



THE IDENTITY OF THE PAULINE CENTERS OF STUDY IN COMMUNICATION

The aim of this report is to offer a content that may help us to reflect on the reality of the Pauline Centers of Study in Communication (CPSC) starting from some characteristics that we consider to be unavoidable in the determination of their distinctive institutional physiognomy. In fact, an important premise to be made is that it is not enough to open and develop a Pauline center of formation in the field of communication, as the last General Chapter has confirmed.¹ It is also necessary to give it a “Pauline” identity which distinguishes it from so many institutions of formation in communication (religious or lay) already present in the territory.

We shall make this journey in two stages. In the first, we shall try to insert the CPSCs – a reality already existing in the Congregation! – in the context of our mission, starting from the thought of Fr. Alberione and from some General Chapters. Successively, taking the Apostle Paul as reference in following Jesus, we shall single out some aspects that characterize his manner of being and acting in pastoral, and which must identify us Paulines and our apostolic works. We are aware that we shall present only some hints, without the pretense of exhausting the theme, but the attempt will however be useful to make one of the first steps in the search for the Pauline identity in our centers of study.

I. The Pauline Centers of Studies in Communication: an apostolic reality

I.1 The dynamism of the Pauline charism

Initially, we shall try to insert the CPSCs inside the project of the “new evangelization”², which blessed Alberione has started more than a hundred years ago through the apostolate of the good press. As is already known, our Founder has gradually assumed as integrating part of the “new evangelization” cinema, photography, radio, television, discs and all the technologies that along the way became a phenomenon of importance in society.

Fr. Alberione knew how to read the needs of the men and women of his time related to evangelization using the *mass media*, and he has left us as inheritance the charism he has re-

¹ Action line I.2.2, cf X General Chapter, *Acts of the X General Chapter*, General House, Society of Saint Paul, Rome, 2015, p. 66.

² The theme of the “new evangelization” has been developed by Fr. Silvio Sassi in some of his writings. Among these I remember the Annual Letter *Evangelizing in communication employing communication*, published posthumously in November of 2014 (v. http://www.paulus.net/comunica/sanpaolo/2014/SP_2014_11_446_eng.pdf). Important also are his reports *The pauline charism interprets Saint Paul today*, in “International Seminar on Saint Paul”, Ariccia 18 –19 April 2009, pp. 455 ff. and *Sospinti dallo spirito ad attualizzare il carisma paolino*, in “L’attualizzazione del carisma paolino nel terzo millennio: spiritualità e missione”, Ariccia 18 June – 3 July 2008, pp. 5 ff.

ceived as gift from God. Our Constitutions specify that «The charism that has been handed on to us is a reference point for every generation of Paulines who, in turn, are called upon to fashion it to their own age. This commits us to a discovering and interpreting the “signs of the times”, as well as to a boundless dynamism, in harmony with the Pauline motto of our Founder: “I press on”. Linked as it is to a resolute intention to be of service to men and women whose salvation is brought about through faith in Christ, our apostolic line of conduct infers: the utilization of all that goes to make up the temporal order; openness towards the world; a constantly updated pastoral commitment; a continuing missionary thrust. Making our own the all-embracing heart of St Paul and following in the footsteps of our Founder, we will consider ourselves dutybound to preach the Gospel to all human beings»³.

In fact, the actuality of evangelization, in the sphere of our specific charism, is closely connected with the actuality of communication, of society and of culture. With the development of digital communication and of the net, the culture of communication has enormously widened. Considering this reality, «in order to be aware of the sphere of our mission, we Paulines are duty bound to know, in all its complexity, the contemporary communication. In order to synchronize with the phenomenon of communication, which from the invention of language and of writing up to digital language, has successively changed its identity, passing from individual techniques to articulated culture to the point of being free individual and social project, the Paulines ought to acquire a theoretical and practical competence»⁴.

The need for a practical and theoretical knowledge of communication is present in various documents of the Congregation, among them the *Ratio Formationis* and the “Acts of the International Seminar on Pauline Formation”.⁵ One of the affirmations of the Seminar that took place in the “distant” 1994, underlines: «Present-day communication can no longer be seen as a group of means; it is a culture. The Pauline must become cognizant of this global phenomenon and as such bring all apostolic undertakings and the stages of formation into line with it»⁶.

