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FATHER ALBERIONE INTERPRETER OF SAINT PAUL TODAY

1. Father Alberione's admiration for Saint Paul

1.1. "Saint Paul: the saint of universality. His admiration and devotion began chiefly with the study of the Letter to the Romans and meditation on it. From then on, Paul's personality, his holiness, his heart, his intimacy with Jesus, his contribution to dogmatic and moral teaching, his impact on Church organization and his zeal for all peoples – all became topics for meditation. Paul came across to him indeed as the Apostle, and thus every apostle and every apostolate could draw from Him. The Family was consecrated to Saint Paul. The cure of P.M. too is to be attributed to Saint Paul" (*Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ*, 64).

Since it is not possible to reconstruct in a documented, historical form the genesis and development of Father Alberione's knowledge and assimilation of Saint Paul, the above cited text, written by him on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Society of St. Paul, constitutes the most reliable witness from which we can deduce the profound effect that Saint Paul had on Father Alberione during his seminary formation.

The numerous spiritual and apostolic gifts which Father Alberione lists for Saint Paul lead to the conclusion that the Apostle is a **model** for "every apostle and every apostolate." We can perceive already from these considerations the **double interest** that Father Alberione had for Saint Paul: he is the point of reference for every believer and, above all, the prototype for every apostle and inspirer of every apostolic activity.

1.2. Charged by the Bishop to take on the teaching of pastoral theology in the seminary, Father Alberione, aided by the experience of several pastors, prepared the manual *Notes in Pastoral Theology* (1912 and 1915) as a formative instrument for the young priests of the diocese of Alba.

An examination of the biblical citations shows that Saint Paul is the most quoted author of letters from the New Testament. In his use above all of the *Letter to the Romans* and the *Second Letter to the Corinthians*, Father Alberione intended to present and promote a pastoral model for souls.

The priest "will be careful to avoid that solitary life that is spent almost totally within the walls of the rectory, secluded, insensible or in the dark about what goes on among the population... Saint Paul 'rejoiced with those who rejoice, wept with those who weep (Rom 12:15)'" (*ATP*, 128). The pastor is like Saint Paul, "a debtor toward all" (Rm 1:14). "This could even be the motto of a shepherd of souls: to save everyone, to work and pray for all" (*ATP*, 140). To justify the need for preaching, he quoted Rm 10:17: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through Christ's word" (cfr. *TGP*, 241). Saint Paul wrote: "For we do not proclaim ourselves - we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor 4:5), and the application to parish ministry is: "Why is it that almost innumerable preachers do not convert? Because they seek themselves" (*ATP*, 243).

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1.3. To strengthen the pastoral activity of parish priests with the help of women, Father Alberione wrote *Woman Associated with Priestly Zeal* (1915). Reference to Saint Paul served the author above all to explain the **mission of the priest**. Like Saint Paul, the priest generates spiritual life (cfr. *DA*, 15): “I was the one who begot you in Christ Jesus through the good news” (1Cor 4:15); preaching is a responsibility to generate spiritual life (cfr. *DA*, 15); “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the good news!” (1Cor 9:16); the priest must address everyone (cfr. *DA*, 19): “For I am obligated to both Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and foolish alike” (Rm 1:14).

In addition, to take maximum advantage of **the work of women at the side of the priest**, Father Alberione quotes Saint Paul. Referring to Rm 16, he comments: “The Apostle recalls the name of various women who were of valid assistance to him” (*DA*, 45); to motivate the contribution of women to the apostolate of prayer, he offers as an example the Apostle, who prayed constantly for the Christians of his communities (cfr. *DA*, 72); the woman can reach with her words where the priest cannot reach with his preaching; thus like Saint Paul he makes use of the help of women (Cfr. *DA*, 90); Saint Paul (cfr. 1Cor 7:14) reminds us that the faithful woman can sanctify her unbelieving husband (cfr. *DA*, 140).

The references to Saint Paul in the two texts that Father Alberione wrote during his engagement as teacher of pastoral theology in the seminary are the fruit of his desire to relaunch the mission of the priest and justify the involvement of women in **parish pastoral activity**.

