

JAMES ALBERIONE

OPERA OMNIA

PAUL THE APOSTLE, INSPIRATION AND MODEL

JAMES ALBERIONE

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INSPIRATION AND MODEL



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SUMMARY

<i>Preface</i> , by Fr. Silvio Sassi.....	9
<i>Introduction</i>	11
I. IN THE “PAULINE SPRINGTIME” Chronicles, devotion and celebrations: developments and deepenings (1918-1927).....	17
II. A MONTH FOR SAINT PAUL Meditations and readings (1918-1925)	37
<i>Appendix</i> : Thirty thoughts for a month for Saint Paul	143
III. SAINT PAUL MODEL OF APOSTOLIC LIFE (Private exercises, in Albano, 1947)	149
IV. PRAYERS TO SAINT PAUL	205
The chaplet and its explanation (meditation)	207
Other prayers to the Apostle.....	213
V. ARTICLES AND PIECES AT MATURITY (from “ <i>San Paolo</i> ” and various meditations)	217
VI. TESTAMENTARY DIRECTIVES (from <i>Abundantes divitiæ</i> and <i>Ut perfectus sit</i>).....	265
<i>Postface</i> , by Fr. Silvio Sassi: THE PAULINE FAMILY, “ST. PAUL LIVING TODAY” ...	279
INDEXES	291

INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AD *Abundantes divitiæ gratiæ suæ*, Charismatic history of the Pauline Family, by J. Alberione [1954], Opera omnia, Rome 1998.
- AP *L'Apostolo Paolo modello di vita spirituale*, Spiritual notes of J. Alberione [1947], edited by Stefano Lamera, E.P., Rome 1972; – second edition: *Paolo Apostolo*, [PA], edited by G. Di Corrado, E.P., Rome 1981.
- CISP *Carissimi in San Paolo*, Collection of articles and pamphlets by J. Alberione from the bulletin *San Paolo* [1933-1969], edited by R.F. Esposito, E.P., Rome 1971.
- CVV *Considerate la vostra vocazione*, Circular letters and directives to the Daughters of Saint Paul, Rome 1990.
- Diario *Diario* (unpublished) by Fr. Antonio Speciale SSP, personal secretary of Fr. Alberione.
- ECM *Eco di Casa Madre*, First house bulletin of the Daughters of Saint Paul.
- E.P. Edizioni Paoline.
- FSP Figlie di San Paolo.
- FSP34 *Alle Figlie di San Paolo*, Series of meditations and instructions, 1934.
- MSP *Un mese a San Paolo* (Meditations and readings). Alba, Pia Società San Paolo, 1925; 140 p., 14 cm. A new edition came out in Alba in 1932; another in 1941.
- PA *Paolo Apostolo*, edited by G. Di Corrado, E.P., Rome 1981. Second edition of *L'Apostolo Paolo modello di vita spirituale*, Spiritual notes of J. Al-

- berione [1947], edited by Stefano Lamera, E.P., Rome 1972. – See also AP.
- P. M. Primo Maestro (referred to Fr. Alberione).
- San Paolo* House bulletin of the [Pious] Society of Saint Paul, cited also in CISP.
- SSP Società San Paolo.
- UCAS *Unione Cooperatori Apostolato Stampa*, Bulletin for the Pauline Cooperator (second series).
- UCBS *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, Bulletin for the Pauline Cooperators (first series).
- UPS I-IV *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, Talks of J. Alberione in Ariccia [Month of Spiritual Exercises, April 1960], in 4 volumes; Opera omnia in single vol. Ed. San Paolo, 1998.
- Vol. Volume.

ATTENTION

In the texts “A month to Saint Paul” and “Saint Paul model of apostolic life” appear in margin, preceded by respective initial, the numbers in bold: they remind the pages of the original edition from where they are extracted.

The vertical bar (“|”) indicates the beginning of a page.

PREFACE

In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul narrates the journey that in the company of Barnabas and Titus he makes to Jerusalem in order to divulge the Gospel that he goes around preaching among the nations. After having heard the Apostle, “the persons of authority” in the Church of Jerusalem give their approval, “seeing that to me had been entrusted the Gospel for the uncircumcised as to Peter that for the circumcised” (Gal 2:7). In his letter to the Romans Saint Paul expresses the awareness of his apostolic identity addressing the pagans “in his capacity as apostle of the gentiles” (Rom 11:13).

In an important and difficult moment for the continuation of the work of Christ, the Spirit enlightens the early Christian community to convince it about the universality of evangelization open to the Jews and the pagans.

The same Spirit helps blessed James Alberione in elaborating both in reflection and in practice the apostolic identity of the Pauline charism as “*written preaching*” side by side with “*oral preaching*”. Between the end of 1800 and the first years of 1900, the young Alberione, noticing the actuality of Christ’s invitation “Come to me, all of you” (Mt 11:28) and seeing the flight of the masses from the Church, imagines a *new evangelization* to be done using the press together with evangelization that traditionally revolves around the parish.

In order to give to the Church of his time a form of *new evangelization* and a figure of *new apostle*, in his innovative creativity he takes up Saint Paul as model: “He appeared to him as truly the Apostle: therefore every apostle and every apostolate could draw from him” (AD n. 64), he concludes after having read the letter to the Romans. Later on he clarifies: “The letter to the Romans of Saint Paul is the first and principal article of the apostolate of the editions, specimen upon which every Pauline edition should model itself” (*Spiritualità paolina*, p. 88: vol. 1, “Haec meditare”, 3 February 1958).

Fr. Alberione's admiration for the personality of Saint Paul comes from the synthesis of *love for Christ and love for the apostolic mission* that the Apostle lives in full and that he does not hesitate to indicate to his communities as a model to imitate. The Pauline charism has its source in the commitment of *Christification*, from which flows total *dedication to the apostolate*. Saint Paul embodies these two complementary dimensions of a mature faith: "It's not me anymore that lives, but the Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20) and "I have made myself all for all" (1Cor 9:22).

Saint Paul's integrality is for Fr. Alberione a point of reference both for his *pastoral sensitivity* that sees in the press the most opportune instrument, and for the choice of "*mixed consecrated life* that combines contemplation and action. To the initial idea of a group of lay persons dedicated to the good press, Fr. Alberione puts in place the project of a *new style* of consecrated life that keeps in itself the commitment of Christification and the advantages of apostolic organization. In this way the charism becomes the *unbreakable unity between "Pauline" spirituality and "Pauline" apostolate*; because of this Fr. Alberione excludes reference to any other spirituality and forms of apostolate, including the parish one. All the dimensions of the Pauline charism are characterized only for their Pauline "color" and in that way concur to give life to an *original manner* of sanctification and apostolate fully approved by the Church.

Saint Paul-form constitutes the point of reference for all the Institutes that form the *Pauline Family*. To all members Fr. Alberione has given the same *spirituality* mediated by Saint Paul: "...the Disciple who knows the Divine Master in his fullness; ...he presents to us the total Christ, as the latter had already defined himself, Way, Truth and Life" (AD n. 159). Although in his Letters Saint Paul never defines Christ as "Master" or even uses the definition "Way, Truth and Life", for Fr. Alberione the Apostle is the living definition of Christ the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Even *the very apostolates* of the Pauline Family find their unifying reason in the method of evangelization of the Apostle who knows how to “call as help” woman and laypeople in order to reach everybody with his Gospel. The convergence of the various apostolates of the Pauline Family is done both through its *specific service* to the common evangelization and through the civil and ecclesiastical *state of life* in which its apostolate is realized.

The totality of his love for Christ and the universality of the persons to be evangelized have led Saint Paul to have a personality tending to the future, that “*strains forward*” like a runner in the stadium (Phil 3:13-14). Even the commitment of Christification and donation to the apostolate in the Pauline charism inevitably lead to “straining forward”. The Pauline charism is nomadic like Saint Paul who undertakes his journeys; the Pauline charism is, by its nature, in movement, dynamic, attentive to changes, capable of identifying and integrating what is new; the Pauline charism is not sedentary, but in continuous pilgrimage towards God and towards its contemporaries.

As Saint Paul has the mission to evangelize the uncircumcised, so the Pauline charism has received from the Church the mission to evangelize in the complexity of communication in every historical age. This equivalence which may appear pretentious in reality simply takes up again the similitudes that blessed James Alberione has formulated in his work of mediation of Saint Paul for the Pauline charism.

We can, therefore, understand better this explanation of Fr. Alberione: “Everything came from the Eucharist, the life of the Pauline Family; but it was transmitted by Saint Paul. ...The Institute was inspired by him. He is its father, its light its protector, its teacher, its everything. ...The Pauline Family, made up of many members, must be *Saint Paul living today*, in a social body. ...We have not chosen Saint Paul; it is he who has elected us and called us. He wants that we do what he would do if he lived today” (*Vademecum*, n. 651).

The unity of the Pauline Family has been conceived and

elaborated with in mind the *integral project of new evangelization* founded on Saint Paul and on communication for the Gospel. Therefore, to know and deeply study Saint Paul leads to know and go deep into the Pauline charism in its spirituality and apostolates, in the same way that its *unity* in its spirituality and the *complementarity* of its apostolates of the Pauline Family are fostered by the integral assimilation of the thought and work of Saint Paul.

The letter to the Galatians narrates the conclusion of the meeting in Jerusalem: "...recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James, Cephas and John, who were considered the pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go the pagans and they to the circumcised" (Gal 2:9).

The *vow of fidelity to the Pope*, wanted by Fr. Alberione in a particular way for our apostolic choices, must be lived as a "giving of the right hand" that creates *union* in the ecclesial community even in the *diversity* of charisms.