This is not the place for a complete account of what has happened during these last decades, within the Congregation, regarding such affirmation. We cannot however deny the development, up until today, specifically regarding the area of formation in communication, of some initiatives thanks to the concrete effort of various Circumscriptions of ours. We cannot say that, actually, the teaching mission of the Congregation is not limited to the sphere of editorial activity – which on the other hand is the field where we have more experience –, but it concerns also the area of formation in communication, whether for our young ones or for the lay people in general.

It is about a contribution of the Congregation to the Church, when she needs not only to use the instruments of communication for the purposes of evangelization, but also to prepare professionals – capable of integrating in their life the Christian values – and of educating the people in the correct use of them. In creative fidelity to the Founder, we try to respond to these needs. It is opportune, then, to call to mind some steps done by the Congregation in this regard.

³ Constitutions, art. 67.

⁴ Silvio Sassi, *The pauline charism interprets Saint Paul today*, op. cit., p. 463.

⁵ Cf “Pauline formation for the mission. Acts of the International Seminar on the Pauline Formation”, Society of St Paul, Ariccia 12 – 23 ottobre 1994.

⁶ “Pauline formation for the mission”, op. cit., p. 161.

I.2 The Special General Chapter (1969-1971) and the III General Chapter (1975)

Actually, there are in our Congregation four CPSCs, which we mention in order of foundation: *Saint Paul Seminary – SPS* (Philippines), 1992; *Institute of Communication and Philosophy – COMFIL* (Mexico), 1993; *Paul Faculty of Technology and Communication - FAPCOM* (Brazil), 2005; *St. Pauls Institute of Communications Education – SPICE* (India), 2011.

That which today is a reality, almost a hundred years ago was already a “possibility.” In fact, in 1922, on the occasion of the request for diocesan approval of our Congregation, Fr. Alberione wrote to the abbot Mauro Serafini, Secretary of the Congregation of the Religious, in the intent to explain the purpose of the Pious Society of Saint Paul.⁷ After having affirmed that «she aims to do with the written word what the preachers do with the spoken word», he clarified that among the aims of the institute, besides that of doing typographical work – with the only end the greater glory of God – and the diffusion of the good press, there was also that of «forming colleges for journalists and writers, priests and lay people, through specific studies, with profound theological culture and with the abilities of one who writes to spread the Christian culture [...]».⁸

As we know, for various reasons in the following decades this project directed to the academic field has not been concretized. The theme reappears in the Special General Chapter (1969-1971), which has had the task of updating the Congregation in the spirit of Vatican Council II. In this event the Congregation was aware of the need to prepare its members for the challenges of pastoral of communication, but at the same time, thanks also to the reflection of the Council, it recognized that it was necessary to assure for social communication a constructive and saving role of the world, made possible also by the contribution of professionals, starting from Christian principles in the field of communication.⁹

Certainly, present in the Special Chapter was what the Decree *Inter Mirifica* affirmed, which invited the lay people to be prepared in technology, in culture and in moral life, multiplying schools, faculties and institutes where publicists, authors of films and of radio and TV transmissions and others appointed to those activities, may find manner to acquire a complete professional formation, vivified by a Christian spirit, particularly for what concerns the social doctrine of the Church.¹⁰

In fact, in the document of the Special Chapter, more exactly when being dealt are the «recipients, the extension and the situation of our specific mission», reference is made to the commitment of the Congregation in the formation of the promoters of social communication, for the Church and for the civil society. The Chapter points out at least two means to offer a Pauline contribution in the field of formation: the promotion of institutes of specialization (whether for research in the field of theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology and social

⁷ «Fr Alberione specifies for abbot Serafini the purpose of the SSP. The letter is without a date, but it must be a little after 16.11.1922, because Fr Alberione refers in it to the request presented by Mons. Re to the S. C. of the Religious exactly on that day», cf Gianfranco Rocca, *La Formazione della Pia Società San Paolo (1914 – 1927). Appunti e documenti per una storia*, Roma, 1982, p. 591.

⁸ *Ibidem*. It is not the case to enter in the interpretations on why the Founder has referred to the academic activity in this initial phase of the history of the Society of Saint Paul. Even if this activity was not, at that moment, a priority, we know that the idea has returned in the development of the institutional history and of the understanding of the charism, thus becoming integrating part of the Pauline mission.

