

**WELCOME ADDRESS
OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL FR VALDIR JOSÉ DE CASTRO**

AT THE MEETING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOR THE APOSTOLATE (CTIA)

Rome, 8 February 2016

First of all, my sincere thanks to each of you for having accepted to be part of this international team of apostolate and thank also to your Major Superiors who have consented for your participation so as to make your contribution to this very specific service of the Congregation, as members of the CTIA (International Technical Committee for the Apostolate), together with the Councillors General Fr Jose Pottayil, the President, and Brother Darlei Zanon.

This body of the General Government was born in 1988 to promote and coordinate the projects and apostolic activities worldwide. In twenty-seven years of its existence various initiatives have been decided and developed with the aim of helping our Congregation to think and to act in an articulated way in the field of apostolate.

This new team, whose members were appointed last September 2015, has the task of assessing the progress made so far by the CTIA, of providing continuity for ongoing projects and of proceeding with new initiatives in the light of the X General Chapter which established throughout Congregation this objective: «*I do all for the Gospel*» (1 Cor 9:23). Attentive to the signs of the times, renew the impetus of our apostolic action, converting ourselves, our communities and our apostolic structures, to reach everyone, especially in the periphery, utilising likewise the new languages of communication».

In the agenda of this meeting there is a series of themes to discuss, all important points, but I want to emphasize, in particular, some of them:

1. As requested by the last General Chapter¹, you have, among other commitments, to help the General Government develop the document «**Editorial lines, contents, recipients of the Pauline apostolate**» (in force since 16 November 2005). This means to dwell on an important aspect of our mission, which delineates its identity as “one publisher”. We remember what Fr Alberione said in 1954: «*By the word ‘edition’ we do not mean only the book: we mean other things. The word edition has many applications: edition of the magazine, edition of the person preparing the script for the film, of one who prepares the program for television, of one who prepares the things to communicate by radio*»². Today we can add many other means, especially, those of the digital communication and the network.

Evidently the question on the editorial lines, in this broader vision, has to do especially with the content of our message. That is why it makes sense to ask: what are we

¹ X General Chapter, Operative Guideline 1.1.2.

² James Alberione, *Pr* 1954, 137.

publishing? Are we, in fact, bringing the Gospel to the people of today and talking about everything in a Christian way, to respond to the problems of today? While we are looking for an answer it is essential to consider the declaration of the last General Chapter, which, in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, has affirmed that we are a Church and we want to be with the Church as a Congregation that “goes forth”, “on the way”, in order to put ourselves alongside the different realities that challenge us, especially to those people who live in existential peripheries.

It is true that the fruit of our apostolate should reach everyone, but especially those who are most in need³. In this sense, the Congregation has made precise choices in the last General Chapter, expressed in the first priority of the apostolate⁴, which is to creatively renew our missionary zeal in the service of the Word with new sustainable initiatives for non-believers, the distant ones and the poor. Are we treading in this direction? What more do we need to do to respond to this challenge?

2. The second priority in the apostolate concerns the Bible and communication, that is, «*strengthen our apostolic commitment in becoming formators in the field of communication and in the Bible*»⁵ and still on this track, the operative guideline 1.1.3 asks to «*consolidate St Pauls Biblical Centre so that it could coordinate all the biblical initiatives in the various Circumscriptions*»⁶. It is precisely for the CTIA to watch keenly these two areas of our apostolate.

First of all, let us remember that «*the book that we must particularly diffuse is the Bible, most of all, and first of all, as we know, and always*»⁷. This is the meaning of a renewed commitment of St Pauls Biblical Centre (SPBC). One of the first decisions is, according to what is established in the Statute in no. 3.3, to indicate the name of the International Coordinator and the Paulines members of the team who will carry out the animation of this project, in addition to providing, through the Major Superiors, the appointment of the Persons responsible in the Circumscriptions for the local SPBC. As for the education centres of communication, let us remember that Fr Silvio Sassi, in the meeting of the CTIA from 10 to 14 March 2014, invited this body to study the physiognomy and services of what our centres of research and education of social communication (COMFIL, FAPCOM, SPICE, SPSF) could render to our apostolate and formation of our young people in communication, both as initiation as well as specialization.

In turn the last General Chapter asked that «*the General Government, through the International Technical Committee for the Apostolate (CTIA) and the International Secretariat for Vocation Pastoral and Formation (SIF), establish guidelines of pedagogical identity which would become reference point for the Study Centres promoted by various Circumscriptions and promote mutual collaboration*»⁸. To arrive at these goals, we expect from the CTIA some reflections and indications for the names of Paulines who can be part of an international team in order to share their

³ James Alberione, *Apostolato delle Edizioni*, 1944, p. 265.

⁴ X General Chapter, Priority 1.1.

⁵ X General Chapter, Priority 1.2.

⁶ X General Chapter, Operative Guideline 1.1.3.

⁷ James Alberione, *UPS III*, p. 12.

⁸ X General Chapter, Operative Guideline 1.2.1.

experiences in this apostolic area and help the Congregation to put this operative guideline into effect.