The present collection of the texts of blessed James Alberione regarding Saint Paul, edited with pertinence by our Confreres in the Center of Pauline Spirituality on the occasion of the year announced by Benedict XVI to commemorate the bimillennium of the birth of Saint Paul, offers to the whole Pauline Family a precious documentation for knowledge and meditation.

On these texts has matured the synthesis that I have just traced through a reading of mine. Thanks to the two volumes and to the meditations put together here, every reader will be able to realize personally the importance of Saint Paul for our Founder, who has accomplished an original work of interpretation of the Apostle for his own life of faith and to bring to conclusion the progressive birth of the entire Pauline Family.

FR. SILVIO SASSI
Superior General, SSP

INTRODUCTION

1. The celebration of the Pauline Year awakens in many a question that perhaps has never been given attention: How much and what truly has written Fr. Alberione about Saint Paul? Given as accepted that the whole existence of distinguished founder has taken place in the shadow of the Apostle – or better, in his light – and that he has spoken about him with insistence and in every occasion, and that as in a mirror he has always looked at him for intense participation..., the explicit question, however, has never emerged: What therefore has blessed Alberione “written” about Saint Paul? No biography, no systematic treatise about his doctrine or his role in the Church... Only meditations he preached and gathered by others? or brief exhortative interventions?

To such questions the present volume attempts an answer “in facts” through a summary gathering – not exhaustive, unfortunately, but significant – of what has come out of the pen and heart of blessed Alberione, the greatest admirer of the Apostle in the last century. As will be noted, it is a rather extensive series of writings, varied by nature and destination and embracing a span of more than half a century, from the first decades of the 20th century to the 1960’s.

2. Following a chronological order, we have divided the material into six sections, each of which preceded by a specific presentation. It will be possible in that way to follow the development of a “devotion” as Fr. Alberione loved to say about the personal rapport with the Apostle – in fact, this was his aim in writing about him, – and in addition to verify the increasing quality of the doctrinal motivations that from the Apostle had to pass over into the concrete action of the new apostles of the Gospel.

At the end of the Alberionian writings follows a “postface” of the Superior General Fr. Silvio Sassi, as an added contribution for an actualization and a working orientation of what

has been shown, on the level of the life and apostolate of the Pauline Family.

3. The material is very diverse, as we have said: it goes from the devotional accounts of the first decades of the nineteenth hundreds, until the more elaborate treatises from the doctrinal and methodological point of view, written during the last decades. And the style is also varied: narrative, expository, catechetical, exhortatory..., aiming in every case at the comprehension of his readers and at animating them by giving directly the “empowering ideas” of the Apostle.

It is known, moreover, that Fr. Alberione aimed at the substance of his discourse; he was not inclined to rhetoric; and this is the counterproof that excludes the Alberionian authorship of unsigned writings and sometimes made to pass as authentic; every surrender to any literary affectation is proof that the writing does not belong to Fr. Alberione.

4. That, however, poses the problem of the real paternity of the ideas expressed in the earliest writings, like those drawn from the bulletins of the *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*. It was normal that the texts were proposed or drafted by the Founder, but then passed to the final editing of the good “maestro” Giaccardo. It is however certain that not only the scheme of the articles, but all the ideas contained in them belonged to the mind and will of “Signor Teologo” as he was then addressed.

We shall see from time to time how such routine procedure of Fr. Alberione allowed and provoked fruitful collaboration, not only with his first true disciple become proven master, but even with his sons and daughters who gladly renounced appearing with their own name among the authors of Alberionian works (to tell the truth, bearing in the frontispiece, rather than the name of James Alberione, the abbreviation G.D.P.H.: *Gloria Deo Pax Hominibus*; or J.M.J.P.: *Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Paulus*).

5. The writings are cited in their original draft, respecting even their old-fashioned forms, limiting ourselves only to correcting eventual errors or rectifying the spelling or adding explanatory footnotes. We would propose in its time ulterior annotations in the “premises” to each section.

May it be enough for us to express here the hope that the present collection of writings on the Apostle Paul increase the knowledge of what the Founder of the Pauline Family has meditated, prayed and taught concerning him who he proposed to us as the “true father and founder” of the institutions that from him get their spirit and name. And may the Apostle intercede so that the writings dedicated to him may pass into the life and works of all the readers.

Rome, 25 January 2008.

THE CENTER OF PAULINE SPIRITUALITY

I

IN THE “PAULINE SPRINGTIME”

(1918-1927)

PREMISE

The writings brought here are taken from the first printed bulletins – “Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa” (UCBS) –, addressed to the friends of Fr. Alberione, and above all to the Cooperators living outside the Pauline communities to inform them about what was taught and lived in the House of Saint Paul, during the first years of the foundation.

The texts comprise the span of a decade and almost all are found in the collection edited by Fr. Rosario Esposito, La Primavera Paolina:¹ an apt expression that describes that lively period during which the infancy of the institution unfolded.

Each of the passages is dated starting from the chronological indication of the immediate source. It will be easy for all those who might want to find confirmations in the collection Fr. Esposito, to find the texts accompanied by additional notes and comments of the said editor.

ST. PAUL LIVING AGAIN

These words of Mons. Ketteler,² Archbishop of Magonza, has made the rounds of the world: “*If St. Paul returned to the world, he would make himself a journalist*”, and I strongly believe them.

In reality, what did St. Paul do? He sowed the word of God everywhere. For that purpose he chose the most reputed places and cathedras to make himself heard by the most number of persons. He looked for them and asked for them at the synagogues, he asked for them in the Areopagus at

¹ *La Primavera Paolina*, edited by Rosario F. Esposito SSP, Edizioni Paoline, Rome 1983, pp. 1293.

² Wilhelm VON KETTELER (1811-1877), deputy in the German parliament, inspirer of the party in center and of the German Catholic unionism, adversary equal to K. Marx e F. Lassalle, heads of Socialist syndacalism.

Athens, at the tribunal of Agrippa, the Theater of the great Diana of Ephesus, the Roman prisons.

Let us suppose that one day they had said to St. Paul: Paul, there is a cathedra where you can be heard not only by a small synagogue, but by all the people or even by the whole world: from Syria, Palestine, from all Asia, Egypt, Greece and Italy: from atop this cathedra you can announce Christ, preach the Cross, lead the peoples to justice and truth.

I am sure that St. Paul would have quickly asked: "Where is this cathedra? I want to ascend it". And if it were pointed out to him, he would have gone up to it in the blink of an eye and would have stayed there for all his life as the Stylites did on top of their columns.

This cathedra did not exist at the time of St. Paul, but now it does: it is the good periodical. This is the pulpit of humanity: the "perpetual mission" as Leo XIII called it.

(UCBS 1919, n. 5, pp. 5-6)

DEVOTION TO ST. PAUL

Mons. Bonomelli³ said very well that many of the most distinguished saints in the Church are those who are least remembered by the people. In fact, how many are they who pray to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ignatius the Martyr, etc.

Would that we knew the good that St. Paul has done for the world, especially for us descendants of the gentiles! if we read his life, his works and his letters: how much more would we pray to him, love him and imitate him. From him we would learn the two virtues that are the foundation of Christianity: love for Jesus and love that will show itself in zeal for one's neighbor.

³ Geremia Bonomelli (1831-1914) bishop of Cremona starting 1871, a notable personality of the Catholic revival of the final 19th century years.

Let us devotedly celebrate the feast of St. Paul on 30 June: it will be a beautiful occasion in order to make known the great apostle.

Let us also distribute his picture and invoke him as the protector of the Good Press. It is also very useful to explain the letters of St. Paul, at least once. This is already done substantially in some parishes, where every 5 or 6 years, instead of the Gospel, the epistle of the Mass is explained to the people: and the epistle is almost always a part of the letters of St. Paul.

(UCBS 1919, n. 6, p. 2)

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

This current 25 [January 1919] the Catholic world celebrates the feast of the conversion of St. Paul. A memorable date in the Church. Saul was the most terrible adversary of early born Christianity: he marched with fury toward the city of Damascus with his soldiers to bind as prisoners as many Christians as he could find. But the grace of God strikes him at the gates of the city and he is changed into a totally different man. "I have chosen him so that he may preach my name to the Hebrews, to the Gentiles, to princes and kings", says the Lord. And Saul, now Paul, becomes the first among the apostles, the one who brought to the bosom of the Church more souls than all the apostles. Because of him the Church had a new life, instead of a persecutor. With reason then this great feast is celebrated in the Christian world.

There are some parishes where it will be solemnized with a "day of the good press".

In other parishes there will be a special activity for the conversion of sinners especially of those who like Saul, use their talent, culture, or social position to combat the Church, the Vicar of Christ, religion.

All those enrolled in the "Union of Cooperators of the Good Press" are vividly invited to receive Communion on that day for that purpose.

Let us ask that we be converted from a lukewarm life to one of ardor: let us ask for energy and the right spirit for Catholic writers; let us ask for the conversion of impious journalists. Let us also celebrate a novena of his, especially by reciting the prayer printed on the images of St. Paul.

(UCBS 1919, n. 1, pp. 2-3)

ST. PAUL PROTECTOR OF THE GOOD PRESS

The orientation of the studies as they were during the period before the war,⁴ led, of its nature, the attention of the learned to the origins of the Church. The Christian antiquities were the preferred object of the scholars of Christian matters. Many aberrations came out in the modernistic and Protestant field: good results were not lacking, they were even aplenty. Among these results is certainly one of the best: a more vast and deep knowledge of the life, works and doctrines of the Apostle Paul. Not only this, but also (and this is a natural consequence) the desire to make more practical again and almost to vulgarize the cult to this great preacher of the Gentiles.