⁹ Cf Special General Chapter (1969 – 1971), *Chapter Documents*, General House, Society of Saint Paul, Rome, 1982, n. 128.

¹⁰ Cf *Inter Mirifica*, n. 15.

communication, or for each of its forms: journalism, cinema, radio, TV, etc.); and the organization of introductory courses, conferences, conventions, congresses, gatherings, expositions, clubs, fora, symposiums, seminars, etc., for priests, religious and even lay people, with the objective of sensitizing and preparing them for effective and responsible use as well as for the promotion and the animation of the means of social communication.¹¹

Some years after, recognizing the dearth of the whole Congregation in the specific apostolic formation, the III General Chapter (1975) will show the need to create in Rome the SPICS (International Pauline Study of Social Communications). In the programmatic choices entrusted by this Chapter to the SPICS, present were two principal purposes: «1) give a basic formation on the sciences of social communication: not a formation for technicians-operators and professionals in the various *mass media*, but a scientific-practical competence on the problems of the instruments of social communication; 2) put up a specialized consultancy group that may make us sufficiently autonomous in orienting and controlling the studies, the apostolic organization, the formation, the government, as a help in the choice and analysis of the contents themselves of the “instrumental evangelization”».¹²

In referring to the structure, the Chapter affirmed that the SPICS could start with the academic year 1976-1977, making use prevalently of outside teachers. As soon as possible, however, it had to be composed prevalently of Paulines. The SPICS, as we know, has worked from 1980 to 1998 and has offered preparation for pastoral of communication for many Paulines, priests, religious and lay people.

1.3 The General Chapters of 2010 and 2015

Other two important stages that serve as reference for the CPSC are the last two General Chapters. In the IX General Chapter (2010), the priority 1.3 about the apostolate asked to «strengthen the “pedagogical choice” becoming formators in the field of communication in the service of the Church»,¹³ and presented three action lines entrusted to the responsibility of the General Government: «1.3.1 *II The General Government is to coordinate and harmonize the specializations in the formative and apostolic field in order to answer the common needs of the Congregation and of the single Circumscriptions; 1.3.2 II The General Government is to sustain through bourses of study the persons that the Governments of Circumscription direct to a specialization in communication; 1.3.3 The General Government, from the first year of its activity, is to develop the potentialities and the interchange among the Centers of specialistic formation in communication that are in operation in the Congregation (COMFIL, FAPCOM, SPSF, etc.)*».¹⁴

Meriting to make known is section 3, still fruit of the IX Chapter, about “Vocational animation and Formation,” when in priority 3.2 it talks of «elevating the level of general culture in the Congregation and of “creating thought”».¹⁵ Even if in this priority no reference is made and there no action lines that are properly referred to the centers of study, we cannot forget that a

¹¹ Cf Special General Chapter (1969 – 1971), op. cit., n. 128.

¹² III General Chapter, *Programmatic choices entrusted by the General Chapter 1975 to the General Government*, General House, Society of Saint Paul, Rome, 1975, p. 15.

¹³ IX General Chapter, *Acts and Documents. Ariccia 25 April – 15 May 2010*, General House, Society of Saint Paul, Rome, 2010, p. 63.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*

¹⁵ IX General Chapter, op. cit., p. 65.

center of study is exactly the privileged place where to “create thought,” as we shall see later on.

The last General Chapter, the tenth of our institutional history, carried out in February of 2015, has laid out as a challenge, in the apostolic area, priority 1.2 to «*strengthen our apostolic commitment in becoming formators in the field of communication and of the bible*»,¹⁶ by means of two action lines about the centers of formation in communication, one taken care of by the General Government and the other by the Circumscriptural Governments: «1.2.1 *The General Government, through the International Technical Committee for the Apostolate (CTIA) and the International Secretariat for Vocational Pastoral and Formation (SIF), is to set down the guidelines of pedagogical identity, to which may refer the Centers of study promoted by the various Circumscriptions, and is to promote their mutual collaboration; 1.2.2 The Governments of Circumscription are to promote the development of a Center or Faculty of their own in the field of evangelization and communication or, as an alternate, collaborate in a stable way by means of appropriate Institutes of formation*».¹⁷

This retrospective exposition is useful in order to clarify how the Congregation, in a special way after Vatican Council II, has taken seriously its mission regarding formation in communication, whether of the Paulines or of the religious and lay people who operate with the means of communication. That means widening our apostolic vision, strengthening our teaching mission, as our Founder has wanted.¹⁸ This is our mission: to announce the whole Jesus to all men, using all the means of communication, and to talk not only of religion, but of everything in a Christian way,¹⁹ something which we must try to do also through our CPSCs.