2. Father Alberione interprets Saint Paul in beginning the apostolate of the press

2.1. Starting with the awareness that came during the night of adoration between 31-12-1900 and 1-1-1901, and reflecting on the vastness of the masses abandoning the Gospel also because of the anticlerical press, Father Alberione desired to satisfy the invitation of Christ: “*Come to me all of you*” (Mt 11:29) He did this above all through his ministry and with his teaching in the seminary, renewing the awareness of parish ministry in the young priests. Together with this activity, he cultivated within himself the desire for a particular form of evangelization: the apostolate of the press.

When he remembered how the idea matured to utilize for the apostolate of the press not a group of laity, but a group of religious, he specified: “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*, 23). We have the confirmation that, while he was preparing the two texts for the renewal of **parish pastoral ministry**, he continued to reflect on how to begin the **pastoral ministry of the apostolate of the press**.

2.2. Desiring to give life to a group of “religious men and women” who would carry out the apostolate of the press, Father Alberione went in search of the basic element for apostolic activity: **a spirituality suitable for the specific mission**.

Father Alberione examined various spiritualities, and even though he judged them valid, he did not deem them adequate for the apostolate of the press because each of them considered only one aspect of Christ. Then he discovered: “But if one then moves on to the study of Saint Paul, one finds the Disciple whose knowledge of the Divine Master is complete; he lives the whole Christ; he scrutinizes in depth the mysteries of his doctrine, of his heart, of his sanctity, and of his humanity and divinity: he sees him as Healer, Victim, Priest; he presents the whole Christ to us as he had already proclaimed himself to be: Way, Truth and Life. This angle contains religion, dogma, morals

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

Father Alberione put great effort into **parish pastoral ministry** so that, with a new awareness of his mission, the priest might promote a **complete life of faith**, avoiding the fragmentation that occurs from a doctrine that is too abstract, a liturgy that does not permit the conscious participation of the people and a morality restricted in practice to merely some precepts. In the **pastoral activity of the apostolate of the press** he continued his concern to offer the faith in its totality to the whole person. Saint Paul is the example of a person who lived and preached the whole Christ, in his definition as "Way, Truth and Life."

The entire Pauline spirituality was elaborated by means of Saint Paul: "The Pauline Family strives to fully live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, in the spirit of Saint Paul, under the gaze of the *Queen of Apostles*" (*AD*, 93). "The spirit of Saint Paul is drawn from his life, his letters and his apostolate. He is always alive in the Church's dogmatic and moral teaching, in her worship and in her organization" (*AD*, 94); to live the Pauline spirituality it is necessary: "to reflect on and nourish oneself with every word of the Gospel, in accord with the spirit of Saint Paul" (*AD*, 95).

Leaving aside other ways of sanctification, Father Alberione chose a method for himself and for the Pauline Family from the spirituality of Saint Paul who lived his experience of faith affirming: "For me life is Christ" (Phil 1:21) to the point that "It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me!" (Gal 2:20). At the same time, in his activity of evangelization he worked for the communities he founded "until Christ takes form in you" (Gal 4:19). In the volume *Donec formetur Christus in vobis* (1932), tracing out in a systematic way the path of **sanctification as Christification**, Father Alberione has recourse to numerous passages from the Letters of Saint Paul: Gal 2:20 and 4:10 are the passages most frequently quoted.

2.3. With the permission of the Bishop who allowed Father Alberione, on 8 September 1913, to become the director of the weekly publication *Gazzetta d'Alba* "The hour of God struck (he was waiting for the bell stroke) charging him to devote himself to the diocesan press. This opened the way for the apostolate" (*AD*, 30).

The intuition that synthesizes the entire Pauline charism in using the press for evangelization is: **"written preaching at the side of oral preaching."** The example of Paul, who preached the Gospel to the Gentiles with the word and with his letters, constitutes from the very start the model for the apostle and for the apostolate of the press.

Observing the teaching of the Popes of his time regarding the press, accepting the analysis of Catholic sociologists, examining initiatives of the good press already attempted or existing and gathering intuitions and slogans on the importance of the press for evangelization, Father Alberione wanted to translate into action the affirmations of Bishop Ketteler (1811-1877), the Archbishop of Magenza: **"If Saint Paul were to return to the world, he would be a journalist."** In *La primavera paolina*, a collection of the issues of the *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa* from 1918 to 1927, we can verify the recurring citations of this phrase of Bishop Ketteler to demonstrate with facts that it was realized in the press apostolate (cfr. pp 63, 505, 542, 660, 667, 670, 907, etc).

