



“See, I am doing something new!” (Isaiah 43:19a)

GENERATIVE SEEDS FOR THE PAULINE PASTORAL WORK FOR VOCATIONS

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON PASTORAL WORK FOR VOCATIONS
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International Secretariat
for Pastoral Work for Vocations and Formation



INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the International Seminar on Pauline Pastoral Work for Vocations (Ariccia, October 21-25, 2024) is to provide a renewed impulse to this aspect of Pauline life. Following the 2nd International Seminar on Pauline Publishers (October 16-21, 2017) and the 2nd International Seminar on Pauline Formation for the Mission (November 4-8, 2019), the XI General Chapter aims to build upon the previous meetings, recognizing that our mission is closely tied to the emergence of new generations of Paulines who wholeheartedly embrace our charism.

The style in which this seminar was experienced indicates a pathway in both methodology - characterized by a participatory, laboratorial and generative approach - and structure, centered around three fundamental actions: exploring, forming and generating. These steps and methods help us live in the present during this transitional time of faith, marked by conditions that must not be overlooked and which provide new invitations to “go out” and walk “with” and “alongside” everyone. This serves as a strong call for missionary, personal and pastoral conversion, rediscovering the synodal dimension as a constitutive element of the Church and seeking ways to be evangelizers for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel, which should be shared humbly and generously.

The process initiated during the Seminar has placed the formation of a “**culture of vocation**”¹ at the center, identifying four key areas in which it can be cultivated: **community, identity, culture of encounter** and **interculturality**. This choice presupposes overcoming the delegation in vocational animation and calls for a profound conversion in the way of thinking about vocation.

The four areas identified as “spaces” for nurturing the culture of vocation require the active participation of every member of the Congregation. This invites us to walk and grow together, recognizing that relationships transform us into a community that bears witness to the joy of the Pauline vocation.

The outcome of these days of sharing and discussion is the “**generative seeds**” of the Pauline Pastoral Work for Vocations, which should not be viewed as operational guidelines applicable to all our contexts or as fixed vocational pathways. Each country has its own culture and unique ways of living the same faith... The young people themselves are seeking personalized options for their vocational discernment.

¹ Pontifical Work for Ecclesiastical Vocations, *New Vocations for a new Europe*, Rome, September 8, 1997. The Culture of vocation “*is a component of the new evangelization. It is a culture of life and openness to life, of the meaning of life, but also of death. In particular it makes reference to values... such as gratitude, openness to the mystery, sense of the incompleteness of the individual and, at the same time, of his openness to the transcendent, readiness to allow oneself to be called by another (or by Another) and be questioned by life, faith in oneself and in others, freedom to be touched by the gift received, by affection, by understanding, by forgiveness, discovering that what is received is always undeserved and exceeds one’s just measure, and is the source of responsibility for life. The ability to dream and think big is also part of this vocational culture, that wonder that allows the appreciation of beauty and the choosing of it for its intrinsic worth, so that it might make life beautiful and true, that altruism which is not only an emergency solidarity, but which is born of the discovery of the dignity of every brother and sister... Such a new culture will become the right and proper terrain of the new evangelization... This culture, today, is probably becoming the primary objective of pastoral work for vocations(20) or, perhaps, of pastoral work in general. What kind of pastoral programme, indeed, would not cultivate the freedom of feeling oneself called by God, or give birth to newness of life?*” (n. 13b).

The quality of these paths depends not only on the organization of specific initiatives but also on the relationship that the vocational animator—and, alongside him, the Pauline community—manages to establish with the young person seeking to understand our life. This is why this text is not a document but rather like “soil that nurtures generative seeds.”

Speaking of “generative seeds” means emphasizing the importance of human relationships and recognizing the analogy between the generation to human life and the generation to the life of faith. It means, therefore, welcoming and valuing the desires and projects of those who are passionate about Christ but, at the same time, learning the patience of the sower because the periods of understanding, change and growth are long and different for each one. Choosing to carry out generative actions implies being willing to let ourselves be moved, abandoning logics that keep us anchored to conventional concepts and pathways but are now sterile in this epochal change. The “static fidelity” of “it has always been done this way” risks devolving into a passive acceptance that fails to generate life either in itself or around itself.

Instead, we need to come together to listen to the Spirit that moves within us today, confident that even comparing our time to that of the new generations shaped by it can be fruitful. Indeed, it can become an opportunity to rediscover new aspects that this era, with its “strengths” and “threats,” reveals about ourselves, our vocation and our mission in the Church and in the world.

The “generative seeds” illustrate that the culture of encounter is a virtuous and fruitful dynamism, guided by the logic of dialogue, mutual research, exchange, and the act of “making room for the other” while remaining attentive to the Word that calls and saves everyone. It is in this “place” that the individual, through an encounter that opens the relationship with the Master, discovers the meanings for which it is worth fully committing one’s life.

GENERATIVE SEEDS: THE FERTILE GROUND FOR A CULTURE OF VOCATION

I. COMMUNITY

Young people ask us to reflect on what it means to be a community that fosters mature and generative relationships in the apostolate. This request, more than a mere desire, represents a genuine need. Today, more than ever, the community is where God's call becomes clearer, guiding young individuals toward direction in their lives, whatever it may entail.

1.1 The Relationship with Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life

In the community, the young person who begins the journey of vocational discernment gains an understanding of how the relationship between the Pauline and Christ is realized. He comes into contact with a lifestyle characterized by a vital relationship with Jesus, a distinctive way of praying and a unique spirituality. He places himself at the school of the Master who teaches how to make life a gift. It is in this context that he makes his decision, welcoming the difficult moments and sensing that Christ is calling him to follow Him by embracing the Pauline apostolate.