2. The “Pauline color” of the Pauline Centers of Studies in Communication

2.1 The “Catholic” identity

Before considering some aspects that must characterize as having “Pauline color” our centers of study, let us make a very brief hint about the Catholic identity of the centers themselves. The CPSCs must have a clear “Catholic”, considering that «*At the heart of Catholic education there is always Jesus Christ: everything that happens in Catholic schools and universities should lead to an encounter with the living Christ*».²⁰ In this sense our centers of formation must have as principle the Gospel, which is exactly Jesus.²¹

What is an educational Catholic institution? In the face of this important question the Congregation for Catholic Education affirms that «*Schools and universities are places where people learn how to live their lives, achieve cultural growth, receive vocational training and engage in the pursuit of the common good; they provide the occasion and opportunity to understand the present time and imagine the future of society and mankind. At the root of Catholic education is our Christian spiritual heritage, which is part of a constant dialogue with the cultural heritage and the conquests of sci-*

¹⁶ X General Chapter, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Cf James Alberione, *Spiritualità paolina*, Pia Società Figlie di San Paolo, Roma, 1962, p. 314.

¹⁹ James Alberione, *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*, Saint Paul, Rome, 1998, n. 87.

²⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educate today and tomorrow: a renewing passion. Instrumentum Laboris*, 7 April 2014.

²¹ Cf *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 11.

ence; *Catholic schools and universities are educational communities where learning thrives on the integration between research, thinking and life experience*».²²

Moreover, the same Congregation of the Holy See clarifies the purpose of a higher Catholic institution: *«The aim is to form men and women capable of critical thought, endowed with high professionalism, but also with a rich humanity and oriented to put their competence at the service of the common good. If need be, the Catholic University must have the courage to say inconvenient truths, truths that do not flatter public opinion, but which are also necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society»*.²³

After these considerations, we note that the sphere of education that must be developed in our centers of studies is about the sciences of communication and other related ones, in a special way philosophy. We want, as Church, to start from our charism, to *«seek to be of help by indicating ethical and moral criteria which are relevant to the process – criteria which are to be found in both human and Christian values»*²⁴ and, besides the practical disciplines, *«to offer formation to communications professionals and to the public, so that they will approach media with a critical sense which is animated by a passion for the truth»* and undertaking *«a work of defense of liberty, respect for the dignity of individuals, and the elevation of the authentic culture of peoples which occurs through a firm and courageous rejection of every form of monopoly and manipulation»*.²⁵

2.2 Saint Paul: inspirer and teacher

A reflection on the identity of the CPSCs requires consideration of the charismatic patrimony of our Founder within which, besides the central figure of Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life, there are also Mary, Queen of the Apostles and the Apostle Paul, the points of reference that characterize our Congregation. In fact, *«Jesus Christ is the perfect original: Paul has made himself form for us, whence in him we are forged to live according to Jesus Christ. Saint Paul-form is not such for a physical reproduction, but in order to possess to the maximum his personality: mind, piety, heart, virtue, zeal... To live, that is, to think, operate, be zealous, as he has thought, operated, been zealous for the salvation of souls, as he has prayed. To be truly Paulines. Paulines!»*.²⁶

The Apostle Paul, for us Paulines and for all the Pauline Family, is the prototype of the following of Christ. The Pauline Family, composed of many members, is called to be saint Paul living today,²⁷ in a social body.²⁸ He is the father, the protector and the true founder.²⁹ As Fr. Alberione asserts, *«the children must resemble the father»*.³⁰ That requires verifying up to what point the signs of “Pauline” identity are present in us and in our apostolate.

To affirm that our centers of studies in communication must have a Pauline identity leads us to assume the aspects which have characterized the Apostle Paul: his manner of “being

²² Congregation for Catholic Education, op. cit.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Aetatis Novae*, n. 12.