In order to offer a manual of formation for the apostle of the good press, Father Alberione gathered together what he had previously written in the *Gazzetta d'Alba*, in *Vita pastorale* and in *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, into a systematic text of apostolic formation: *Apostolato stampa* (1933). Reference to the person and Letters of Saint Paul is present when there is need for an authoritative justification of the interpretation that Father Alberione offers.

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“Feel with St. Paul for souls... *Instruction* must be given with the spirit of St Paul in the Areopagus; like St. Paul in the letter to the Romans. ...Christian morality must be presented differently: the publishing Apostle must be all to all” (*Apostolato stampa*, p. 33).

With a year's difference in publication, Father Alberione thus intended to provide follow-up and to complement the text *Donec Formetur* (1932), which concluded with a reference to the apostolate (cfr. n. 93-97), with the text *Apostolato Stampa* (1933), offering the integral vision of the Pauline Charism: **Pauline spirituality for the publishing apostolate.**

2.4. The publication *Mese a San Paolo*, in the manuscript version of Father Alberione (1918) and in the three successive editions with additions from Blessed Timothy Giaccardo (1925, 1932 and 1941), contains a series of meditations aimed at reflection on St. Paul, but the considerations on the Apostle served to make the Paulines question themselves: Saint Paul is like a mirror in which the Pauline must see his own identity reflected.

All the meditations display the intention of placing Saint Paul in comparison with the Pauline, the apostle of the good press; but the reflection of the sixteenth day, Saint Paul apostle of the good press, contains the explicit expression: “Bishop Ketteler wrote that if Saint Paul returned to the world he would become a journalist: and it is sure that he would cling to the best means to do good, and this today is the press. But as for us, what ease we have in exercising this apostolate! We can write, we can compose, we can print, we can disseminate, we can make people read, remove from their hands dangerous magazines and books” (in *Paul the Apostle Inspiration and Model*, p.93)

The meditations given during the Spiritual Exercises preached by Father Alberione to the Pauline priests in 1938 were gathered in *Sectamini fidem* and republished in 1972 with the title *Mihi vivere Christus est*.

Numerous citations from the Letters of Saint Paul are applied to the “Sampaolino” priesthood, completed by the presence of the Disciples, so that they would understand well its nature: “It is good to have much to do: but before all else apostles of the press; all the other things are in second place” (in *Viviamo in Cristo*, p. 220).

In the manuscript that is the fruit of his Spiritual Exercises of 1947, Father Alberione's 40th anniversary of priestly ordination, he used the Letters of Saint Paul to understand, by observing the example of the Apostle, the value and importance of the priesthood, especially as it could be exercised with the press apostolate. “Our great need: let Christ live, reproduce him in us; so that our people, our readers may read in our life the life of Christ: the Gospel” (in *Paul the Apostle Inspiration and Model*, p. 154). Referring to the vocation of Saint Paul, Father Alberione commented: “Vocation similar to ours. Called to preach: through his voice [and] writing; ... using the most powerful means, the most respondent to the needs of today” (*idem*, p. 156).

2.5. The XIX centenary of the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans, celebrated in 1958, offered Father Alberione the opportunity to apply this text that drew his fascination to the Apostle to the press apostolate, transformed into the “apostolate of the editions.” “The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans is the first and principle model for the apostolate of the editions, the example on which every Pauline edition must pattern itself. For this reason, when the church dedicated to Saint Paul at the Mother House was constructed, my desire was to represent in a beautiful picture the Apostle dictating and addressing his great letter to the Romans. In general, this painting represents well the purpose and goal of our apostolate: to bring the Gospel to all peoples of all times” (meditation for 3 February 1958, in *Spiritualità Paolina*, p. 88).

Father Alberione's question developed in this meditation is still relevant for the Pauline charism: “In what way must this great Pauline Letter be considered the model for our editions? In

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the sense that all our preaching, writing and diffusion must be modeled on it. But in what way?" (*idem*, p. 92).

Applying the Letter to the editorial work of the apostolate of the editions, he explains: "Saint Paul interpreted, explained and adapted the principles of the Gospel to the people of his time, especially the pagans. We too, following his example, must always keep our audience present: who the readers are, who the viewers of the cinema are, so as to give them what can do them the most good" (*idem*, p. 93).

