for Don Alberione, the direct contact with the Sacred Scriptures: "In the publishing apostolate proper to our Institute, the book that we have to especially spread is the Bible: more than the others and first above all and always" (*UPSHD*, v. III, p. 12).

The **two editorial poles** of the Pauline apostolate are: **the explicit proclamation of Christ** and **the whole human reality**: “Don’t talk only of religion, but talk of everything in a Christian way” (*AD*, n. 87).

Among the “things to achieve” that Don Alberione describes in the *Abundantes...* there is a project of unification of all human sciences; “What is lacking at present is the unification of sciences into a Philosophy that would lead intellectuals to the doorstep of theology, and instill in them a desire for further light, that of Christ, which will lead to the fullness of light in heaven” (*AD*, n. 191). The idea of a synthesis of sciences that would bring natural sciences to the supernatural science, more than a project of apologetics, is the pastoral concern that also people of culture could discover in the faith an attractive proposal.

2.18. When Don Alberione describes the **recipients** of the Pauline preaching, he takes recourse always to St. Paul: “Let us feel, like St. Paul and in St. Paul, ourselves debtors to all men, ignorant and learned, Catholics, communists, pagans, Muslims. Let us love all. Let our apostolate be for all” (*Regina Apostolorum*, April 1951). The Alberione synthesis is: “Do we understand the Pauline mission? It is to reach out to everything and to everyone” (*Prediche del Primo Maestro I*, 1953, p. 161). “Let us have a heart vaster than the seas and the oceans... Let us love all, think of everything and everyone, work with the spirit of the Gospel which is universality and mercy: ‘*Venite ad me omnes*’. Just like the spirit of St. Paul the Apostle, always geared towards peoples who did not have the light of Christ” (*UPSHD*, v. III, pp. 117.118). **“The apostle of the editions makes himself everything for everyone”** (*UPSHD*, v. III, p. 120).

The **masses** and the **great numbers** are the recipients of the Pauline apostolate: “Your apostolate does not aim only at forming a **new mentality** in society: and this means to leave a mark, to give a new direction. Often, one falls into the mistake of wanting to see only the fruit in a particular soul, but the fruit is the mentality that is being spread amidst society” (*Meditation e Intrusion*, 31 July 1958).

2.19. In the boundless and universal panorama of the recipients, the Pauline preaching ought to pay special attention to the **people** understood as multitude of persons often beset with material poverty, limited education, immediate human worries, etc. The constant presence of world map and a geographical world atlas on Don Alberione’s desk is a sign of his constant universality: “Look at that world map, the figure of the earth, let’s say, let that world map move and look over the countries... Have a tender heart, the heart of Jesus” (*Vademecum*, n. 288).

Another category particularly pointed out are the **men of culture**: “The Pious Society of Saint Paul is to reflect often on ‘*ad quid venisti?*’ Let it always find a place in its heart for intellectuals; the Gospel is something divine: after all, it speaks to the minds of everyone; it is able to satisfy all demands [giving an answer] to the peoples of every age. If you win over intellectuals you are fishing not with a fishhook but with a net” (*AD*, n. 197). People of culture are important not only for their personal salvation, but also for their influence over the people.

2.20. The Pauline **method of apostolate** must know how to start from the concrete needs of the chosen recipients: “The nature of the needs defines the nature of the initiatives” (*Donec formetur Christus in vobis*, 1933, p.253). “We do not need numerous methods, because there is the divine method and that one held by Jesus Christ. We must do this: consider the needs of humanity, then go to Jesus, consider sacred science, make a beautiful visit to the

Most Holy Sacrament, and then, draw from Jesus that knowledge the world needs and the break it for the little ones. ...Two things therefore: 1. Consider the needs of people, then consider those people to whom we address ourselves: if they are children, scientists, pagans. 2. Draw the truth from Him who is Truth itself, then Wisdom, and break it for people who need such bread” (*Prediche del Primo Maestro* 5, 1957, pp. 134-135).

Pauline publishing must **know how to adjust itself to the various recipients**: “It seems strange to Pauline men and women to hear that Jesus is the Teacher of diffusion. ... His word was simple, clear, also when he taught doctrine. He adjusted his teaching to the needs of his audience The Gospel notes that He knew what is in every person. He adjusted himself before the fishermen, the shepherds, the Galileans, the Jews, the Pharisees, the disciples and before his enemies. How different is his conversation with the Samaritan woman from his dialogue with Nicodemus who came to him at night! How different is his teaching to the crowds and that one given to the closed circle of the apostles. And this was so even if his message were the same message of salvation. He wanted that his apostles did the same manner” (*UPSHD*, v. IV, p. 140s).

The Pauline apostolate, which is addressed to those far away, to the agnostics, the indifferent, the atheists, to believers of other religions, to different Christian confessions, to non-practicing Catholics, to wavering Catholics, to fervent Catholics, if it wants to be at their service, has to clearly define each time who is its audience, while departing from real needs in order to meet them.

2.21. The **communication method** that underlies the written preaching formulated by Don Alberione follows the theological conviction that is at the root of everything: the Pauline apostolate as preaching has a **teaching** character: the faith proposal assumes a **linear process of mass communication** where the transmitter sends, through the languages of communication, a message to a multitude of recipients. The active part of the recipients consist in decoding, according to the intentions of the transmitter, the contents of the message and to behave in a consequent manner. The Alberione model follows closely the ecclesial model of the teaching Church which adopts the style of the pedagogy of the teachers of the Greek, Latin, Renaissance and mass media culture.

2.22. The idea of preaching through the mass media of communication, after having progressively matured in Don Alberione, is to be considered, under the profile of the recipients, a **real project of a new evangelization** that takes up the means not as mere “instruments” but a new form of complete evangelization. If the process of communication which in fact utilizes the linear and unidirectional process, in reality, in its theological description, **the recipient** is already present in the quality of faith of the Pauline apostle, in the choice of means, in the translation into mass media languages and in the priority of the needs of the recipients.