* * *

The Apostle Paul traveled the known world of his time, making heard everywhere the good news and gathering under the banner of the cross an immense number of Christians.

He is therefore the man of zeal: it seems almost that in St. Paul zeal has been personified.

From here it became natural that the Apostle Paul was chosen as the protector of the Good Press.

⁴ First World War (1914-1918).

No means of propaganda today can be more universal and effective than the magazine specifically and the press generally. Through it, the journalist closed in his redaction office extends his work and lets his word reach the farthest limits of the earth. Not devoid of sense or said casually is the phrase of Ketteler: "If Paul were born today, he would make himself a journalist".

* * *

St. Paul made a big spiritual harvest at Ephesus. Many of those who had dealt in vain sorceries, magic and evil activities were converted. Knowing what a destructive occasion of sin were the books that they kept in their homes, the Apostle ordered them to bring them to a public plaza; he made a big pile of them and put them on fire.

Calculating their price, it was found that they reached the huge sum of fifty thousand denari. An amount truly great whether judged in itself or judged from the circumstances of the time.

How opportune is it therefore to invoke the Apostle against the great destruction that the perverse press goes on accumulating!

(UCBS 1919, n. 1, p. 4)

NEW TIMES AND ANTIQUE AND NEW DEVOTIONS

The beginnings of Christianity are its ages of gold.

We always read with emotion, with fruit and with passion the pages of the Gospel when the Apostles at the school of Jesus said to him: "Master, teach us how to pray"; when the crowds stepped on each other to hear the words of eternal life of the Divine Master; when the young men approached him with confidence and asked: "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?". The Savior was pleased with the title of Master

and expressed his pleasure: "You call me Master and you do well, for so I am".

Wonderful are the scenes wherein the Apostles gathered around Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She was the Mother, the Teacher, the Queen of Apostles. She enlightened them, guided them, prayed, and they went, made known to the faithful the heart of Mary, her great qualities, her power over the heart of God, and directed to her the pilgrimages of the faithful.

Wonderful is the first Christian Pentecost of the Apostles guided by Mary Most Holy, during the first and most important novena to the Holy Spirit.

Wonderful is the picture of the death of Mary, while the Apostles surrounded her bed, and her Assumption at the sight of all the Apostles.

Still more: profoundly impressive and edifying were the descriptions in the Acts of the Apostles when St. Paul made his voyages of evangelization and the big ones of the Areopagus invited him to state the new doctrine in the most celebrated assembly of the world; and the Christians converted by him stayed from sunset to midnight and then from midnight to morning to hear his word; and they brought to him in the plaza the bad books for him to burn; they received with anxiety and trembling his letters and fell on his neck weeping when they greeted him for the last time; and the Romans who had never heard him, and already knew him through the most sublime of his letters addressed to them, went to meet him, a prisoner, many kilometers outside the city.

The times of the Apostles are here again.

The apostolate is placed again in honor and flourish by pontifical drives.

Catechisms that develop, religious conferences for every group of persons, abundant preaching; the press that becomes gigantic; propaganda among groups and in plazas: it is the effort to let Christianity penetrate the whole of society, all its branches, an effort that fights and advances notwithstanding the enormous resistance of evil that maintains its positions.

Jesus is the Divine Lamb, from whose heart flow rivulets of living water: preachers who truly want to accomplish good must take and bring to souls this water. We shall teach with effect the doctrine of the Savior if like the Apostles we shall first press ourselves close to the Divine Master, to learn his doctrine and his Heart, and foster in our hearts devotion to the Divine Master. It is devotion that will mature during these apostolic times.

Also to develop is devotion to Mary, Queen of the Apostles, that devotion professed and practiced by the Apostles chosen by Jesus.

The *Queen of Apostles* is today already widely invoked, and Mary will be the one to guide the new Apostles to wonderful new conquests: newly ordained priests invoke her in the souvenir holy card of their first Mass, books of spiritual reading and meditation of the Clergy talk about her; in Mondovì, that holy Bishop, Mons. Ressia, has canonically erected the Pious Association of the Queen of Apostles for extraordinary preaching in the Diocese. In Turin, on 14 December 1920, Cardinal Archbishop Richelmy founded the Pious Association of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles for seminarians to ask from God through the intercession of Most Holy Mary, more learned and zealous Priests and to ask monetary help from the faithful to assist in the heavy needs of the Seminaries.

His Eminence Card. Richelmy then wrote a beautiful prayer for those enrolled in the Pious Association of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles.

They direct themselves to St. Paul the Apostle, the Doctor, the Preacher, the Teacher of the Gentiles, the Prisoner of Jesus, the Knight of the Spirit, who work hard today to solve in a Christian way the most serious religious, social and political questions; who long to penetrate with pure Christianity the masses and to do good using the fastest means. Those who know more deeply his spirit pray to him and are devoted to him, and devotion to St. Paul will spread wider and will also become big in these times of apostolate, and will divulge

among those who are dedicated to the apostolate and those who want to live a robust Christian life.

In Alba and in the Diocese the devotion to the Divine Master, to the Queen of the Apostles and to St. Paul have their center, practice and diffusion in the new Church of the Pious Society of St. Paul that gets its inspiration from St. Paul, has consecrated its novices to the Queen of the Apostles and has put its aspirants under the guidance of the Divine Master.

(UCBS 1922, n. 9, 10 August, pp. 4-5)

THE HEART OF SAINT PAUL

The heart overflows and confounds the mind. No saint whether ancient or modern has had in this last years so abundant a bibliography. St. Paul has, however, many who study and admire him, but less who imitate and love him. People look at his book and sword, miss his will and sacrifice, like his heart and his spiritual struggle.

Saint Paul is a heart: a heart on fire with love for God: a heart of very tender love for his own. "He who does not love Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema". On the other hand, after the example of Jesus, he himself longs to be cursed by God for his brothers. Charity has entirely transformed him in God: he is the prisoner of Jesus Christ, desires that his body dissolve, so that his soul may be united with Jesus. For him to live is Jesus Christ: even more, it is not he anymore that lives, but it's Christ that lives in him. And their union is so deep and strong that neither death, nor the evil spirits, nor heaven, nor hell will be able to separate him from the love of Jesus Christ. The heart of Paul has become the Heart of Christ: and Jesus has changed his heart of a ferocious lion breathing threats and massacres into a very tender one. It is impossible to read the affectionate passages of the letters of St. Paul and not weep: they are words like those of the most loving of mothers.

If he writes to his disciples, or if he talks or converses with them, he never mentions them without saying "my very beloved son, my beloved son, my faithful son" and other words of like meaning. He writes to Philemon to recommend him Onesimus, the disloyal and repentant slave and tells him: "I, Paul, an old man, appeal to you for my son Onesimus who I have generated in my chains. Accept him as my heart; if you consider me as your friend, receive him as if you received me; and if he has wronged you or owes you something, write it down on my account". To the Corinthians he writes his first letter of very serious reprimand: with very moving sadness he enumerates the sacrifices he made for them: the ignominy, the dishonor, the hunger, the thirst, the cold, the tempests, the slaps, the stonings, the fatigue of work, the blasphemies, the persecutions: it's like looking at the scene of a heartbroken mother warns her children of their ingratitude. St. Paul concludes: "I don't write you these things in order to put you to shame, no: but I admonish you as my dearest children: because even if you had ten thousand guardians, you do not have however many fathers: I have generated you in Christ through the Gospel".

While writing all these things Paul has shed many tears as he himself says: "With great affliction and anxiety of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not to sadden you, but to make you know the great love I have for you".

St. Paul had disciples and he made them saints. He wants devoted people. In modern education great part is given to the education of the heart. Affection is a powerful force that must be guided, oriented, not repressed or annihilated. Especially to young people who are full of sentiment, to persons who violently need to love and in loving well would become heroes, to all who have already experienced with pain the betrayals of the heart, a friendly word: start being devoted to St. Paul. To souls once more and to young apostles who need tender affection to feel themselves loved in order to fight or to do good, the same friendly word: be devoted to St. Paul.

* * *

It is necessary to underline another divine quality in St. Paul: his struggle against his ego. Who would think of such a struggle in this man of God? Saint Paul has had to revolutionize everything in himself through a gigantic, continuous and all-out battle. "The messenger of Satan is beating me. I see in my members another law that wars against the law in my mind and wants to drag me to the law of sin". Who won? The grace of God aided by his strong resolve. Saint Paul wants devotees. "*Christ did not please himself: Jesus did not try to please himself*". Hence, we should not please ourselves, but God, and offer to him our life as a holy and pleasing victim. Here is goodness, here is sanctity. The condition to attain it is spiritual struggle consisting of prayer, vigilance and examination of conscience. Again, a friendly word to generous souls: devotion to St. Paul.

* * *

Saint Paul therefore appears to us as the best practical example of Christian experimental psychology. His life tells us that every temperament can be dominated, corrected, directed, even changed; that Christian character is the result of two elements: prayer and struggle, which even in defeat is a continuous victory; that not only reason and will but also the powers of the heart have to be educated because the heart is a very powerful help, and it's the one that pulls us to God.

* * *

Saint Paul wants devotees.

These are again the times of devotion to the great apostle! Generous souls, be devoted to St. Paul and you will touch the divine! Cooperators of the Good Press, if we have done you great love in inviting you in the name of God to the holy mission of the press, we will do you an equally great love suggesting to you devotion to Saint Paul, the soul of our apostolate.

(UCBS 1923, n. 6, 21 June, pp. 1-2)

SAINT PAUL'S WORK IN THE FORMATION OF HIS COOPERATORS

St. Paul's spirit continued in his churches even after him. Good continued to be active. The apostles did not only preach, but founded churches. They did not only make Christians, but formed their successors, the bishops, the priests and those that we call the sisters. They dedicated their most kind attention and their very fine consideration to the education of the cooperators.