²⁵ *Aetatis Novae*, n. 13.

²⁶ James Alberione, *Santificazione della mente*, Pia Società Figlie di San Paolo, Roma, 1956, pp. 56-58.

²⁷ James Alberione, *CISP* (edited by Rosario Esposito), Edizioni Paoline, 1971, p. 147.

²⁸ *CISP*, op. cit., p. 1152.

²⁹ *CISP*, op. cit., p. 147.

³⁰ James Alberione, *Alle Figlie di San Paolo 1929-1933. Vol. II*, Casa Generalizia Figlie di San Paolo, Roma, 2005, p. 167.

apostle” and of working for evangelization, his manner of working in “synergy” with his collaborators, his pastoral strategy starting from the big cities, the means and the languages he used to reach everybody, etc.

2.2.1 Making human to make Christian

The Apostle Paul had a clear message to communicate to the men and women of his time which sprang from the Gospel and from his experience of faith. Thanks to his meeting with Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul has discovered a new style of life. From being a traditionalist Jew that he was, he became a Jew “in Christ”.³¹ From being a Pharisee, he has become the Apostle of the Gentiles. His program of life becomes: «*I do all for the Gospel*» (1 Cor 9,23). In his letters emerge his experience and his knowledge of Christ, but gradually we see how Paul develops a “content” and a pastoral sensitivity, thanks to which he tries to give some “Christian” answers to the concrete problems of the various persons and communities.

The content of the message of Paul, besides the aspects of properly Christological and soteriological order, is full of deeply human exhortations, especially oriented to rapports between persons, fundamental for an effective testimony of the Christian faith. This is why he insists on the practice of love and mercy, qualities that generate fraternal relations. We also find some concrete examples of material help for persons: it is the case of the collection for the needy of Jerusalem. His exhortations to the Christians to help the church of Jerusalem in difficulty (cf 2Cor 8-9) is an effective work of charity. Paul makes us see that to be “Christian” means also to share, a truly “human” gesture, in the deepest sense of this word.

In this perspective Vatican Council II has also placed itself, when it affirms: «*The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts*».³²

In defining the characteristics of our schools, we must be aware that today we are experiencing a very intense human crisis which exerts influence in interpersonal relations, in politics, in the economy, in the respect toward creation, in religion, in communication. Today generally we notice in the studies in communication an emphasis on the technical dimension, on what must be done, but this is not enough. We must put into practice our option as Congregation: «*We assume as our preferential option the defense and promotion of human dignity in all its dimensions, of social justice, of universal brotherhood, of interreligious dialog, of the integral progress of every people and person, of peace and of authentic communication*».³³

All of that requires elaborating solid contents made mature in light of the Gospel, as the Apostle Paul has done through a realistic vision of his recipients who lived in a global and pluralistic world. With the Apostle Paul we believe that the Gospel should become hope for all of humanity. We too are Church and we remember that «*the Church promotes human*

³¹ Cf James Dunn, *Main Aspects of the theology of Paul*, in “International Seminar on Saint Paul”, op. cit., p. 227.

³² *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1.

³³ VIII General Chapter, *Reflections and Documents of the VIII General Chapter. Ariccia 20 April – 20 May 2004*, General House, Society of Saint Paul, Rome, 2004, p. 234.

*knowledge and every civil progress; she is the great benefactress of the poor and of the weak; the inspirer of an economic, social, political, international order conformed to charity, justice and truth».*³⁴

2.2.2 Cultural aspects

Culture, as we know, is a term that includes many meanings and interpretations. As a first comment, we make a brief reference to culture as a grouping of things known by a determinate person, looking in that way from this angle the Apostle Paul, aware that his personal culture was not closed in himself, but put at the service of evangelization.

Paul has succeeded in putting at the service of the Gospel the accumulation of cultures which characterized him (Greek-Hellenistic, Jewish and Roman), succeeding in sharing with his interlocutors not only the language, but also the very categories of thought, while covering in his missionary journeys through the use of the road and administrative system current in his day, tens of thousands of kilometers by land or sea. In short, using modern terms, we could talk of a man who is fully globalized,³⁵ who finds in his ministry at the service of the announcement of the Risen One, who he has experienced, the point of unity among all the various souls who dwell in him.³⁶

The personal culture of Paul has been a true help in entering the various cultural environments – the second meaning of culture! – of his time and thus in carrying out to the best his work in the great cities like Athens, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome, true bases for the irradiation of the Gospel. Being sensitive and open to the cultures and mentality of his contemporaries, he has tried to speak the most understandable language possible.