2.23. Let **us, Paulines**, -- a portion of the Church of the third millennium with the mission of evangelizing, while imitating Don Alberione’s love for history and of society contemporary with us -- assume for ourselves the considerations on the **situation** during these years: “The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time,” so does Paul VI affirm in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (08/12/1975, no. 20); John Paul II takes it up and reasserts: “Pope Paul VI said that ‘the split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our time,’ and the field of communications fully confirms this judgment.” (*Redemptoris missio*, 07/12/1990, n. 37c).

The occasion of the **Jubilee of the year 2000** has also given life to the celebration of the Synods of continental Churches that were concluded with the publication of an apostolic exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa*, 14/09/1995; *Ecclesia in America*, 22/01/1999; *Ecclesia in Asia*, 06/11/1999; *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 22/11/2001 and *Ecclesia in Europa*, 28/06/2003.

With the apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (=NMI), of 06/01/2001, John Paul II points out to the universal Church the route for the third millennium by affirming since the beginning: **“Christianity is a religion rooted in history!”** (NMI, no. 5). “The experience of the Jubilee must be a source of dynamism: Now we must look ahead, we must ‘put out into the deep’, trusting in Christ's words: *Duc in altum!* What we have done this year cannot justify a sense of complacency, and still less should it lead us to relax our commitment. On the contrary, the experiences we have had should *inspire in us new energy*, and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives the enthusiasm which we have felt” (NMI, n. 15).

2.24. At the start of the new millennium, the Pope urges with determination the whole Church towards a **missionary faith**: Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of "globalization" and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures. Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the *new evangelization*. I do so again now, especially in order to insist that we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardor of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (*I Cor* 9:16). “Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as *the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups.*” (NMI, no. 40).

Already in *Redemptoris missio*, John Paul II affirmed: ‘Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!’ (n. 2); now he clarifies further: “Christ must be presented to all people with confidence. We shall address adults, families, young people, children, without ever hiding the most radical demands of the Gospel message, but taking into account each person's needs in regard to their sensitivity and language, after the example of Paul who declared: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (*I Cor* 9:22)” (NMI, no.40). “The ethical and social aspect of the question is an essential element of Christian witness: we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the Incarnation and, in the last analysis, of Christianity's eschatological tension.” (NMI, no. 52). For such an engaging work, the Pope refers himself to the documents of Vatican II: “With the passing of the years, *the Council documents have lost nothing of their value or brilliance.* They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition. Now that the Jubilee has ended, I feel more than ever in duty bound to point to the Council as *the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century*: there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning” (NMI, n. 57).

We could say that the *Novo millennio ineunte* is equal, for us Paulines of today, to what *Tametsi futura* stood for Don Alberione.

2.25. Granted the mobilization of a missionary faith for the whole Church, one must yet attentively observe **the social and cultural situation** wherein the recipients of our apostolate live.

With lucidity, the need is there for us to be aware of a phenomenon pointed out by the Pontifical Council for Culture which differentiates many of the current populations in comparison with just some years ago: **“But the fact that something is said is not enough to guarantee that it will be understood.** When those listening were basically in tune with the message because of their traditional culture imbued with Christianity, and generally well disposed towards it through their overall social and cultural background, what was offered could be received and understood. With the cultural pluralism of the present, there must be coherence between the message itself and the conditions of its reception. (*Towards a pastoral approach to culture*, 23/05/1999, no. 25).

2.26. It certainly is not the task of this talk to draw an exhaustive analysis of the socio-cultural context wherein we now live today in the five continents. Knowing that “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize...” (*EN*, n. 14), **whatever project of the Pauline apostolate, in every age, is effective by the measure that it knows well its recipients.** The value of our projects of evangelization, above all today, cannot be concerned only of the contents of the faith, but in the same measure it also must be attentive to the identity and the communication languages of our recipients: **“something is said is not enough to guarantee that it will be understood”!** The principal points of reference for perceiving the identity of the existential context of today are: **society and culture, communication, the Church’s pronouncements.**

2.27. Whatever picture of **society** and of **culture** in this third millennium is the fruit of the point of observation that has been chosen. A very broad evaluation is the unpublished situation where we live today: never has any society been a **reality so vast and complex** as that in this moment. We have to say, on a very general level, that we are face to face with characteristics that are intertwined; whatever attempt to identify phenomena in their state of purity is a simple commodity of analysis and of presentation. Every synthesis that we can establish requires and integration on the global, continental and local levels. No one impedes us from describing our society and culture with universal categories, but the precariousness of this methodology is revealed at the moment of drawing the consequences.

Just to point, for society on the **world level** we can mention: the globalization of economy, politics, communication; the prevalence of a neo-liberal economic model based on a free market economy, without any scruples as regards profit; the multi-culturality and interculturality due to immigration or to global population movement; the centrality of the person as critical and free subject; the democratic formula of political governance of nations; the development of science that raises ethical problems to the human species; the formation of a culture where traditional values are evolving (education models, family, sexuality, authority, truth, etc.); a secularism that has as a consequence for some countries the absolute religious indifference and in other nations the development of *new age*, of sects, of religious fanaticism; persistent hotbeds of violence that marks forms of international terrorism; situations of extreme poverty which thrives alongside wealth and waste.

Each of the **five continents** and, in each of them, **every single country**, live in specific manner these general phenomena completing them with their own realities related to geographical, historical, cultural situation, as well as the state of the population, of political governments, etc.

To identify concretely the world, continental and local profile of our recipients we can avail with documentation and of specialized research centers; just as Don Alberione points out in

sociology an instrument of useful knowledge for the evangelization, we must take advantage of all other **disciplines** that study global society and the various society as indispensable aids for the Pauline preaching. The profile that we establish of our recipients is the faithful mirror of our missionary desire and love.