3. Father Alberione interprets Saint Paul in founding the Pauline Family

3.1. The contemporary application of Saint Paul carried out by Father Alberione developed in concentric circles. The press apostolate carried out by the **Society of Saint Paul** was the starting point for making Saint Paul live again *today*; the following year, 1915, the Founder, moved by the convictions expressed in *Woman Associated with Priestly Zeal*, gave birth to the **Daughters of Saint Paul**, thus involving the woman and the sister in the same apostolate.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Saint Paul, when the **Pious Disciples of the Divine Master** (1924) and the **Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd** (1938) had previously been founded, Father Alberione already at that point described the four Congregations as an organization founded on a single spirituality and with apostolates that completed one another: "There is a kinship bond among them, because all of them issued from the Tabernacle. There is a sole spirit: to live Jesus Christ and to serve the Church. There are those who represent everyone in their prayers of intercession at the Tabernacle; those who spread, as from above, the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and those who are in direct person-to-person contact. There is close-knit collaboration among them on the spiritual, intellectual, moral and economic levels" (*AD*, 34).

3.2. Besides presenting how the four Congregations are united, Father Alberione specified the unity that they form in the Apostle: "Saint Paul Apostle is our Father, Teacher, and Protector. He has done everything. ...The life of the Pauline Family comes from the Eucharist; but it is communicated by Saint Paul. ...Saint Paul Apostle is the true Founder of the Institution. In fact he is its Father, Teacher, exemplar and protector. He created this family with an intervention so physical and spiritual that not even now, upon reflecting on it, can it be understood fully; and much less explained. ...It did not happen like when a protector is chosen for a person or institution. It is not we who chose him; rather, it is Saint Paul who chose us. The Pauline Family must be Saint Paul living today, according to the mind of the Divine Master; operating under the gaze and with the grace of Mary Queen of the Apostles" (*San Paolo*, July-August 1954, in *Carissimi in San Paolo*, pp. 145.147).

On the same occasion, in a sermon given to the Pauline Family on 20 August 1954, Father Alberione expressed identical convictions: "The Pauline Family was raised up by St. Paul to continue his work. It is St. Paul alive today, composed of many members. We did not choose St. Paul; he is the one who chose and called us. He wants us to do what he would do if he were alive today. And what would he do if he were alive today? He would fulfill the two great precepts as only he knew how to do. ... He would use the greatest 'pulpits' fashioned by modern progress: the press, cinema, radio, television; the greatest discoveries [to transmit] the doctrine of love and salvation: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. St. Paul made himself our 'form.' ... Let us be true Paulines. Paulines! Thus our general resolution should be to become true Paulines. (*To the Daughters of St. Paul*, 1954, pp. 144-145).

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In the October issue of *San Paolo*, 1954, Father Alberione indicated forcefully the ideal of being Saint Paul today: “O God, you who enlightened the gentiles with the words of the Apostle Paul...” This corresponds to the second purpose of the Pauline Family: preaching the dogmatic, moral and liturgical doctrine of Jesus Christ and of the Church with the fastest and most efficacious modern means.

“This means to represent and live Saint Paul today: thinking, working, praying and sanctifying oneself as Saint Paul would if he were living today. He lived the two precepts of love toward God and toward his neighbor in such a perfect way that he showed forth Christ in himself: ‘Christ lives in me’ (Gal 2:20). He began the Society of Saint Paul of which he is the Founder. The Society of Saint Paul did not choose him, but he chose us; even more, he generated us: ‘I was the one who begot you in Christ Jesus through the good news’ (1Cor 4:15).

“If Saint Paul were living today, he would continue to burn with that double flame from a single fire, zeal for God and for his Christ and for all the people of every nation. And to make himself heard, we would ascend the highest pulpit and multiply his word with the means of progress: press, cinema, radio and television. ...May the Pauline Family, composed of many members, be a living Paul in a social body” (*Carissimi in San Paolo*, pp. 1151-1152; cfr. *Anima e corpo per il Vangelo*, pp. 61-63).