St. Paul was a strong organizer of good and of the apostolate. A wonderful network of bishops and priests was established in the places of his missions at the end of his voyages: a network of holy pastors.

Before going to Jerusalem where he would have been captured, he wanted to greet the bishops and priests of Miletus belonging to the jurisdiction of Ephesus.

He said to them some testamentary words: "Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has constituted you overseers to shepherd the church of God. Be vigilant, and remember that for three years I did not cease day and night to admonish each of you with tears. Now I commend you to God". Then he knelt and prayed with all of them, and great was the weeping of all those venerable bishops and priests who threw themselves at Paul's neck and kissed him. Saint Paul possessed the soul and heart of his disciples.

Of his first disciples, be they bishops, priests or cooperators, we know the name of a good number of them. They are our elder brothers.

Alexander and Caius who were with Paul and suffered with him in the tumult of Ephesus; Erastus and Sosipater, who accompanied him and worked with him in the mission of Macedonia; Sosthenes and Tertius were his loyal secretaries and wrote under Paul's dictation the letters to the Corinthians and to the Romans; Tychicus⁵ and Trofimus carried

⁵ In the original *Tydricus* (*Tidrico*).

and explained the letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the Philippians; Philemon and Mnasone offered him hospitality in Colossi, in Cyprus and in Jerusalem; Aristarcus accompanied him in the prison in Rome; Silas, a Christian of Antioch and Apollo, an eloquent man and versed in the Sacred were taken by St. Paul as companions of work and sacrifice and carried to the missions of St. Paul all the contribution of their doctrine and energy. Dionigi the Areopagite converted due to the preaching of Paul and afterwards became the first bishop of Athens and Paris.

In his letters Paul affectionately remembers other cooperators: the beloved Epaeetus, first fruits of Asia, the very dear Ampliatus, Urbanus who worked with him, and Stachi beloved to him, Apelle who gave proof of his fidelity to Jesus Christ, Rufus, an elect in the Lord, Asyncritus, Flegonte, Erma, Patroba, Erme, Dema, Filologus, Erodione, Lucia, and Jason his relatives, Quartus, Zema, Artemas, Stephen, who had consecrated himself to the service of the poor Christians, Stefana, Fortunatus and Achaius, first fruits of the church of Achaia had carried to the Corinthians from Ephesus the first letter that Paul wrote to those Christians, and they had restored much his spirit, Eubulus, Linus, first successor of St. Peter, Onesiforus of Ephesus who often has refreshed him and was not ashamed of the chains of his master, Onesimus, an unfaithful slave who converted and later became the bishop of Colossi, Epafra, servant of Jesus Christ who continually agonized in prayers for his brothers.

St. Paul remembers to the edification of other Christians Aquila and his wife Priscilla, baptized by him and who then helped him much in the establishment of the church of Corinth and exposed their life for him. Andronicus and Giunia his wife, their relatives, illustrious among the apostles, his companions in imprisonment, the senator Pudens and his wife Claudia, who worked with Peter and Paul in the evangelization of the Romans.

However, three especially were the disciples of St. Paul who he loved with a love of predilection and cared for with singular tenderness and formed in the smallest details. To them he entrusted the most delicate tasks, gave special authority in his churches and among the other disciples, and better than others got his spirit and were his and were his most faithful friends and cooperators. They are: Timothy, saint and martyr, bishop of Ephesus, Titus, saint and confessor and bishop of Crete, Luke, saint, evangelist and bishop of Philippi.

St. Luke was a physician. He wrote the third Gospel, the Gospel preached by St. Paul, the Gospel of the Gentiles and of the mercy of God. He wrote the "Acts of the Apostles" that are most beautiful biography of St. Paul, inspired and dictated by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul writes: In Troade my spirit was restless, because I did not find my brother Titus. But God who consoles the humble made me find him in Macedonia.

St. Timothy was especially dear to St. Paul for his fidelity. Because of this the Apostle had him close to him most of the time, as a Father with his son and had him as companion in his preachings, travails and imprisonments.

St. Paul calls him his beloved and his very dear one, a man of God, faithful to the Lord. And of him he writes: "I have no other like him that shares so well my sentiments and loves you with the most sincere affection. Know that he has helped me in the gospel as a son his father".

The eye and the apostolic heart of St. Paul also led him to give to his mission helpers and those that we say the first daughters of St. Paul.

He recalls Eunice, the mother of Timothy, and his grandmother Lois. He recalls the mother of Rufus, who had also for him the care of a mother. He tells the Romans to greet Mary who bore much hard work for the Lord; Trifena and Trifosa who spent themselves so much for the Church; Perside, beloved in the Lord, Julia and Olimpia, sisters of the saints. To Phoebe, the sister who served the Church of Cenchreae, he gave the task of bringing the letter to the Romans;

Lydia of Thyatira, a dealer of purple in Philippi, converted and in her house offered hospitality to St. Paul and to his disciples. Apphia, Philemon's wife, a very dear sister, gave hospitality to St. Paul in Colossi.

St. Paul succeeded wonderfully in forming his disciples and his first daughters. His care for them was affectionate and scrupulous. He wrote to them often, Bishops, Priests or cooperators, housewives or deaconesses, widows or virgins. He admonished, prayed night and day with tears, gave out practical and effective rules of life, led by example.

The disciples were the garden that he cultivated with the exquisiteness and finesse of love. They were also his peace. He wrote that he nourished the faithful not with bread but with milk. For the disciples therefore he had first rate milk, but he succeeded and had in them and in his daughters the sweetest joy and the most glorious crown.

This is the principal work that the Pious Society of St. Paul now does. Prior to propaganda, prior to other initiatives it has in mind the formation of young men. The alumni are the fiber of its heart, the pupil of its eye. Its main thought is for them. For them it lives and for them it suffers. Souls are needed more than money, vocations are needed, lives are needed. One who directs alumni to the Pious Society of St. Paul is deserving of the Church and will have the blessings of the Apostle. The Pope has said it: In this apostolate, money is not enough, persons are necessary.

What is to be done?

Let us convince ourselves first of all of the truth of what has been said above. Let us reflect before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, so the very means of action will impose themselves. Let each one think of what he can do in his situation and do it. If he needs help, advice or explanation, we desire no other than to be asked so as to do what is possible. But it's not enough to think only of oneself: each one has

the task of helping his neighbor. In talking with our Conferes, let us try to persuade them to do something, let us suggest the means that we have found to be the best. If nothing more can be done, send to the Directorate of the A.G.B. the address of the Rev. Parish Priests who could do something, of already existing Libraries that need help to carry on doing more. We shall send pamphlets and catalogues and we shall think of doing what we can to help them.

All of us must do something. Best of all to think of providing oneself quickly with a Library that can begin even from a small starting nucleus of books to be distributed for reading. If one sees that he still cannot begin and is convinced of it after having prayed for light from the Lord, at least let him try to collaborate with us, so that all together we may form a strong union that, blessed by God, may have the strength to overcome the organization of lay Libraries and to give to the evil that they produce an effective and quick antidote before it's too late.

("San Paolo",⁶ A. I, n. 3, 22 Sept. 1923)

THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL IN ALBA AND ITS "THESIS"

As soon as possible, the diggings for the construction of the big new Church that will rise in Alba in honor of the great Apostle will begin.

It is the sweet longing cherished in the heart for a long time.

It is a duty of acknowledgment that is fulfilled for our Protector.

It is the spiritual center where the hearts of our fifteen thousand Cooperators converge.

⁶ In some issues of 1923, "due to postal needs", the masthead of the bulletin "Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa" became "San Paolo", but then returned to be UCBS. "San Paolo" was the masthead of the internal bulletin of the SSP that came out in 1926.

It is a need that is almost material, so that the bigger family of St. Paul may all together gather to pray, meditate to receive light and strength...

Its design is of Engineer Gallo whose name is guarantee. A grandiose design, pious, all done and well oriented to express just the right THESIS: *Like St. Paul, we gather from the lips of the Divine Master, under the protective shadow of the Queen of the Apostles, the divine Word that by means of the press will become life, way and truth for souls...*

Blessed is he who will cooperate with God for this temple! Blessed is he who will lend to God a little of what he has received from God! Blessed is he who will know how to make God his debtor! Blessed is he who will do good while life's day shines for him! Let them kiss the hand of God a thousand times who will want to accept something from them...

Cooperators all, parents of the young men who are in the house of St. Paul, you will do even more. You will be so many centers to collect offerings.

May the Divine Master be your Way, Truth and Life. Let us imitate St. Paul as he has imitated Christ! May the Queen of Apostles extend upon all Her blessed hand.

(UCBS 1925, 15 March, pp. 3-4)

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD PRESS

It is the new big church that is erected in Alba in honor of the Apostle Saint Paul. It is the church to St. Paul as model, patron of the Apostolate and of the Apostolate of the Good Press.

The church of Alba honors his character as apostle and his patronage of the written and printed word as sacred mission of the Church.

It is the church of prayer for the mission of the good press, a very vast field and intense in work. On the main altar, as it is now in the small chapel, the Divine Master made Sacrament will be exposed at every hour of the day, and a

religious institute of Sisters proper for it will make perpetual and uninterrupted adoration for all the multiple needs of the Catholic press.

Oh! The need for Catholic writers, the need for the Apostolate of the Catholic press! We should read in the letters of St. Paul the groans and the humble and incessant invocations of the Apostle so that the brethren would pray and still pray. It is therefore the temple of the Catholic journalists that needs light, constancy, assistance and help.