2.28. We Paulines of today must reserve a special interest on the phenomenon of **communication** because it is the specific sphere of our evangelization: the study of communication ought to come together with the renewal of our charism inasmuch as the historical understanding of our identity cannot take place without taking into consideration the development of communication.

We had the chance to recall how, at the beginning, Don Alberione elaborates the Pauline charism with reference to the press, first as journalism and then as book publication; eventually, he integrates the charism with other mass media, movies, radio, television, music, images. The Pauline charism was born with the press and developed in full, thanks to the Founder himself, during the time of consolidation of the mass media.

After Don Alberione's death (1971), the Paulines continued during the years 1970-1990, the inheritance received to work in mass media, although, for a series of reasons, the press has had greater development with respect to other audiovisual means. On its part, communication starting from the 1980's has undergone an important revolution: the invention of the **digital language** with the birth of computer and communication technologies that have produced the *new media* and the network.

Already during the time of growth of the mass media, society has noticed that communication is not just a **composite of technologies** but brings about a **mass culture**; the incidence of digital communication has accentuated the cultural aspect of communication by setting up a **real revolution** with respect to the preceding times. In fact, we have passed from analogical communication to the digital one; from mono-media to multi-media communication; from unidirectional communication to interactive one; from textual communication to hypertext and hypermedia; from communication that gives priority to contents to the communication based on services; from mass communication to a mass of communications.

We have entered the **culture of communication** because we count in millions of persons on the world level who **takes recourse of communication** for: being informed, taught, for working, for living in relationships with others; for fun, for procuring goods and services, for finding documents, for participating in the elaboration of ideas and values.

We have to be aware that to speak of culture of communication is not an intellectual luxury, but it is a duty-bound awareness that today the **principal parameters** of individual and social experience are no longer perceived as how it is brought about in interpersonal experience, but also as they are **reformulated** by media, multimedia and network communication: space, time, logic, memory, tradition, history, truth, reality, corporeity, presence, identity, community, pedagogical relationship, sign, persuasion, authority, information, ethical values, etc.

2.29. Today, observing communication on the **world, continental and local level**, we notice that this planetary reality does not have the same meaning everywhere. With a broad evaluation, we can say that communication is also a **complex phenomenon** that does not easily allow itself to be isolated either in its merely technological description or, even less, in its socio-cultural incidence. Communication is not the same everywhere; we are face to face with variegated combinations of communication through a single means, communication through varied mass media, through network communication. The spread of communi-

cation on the world level is in fact **utilized in individual countries in different manners** and this explains why the various forms of communication have to be taken into account along with the other aspects of every society (economic situation of persons, illiteracy, tradition culture, political power, degree of technological development, etc.).

The differing usage on the world level of all the forms of communication we avail with today does not only show that the rich and the poor in communication exist, but there is a **surprising fact**: some countries pass from communication through a single means (either radio or press or television) to digital communication in the network without having been immersed in the variety of mass media of communication. It is quite difficult to evaluate its consequences on cultures if we accept as an established matter that digital communication is a style of life and a way of being in the world. While in countries richer in communication one witnesses the coexistence of various forms of communication influenced by digital communication: mass communication flows into the culture of communication with all its consequences.

2.30. The **universal** church, interpreted by the providential celebration of Vatican Council II, and, after the Council to our times, the authoritative magisterium of Paul VI (*Ecclesiam suam, Evangelii nuntiandi*, etc) and John Paul II (*Catechesi tradendae, Redemptor hominis, Christifideles laici, Redemptoris missio, Ecclesia in Africa, Ecclesia in America, Ecclesia in Asia, Ecclesia in Oceania, Ecclesia in Europa, Novo millennio ineunte*, etc), face to face with the world state of factual de-Christianization, of secularization and of religious indifference, has been entirely mobilized in a **missionary thrust** that is not characterized only by its spread in the geographical sense, but also for its penetration into cultural spheres. Evangelization today does not only meet **new populations**, but also **complex social and cultural phenomena** that constitute real autonomous and transversal cultures (communication, economy, politics, science, cultures, migration, etc).

In the religious context represented by the variety of Christian communities, by Judaism, by the expansion of Islam united with politics, by violence related to religious fanaticism, by the preference met also in Christian countries of religions and oriental philosophies, by the development of sects, by inter-cultural problems raised by migrations, the Church affirms her intention to “preach to all” the Gospel of Christ (**evangelization ad gentes**).

Face to face with the growing secularism and the spread of post-modern values and of weak thinking, above in countries that were massively Catholic, the Church invites the invention of a **new evangelization** brought to maturity in a radical **pastoral conversion** built starting from the condition and the needs of the non-practicing baptized persons. Concerned are the parishes but also the different forms of communication.

In order to re-establish the faith of the practicing ones and, in particular, in order to render effective the evangelization in new geographical and cultural contexts, the Church insistently points out to the process of **enculturation** in order to be able, at the same time, to allow the encounter of Christ with the wholeness of the person, of groups and of phenomena. For sometime now, there have been very good texts of the magisterium on the missionary style of enculturation, but we are regularly witnessing the difficulties in the concrete passage of such authoritative and farsighted indication.

2.31. For us Paulines of today, the **universal teaching on communication** assumes a special importance. Just as for Don Alberione the documents and speeches on communication by the Pope at the end of the 1800 to Vatican II have been enlightening, so they are as well indispensable for the development of the Pauline charism today. We know well with what

enthusiasm and gratitude Don Alberione presents to us Paulines the *Inter mirifica* (04/12/1963) that sets the seal of the Council's teaching on communication for evangelization and, at the same time, also on the Pauline apostolate. (cf. *San Paolo*, December 1963 and *San Paolo*, March 1968).

When the Pastoral Instruction *Communio et progressio* (23/05/1971) was published Don Alberione was old and ill but he rejoiced with the news of another document of the magisterial that gave importance to the Pauline apostolate.