3.3. During the Spiritual Exercises of 1960, Father Alberione affirmed: “Now the Pauline Family is complete” (*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, I, 19), and then he listed the Congregations, aggregated Institutes and the Pauline Cooperators giving a rapid description of each; he concluded: “The *spirit* must be only one, that contained in the heart of Paul, ‘The heart of Paul was the heart of Christ;’ the *devotions* are the same, and the various *purposes* converge in a common and general goal: to give Jesus Christ to the world, in a complete way, as He defined himself: ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’” (*idem*, I, 20).

Continuing the reflection on the Pauline Family, he defined it as “the Pauline parish” and specified: “How are these Institute united: 1) by their common origin. 2) by their general purpose. 3) by the same Pauline spirit, even in the diversity of works. 4) by their convergent, cooperative, dynamic activities nourished by the same lymph” (*idem*, I, 381).

3.4. During the course of Spiritual Exercises given to the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master 12 May – 1 June 1964, Father Alberione offered further clarifications about the way he envisioned the Pauline Family. Responding to the question: “How is the Pauline Family composed?” he emphasized the involvement of all the states of life of the ecclesial community: “The important thing is to consider that the Pauline life is “in Ecclesia,” as willed by Jesus Christ, the Church. Thus Jesus wanted 12 Apostles. This corresponds to the Priests. Jesus Christ willed to have 72 disciples. These correspond to the Disciples.

“Jesus willed that they go into the whole world, yes. And thus the mission, the spirit of mission in the whole world. Jesus willed to be served by pious women, with Mary as their head. And thus, the Sisters. This is how the Institutes are to consider themselves: the Pious Society of St. Paul, the Family of Disciples, the Gabrielites and Priests of the Union of Jesus the Priest so that the masculine apostolate might be complete; to which is then added the Union of Pauline Cooperators because everyone in the Church must cooperate” (*Alle Pie Discepoli del Divin Maestro*, 1963, p. 169).

“Therefore the Institutes have to live a common spirit with a color that then brings out the particularities, but the general principles are the same for all, and that is: the spirituality is always in Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life. ... So the nature is common: in the way of forming, giving

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formation, in the way of praying, and in the way of carrying out the apostolate. ...All of this because we form only one body *in Christ* and *in the Church*" (idem, 173.174). "This is the Pauline spirit: to live in Jesus Christ Master Way, Truth and Life, according to the way Saint Paul presents him, Jesus Christ the Master. Thus the necessity of reading Saint Paul" (idem, p. 175).

Referring to a gathering of Daughters of Saint Paul, he recalled that a non-Pauline priest during the meditation reminded them of the importance of Saint Paul; Father Alberione concluded: "Therefore, life in Saint Paul and through him; the way Jesus Christ is explained and presented by Saint Paul" (idem, 176).

During the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Saint Paul, Father Alberione commented on the meaning of the Pauline coat of arms; explaining the pen he wrote: "The pen is the first instrument of social communication and stands for the whole series of other instruments: machines, paper, film, radio, television, records, etc. That which the Pauline of 1914 used widely and felt profoundly and certainly as apostolate, today has the most solemn approval; and it has become the duty of everyone, at the side of the word, according to the Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. In the Pauline Family there are those who instruct with the word, those instead who do so with technical instruments and those who use both" (*San Paolo*, July-August 1964, in *Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 208).

Concluding his text, the Founder affirmed: "In Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life; the protection of Mary *Queen of Apostles*; the example of Saint Paul, who more than all the apostles used the technical means, his letters, associated with the word" (idem, p. 21).

4. Considerations on Father Alberione's interpretation of Saint Paul

4.1. To set the objective of getting to know Father Alberione as an interpreter of Saint Paul by reading what **he wrote and said** as a commentary on Paul's Letters would produce very limited conclusions. Father Alberione was not an exegete nor even a theologian specialized in Saint Paul; he did not constitute a significant contribution in research on Saint Paul, and one could be very disappointed in studying how he interpreted the contents of the Letters of the Apostle, even by just comparing him with Biblicists and theologians of his time.

It is necessary to take into consideration the entire thought and work of Father Alberione in order to understand the way in which he was an original interpreter of Saint Paul: **his knowledge of the Apostle moved him to action**. The goal that Father Alberione established for himself was **to make Saint Paul live again** with the preaching of the apostolate of the press and the progressive foundation of the Pauline Family. In synthesis: **Father Alberione interpreted Saint Paul by bringing the Pauline Charism into being**.