It is the church of the missionaries of the Good Press: the church is incorporated to the houses, and the houses to the church. As in the parishes, beside the church there are the rooms for the schools of catechism, beside the church of Saint Paul and incorporated to it, just one temple with it are the houses for the sons and daughters St. Paul. The construction plan reproduces it: the houses are like the pulpits of the church, and in it are being instructed, educated and prepared the missionaries of the good press. In it the little missionaries write and work for the diffusion of the reign of God.

The Divine Master in the church spreads off his rays that are way, truth and life, and these rays in the house through the heart, the spirit and the mouth of the superiors form the apostles of the press, and through the pen, the types and the machines of the house enlighten souls, guide them and give them life. From here the missionaries of the good press will leave for the mission countries.

St. Paul, our father, model, patron, teacher and advocate, will in his church have us all each morning, each day around him, and will communicate to us the spirit of the Divine Master, because the heart of St. Paul is the heart of Christ.

The first stone

The first stone of the church of St. Paul or the foundation stone, the stone that contains the documents, will be laid during the coming feast of St. Paul.

Something that is lovely: we shall have a brick taken from the Porta Santa of the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome open this Holy Year 1925. The pieces of these bricks are kept as precious relics! And the precious brick from the Porta Santa of the basilica that conserves the body of St. Paul will be the first brick of our church of St. Paul put in the foundation stone consecrated during the feast of Saint Paul, in the jubilee holy year.

(UCBS 1925, 1 April, pp. 3-5)

II

A MONTH FOR SAINT PAUL

Meditations and readings
(1918-1925)

PREMISE

*“It is a tradition of the Pious Society of Saint Paul to dedicate the month of June to Saint Paul. To spend a month in honor of Saint Paul means doing three homages: 1. meditate on Saint Paul, on his doctrine, on his examples; 2. imitate Saint Paul especially in those virtues that are more necessary for us; 3. in a special way pray to Saint Paul, both for our sanctification and for our apostolate, and have faith in his powerful intercession. It is advisable that the little book with the title “A month to Saint Paul” return to be read. It reassumes the meditations done the first time when a month to Saint Paul was celebrated in a somewhat solemn form and by everybody. There is for every day a brief meditation, with the fruit to be obtained and the petition to be presented to Saint Paul. We should consider Saint Paul under three aspects: as teacher, model and provider”.*¹

In February of 1957, on the bulletin “San Paolo” Fr. Alberione enumerated 31 titles of meditation for a month to Saint Paul, with the specification: “This list can serve as a guide for one who prefers it. Of use can also be the small ‘Month to Saint Paul’ of Fr. Giaccardo”.

Furthermore, going backwards, we find an exhortation of Fr. Alberione to the Daughters of Saint Paul (dated January 1944), that recommends: “1) Know, love, believe in St. Paul. So it is very useful not only to read but meditate on the life of St. Paul, his letters, the books of instruction and meditation on the apostle. Particularly useful for you is the Month to Saint Paul... That one this year, it is good that it be done preferably during the first part of the visit; besides in the refectory or during conferences... From all this you can draw the Pauline spirit, that means substantially: possess the spirit, the heart and the mind of Saint Paul” (Considerate la vostra vocazione [CVV], circ. 103).

¹ Thus we read in the circular “Regina Apostolorum” of June 1954. Cf CVV, circ. 211.

A month to Saint Paul: *what is it in reality? It is a series of meditations contained in a handwritten notebook that is the source of the book published in 1925 under the title "A month to Saint Paul". The manuscript of Fr. Alberione dates back to 1918.*²

The printed text appeared first in the bulletin "Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa" starting April 1925,³ and successively had three book editions, respectively:

1st ed. A month to Saint Paul (Meditations and readings), Alba 1925, Pious Society of Saint Paul; pp. 135; f.to cm 9×14,5; author G.D.P.H. (= Gloria Deo Pax Hominibus).

2nd ed. A month to Saint Paul, Meditations and readings; Alba-Rome, 1932, Pious Society of Saint Paul, 172; cm 10×16,5; author J.M.J.P. (= Jesus Maria Joseph Paulus).⁴

3rd ed. A month to Saint Paul, Meditations and readings, Pious Society of Saint Paul, Alba-Rome-Catania 1941; pp. 224; cm 9,5×14,5; author G.D.P.H.; tip. Figlie di San Paolo, Alba.

This third edition is characterized with respect to the preceding ones by the introduction of verses of the Pauline letters opening each meditation.

Another curious detail: in the same year 1941 appeared from the Edizioni Paoline (Figlie di San Paolo, Alba), the same text of the volume, with two significant variants: the author is indicated by name "Teol. T.M. Giaccardo SSP" and the title Alla Scuola di San Paolo (in the frontispiece, the added "Un mese di meditazioni"). All the rest is identical to the preceding editions.

² Cf ANTONIO DA SILVA, "Il Mese a San Paolo", historical-critical exposition in his report to the VIII General Chapter SSP, in "Essere San Paolo oggi vivente", Rome 2004, pp. 92-96.

³ UCBS, Anno VII, 1 April 1925.

⁴ Strangely, on the frontispiece of this edition appears written "III EDIZIONE", that could be explained only if for "second edition" is computed that one published in the bulletin "Unione Cooperatori Apostolato Stampa" [UCAS] from May 1932.

Is the Author of the writing therefore Fr. Alberione or Fr. Giaccardo? The answer is twofold:

1) The original handwritten notebook going back to 1918, is of Fr. Alberione and consists of 71 pages containing a not continuous series of meditations. The remaining 49 pages of the notebook, handwritten by Maestro Giaccardo, contain the texts of the liturgical office in honor of the Apostle.

2) The printed editions, whether in the bulletins of the Cooperators (UCBS and UCAS), or of the paperback booklets, all in pocketbook format, were completed and published through Maestro Giaccardo.

The text that we present in this volume is that of the first edition. The meditations added by Giaccardo are distinguished from those of Fr. Alberione by means of an asterisk between square parentheses [].*

A MONTH TO SAINT PAUL

Meditations and readings

MSP

2

Ora pro nobis, sancte Paule Apostole,
Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus.

Deus qui multitudinem gentium beati Pauli Apostoli prædicatione docuisti: da nobis, quæsumus; ut cujus natalitia colimus, ejus apud te patrocinia sentiamus.

Per Dominum nostrum etc.¹

¹ “Pray for us, Saint Paul the Apostle / That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O God, you have taught the multitude of the Gentiles through the preaching of the blessed apostle Paul. Grant us the grace to receive before You the protection of him whose conversion we celebrate. Through our Lord...”. (*Italian translation is taken from “The Office of St. Paul the Apostle - 30 June”, prepared by Fr. Timothy Giaccardo. Cf handwritten notebook, II part, p. 20*).

As we can see, Fr. Alberione introduces the treatment of various aspects of the figure of Saint Paul with a prayer: invocation of the apostle and respective *oremus*, much in use in the Pauline Family. – We can say that it is a *constant* in our Founder: prayer enlightens reflection and reflection leads spontaneously to prayer.

INTRODUCTION

The Lord has given us a great grace in giving us Saint Paul as Father, Teacher, Model, Friend and Protector.¹

He is a miracle of doctrine, a prodigy of zeal, a hero in every virtue.

He was converted due to an extraordinary favor, has worked more than all the other Apostles and has enlightened the world through the splendor of his doctrine and examples.

In heaven Saint Paul enjoys a special glory in proportion to his great merits. From there he protects, blesses, and prays for his devotees. And his prayers are so powerful to the degree Jesus loved him on earth.

Therefore, love him very much. Pray to him. Read very willingly about his life. Meditate on his letters. Seek to imitate his excelling virtues.

Be reminded especially that he is also the protector of the good press and that one of the best homages that we can give to this saint is to work for the good press.²

* * *

¹ From the first times Fr. Alberione proposes the apostle Paul as *Father, Teacher, Model, Friend, Protector for every Pauline*. It is a conviction that has accompanied the Founder all his life, until to make him write in the “charismatic history” (*Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*, 1954), his well-known testamentary words: “This second history has produced in him a deep persuasion and he makes of it an intense prayer: all must consider Saint Paul the Apostle alone as father, teacher, exemplar, and founder. In fact, he is such. Through him it was born, by him it was nourished and made to grow, from him it got the spirit...” (AD 2).

² The attitudes that we are invited to have in regard to saint Paul are: to love him, pray to him, read about his life, meditate on his letters, imitate his virtues. But among the “best homages” towards the apostle, the aspect that is most at the heart of the Founder and cannot be absent is: “to work for the good press”.

[*] St. John Chrysostom³ said: “Every time I read something about him I feel completely moved, inflamed, enthused in a holy way”. A very good homage to the great and beloved saint is this: to cooperate in the Apostolate of the Press.

All the glory and the good of St. Paul as of every saint is in studying, imitating, and loving our Lord Jesus Christ. The more we become saints the better Jesus Christ lives in us, and the Apostle felt he was nothing and that everything was Jesus Christ: “It’s not anymore I that lives, it’s Jesus Christ that lives in me”.

Let us listen while adoring to the words of the Divine Master: “*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*”. So then Jesus Christ shows himself to the Apostle Paul as in a faithful image, as in a talking and operating portrait.

So Jesus Christ in St. Paul comes out with this expression: “Imitate me... my gospel... I complete the passion of Jesus Christ”.

Let us meditate therefore in the course of the month:

1. - St. Paul model of virtue.
2. - St. Paul light of truth.
3. - St. Paul a good father to his devotees.

* * *

There will be a course of thirty meditations that can be of use to celebrate a month in honor of the Holy Apostle. In some places people choose the month of January which sees the celebration of the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul; in others they prefer the month of June, dedicating instead to January the month of the Sacred Heart. At any rate the pious practice of the month to St. Paul is ever more extending itself to so many Churches and to many cities that bear his name.