After the Founder's demise, the Church offered a magisterium abundant and, often, very important for the development of the Pauline charism. If we should go over systematically the evolution of the mind of the Church, from Vatican II to today regarding communication, we could notice that, at first, the accent was on the means as a **specific sphere of pastoral** (*Inter militia e Communio et Progressio*), then as the **backdrop of global pastoral** (*Accetates novae*) and finally as a **complete culture** (*Redemptory mission*). It is evident that the various texts should render a rigid progressive development because they are an expression of different writing groups with different thought evolution, but it is undeniable that as a whole the magisterium on communication has been **attuned** with the developments of communication.

The first confirmation of this conviction is the pontifical text that remains till now as the most advanced point of the magisterium on communication; speaking of mass media, the *Redemptoris missio* affirms: "... it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the 'new culture' created by modern communications. This is a complex issue, since the 'new culture' originates not just from whatever content is eventually expressed, but from the very fact that there exist new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology" (n. 37c). **Communication is not a mere means, but is a culture; it is no enough to include in it the Christian message and the Church's magisterium. It is a must "to integrate" them in this culture (= enculturation).**

The **second** proof are the document that refer to digital communication: *The Church and Internet* and *Ethics and Internet* (28/02/2002), the messages for the world day of social communications of 2001, *Preach from the housetops": The Gospel in the Age of Global Communication* and of 2002, *Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel*.

The two most fecund indications given by the magisterium regarding communications are: 1. the Christian message has to be **acculturated** in the culture of communication and 2. digital communication, incarnated in the Internet, represents a frontier to explore and given importance for today's evangelization.

2.32. Another reflection in the universal Church that concerns our Pauline charism concerns the **consecrated life**. Many have been documents on this theme after Vatican Council II's *Perfectae caritatis* (28/10/1965); after the Synod on the consecrated life, John Paul II publishes the post synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita consecrata* (25/03/1996).

In this document there is as well the explicit discussion on the commitment of religious men and women in culture and in communication: "Consecrated persons, especially those who have the institutional charism of working in this field, have a duty to learn the language of the media, in order to speak effectively of Christ to our contemporaries..." (no. 99).

For a long time, also within the various institutions that make it up, the religious life has been taken in consideration for a re-launching while giving importance to today's context. Some speak of "refounding," others of "revitalization," but all seem to agree that it is not just a matter of mere external and secondary changes.

2.33. In communion with the universal Church, the Churches in the **continental** and **local levels** are committed to the evangelization of populations and of cultural phenomena by now proceeding from the elaboration of **continental projects** (for example the Pastoral Plans of del CELAM) and on the local level of **Bishops' conferences** of different countries and then of every diocese of the world.

The programming of the Pauline apostolate is called, on the basis of theological foundation and of effective pastoral practice, to integrate itself, through its specific service with the continental projects, those of the bishops' conferences and of individual bishops.

2.34. Also by limiting ourselves to this panoramic vision of society, of communication and of the Church, we can convince ourselves that the work of evangelization for the whole Church, and hence also for us Paulines, cannot live on incomes and of memories: also we need that **revolution of mentality and of method** in the evangelization that Don Alberione required for the Church of his time.

The most significant fact is the change of mind of the communication process on which our current society and culture are set, thanks as well to the possibilities offered by the information and telecommunication technologies: **at the center is the recipient, the pole that attracts everything is the user, the recipient is the lord of communication.**

The communication that seemed most suited for the evangelization of the centuries past and also of the era of mass media was the **linear and uni-directional model** with the mentality of structural philosophy (the message belongs to the transmitter; the recipient has only to decode exactly without any creative intervention); today, studies on the analysis of cultures, on reception and on network communication has marked a radical change by placing the recipient at the center of everything. This is why the Church feels, still rather vaguely and not it seriously assumed, the need of **"putting together the proclamation and the condition of its receptions."**

While keeping the sense of proportions and of diversity, we can say that St. Paul was chosen for the **proclamation of Christ to the pagans**; Don Alberione has been enlightened to open the Church to **preaching through the press and the mass media**; the Paulines of the third millennium, in their anxiety "to be all things to all" are called to be pioneers in **acculturating the Gospel in the culture of communication**, starting from the identity of today's recipients.

3. 3. "... straining forward to what lies ahead" (Phil 3:13)

3.1. *"It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ [Jesus]. Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's calling, in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3: 12-15).

In the **immediate context** of the Letter, Paul defends the significance of Christ's death and resurrection before the believers; justification before God no longer takes place thanks to the scrupulous observance of the prescriptions of the Law; perfection is not the result of favorable conditions through birth or of virtues acquired by the will.

Paul manifests his experience as a believer: after his encounter with Christ, all that he considered at first as "advantages" for his salvation, now he calls "a loss", "garbage", compared

with his “knowledge of Christ.” The ideal of faith remains to be Christ’s example; Paul, like every authentic Christ, has an entire existence in order to be transformed “by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Phil 3, 11).

Availing with the **metaphor of sports race**, Paul describes himself as a runner who, in order to win the prize, strains towards the goal, does not look behind, but gathers all his energies in the direction that draws him. The salvation obtained by faith in Christ is not the tranquility that comes from the observance of the rules and external norms but in a constant dynamism that seeks continually for improvement.

Reaching the point of “Christification,” to the “stature of Christ” (Eph 4:13) is not an objective on short term that one can achieve by observing religious practices, but it is a slow and progressive process of maturation in order to participate ever more in Christ’s resurrection and death. It is a **spiritual tension**, not a **final possession**, neither is it a **static conquest**; it does not give cause to nostalgic regrets or to regressive turning into one’s self.

3.2. Read in the context of Christology of the Letter to the Philippians, the Paul’s race to the future is motivated by his vital relationship with Christ: Christ’s death and resurrection are not only biographical moments of Christ, but they are transformed into a way of life of every Christian. The entire life of faith is summarized in height of the historical events of Christ: participation and assimilation of death and resurrection already in this life and then in the parousia. The race towards the future has an initial thrust, a constant motivation and a well-identified objective: everything is centered on the vital relationship with Christ. The sport metaphor has a global motivation **Christological** and **theological** in character: “God’s calling in Christ Jesus” (v. 14).