4.2. Father Alberione's understanding of the Apostle is due to a certain viewpoint of his time: Saint Paul was considered in the same way he is described in the Acts of the Apostles and as he manifested himself in all the Letters, including that to the Hebrews.

His constant meditation of this whole spectrum of Saint Paul, for the most part, was not carried out with instruments of exegesis, but was guided by interpretive criteria derived from a general theological vision which attributed to the Apostle a synthesis of the whole faith in its components of doctrine, cult and morals (the method way, truth and life). By observing any comment that Father Alberione makes regarding the person of Saint Paul or a passage from one of his Letters, one can easily tell what concern he was responding to in that reflection.

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Often the interpretation given by Father Alberione shows a need of a *doctrinal* character, to explain the contents of the faith; other times the intention is to extract a teaching of an *ascetical* nature; sometimes with a quote he wants to *confirm* a thought that comes from various sources. In all these cases the most important fact is that Saint Paul, even though interpreted in various ways, is his habitual reference point and often, the exclusive [source] for his applications.

The Christology that Father Alberione willed to place as the foundation of the spirituality of the entire Pauline Family is: Christ Master Way, Truth and Life. So then, from a strictly terminological point of view, only “**Christ**” is present in the Letters of Saint Paul; “**Master**” is a Christological title proper to the Synoptics and “**Way, Truth and Life**” is a definition from the evangelist Saint John. Just the same, the contents of this Christological definition for Father Alberione are mediated by Saint Paul, considered as the one who lived and expressed the faith experience in the most complete way.

4.3. Father Alberione’s interpretation employs as its inspirational criteria a global vision of Saint Paul: complete in love for God and in love for neighbor; he knew how to unite contemplation and action; mysticism and apostolate; prayer and work; dogma, morals and cult; he preached with the word and with letters; he knew how to organize the Christian communities that he founded; he involved other men and women in his work of evangelization; he was tender and strong: father and mother; merciful and demanding; aware that he had to carry out a mission, but with the power of the Spirit of Christ. From Saint Paul’s Letters and missionary activities, Father Alberione identified above all how useful he was for **elaborating the Pauline Charism** and for **founding the Pauline Family**.

It should not surprise us that there is a **gradation of interest** with which Father Alberione reads, quotes and indicates Saint Paul as an example; in fact, we should take it for granted that some themes of the Letters or episodes in Saint Paul’s mission are treated in a reduced manner or even absent. A documented research in the quantitative order is necessary to arrive at observations of a qualitative nature.

Even at the risk of over-simplification, the spirituality and the apostolates of the Pauline charism could be synthesized with some recurring passages of Saint Paul: **his spiritual experience**: “For me, to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21), “until Christ takes form in you” (Gal 4:19), “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:29) so as to arrive at “It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me!” (Gal 2:20). **His missionary commitment**: “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the good news!” (1Cor 9:16), “I have become all to all” (1Cor (9:22), “I am a debtor toward all” (Rom 1:14), “I strain ahead” (Phil 3:13).

The **first heritage** that the Pauline Family received from Father Alberione, in view of a creative fidelity, is the **thought and missionary work of Saint Paul**: without Saint Paul the Pauline charism would not exist; consequently, the study, assimilation, imitation of and prayer to Saint Paul are instruments for updating the charism.

4.4. The indisputable merit of Father Alberione is to have taken inspiration from Saint Paul, who evangelized with his word and with his writing, in order to plan out a **complete project of new evangelization** centered on the press. To consider Father Alberione only as the person who placed the press at the service of evangelization would be to minimize the originality of his work. In fact, he was not the first nor the only one to have the idea of the “good press.” The distinction that he made right from the beginning between the “good press” and the “apostolate of the good press” helps us understand his specific contribution.

In defining his thought, he wrote: “But between this Good Press and the Apostolate of the Press there is still an abyss. The Apostolate of the Press is a totally different thing, immeasurably

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superior. That apostolate is the dissemination of thought, of morals, of Christian civilization; in a word, of the Gospel, with the means of the Press, precisely as one would do with the word” (*Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, 20 January 1926 in *La primavera paolina*, p. 668).

Because there exists equality between “oral preaching” and “written preaching,” it is necessary that both include **all the elements of evangelization**: the apostle, the contents that it presents, the means it uses, the efficacy it wants to achieve, the public it wants to reach.