Everywhere, the fruits are abundant.

³ In all the texts of Fr. T. Giaccardo we bring in these pages (and marked, as we have said, with an asterisk between square parentheses [*]) the name of St. John Chrysostom is written “Grisostomo”.

THE MONTH TO SAINT PAUL

1. *It is a beloved month* in which we *propose three things*:

a) *Know* St. Paul and thank the Lord for having done so many wonders through the Apostle Paul: converting him from Judaism, enriching him with so much science, inflaming him with the purest love for Jesus, filling him with the most holy zeal and giving him constancy up to martyrdom in preaching the Holy Gospel.

b) *Imitate* a little the virtues of St. Paul, particularly those in which he distinguished himself more: humility, charity, promptness in corresponding to the graces of the Lord and in addition those virtues that have attracted the admiration of the whole world, that is, his zeal for souls, his spirit of sacrifice and his unshakable faith.

c) *Pray* to the Apostle so that he may obtain for us that abundance of grace that he received from the Lord. Those who went to him on earth obtained so many spiritual goods and even material ones. Even now that he is glorious in heaven we can ask him, hope in him and receive from him.

2. *Importance*. The cult of the Apostle Paul in the Church was universal, constant and grandiose. And yet in some way we can say that it was not popular as the cult of many saints. That depends on the fact that St. Paul is not known enough and popularized. St. Paul is considered to be of such extraordinary virtue, of having such a sublime science, of being so exceptionally zealous that he would appear to be reserved to the learned, to the Holy Fathers, to the doctors and to apostolic people. But that is false. The fact is this:

that St. Paul is exactly the Apostle to whom we, the descendants of the gentiles, owe a very special gratitude. He is *our* Apostle, because he was the Apostle of the gentiles;

that St. Paul has such a good heart, the loving heart of a

father that St. John Chrysostom said resembled very much the heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, or even that his heart is the heart of Jesus Christ himself;

that St. Paul entered so deeply into the spirit, the love and the doctrine of the Divine Master that more and more each day he is recognized as his most faithful disciple and most authoritative interpreter;

that St. Paul is the Apostle who every day becomes more known, loved and prayed to little by little as the world makes itself capable of understanding him more.

3. How shall we spend this month?

We shall stay with St. Paul with the spirit of St. Titus who had the fortune of dealing familiarly with the Apostle for a long time.

He was with him as a disciple. Full, above all, with admiration for the holy life of the Apostle, he studied it in every detail and tried to copy it, to live as he lived.

We shall imitate his virtues. We shall often ask ourselves especially: what would Saint Paul do if he were in my place?

Also: he heard his holy teachings. St. Paul was so full of love for Our Lord, so convinced of his doctrine that he always spoke of it, everywhere, with great ardor, night and day. Titus heard, kept them in his heart and reflected.

In the third place, Titus had the fortune of praying with the Apostle. He felt his burning heart, attended his Holy Mass and received Communion from him.

And the Apostle carried Titus in his heart, besought the divine mercy for him. He obtained every grace for him.

So St. Titus merited to substitute the Apostle, to represent him. The faithful listened to him as they had listened to the Apostle. He was another Paul.

By meditating his examples, studying his teachings and praying to the Apostle, we shall be formed in him and we shall be in the spirit and heart of the true Paulines.

EXAMPLE. Many are the saints who are devoted to Saint Paul. Among them is St. Anthony Maria Zaccaria.¹

This saint was at first a physician, then a priest. While he was still a young man, he greatly loved St. Paul, often read his life in the Acts of the Apostles and lengthily meditated on his virtues.

As soon as he graduated in medicine, for about four years he dedicated to the reading and meditation of the letters of St. Paul all the time that he was free from his exercises of piety. Then, in imitation of the Apostle he started to preach in the plazas and in pious gatherings, to gather the children and to instruct the prisoners, the poor, the pilgrims. Almost he did nothing except to repeat to them the words of the Apostle, explaining them with ardor and simplicity.

By this means he kindled in himself an extraordinary ardor for his own sanctification and for the salvation of others.

To the Apostle he built a church or oratory that at first he named of St. Paul beheaded. Here he gathered his spiritual children. Here especially he preached, choosing preferably his favorite topic, that is, the letters of St. Paul. He called Paulines the regular clerics that he founded, although today they are more known as Barnabites because they set themselves as other Barnabases for their study and love of St. Paul.²

With the help of the Countess Porelli he also founded a monastery of Virgins called Angeliche. He called their monastery of St. Paul the Apostle. After his death, it was called of St. Paul the convert.

He used to say: I have never asked a grace from St. Paul that I have not received.

So the Church exhorts us to ask for the spirit of the Apos-

¹ Born in Cremona in 1502, he died there in 1539. He founded the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul.

² The appellation seems rather to come from the church of Saint Barnabas that they were officiating.

tle Paul after the example of St. Anthony M. Zaccaria, putting on the lips of the priests this prayer: "O Lord our God, grant that we may learn through the spirit of the Apostle Paul the supernatural science of Jesus Christ, taught by which science Blessed Anthony Maria instituted in the Church new families of clerics and virgins".

Homage: *Let us recite three times in an act of humility the words of St. Paul: Lord, what do you want me to do?*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle our protector, pray for us and for the Press Apostolate.*

THE FAITH OF SAINT PAUL

1. Faith is the first and most basic virtue, being, according to the Council of Trent, the principle of Christian life.¹

Without it is impossible to please God, said Saint Paul. Yet more, said Jesus: he who does not believe cannot be saved.

In fact, the life itself, fervor, zeal, hope and charity of a Christian depend on the degree of faith that he has. One who has true faith works miracles: true faith moves mountains. It is understood that needed is the faith of Blessed Cottolengo, who alone had more faith than thousands of Christians together. Now, it is exactly this living, deep, felt faith that Saint Paul possessed. He wrote that the just man lives by faith, and he was just and felt his faith to be so deep that he felt the need to communicate it to others and in the letter to the Hebrews he felt the need to give it the most sublime praise. His soul being filled with living faith, he felt he could have the testimony of his conscience | even thinking of God's judgment and he exclaimed with satisfaction: in my life I have always kept the faith: "*fidem servavi*"² and because of it he hoped to receive the eternal reward: "we who have believed shall enter into happiness" (Heb 10:22).³

¹ "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen" (Heb 11:1). – "*Without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Heb 11:6). – "*The just man lives by faith*" (Rom 10:38). – These series of citations from Sacred Scripture has been added by the Author himself, perhaps to use them in preaching. The first expression, taken from Heb 11:1, is reported in Italian; the other two in Latin, according to the habitual style of Fr. Alberione. – To be noted is the inaccuracy of the last citation: instead of Rom 10:38, we must read: Heb 10:38.

² "I have kept the faith" (2Tim 4:7).

³ The exact citation of this passage would be Heb 4:3. According to the common opinion of the time, Fr. Alberione recognizes Saint Paul as the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews*. The motive is not clear why the text of Heb 10:22 is cited. It sounds: "let us approach with sincere heart in

Do you have a living faith? A strong one? Do you believe all the words of the Gospel? Do you have great respect for the Church and for the Pope who teach them?

2. It is also necessary to consider that the faith of Saint Paul was constant in the face of the greatest difficulties. After his conversion he never had anymore a moment of doubt, not a moment of hesitation, even amidst grave difficulties. The Hebrews offered him all kinds of difficulties and objections. He did not budge. He did not doubt. He met with persecutions from his countrymen because he believed in Jesus Christ but he never hesitated. He was threatened with death but he never feared even in front of the executioner. On the contrary, gradually as the days of his life passed, his faith became ever more strong in his heart, with all the prodigies that multiplied from his very hands.

Drive away any doubt. Don't believe the magazines and the foolish scribblers: the Church alone, Saint Paul says, is the pillar and foundation of the truth.⁴

MSP

6

3. Faith must also go in operation, because without works faith is dead.⁵ Even the demons have faith, but not works. The man who believes in God follows the commandments.

And only he who does the will of the Lord will be saved.

What about Saint Paul? Not only did he strongly believe, but he heard the voice of God who called him to bring the name of Jesus Christ to the whole world. On the road to Damascus, struck by the grace of the Lord, he asks: what must I do? The Lord orders and commands him what in that moment was very hard: humble himself to ask for baptism and start a life opposed to that he lives. And he asks baptism from them⁶ who before he tried to kill. The spirit of the Lord

fullness of faith, with hearts purified of every evil conscience and the body washed with pure water".

⁴ Cf 1Tim 3:15.

⁵ Cf Jas 2:17,26. For the following passage, cf Jas 2:19.

⁶ In the italian text there is an incorrect expression.

had said: “Segregate Paul and Barnabas for the apostolate among the pagans”.⁷ And being obedient, Paul did that work until his death.

Remember: it’s not enough to believe, but to think truly that a judgment awaits you, that God sees you everywhere, that your life must be truly Christian.⁸

EXAMPLE. Saint Paul was in Listra⁹ to preach.

MSP

7

There was man there crippled from birth. He had never walked. He came to Saint Paul’s preaching and he looked at him with certain eyes that wanted to say: if you will, you can cure me. Upon seeing his faith, Saint Paul said in a loud voice: Stand up straight on your feet. And the man began to jump full of joy. The amazed people thought that Saint Paul was a god and wanted to offer him sacrifices. But Saint Paul said openly that only the God of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things had done this miracle.

It was the reward of faith.

Ejaculation. *O Saint Paul the Apostle*, etc.

⁷ Cf Acts 13:2.

⁸ Cf Rom 2:13: “Not they who listen to the law are just before God, but they who put in practice the law will be justified”.