3.3. Paul’s **entire existence and his apostolic struggles** are the most broad context that emphasizes the athletic determination of this Apostle in want to always strain forward in the course in spite of all the difficulties: “*Are they ministers of Christ? (I am talking like an insane person) I am still more, with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, far worse beatings, and numerous brushes with death. Five times at the hands of the Jews I received forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I passed a night and a day on the deep, on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own race, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, through hunger and thirst, through frequent fastings, through cold and exposure*” (2Cor 11: 22-27).

His encounter has not only transformed Paul’s **theological convictions** which, from that instance, has made of Christ the reason of his believing, but the strength of this spiritual fascination has been placed at the service of his **mission** among the pagans: the intimacy of faith and the labors of the mission received strengthen each other.

3.4. At the first contact with St. Paul **Don Alberione** is filled with a dynamism ever strained forward to the point of making of it a **style of life** for his entire foundation activity and a **series of phrases** he loved to repeat endlessly: “Ever forward!”; “Progress a little each day.”; “Never stop, but strain ever forward.”; “Start from little and then move ahead with perseverance.”

At the moment wherein Don Alberione tries to express the newness of the mission he feels to have received from God, he finds a great consolation in a quotation: “The expression of Msgr. Ketteler, Archbishop of Mainz, has gone around the world: ‘If St. Paul returned to the

world, he would have been a journalist,' and I firmly believe it so" (1919, in Rosario F. Esposito, *La primavera paolina*, p. 63).

Recalling the foundation process, Don Alberione forcefully underlines: "... everyone must regard Saint Paul the Apostle alone as father, teacher, exemplar and founder. It is so, in fact, [The Pauline Family] was born through him, it was he who nourished it and raised it, its spirit is from him" (*AD*, n. 2).

On the fortieth year of the Society of St. Paul's foundation, Don Alberione reaffirms his conviction: "St. Paul is our Father, Teacher, Protector. He has done everything. ... He has acted on this family with so physical and spiritual intervention that even now, thinking of it, one cannot well understand; and even much less, explain. ... The Pauline family **has to be St. Paul alive today**, according to the mind of the Divine Master, acting under the grace and with the grace of Mary, Queen of the Apostles" (*San Paolo*, July-August, 1954).

"The Pauline Family has been raised by St. Paul in order to continue his work; it is **St. Paul, alive**, but who today is made up of many members" (1955, *Prediche del Primo Maestro SP*, p. 291). The Pauline Family "is resolved to represent and live **St. Paul today**; thinking, being zealous, praying and being sanctified as St. Paul would have done if, today, he lived. ... He has made himself the Society of St. Paul. ... If St. Paul were alive, he would have continued to burn of that dual flame, of the same fire: zeal for God and his Christ and for all peoples of every country. And, in order to make himself heard, he would have climbed the highest pulpits and multiplied his word with the means of today's progress: press, movies, radio, television" (*Santificazione della mente*, 1956, pp. 56-57).

3.5. First the Society of St. Paul, then the entire Pauline Family, are the actualization of St. Paul; we are the Apostle's **form today** which would assume his "straining forward." Deepening St. Paul's identity, we truly better deepen our charism because we are St. Paul today. It is hard to be true Paulines without a systematic and assimilated knowledge of St. Paul.

With the expression, "**Pauline spirit**" Don Alberione synthesizes our identity in its totality and invites his children of all times to "strain forward" without ever losing "our color," losing "our path", getting ourselves lost in a generic life no longer characterized by "our specific apostolate."

The urge to "strain forward" inherited from the Founder has to avoid either the danger of living on memories of the past or with a traditionalism that limits itself to repeating formulas, or to cultivate a constant updating necessary but which however gives in to the temptation of deviating novelty, of abandonment of what instead constitutes our unchanging identity.

The Paulines who lived longest with the Founder have experienced an almost genuine "**jealousy**" of the Founder face to face with the novelty of the Pauline vocation and mission. In more than one occasion and with unequivocal words, Don Alberione defended his foundational will by stigmatizing the attempts to disfigure the physiognomy of a vocation that seemed new and very risky to many. Remembering St. Paul's words to the Galatians that put them on guard so they may not change the Gospel received from him (cf. Gal 1: 7-10), Don Alberione comments: "Applying ourselves that verse of St. Paul, we ought to say: If someone wanted to give the Institute a different spirit, even if he were an angel, also a priest, this angel has to be driven away, because he is against the Church which is infallible. Once the Pope has become the head of the Institute through the definitive approval, we ought to follow the Pope and what the Pope has entrusted to the Institute to observe; the book of the Constitutions" (*Fedeltà allo spirito Paolino*, 1965, p. 91).

3.6. Also a look over **the entire existence** of Don Alberione confirms the commitment to “strain forward,” starting from the decision to follow his priestly vocation, while continuing in the desire to innovate the figure of the priest of the parish and fully developing his multiple activities in the foundation of the Pauline Family.

Limiting ourselves to the **evolution** that he did in the Society of St. Paul, one can document his determination, unstopped by anything and by anyone in order to start the press apostolate, the different periodical mastheads, the movies and San Paolo Film, radio, television, discs, without forgetting the Church of St. Paul and the Regina Apostolorum Sanctuary, all the Pauline foundations outside Italy. To this list originated from a constant dynamism, follows an equally long list of ideas and projects, either thought of or achieved at a short time (a periodical and an encyclopedia on Christ Master, way, truth and life, etc).

After St. Paul’s style, he knew how to put together in a **great equilibrium** the supernatural motivation of every initiative, big or small, coming from his contemplation of Christ and his capacity for work that does not spare any effort in order to humanly cooperate with spiritual salvation.

The life of Fr. Alberione is unthinkable without the supernatural spring motivated by a conviction of having received from God a mission to accomplish, but this awareness is incarnated in the most elementary historical conditions that are, however, taken up as the necessary path to its realization.