3. Another task of the CTIA is to reflect on the **intercontinental linguistic Bodies** of the apostolate: CIDEP (Centro Iberoamericano de Editores Paulinos), GEC (Europe-Congo Group) and CAP-ESW (Conference of Asia Pacific and English Speaking World). Here there are members from all three areas, and this helps to review the current situation of each of the three organizations. What apostolic works and what areas of each of the apostolic activities need improvement, help, must be boosted, initiated, promoted in these geographical areas? What structures are in need of a true "conversion", as asked by our General Chapter?⁹ It is necessary to review their Statutes, not forgetting an exhortation of our Founder, still relevant today: *Today, even more than in times past, organization is important, especially internationally, in every sector; especially for the apostolate ... Understanding each other and love each other ... Self-interests, destroy community life, social, political and familial egoistic tendencies destroy even institutes, or at least condemn them to sterility*¹⁰.

4. Review and evaluate the **Documents elaborated by the CTIA** for the organization of the apostolate: *Some Methodological Instructions for the Preparation of the Sales, Expenses, and Investments Budgets in the Society of Saint Paul 2011-2016* (2011); *Frame of Reference and Proposed Administrative Policies and Procedures and Control in the Society of Saint Paul Circumscriptions 2011-2016* (2011); *Frame of Reference and Proposed Methodological Guide for the Elaboration of the Apostolic Project of the Circumscriptions of the Society of St Paul 2011-2016* (2011); *Elaboration for the Guidelines for the Preparation of the Procedures Manual or Corporate Manual* (2011); *Criteria for Developing St Pauls Multimedia* (2012); *Guide for Elaborating the Ethics Directory of the Society of St Paul 2012-2016* (2012); *Ethics Protocol of the Society of St Paul 2012-2016* (2012); *Guide for the Elaboration of the Internal Control Manual for Enterprises or Apostolic works of the Society of St Paul at International Level* (2014); *Norms Regarding Human Resources in the Society of St Paul 2012-2016* (2012).

We must bear in mind that it is not enough to make the documents, but we must also translate them in different languages, adapt them to different situations and to accompany their application.

5. The general objective and the first priority of the apostolate in the Final Document of the X General Chapter speak of «creatively renew our apostolic impetus». In this renewal process it is essential to understand to where the publishing world treads today, especially the religious one, considering the arrival of digital technologies. Hence the urgent need to place in this context of transformation our apostolate, in the light of the theological-apostolic meaning given by our Founder. While considering this reality, we have decided, after having reflected within the General Council, to carry out in October 2017, a second **International Seminar of Pauline Editors**, an updated version of the one celebrated in 1988 (Ariccia-Milan, 17 September – 2 October). Rightly in the Final Document of that Seminar, Fr Renato Perino, then Superior General, made clear the goal: *«Inspire a participatory process for the renewal of the*

⁹ X General Chapter, Objective 2015-2021 and Operative Guideline 4.1.4.

¹⁰ James Alberione, *UPS I*, pp. 381-382.

Pauline mission, to meet the challenges of evangelization in a vocational perspective». In the meeting of the CTIA held in Rome from 14 to 18 October 2014, there already has appeared the idea to organize a workshop on the Pauline publishing. We decided to make a real seminar that allows us to know and to face new challenges to our mission in a changing world. We expect the contribution of CTIA for the preparation of this event of the Congregation.

I wish all of you, on behalf of the General Government, a work well done, in the commitment to think, to organize, to project the apostolate at the worldwide level and also to promote the growth of the image of the Congregation as a body. Furthermore, I remind you that it is essential to work in close relationship with the SIF (International Secretariat of Formation), always considering the need of Paulines who are to be prepared to meet the needs of the present and the future of our mission in the culture of communication.

We can not forget that the ideal to do everything for the Gospel begins with our “evangelical” witness that is personal and communitarian, lived especially in relationships with our brothers and with our lay collaborators. Certainly, love for the apostolate associated with a profound Pauline spirituality, teamwork and the search to live in communion and in a spirit of participation, are some of the values that would help us not reduce our mission to a managerial activity, as our Founder used to warn us. We can, together, always have as a reference an effective organization of “communicators-consecrated apostles”.

It is essential in this journey the creative fidelity to the Pauline charism in order to perform well our mission. A suggestion from the past, given by our Founder, makes us think and allows us to be vigilant, even in our days: *«Today, of certain Institutes, there exists only an edifying story. Some Institutes cease to exist because they have not completed their mission well; this is passed on to others that will do it better. If we will not do good our mission, the Lord will replace us. There is always a danger of deviating from the special end! The Word of God must be always preached: there will always be souls to save. The medium may vary, but the preaching must remain»*¹¹.

In the footsteps of the Apostle Paul and Blessed James Alberione, let us live and proclaim Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life, with joy and hope, responding to the needs of the men and women of today, with the means and languages of today.

¹¹ James Alberione, *Haec Meditare*, vol. II, 8, 1948, pp. 58-59.