Referring to Paul's effort at inculturation and comparing the cultural environment of his time with the present-day culture of communication, Pope John Paul II has made an interesting observation: «*After preaching in a number of places, St. Paul arrived in Athens, where he went to the Areopagus and proclaimed the Gospel in language appropriate to and understandable in those surroundings (cf. Acts 17:22-31). At that time the Areopagus represented the cultural center of the learned people of Athens, and today it can be taken as a symbol of the new sectors in which the Gospel must be proclaimed. The first Areopagus of the modern age is the world of communications, which is unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a "global village". The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behavior as individuals, families and within society at large*».³⁷

These affirmations make us consider that the utilization of the sciences of communication on the part of the Church cannot just be instrumental, but "cultural." The question that the Church poses is not so much that of finding or creating some Christian *mass media*, but that

³⁴ James Alberione, *Catechismo Sociale*, Edizioni Paoline, Roma, 1985, n. 220.

³⁵ Even if it's a term willingly used today, globalization already existed in the world of Paul which included all the territories of the imperial dominion of Rome. «Every empire is, in its own way, a globalization. The Roman one has been like that, characterized by that political unification which left in life the differences, whether ethnic, cultural or religious. It was a world that so much invested on communications, above all on roads, which Paul uses for his mission. It was the world in the plural of the great cities». Andrea Riccardi, *Paul and the contemporary man*, in "International Seminar on Saint Paul", op. cit., p. 279.

³⁶ Cf Francesco Bianchini, *Paul. Who was he? In search of the Apostle's identity*, in "International Seminar on Saint Paul", op. cit., p. 34.

³⁷ *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 37 c).

of giving life to a Christian culture in the world in the language of the media, a culture understood as a complex of relations, languages, laws and concepts in accord with Christian anthropology.

Hence, persons are needed prepared to face this reality! Considering in a specific way the preparation of the Pauline, our Founder has expressed himself thus: «*The Pauline needs a classical and philosophical culture so as to be able to present himself in a convenient way to the readers, the audience, the spectators [...]. Look at saint Paul. His culture was very vast; he knew Hebrew, Greek and Latin*».³⁸ Our centers of studies must consider culture in the global sense of the term and prepare the Paulines and the lay people to “inject” in the persons and culture of contemporary communication the anthropological and ethical values which are necessary to build up a united and fraternal society.³⁹

2.2.3 A new mentality in today's society

Embracing a culture does not mean absorbing everything that it has. As saint Paul did his best to communicate something radically new during his time born of his inner experience with Christ, we also are called to do the same with our style of life and with the contents that we diffuse by means of our apostolate, bearing in mind what the Apostle repeats: «*Do not conform yourselves to this world, but let yourselves be transformed as you renew your way of thinking, so as to be able to discern the will of God, what is good, what is pleasing to him and perfect*» (Rom 12,2).

The intention of our Founder when considering the means of communication, was that of bringing the Gospel to all, talking in a Christian way and respecting all the sciences: «*Penetrate all human thought and knowledge, using the Gospel. Don't talk only of religion, but talk of everything in a Christian way; like a Catholic university, which, if it embraces all, includes Theology, Philosophy, the Humanities, Medicine, Politics, Natural Sciences, etc.*».⁴⁰

The objective of interpreting everything starting from the horizon of the Christian values means to bring one's contribution to create a new mentality in society: «*Your apostolate,*» exhorted Fr. Alberione, «*does not aim only at the progress of individual souls, but at the formation of a new mentality in society; which means giving a new imprint and direction. Often you fall into error wanting to see only the fruit in a particular soul, but the greater fruit is the mentality that spreads around in the midst of society: the Christian mentality, the fear of God and everything that insures the spiritual life in souls and the Christian life in society*».⁴¹

No doubt this applies also for the apostolate carried out in our centers of studies. A center of study is a privileged place wherein to create thought and is a point of departure for generating and spreading a “new mentality.” It is where, in the specific case of communication, are being prepared the professionals and the intellectuals who, as they work in the various means of communication, will have the force to create opinion. In this context, it is necessary to form them, considering that with them we fish using the net: «*The Pious Society of saint Paul will often think: “why did you come?” She always has in her heart the intellectuals; the Gospel is*

³⁸ James Alberione, *Finalità dei nostri studi*, in “I nostri studi nella parola del Primo Maestro”, Pia Società Figlie di San Paolo, Roma, 1961, p. 24.