We have had as inheritance the certainty that whatever aspect of our charism were not held on the supernatural height of “preaching”, this would immediately fall into “commerce”. With an equal richness of teachings and of example, Don Alberione reminds all Paulines of the value of **work**, of human effort placed at the service of redemption. Among the constant meditations of Don Alberione, there remains the **hidden life** of Christ lived for 30 years: “The sweat on his brow in Nazareth was no less redemptive than his sweat of blood in Gethsemani” (*Vademecum*, no. 298).

3.7. In the genetic code of us, **Paulines of the third millennium**, the “straining forward” is written as a balanced dynamism composed of supernatural motivations and creative industriousness. The desire to look back, slow down, stop, to begin a countdown and to program immobility or the end as willed objective does not belong to us. We are made to look ahead, we do not live on memories, but on projects, as children of the future.

We are not **naive**, however, nor superficial nor dreamers who do not know how to take into account old age that has befallen us as if a surprise, of sickness that often accompanies the passing of years, of the physical and moral sufferings and of death, of the lack of vocations, of difficulties for the initial, specialized and ongoing formation, of the challenges that our apostolic works are going through, of the limited preparation for adopting new forms of communication, of the modest cultural level, of the struggles in community life, etc.

Also when we pretend not knowing our limitations, the report of the Superior General, the report of Circumscription superiors, the results of the questionnaire in view of this Chapter and our experience of daily Pauline life, these are enough to reshape our sentimentalism as regards the co-naturalness of our “to strain forward.”

There, however, remains a fact that explains our presence in this Chapter: we want to program our life, we want to strain ahead, precisely because we know well the heritage that comes to us from the past and the situation that characterizes the present. Let us not want to be dreamers who flee from harsh reality, but neither as short-sighted realists who drown in problems; let us dream, while taking reality into consideration, to improve what is already

being done today, to try to open new avenues, to have the courage to “to go into the deep” regardless of everything.

3.8. In the name of Christ, of St. Paul, of Blessed Alberione, let us have the daring of a fascinating **global apostolic project**. With the talks that have preceded and with the reminders, I, too, wanted to underline, we can have before our eyes this synopsis:

- **St. Paul**, in contact with the Risen Christ, elaborates a **presentation of the faith** based on freedom from the Law and on sanctification as Christ’s gift; he also has a **specific mission**, to preach Christ to pagans, which allowed him to adapt his proclamation to his recipients.
- **Don Alberione**, having found in faith and in the priesthood the unity of his personality, elaborates a **presentation of the faith** centered on Christ Master, way, truth and life; he feels vested with a **specific mission** of “preaching” the whole Christ to all peoples through the press and the other modern means of communication, while being concerned starting from the needs of the recipients.
- **We, Paulines of the third millennium**, if we want to continue St. Paul’s work and that of Blessed Alberione, while taking into consideration our **recipients** to which we want to address ourselves, must elaborate a **new presentation of the faith** that may be in harmony with the Pauline mission of preaching in **today’s communication**.

3.9. We could define this Pauline project **enculturation of the Gospel in the culture of communication**. So that this may not be but a beautiful dream but may be a dream with open eyes that takes into consideration our real situation, we must above all agree together on some **premises** on the level of convictions.

In this historical moment, although it is about to be 90 years old, our Congregation is a **composite of diversity**. Let us list some of them. Difference of **age brackets** of different proportions, with respect to the specific attitude towards the future. Diversity of **assimilation of the Pauline** charism: in general, for those advanced in years absorbed with the presence of the Founder, for the younger ones, mediated by the teaching of others and for personal initiatives. Diversity of **apostolic experience in communication**: some are more competent in book publishing, others in periodicals’ publishing, others for audiovisual publishing, finally, others are more sensitive to electronic publishing. Naturally, diversity, **by the context of origin**: we are present in all continents, with the seal of language and culture, with a specific heritage had from the pioneers who started off, with the reality of vocations from the place and the forms our apostolate has taken up. **We can think of the Congregation as a block where differences of conceiving and living our charism are included.**

3.10. After 90 years of history, following the example of our Founder and the indications of the magisterium of the Church on consecrated life, we must, as a further premise, observe attentively and with well documented knowledge, the **unchangeable and changeable elements** of the Founder’s charism. Taking into consideration the developments in the Church, in particular Vatican Council II, the post-conciliar period and the Jubilee of 2000; the global changes in **society** and in **culture**, international in character; the revolutions in **communication** and the **history** of our Congregation with the current physiognomy, we must reconsider **some** of Don Alberione’s **certainities**.

How did he imagine, at the beginning, how had he himself brought to reality his key idea of **priest writer**, a central element of the Alberione vision? The observations of the Vatican

Curia at the beginning, the achievements of the first decades of the Congregation, the taking up of new means aside from the press, a different conception of the publisher, etc., have brought about a new formulation of this basic idea in the Pauline preaching and for the unity of the apostolates of the Pauline Family. A path for further deepening has to find its hinges in the understanding of the mission of being **publisher**, in the theological sense, and of giving a special importance to **editorial**.

How should we understand today the importance that Don Alberione gave to the **Pauline self-sufficiency**: all the stages of the apostolate done by the Pauline and the lay persons as exception? We need to further deepen how, safeguarding the idea of the apostolate as **sacramental**, effective of the encounter between God and men, the collaboration of the other non-Paulines, are essential in all the stages of our apostolate. How do we have to re-think the **global project** of new evangelization formulated by Don Alberione while relating on one hand his **Christological synthesis** (dogma, morals, and worship) and his **anthropological vision** (mind, will and heart)?

The contents of the **Alberione definition** Christ, Master, way, truth and life understood as dogma, morals and worship, has to be set within the context of the theological evolution of Vatican Council II and of the 40 years that followed after it. It is not enough to repeat ejaculatory prayers or the brief formulation of Alberione; the need is there to deepen and reformulate.