⁹ Listri, or Listra, is the native country of Timothy (Acts 16:1). One can read the account of this healing in Acts 14:8ff.

THE HOPE OF SAINT PAUL ¹

1. Hope is the second theological virtue. By it we hope from the Lord not only heaven, but also the graces to arrive there. It's a beautiful and amiable virtue that makes us forget earth sometimes in order to think of heaven. There beyond is a place for us. Through his blood Jesus merited it for us. We can and we must arrive there. God has promised it to us. He is faithful to his word as Saint Paul says (Heb 10).² This is the greatest joy of them who live well and suffer. This has been the great thought of the Saints.

It requires a sweet confidence in the mercy of God because only through this mercy can we obtain the pardon of our sins and graces.

It also requires that we do not think of our merits because by ourselves, according to the Apostle,³ we would not even know how to mention with merit the name of Jesus. There are therefore two defects to be avoided: presumption and despair.

MSP
9 2. Saint Paul possessed this virtue. It is born of faith and has strength in a heart in the same degree as its faith.

Now in Saint Paul faith was heroic. And Saint Paul confessed it when he wrote: we have been saved from error by means of hope. Indeed, he said, we do not lose hope because it has great merits. And being full of joy at the thought of heaven, he said: we are happy because of our hope. And elsewhere: we

¹ At the foot of the original page we find the annotation: "It is this – the fundamentals – the fruits". In all probability they are aspects of the title-theme of the day (*Hope in Saint Paul*) that the Author intended to develop.

² Cf Heb 10:23. Fr. Alberione forgot to make precise the verse: perhaps he intended to annotate it at a second moment.

³ 1Cor 12:3: "I declare to you, nobody speaking under the action of the Spirit of God can say 'Jesus is cursed'. So also nobody can say 'Jesus is Lord' if not under the action of the Holy Spirit".

have great comfort in thinking of the hope that is in our heart like a firm anchor⁴ that almost succeeds in tearing open the veil that hides heaven from us. We are children of God. If children, we are heirs, heirs of God, co-heirs of heaven.⁵

When somebody worried too much due to the loss of his dear ones, he said to him: let us not do like those who not having hope⁶ of embracing them again worry inconsolably. And in the same anguish he consoled himself, saying: A crown of justice stands prepared for me, which the just Judge⁷ will give me, but not to me alone, also for all who love Jesus Christ. He admitted being a great sinner but he hoped totally through the precious blood of Jesus, and in the midst of dangers and temptations he trusted in winning thanks to the word of God: “my grace is sufficient”.⁸

3. Do we often think of Paradise that awaits us? We do not have here a stable dwelling, but we must go up there.

St. Paul exhorted the faithful of Corinth: a slight and very brief affliction wins for us a glory that is incomparable and eternal:⁹ it’s little what we have to suffer compared to the much to enjoy.

Let us ask the Lord for this great virtue and let us exercise it through frequent acts, recalling the thoughts of St. Paul: Jesus died for us, dying on the cross. He has prayed for us with his tears and the shedding of his Blood. Now that he lives in heaven, he prays for us there and offers himself to the Father for us continuously.

There are two sins opposed to hope: despair and presumption.

⁴ Fr. Alberione recalls here various biblical passages on the theme of hope, demonstrating his great familiarity with Sacred Scripture. For the precise context of this, cf Heb 6:19.

⁵ Cf Rom 8:17, where Paul writes exactly: “co-heirs with Christ”.

⁶ Cf 1Thes 4:13.

⁷ 2Tim 4:8.

⁸ 2Cor 12:9.

⁹ Cf 2Cor 4:17.

For the person who hopes, very well are suited the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ: "Whatever you shall ask the Father, in truth I say to you, it will be given you".¹⁰ The saints often repeated: I have hoped in you, O Lord, I shall never be ashamed.

On the other hand St. Paul was never presumptuous. Let us never believe that we are already strong in virtue, but let us fear our weakness, the occasions, pride.

Beautiful is the expression of St. Philip: I despair of myself, but I hope all in the Lord.

The *fruits* of hope are a sweet serenity in the midst of pains, the constant consideration of ourselves as pilgrims here on earth since we have a better homeland, detachment from the goods of this world that are just means, constant work to accumulate for ourselves heavenly treasures and prayer to obtain graces.

EXAMPLE. St. Paul had been arrested, bound, imprisoned and led before king Agrippa because he believed in the resurrection of the dead.

So as not to be condemned he appealed to Caesar and therefore was sent to Rome. Always under the custody of the soldiers, Paul boarded a ship that was sailing for Rome. With him there were other travelers. He hoped to reach there, an angel announced it, but his hope met many difficult tests.

Near Crete there was a great storm that had thrown the ship at the mercy of the waves: its cargo was thrown overboard as also the its tools. For 14 days they were in very serious danger of being shipwrecked.

St. Paul always gave comfort, he feared nothing, sure that he would even have converted those people who sailed with him, that is, 270 persons. Another shipwreck in Malta: even then Paul did not lose courage, trusting only in God. When they touched earth Paul was bitten by a viper, but it did not

¹⁰ Cf Jn 15:7.

hurt him, on the contrary, he healed the father of Publius, the governor of the island. Hence many believed in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul accomplished many prodigies and converted many persons. Soon after he reached Rome safe because of his firm hope in God.

Homage: *Recite an act of hope.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

CHARITY OF ST. PAUL FOR GOD

Charity is friendship, benevolence and love that we show in our heart toward our heavenly Father and our brothers, our neighbor. Charity towards God and our neighbor are like two rays of the same flame.

1. Charity towards God can be considered as the state of grace. Indeed, it is inseparable from the state of grace. It is so necessary that Saint Paul writes: “If I spoke the language of men and of angels and did not have charity, I would just be like a copper vase, or a cymbal. These make a vain sound that disperses in the air. And if I had the gift of prophecy and knew every mystery and every science, if I had such faith as to move mountains, but did not have charity, I would be nothing. And if I distributed all my goods to the poor and threw myself into the fire to save my neighbor but did it without charity, it would be nothing”.¹

Charity can exist in many degrees in a heart: from the simple state of grace one can go to the most burning acts of desire and love of many Saints.

2. Now, who can tell the outstanding level of the sanctity of the Apostle? He starts to assure us that he possesses the grace of the Lord when he writes: The charity of God is infused in our heart in virtue of the Holy Spirit that was given to us. Then he exhorts the faithful of Ephesus to grow with him every day in the friendship of God. Then he asks the Philippians to ascend with him even higher. We know moreover how intensely burning in his heart was the fire of his love for God from what he wrote about his intimate union

¹ Cf 1Cor 13:1ff.

with Our Lord Jesus Christ, until his saying that it was not anymore he that lived, but Jesus Christ in him.

Love and the spirit of prayer, when they reach certain heights and certain states of prayer can even arrive at ecstasies and visions. And St. Paul arrived until meriting to be rapt until the third heaven and to converse O. L. J. C. Fr. Àlvarez says that here is precisely the fifteenth and highest degree of love for God.

He even merited to be conformed to Our Lord Jesus Christ in his body: "I bear the marks of the Divine Master in my body".

3. Are you in the state of grace? If due to a very great misfortune you were in sin, you should confess as soon as possible, so as to put yourself again in the state of friendship with the Lord.

Love for God leads us to remain often with God. How do you make your Communion? Do you unite yourself to God in your thoughts and sentiments?

Love for God makes us fear venial sin. How do you flee venial sin? Do you hate and abhor every little offense to the Savior?

Do you always seek to increase in the love of God by trying hard to advance in virtue?

The holy flame of the love of God is nourished by meditation and the reading of holy things, while it is extinguished by dissipation and by too much familiarity with worldly persons.

Let us meditate on the advice of the Apostle: "Above all have charity".

EXAMPLE. Useful for us are the ardent desires of St. Paul to possess and increase charity. "The charity of Christ impels us. Who will be able to separate me from the love of Jesus Christ? Perhaps afflictions, anguish, hunger, nakedness, dangers, persecutions, the sword? Ah no, neither the principal-

ties, nor the powers, nor the present, nor the future, nor violence, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate me from the love of God in Jesus Christ my Lord". "My life is Jesus Christ".

"I am crucified with Jesus Christ. Everything appears like slime to me if I compare it to the science of Jesus Christ, for love of whom I am decided to despise all in order to possess Jesus Christ".²

St. John Chrysostom says that the Apostle pushed himself so far in the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ that it could be affirmed that there are not two hearts already, but only one: "The heart of Paul was the heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ".

Homage: *During the day remember often the advice of Saint Paul: let all things be done in charity.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

² Series of citations from various letters (from Gal to Phil, etc.), habitual in Fr. Giaccardo, as we shall see further on.

THE CHARITY OF ST. PAUL FOR NEIGHBOR

Charity towards God has an external sign by which it is easily known: love of neighbor. “By this, the Divine Master said, men will know that you are my disciples: if you love one another”.

1. Love of God is the first precept, love of neighbor is the second and in them consists the whole Gospel. One who loves his neighbor and not just for mere sensibility or inclination, has a love that is always equal, always pure and always constant. One who loves his neighbor cares for his body and soul. Knowing it, will you let your neighbor perish for whom Jesus Christ died?, wrote St. Paul. The works of charity are: to console the afflicted, counsel the doubtful, teach the ignorant, admonish the wicked, pardon the offenses, bear the troublesome, pray God for the living and the dead.