1.2 Mutual Acceptance

The joy of the Pauline vocation is a powerful and effective testimony that deeply engages young people. This joy is expressed through daily gestures of welcome, listening, assistance, forgiveness and mutual respect. These are Gospel gestures practiced within the community, even among members of different generations, and shared with young people themselves. When they feel welcomed and embraced in a new life, they respond with greater freedom to the Lord's call.

1.3 A Community that Evangelizes

It is the daily apostolate that shapes our vocation. In this context, the young person who enters the community for the first time—even

if only for a short period—perceives how we Paulines give our lives to the Lord and His people through the existential context of communication. Involving him in our apostolate is an initial and essential step in fostering vocational discernment. He himself recognizes how collaboration, constant commitment and creativity for the mission are indispensable elements of Pauline life.

2. IDENTITY

The maturation of personal identity also involves a life project. Giving meaning to one's own history is a process that is not accomplished alone, but with the help of credible witnesses rooted in a lifestyle inspired by God.

2.1 Rooted in Pauline Charism

It is essential to keep alive the fruitfulness of the Pauline charism, a gift of the Spirit for the service of humanity. We are apostles like Saint Paul and Blessed James Alberione, “editors” like Mary, Queen of the Apostles, and men consecrated to the Lord – brother Disciples of the Divine Master and Priests – who, in the culture of communication, live and give to the world Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life. This identity of ours is expressed across cultures and, while engaging in continuous dialogue with various existential contexts, is incarnated in multiple ways according to the realities in which we are called to operate.

2.2 An Ongoing Identification Process

The charismatic legacy is a dynamic process that continually nourishes and renews our Congregation. It is the gift that every Pauline is called to offer to the new generations so that, by knowing it, they may become passionate about it and continue its journey, ensuring the continuity of the “dream” that the young James Alberione had on the famous night between the two centuries. At the school of the Word of God and nourished by the Eucharist, young people who embark on a journey of knowledge and discernment adopt a lifestyle in

which evangelization, through every language of modern communication, becomes an expression of the joy of the Gospel.

2.3 Our Testimony

To the young people who come to us for various reasons, we have a responsibility to provide credible testimony by embodying the spirit of the Pauline vocation. Primo Maestro summarized this spirit with the image of a cart that moves on four wheels: prayer, apostolate, study and poverty. The Spirit Himself calls us to witness a life of communion, walking together and collaborating with various ecclesial realities and beyond, always in the service of evangelization.

3. THE CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

Every young person “dreams” of finding places where relationships are prioritized. Listening, dialogue, friendliness and sharing are fundamental attitudes for the growth of young people, nurturing the search for the meaning of life and fostering trust in their fundamental encounter with the Lord Jesus.

3.1 Stepping Beyond Yourself

Every Pauline is invited to step out of their comfort zone to meet and welcome each interlocutor. This openness encourages us to identify points of contact, create connections and nurture authentic relationships, becoming true “artisans of communion.” The culture of encounter, which is essential for engaging with young people and particularly in vocational pastoral care, is cultivated by promoting dialogue and mercy-key aspects that lend credibility to our vocation and mission.

3.2 Utilizing the Digital Environment

The entire field of communication, especially in the digital world, is a space to be inhabited with creativity and care, where we engage with young people and guide them through the gradual and necessary steps

of a journey of faith open to vocational discernment. The Pauline community exists in the realm of communication because every lived environment represents an opportunity for the Lord to “make his disciples” and send them as witnesses of His love. Those who are touched, healed, forgiven and loved by the Master discover that their life is a gift to be shared and they feel they can no longer keep it to themselves.

3.3 Accompanying Young People

Cultivating a culture of encounter is fundamental to the vocational journey. This implies shaping a mentality in accordance with the Gospel. Being “for others” and “outgoing” is not just an attitude; it becomes a true criterion for discernment in the Pauline vocation. Every young person who begins the process of discovering our charism must be encouraged, welcomed with care and accompanied with trust, as well as with total generosity, guiding them in making mature, conscious and responsible choices.

3.4 Apostolic Experiences

Young people embarking on a journey of Pauline vocational discernment need to see and experience some aspect of our apostolate. This initial approach enhances the process of identification and understanding of our mission as a service to one another. It involves allowing young people to experience various forms of apostolate that emerge from different ways of interpreting the culture of encounter as a means of evangelization.

4. INTERCULTURALITY

The Lord’s call resonates with young people from all cultures. Engaging in paths of knowledge and sharing at a vocational level cultivates an open mind, sensitivity to the diverse situations of others and a willingness to step outside one’s own world to connect meaningfully with others.

4.1 Promoting Cultural Identity

It is essential to enhance the cultural identity of each young person, promoting respect, empathy and openness toward others in all respects. Cultural diversity is a wealth, not a threat. This awareness – often inadequately developed – is fundamental for fostering authentic encounters from the initial stages of vocational exploration among individuals from diverse cultures that can often be distinctly characterized even within the same nation.

4.2 Sensitivity to Global Issues

Young people today have a particular sensitivity to issues that touch on different social problems. This openness is certainly an important factor to promote and a quality to value, particularly in the context of our apostolate that sees us involved in all continents.

4.3 Collaboration Among the Circumscriptions

Similar to the apostolic sphere, it is also important in the Pauline Pastoral Work for Vocations to promote collaborative initiatives among the Circumscriptions through specific projects that actively engage young people in concrete paths of evangelization.

Only by embracing the Pauline vocation as a “gift to be cultivated and a responsibility to be shared” can we revitalize, modernize and orient our commitment to “doing the charity of truth to all” toward the future. This will enable us to become collaborators and witnesses of God’s work, who assures: “See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19).

The document was reviewed and approved by the Superior General and his Council during their meeting on February 14, 2025.

*Rome, February 14, 2025
St. Cyril and St. Methodius*