Furthermore, we know historically the unsatisfied desire of Don Alberione to have from some Pauline a well articulated formulation of Christ Master, way, truth and life. We know the attempts already done but also the dissatisfaction of Don Alberione. In the same way, the synthesis of all the sciences, also through a satisfying presentation of Christ, Master, way, truth and life, Don Alberione makes his Canon Chiesa's prayer: "Let us join in prayer that God's Providence will raise up a new Aquinas who will assemble the scattered members – the sciences, in other words – into a synthesis that is systematic and clear, concise if needs be; and mold them into a sole body" (*AD*, no. 192).

On the other hand, we are well aware that on this theological and Christological elaboration rest all the elements of the Pauline charism: it is "to be or not to be Paulines".

Also Don Alberione's **anthropological vision** is founded on European currents of thought that exalt the predominance of reason, thereby establishing a hierarchy of values (the intelligence commands the will and both contain the sentiment) that is not equal in other continents and cultures, in particular the Oriental perspective.

3.11. The varieties present in our Congregation and the need to rethink some elements of the Founder's charism allow us to effectively put our hands on the global Pauline project of **enculturating the Gospel in the culture of communication**.

We have to aim at a **global project**, and not to busy ourselves in an isolated manner on the traditional "four wheels" of the Pauline charism. It does not make much sense to carry on with some corrections on our spirituality, on our study and on formation, on apostolic activities, on our life of consecration, but we must busy ourselves with the whole "Pauline cart" before the individual wheels. We know that the metaphor of the Pauline cart is not in view of describing a stable element seen in its parts, but serves Don Alberione to define the **dynamism of the Pauline charism**: "The Congregation is like a cart on which the Gospel is brought to souls and on which we have to be in order to offer this Gospel to souls" (*Vademecum*, no. 368). The cart is in view of evangelization, and not to be considered by itself.

3.12. The project is **global** because in its formulation, it takes into account the **Paulines of today, individuals and communities, the experience of faith in Christ, the recipients to whom we want to address ourselves, the means that we choose and the results that we want to achieve.**

The **original nucleus** is the experience of faith, lived and witnessed to, with the languages that are typical to the recipients chosen beforehand. We need “to think as one” of these components of the Pauline charism of today, as, for the rest, St. Paul and Don Alberione did. The Pauline charism, by Don Alberione’s will, is thus well integrated so that each aspect includes or refer to all the other: when there is no more communication and circularity among all, the body shows signs of blocks and of fatal disorganization.

3.13. The **new theological synthesis** that deepens and re-express for us the Alberione definition of Christ Master way, truth and life cannot do without Don Alberione’s preoccupation for an **integral and sectioned Christ**. An opening for a new theological re-elaboration of the integral Christ could be related with the definition of **Christ communicator**. Documents of the magisterium and studies in theology and in communication that draft this definition.. It could be the task of the third millennium Paulines to make a true presentation of Christ communicator that knows how to stand not the limited usefulness of an exemplarist theology, but that flows from the entire communication process as openness to the transcendence and content of revelation.

3.14. The experience of faith has to be thought of and accomplished in close attunement with the missionary objective, the immediate question raised on our **recipients**. As continuation of the universality of St. Paul and Don Alberione, a project brought to the confines of history is nonetheless urged to work within choices. It is enough to analyze the productions of our publishing and subdivided by categories the recipients, for example, the publications for those “far away” and the publications for the “practicing Catholics.” The global project, while preserving the universality of the recipients, is in deeds called to raise **priorities**.

3.15. The unity formed between the formulation of the experience of faith and the choice of recipients weigh significantly on **basic, specific and ongoing formation** of the Pauline. The Pauline apostle must be formed in order to live and bear witness to a faith that expresses itself with languages of communication in order to establish relationship with precise recipients.

From this setup one can deduce how communication, understood as our missionary form but also as the parameter of human expression, ought to be present in all the stages of Pauline Formation and that the *Ratio Formationis* ought to be articulated on this fundamental category for the Pauline apostle. The recipients of the Pauline charism must not only be present in the **apostolic project**, but they are an integrating part of the **formation project** and of the experience of **faith** that is, from the very start, **missionary** in clear space-time coordinates.

3.16. The same unity between faith and recipients characterizes the **Congregation’s apostolic project**, then later adapted in the **continental** and **Circumscription apostolic projects** either in contents or in language forms chosen.

The commitment to **enculturate the Gospel in the culture of communication** is expressed through the **contents** which we can summarize in three spheres: the explicit proclamation of the integral Christ; the meaning presence in the public opinion with the presentation in the

Christian key of all the aspects of individual and social human life; studies, research and teaching of media, multimedia and network communication.

The choice of **forms** and **languages** of communication ought to be achieved based on **two criteria**. Above all, we must not abandon a form of communication for the sake of the mirage of giving importance to another; prudence suggests the integration and diversification of the various forms of communication. Furthermore, when we decide to open ourselves up to new language forms, we need to face them not with the usages and criteria used for the form of communication already used but, although starting from small, launch young Confereres so they may be specialized (for example: electronic publishing, books and periodicals *on line*, conception and management o network sites, etc.) in view of a service that is not confined in only one Circumscription.

3.17. The unity of faith, recipients, formation and apostolic projects has to be integrated with the reality of **individual communities**, of the needs of **community life** and in the giving value of the religious vows from the communication view.

The Pauline mission is entrusted to the **community** and every Pauline takes part in this “mystical body” by functioning with is special gifts and in his own sphere of apostolic activity. The total vision, nourished through correct and speedy information, allows the expression of truth in a spirit of communion and not of exclusion and undue appropriation.