Father Alberione was aware that in order to place the press at the service of evangelization it is not enough to use it as a simple “instrument;” rather, it requires a complete project: “The world needs a new, long and profound evangelization. ...Adequate means are necessary, along with souls on fire with faith. No other means is adequate for providing this except the press and no other apostles use it as ardently as youth. ...New missionaries are necessary! New missionaries for this new and fruitful apostolate!” (*idem*, 20 August 1926, in *La primavera paolina*, p. 680.681.682).

In order to carry out the press apostolate he thought of: the **audience** to reach (the masses and educated persons far from the Church); the **contents to communicate** (the whole Christ and speaking of everything in a Christian way); the **pedagogical method** to use (address the whole person); the **necessary means** (the press with its consequent organization in writing, production and diffusion); and above all, the **Pauline apostle** who must be sought (**vocational promotion**), formed (all the stages for an **integral education**), made capable of living and working in community (**religious life and the vows**) and moved by a missionary spirit drawn from Saint Paul (**the Pauline Spirit**).

The mission will be such if it is founded on the spirituality; the spirituality will be adequate for evangelization with the press and the other means if it bring us to “make ourselves all to all.”

The **second heritage** that Father Alberione left to the Pauline charism, interpreted with the missionary faith of Saint Paul, is preaching with “the fastest and most efficacious means” of every historical era, carried out with a **pastoral mentality and method**: all the forms of communication are utilized so that they may become “salvation.” “Concern and vigilance must be employed so that the apostolate is maintained at that pastoral height expressed in the letters of Saint Paul. Love for Jesus Christ and souls will make us able to distinguish and carefully separate what is apostolate from what is industry and commerce” (*Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 59).

4.5. With the successive foundation of the various Institutes that form the Pauline Family, Father Alberione made it possible for all the states of life of the ecclesial community (priests, consecrated laity, sisters, lay men and women of the consecrated secular life and the cooperators) to participate in **preaching with the press**. Naturally the application was thought out differently for each individual component of the Pauline Family, but **all** have received from the Founder an indication for helping in some way: by prayer, by sensitivity, by diffusion, by example, by education, by vocational proposal, by some commitment compatible with the professional life. **Written preaching at the side of oral preaching**, which marks the beginning of a process in view of “being Saint Paul living today,” is by the will of the Founder **constitutive** also in the development of the Pauline Family.

Having willed that all the Institutes live the common missionary spirituality of Saint Paul, even though with the necessary adaptations that take into account their specific apostolates, Father Alberione also willed to make Saint Paul live again in a “**social body**.” This objective was accomplished by entrusting each Institute with the duty to emphasize a particular **component of the mission** of Saint Paul: preaching with the means of today, contemplation which is indispensable for the apostolate, the pastoral goal that must always be present, utilizing every vocation in the ecclesial community, the function of being leaven in every area and activity of society with the witness of professionalism.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON SAINT PAUL

Ariccia, 19-29 April 2009

The **common** spirituality, drawn from Saint Paul, also permits the achievement of a **convergence** of all the apostolates not only in the contribution of each one to evangelization with communications, but also by living in a more accentuated way one aspect typical of the Apostle, thus keeping alive in the variety of ecclesial sensibilities the **tradition of the “Gospel” of Saint Paul**.

The **single Pauline spirituality** permits the convergence of all the apostolates of the Pauline Family to the extent that it brings each one to act with the **contents** of faith elaborated by Saint Paul and with his apostolic method: his Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, pastoral approach; his appreciation for liberty, grace, mercy, the new creature, charity, universalism; his “being all to all,” his “straining forward,” his feeling strong in weakness, his confiding in the Spirit, etc.

To study Saint Paul in depth, as Father Alberione interpreted him for beginning the written preaching and for founding the Pauline Family, means to become always more aware of the **identity of the charism** and the **nature of the Pauline Family**.

Remembering the warning of the parable of the talents (cfr. Mt 25: 14-30), it is to be hoped that along with this International Seminar we can equip ourselves with suitable instruments for a “creative fidelity” to Saint Paul like Father Alberione accomplished: the charism is entrusted to the breath of the Spirit; to us falls the task of making ourselves receptive so as to let ourselves be urged forward, not immobilized in the past like the women who went to the tomb of Jesus, resigned to embalming him (cfr. Lk 23: 55-56 and 24:1).