³⁹ Cf Congregation for Catholic Education, op. cit.

⁴⁰ James Alberione, *Abundant Riches of His Grace*, Saint Paul, Rome, 1998, n. 87.

⁴¹ James Alberione, *Vademecum* (edited by Angelo Colacrai), Edizioni Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo, 1992, n. 1337.

something divine; at bottom it can relate to all minds; it is capable of satisfying all queries, for men of all times. If the intellectuals are won over, you fish with the net, not only with the hook».⁴²

2.2.4 Universality

Another important characteristic of the Apostle Paul is his universality, which comes from his great heart and from his wide outlook. *«In this connection we must note that in recent studies of marked philosophical nature, one has gone to emphasize the universality of the Apostle, in the face of every particularism of the ethnic-Hellenistic order, making to derive this element from his Greek-Hellenistic culture. [...] He has not only affirmed how “in Christ” ethnic, sexual and social differences are not anymore nullifying (Gal 3,28) and how the Gospel is offered, without any distinction, for the salvation of every man, called only to believe in Christ (Rom 1,16-17), but has effectively lived his mission with a universal breath and a ray of action».*⁴³

The Apostle, starting from his knowledge of Christ, has been capable of holding talks with the distinct cultures and visions of the world, of man and of God. Notwithstanding the difficulties, he has given all of himself *«in eliminating the distance that separated the Gentiles from the Jews, considered no matter how as the people of the alliance with God, for the purpose of including therein also the “others,” the different, “the faraway”».*⁴⁴ In fact, *«for Paul, if the Gospel did not have an effect on the social level, that is, a knocking down of the antagonism and of racial and national disharmony, it would not have been Gospel. If the Gospel had not unified races, nations, and different classes in a single cult, around just one table, then it would not have been Gospel».*⁴⁵ Impressive is the ability of Paul to free Christ from his own culture and Jewish environment (inside of which some groups of Jewish Christians tended to enclose him), to make of him and his Gospel a ferment of new life and salvation for peoples of every land and culture.

To be a “Pauline” means to have an open mind and heart, characterized by universality. It is worth remembering, these words of Fr. Alberione: *«Universality! Don’t be narrow-minded, and see only your own hole. Feel and help one another even among the houses. When your head is small and petty there is reason to doubt if one has vocation, because one is egoistic, does not see except himself and some small circle of persons around... A big heart! The heart of the Apostle, the heart of Jesus! Expand your heart!».*⁴⁶

The point of departure of “universality” is the Gospel, because the Gospel opens us to a new vision of the world, of human relations, of social living together. It is to be taken with faith and hope that *«whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always “new”».*⁴⁷

The CPSCs must also be a place of “encounter” where, in light of the Gospel, we try to create “bridges” with those who think differently from us, spaces that help us to open our-

⁴² James Alberione, *Abundant Riches of His Grace*, op. cit., n. 197.

⁴³ Francesco Bianchini, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴⁴ Romano Penna, *The Pauline Gospel between Judaic tradition and openness to the Gentiles*, in “International Seminar on Saint Paul”, op. cit., p. 162.

⁴⁵ James Dunn, op. cit., pp. 243-244.

⁴⁶ James Alberione, *Spiegazione delle Costituzioni*, Pia Società Figlie di San Paolo, Roma, 1962, p. 83.

⁴⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 11.

selves to ecumenical dialog, interreligious dialog and to make us approach the unbelievers, without however forgetting that *«true openness involves remaining steadfast in one's deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being "open to understanding those of the other party" and "knowing that dialogue can enrich each side"»*.⁴⁸

2.4 Organization: as a "body"

The organizational aspect is the last point that I want to underline in this report about the identity of the CPSCs, showing at least two sectors that are closely correlated: the academic one and the apostolic-administrative one. Referring to the academic sphere, besides the contents inherent in our institutional orientation, it is necessary to know the norms coming from the Ministry of Education of one's nation and proceed in conformity to them, to its rules and requirements in respect of the disciplines, of the academic profile of the professors and of the requirements asked to give certificates and diplomas.