The **community life** that characterizes every Congregation has a specific quality explicitly underlined by Don Alberione: “Also or us, common life is born of the apostolate and in view of the apostolate. ... it has an organization that takes this into consideration: we, religious-apostles, are at the service of souls (*USHD*, v. I, p. 285). In this context the apostolic goal, **the decision-making process** required by the exercise of authority is founded on a theological vision of participation to the common good, particularly in the mission. It is in this view of a community entirely responsible of the mission that we need to improve and clarify our *Constitutions and Directory* and the *Handbook of Authority*. We cannot intervene on the *Rule* of our life only in order to come up with some isolated retouching.

The presentation all the **religious vows**, and not only in the vow of obedience to the Pope, ought to be characterized by the communication dimension of the Pauline Charism, in reference to the Pauline, his recipients, the community to which he desires to belong.

3.18. The global project of **enculturating the Gospel in the culture of communication** includes as well in its unity the role of the Society of St. Paul with regards to the other Congregations and Institutes of the **Pauline Family**. Comforted by the documentation of history and of undergone experience, the articulation of the Pauline Charism on communication could be a way that better values the unity and diversity either of the Christological formulation of faith or the complementary variety of the apostolates of the Pauline Family.

3.19. The most adequate **methodology** for defining the new global project for the Paulines of the third millennium, while taking into consideration some premises on the reality of our Congregation, has to be characterized by a virtue dear to Don Alberione: an **equilibrium** that knows how to dose different but complementary elements.

We have to put wisely together the **universal** and **the local** for every element that comprises the global project: Christological formulation of the experience of faith, identification of the recipients, formation features of the Pauline, apostolic project of the Congregation, adjustment of community life, of the decision-making process and of the religious vows, the significant role of the Pauline Family. It is necessary to coordinate and involve all the levels of

our juridical geography (general, circumscription and local) because without the existence of a **global project** one cannot have a **subsequent** project in the different Circumscriptions and local communities.

Without a project for the entire Congregation, the continental, circumscription and local projects could have as a result an enhancement of the **autonomy** that leads to anarchy; a project on the general level that pretends to be equal everywhere would take the risk of a **harmful uniformity** because it would be mortifying. Meanwhile it would be wise to aim at a **global project** that concerns all the aspects of the Pauline charism, clear, harmonious and thought of on the general level, but which **provides for the commitment** of an enculturation that take into consideration the continent, the Circumscription and the local community.

3.20. Following the example of the adaptation of the universal Church in the local Churches, in the missions, in culture, in science, also the process of **enculturation of our charism** in the various continents and in the different Circumscription is integrated in the Pauline global process for the third millennium of **enculturating the Gospel in the culture of communication**: one refers to the other.

For this reason, the Superior General with his Council has to remain the guarantor, the mover and the qualified mediator for all the Paulines of every continent and of every Circumscription.

In order to reach the objective of formulating and applying profitably the general global plan and its enculturation on the different most circumscribed levels, the General Government and the Paulines spread in the world could avail with the competence and assistance of the three specified **bodies of documentation, study and services** dependent on the Superior General but in view of the entire Congregation and of the Pauline Family should there be the need.

A body that is engaged in deepening the **life and thought of St. Paul** while relating it with the evolution of the pronouncement of the universal Church, of the continental Churches and of the local Churches. **Three are its principal objectives**: study and research in order to involve all the Confreres, with adequate forms of communication, with the central figure of St. Paul and he changes of the Church (a precious material forte process of enculturation of the Pauline charism, for personal enrichment, for the theme of spiritual exercises, retreats and meditation, courses of ongoing formation, etc.) by availing with research materials and of knowledge of the make, to be able o collaborate actively with our entire publishing on the world level through initiatives concerning the two themes; to create a data bank of the two themes that could be a heritage from where Paulines can draw, both those engaged in apostolic activities and those in studies and also others interested in our documentation having a global character

- The transformation of the present Center of Spirituality into a **body for studies and researches** on the life, thought, and the works of Don Alberione in order to further strengthen what has already been done in view, however, of making available the *Opera Omnia*, all that the Founder has written and said to all the Institutions of he Pauline Family in order to further improve knowledge of them *within* and in order to achieve adequate editorial initiatives order to let it be known to the *outside*; to bring to accomplish studies on the social, cultural, ecclesial context of the times of Don Alberione that better allow he understanding of the Founder's innovations; in order to allow a secure knowledge of the Founder or the young generations of Paulines and to offer secure data to enlighten an evolution of the Pauline charism in full fidelity to the past and to the present.

- The constitution, by strengthening the present Studio Paolino Internazionale della comunicazione sociale (=SPICS), of a center of studies and researches on the social communication in view of: being the Congregations **Observation Center** on the global level of the evolution of the phenomenon of communication that takes place in university teachings, in international publications and in the editorial processes; to establish a data bank on culture and communication that may be of help to the process of enculturation of the Gospel in communication; to be a point of reference for the formation of Paulines in communication and the specializations in the sector to collaborate either with the general Pauline publishing endeavors or for specialized publications on communication.

3.21. It is the task of all the members of this General Chapter to evaluate the feasibility and the value of the global project of **enculturation of the Gospel of the culture of communication** as the concrete translation for *Being St. Paul alive today*. The contents of this conference have to be integrated with what has already been said, with the materials present in the *Instrumentum laboris*, to the creativity present in each of us and to what we will manage to bring to maturity as a group of chapter delegates.

Let not our best will of programming lose sight of the conviction that has guided Don Alberione in his untiring activity: **“Save, but first be saved! We need saints who precede us in this unbeaten and but partly traced paths. It is not an affair for amateurs but for true apostles”** (*San Paolo*, November 1950).

May the Servants of God, the Venerables and the Blessed of all the Pauline Family, in particular of the Society of St. Paul, be our intercessors and models of reference. The guarantee of the mystical but industrious presence of Don Alberione amidst us we read written by his own hands in the *Abundantes...*: **“It is as a servant that I intend to belong to this marvelous Pauline Family, both no in heaven. There, I shall concern myself with those who use the most effective modern means to do good: [working] in holiness, in Christo [et] in Ecclesia”** (*AD*, n. 3).