Regarding the apostolic-administrative sphere, an aspect to raise up is the need to insert this apostolic activity in the organizational chart and in the apostolic project of the Circumscription. This means that the centers of studies cannot be developed at the margin of the apostolic works. They must be integrated in the whole of all the activities.

The CPSCs must be integrated in the big body that involves the entire organization, both for the properly administrative aspect and for the economic one, so as to answer the exhortation of our Founder: *«The apostolate is to be unified, for the whole Congregation. Only one Center: everything there, firmly, without allowing yourselves to be guided by small interests or by particular views: all of this must disappear in the common and universal good. There is a universal good to be attained, which is to be placed ahead of any private good: this is an obligation, not an advice; it is a religious obligation»*.⁴⁹

A center of studies in communication has as its vocation that of becoming a true pole which develops creativity, a privileged place to know, deepen and search for even new apostolic initiatives. Regarding that, it is praiseworthy that all the apostolic initiatives be integrated, in some way, with these centers: the editorial, the graphic production, the diffusion, the marketing, the various institutional events, etc. Besides this, the possibility that the other apostolic realities can utilize the structures of the centers themselves, like the auditorium, the laboratories of informatics, TV, radio and photography, etc., is to be appreciated.

To feel yourselves as one body has as result also that of respecting the logic of organization, favoring those mechanisms which make the body united, alive and dynamic. There is the need to create an efficient flux of communication and of favoring a true work in équipe. As a reference for us, in this mode of organizational going ahead, is still the Apostle Paul, who networked with his collaborators, coordinated and motivated all those who were with him for the mission. We hope to network ever more, within each center of studies, and for the promotion of interchanges among the centers of the various Circumscriptions.

⁴⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 251.

⁴⁹ James Alberione, *Esercizi alle Maestre*, Pia Società Figlie di San Paolo, Roma-Alba, 1942, pp. 116-117.

Conclusion

For sure there are so many other aspects that concern the characteristics of our CPSCs. They will certainly emerge during the discussions of these days. These aspects that I have referred to want to be just a point of departure and at the same time a help to make us aware that our centers of formation must have specific characteristics that distinguish them from other similar centers.

Appreciable is the fact that already in our Congregation operate four centers of studies which represent new authentic apostolic prospects. We must give attention to the persons who are enrolled there and who participate there in every seat, in big majority young people; they as well are part of our “big parish.” In this sense, it is necessary to develop in our CPSCs a true universitarian pastoral of a “Pauline color.”

Through the apostolate that is being done in them we enter the specific field of formation in communication, not only of the Paulines but also of so many lay people, of an apostolate, that is, which inserts us exactly in the sphere of education. This reality shows that *«educating is not a business, but an attitude, a mode of being; in order to educate it is necessary to go out of oneself and stay in the midst of young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth, putting yourself at their side»*; and, considering the educator, it can be affirmed that he is the one who *«transmits knowledge and values by means of his words, but he will be incisive on the boys if he will accompany his words with his testimony, with his coherence in life. Without coherence it is not possible to educate!»*.⁵⁰

Our hope is that our CPSCs be true and real laboratories for the Church in the field of evangelization by means of communication and also, as we have already hinted, privileged places to awaken in young people an ethics and some values inspired by the Gospel, with always a critical gaze on reality and with a commitment to build a just and compassionate society.

May Jesus Master, through the intercession of the Apostle Paul and of Blessed James Alberione, help us in this work destined to trace the guidelines of the pedagogical identity of our centers of study in communication, and to promote an ever more intense and mutual collaboration. Together we can face this challenge, with creative fidelity to the charism of our Founder, so as to respond to today’s apostolic needs, looking with faith and hope toward the future of our mission in the culture of communication.

São Paulo (Brazil), 15 February 2017

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Superior General

⁵⁰ Pope Francis, *Discourse to the students of the schools run by the Jesuits in Italy and Albania*, 7 June 2013.