The corporal works of charity are: help the needy, help others, lend our service, etc. Remember that Jesus Christ considers as done to him what we do to our neighbor: whether it is good or bad. Let us also love our enemies. Let us forgive offenses, recalling well the scene of the universal judgment as it was preannounced to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It is not possible to describe the charity of the Apostle for his neighbor in a manner so brief. All his life is charity: it is an apostolate of good for others, so much so that St. John Chrysostom wrote: “Just as iron, when placed in the fire, also becomes fire, so Paul, aflame with love, became totally love”.

Now through his letters, now through his live voice, sometimes with prayers, sometimes with threats, here for

himself, there for his disciples: he used all means to encourage the faithful, let the strong continue to be strong, lift up the weak and the fallen into sin, heal the wounded, reanimate the lukewarm, rebut the enemies of the faith. Excellent captain, intrepid soldier, skillful physician, he was sufficient for all. And in the fervor of his love, the Apostle said that he made himself all for all in order to save all and he asked: Where is a need found without my running there? Who is in need and I don't offer him immediate aid? I would have desired to be anathema for my brothers. To the Colossians he wrote: "I rejoice to suffer for you", and to the Thessalonians: "It was my ardent desire not only to announce to you the Gospel, but to give my life for you".

3. St. Paul describes who is truly charitable with his neighbor: Put on the loins of mercy, kindness, humility, patience, supporting one another and pardoning each other's offenses.

He exhorts us to love one another in peace as if we formed a family, or, better, just one body and one soul, one supporting the defects of the others. And more clearly he enumerates for us the qualities of true love towards our neighbor. 1) Charity is patient; 2) it is gentle and beneficent; 3) is not envious; 4) is not rash or reckless; 5) is not proud; 6) is not disdainful or egoistic; 7) is not touchy or irritable; 8) does not think bad; 9) does not enjoy injustice but rejoices in the truth; 10) bears all things; 11) believes all things; 12) hopes all things; 13) tolerates all things; 14) will never fail. Let us examine ourselves if our charity towards our neighbor is like this.

EXAMPLE. One of the most sure signs of love of neighbor is the forgiving of offenses: forgiving that becomes heroic when we seek to save the one who has disgusted us and to do good to the one who has hurt us. Well, let us observe the demeanor of Saint Paul. His former co-religionists had tried to

kill him at least four times. For several times they had aroused tumults against him. They had him scourged to blood. More than once they brought him before tribunals. And yet what was the vengeance of the apostle? The most gentle vengeance of charity: always another time to write to them to draw them to the true faith, receive with the greatest goodness the repentant, return even risking his life to see them again, collect alms for Christians to bring it to them in time of famine, to address always to them first before to the gentiles in every city his ardent words, risk his life for them. Now, Jesus Christ said: No one loves his neighbor more than he who risks his life for his brother.

Homage: *Glance at a picture of St. Paul, and say his words: "Who among you is glad and I don't rejoice with him? Who weeps among you and I too don't weep?"*.

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL

1. The sanctity of Saint Paul began on the day of his conversion. Now, what is conversion? It is a change, changing one's way, taking another method of living. It involves change in one's thoughts, desires, works. That is, that the converted person start to value what before he despised and despise what before he valued. Conversion cannot be had only when changing religion or abandoning a life of vices¹ and sins. It can also happen leaving certain defects. One who is disobedient becomes obedient. A lazy man becomes industrious. An apathetic person becomes fervent, from being proud he becomes humble. This also is conversion. In this sense the Church every day puts on the lips of her priests this prayer: Lord, deign to convert us, and the Venerable Olier² asked and resolved often to convert himself.

2. The conversion of Saint Paul³ was so extraordinary, so total and so permanent that the church has thought to recall it through a special feast that must be celebrated throughout the world solemnly. It was extraordinary more than that of Peter and of Saint Augustine because it happened due to a miracle,

¹ In the ms: *vizzi*.

² Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657), a French priest; founder of the "Society of Saint Sulpice" (Sulpicians) for the formation of the clergy. Guided spiritually by saint Vincent de Paul, Olier worked with excellent results both in the parish ministry and in the formation of seminarians. There are those who because above all of his very fine feelings, compared him to saint Francis de Sales. His spirituality, inspired by the French Oratory and especially by the doctrine of card. de Bérulle, is characterized above all by love for Christ and by mystical union with the incarnate Word.

³ The narrative of the conversion or vocation of saint Paul can be read in Acts 9:1-30. As we know, the apostle himself narrates several times his decisive encounter with the Lord Jesus: Acts 22:3-21; Acts 26:2-23; Gal 1:11-24.

since Jesus floored him on his way to Damascus and Paul being so convinced of the truth of his religion that he had become a true and fierce persecutor of the Church. His conversion was so sudden that not even Ananias and the Apostles wanted to believe it. It was so total that he began immediately⁴ to preach Jesus Christ with the ardor and conviction he had before in encouraging the Pharisees to kill Saint Stephen and to seek to imprison the Christians. It was so permanent that never more there was a day he hesitated, either during the time he passed in solitude, or during his apostolic journeys, or in his imprisonments.

3. In exhorting the Hebrews to convert themselves, he says to them: Have great confidence in divine mercy,⁵ just have a sincere sentiment. Have a great will to do better. If one committed big sins, he should make a good confession and change radically.

MSP
12

And the others? Let them pick out their principal defect, with the advice of their confessor, declare war against it without truce. To pray, to promise, to examine themselves every day. To report to their Confessor every week. Great vigilance. Nonstop violent action. It will require even many years, but you will succeed in acquiring the opposite virtue. Will it be faith, or charity, or humility, or obedience? Whatever it may be, it is certain that in practice it is impossible to acquire completely a virtue without many others coming in with it.

EXAMPLE. The episode of the conversion of Paul. Saul, then called Paul, convinced of the truth of the Hebrew religion, wanted to put to death all the Christians. After receiving permission to go to Damascus and imprison as many of them as he could find, he went there with soldiers. Suddenly near Damascus an unexpected splendor enveloped him and while

MSP
13

⁴ *immediately*: added in the ms.

⁵ Cf Heb 4:16.

he fell to earth he heard a voice that said to him: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? – He answered: And who are you, Lord? – And he: I am that Jesus who you persecute. – Trembling and stupefied, Saul answered: Lord, what do you want me to do? – And the Lord: Go into the city and there you will be told what to do. – Those with him heard, but saw nothing. They helped Saul, who could not see anymore, up and led him by the hand to Damascus. He stayed there for three days, praying and fasting. – Finally, the Lord sent a vision to the disciple Ananias wherein he told him to look for Saul in the inn, without fearing and to baptize him. – Thus Ananias did: Saul was baptized, he regained his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom. Since that day he became the most fervent among the Apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶

⁶ Added at the foot of the page: “Out of humility he refused the divine honors: *V. Acts of the Apostles* (cf Acts 14:13ff); or Bosco, *Vita di San Paolo*, pag. 27”. – It’s a work written by Saint John Bosco: “*Vita di S. Paolo Apostolo dottore delle genti*, edited by Sacer. Bosco Giovanni”, Torino, Tip. di G.B. Paravia e Comp., 1857.

THE OBEDIENCE OF ST. PAUL

For thirty years Jesus led a life of obedience, subject to Joseph and Mary. He even obeyed until death, meriting through such obedience to be exalted to so great a glory as St. Paul says: "Made obedient until death, for which God exalted him and gave him a Name above all other names, so that at the name of Jesus all should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is in the glory of heaven".

The young who are obedient are blessed by the Lord, even on this earth. They will receive special graces in life. They will sing of many victories in Paradise.

1. St. Paul continually insists on this virtue: Children, obey your parents. Servants, obey your masters. It's necessary to admonish everyone to be subject to the heads and authorities. Obey your superiors and be subject to them because they watch over you as tasked to render account of your souls, so that they may fulfill this duty with consolation and not with sorrow.

2. The life of St. Paul was totally a life of obedience. He received baptism out of obedience. He preached the Gospel all his life to obey God's order. In Jerusalem, in fact, where he had gone to preach, as soon as he became a Christian, Jesus appeared to him and told him: Leave quickly Jerusalem, because this people will not believe you... Paul protested: Lord, they know that I was a persecutor and a blasphemer. If they know that I have converted, they too will be converted. And Jesus: It is not so. Go, I have chosen you to bring my gospel to distant countries among the gentiles. And St. Paul obeyed until death by sword. St. Peter ordered him to withdraw to preach in Tarsus and he obeyed. In the Council of Je-

rusalem, St. Peter ordered him again to undertake an apostolic journey with Barnabas, and he did it. St. Peter sent him to bring a letter to Antioch. Paul also obeyed. Moreover, each time that Saint Paul changed the place of his missions or undertook his voyages, it was always after lengthy prayers to know the will of the Lord.

Jesus talked to him either directly or through St. Peter; now through visions, now through happenings and special circumstances. And St. Paul was always ready for the voice of God: whatever his intentions were or his special views, obedience first of all.

3. Our obedience must be in readiness, cheerful, blind, constant.

In readiness: that is, we must do like St. Paul who turns to Jesus and tells him: “Lord, what do you want me to do?”. And as soon as he knows the will of God, he is ready, and without waiting for something else, he quickly executes.

Cheerful: that is, St. Paul says, not murmuring with sadness: “with joy, and not lamenting, because this not good”.

Blind: that is, even and especially when we do not know well the reasons, even when it is apparent to us or the contrary should be done, “so that – St. Paul reasons – you may be in all simplicity and candidness children of God without meriting reproaches for yourselves”.

Constant: and that means even in the most difficult things, even when you are already advanced in years, even when people don’t see you, as what St. Paul tells us: “do all things without hesitation or murmuring...”. May this saying of the Holy Spirit be a stimulus for us: The obedient man shall sing of victories.

EXAMPLE. St. Paul for some time wanted to bring the Holy Gospel to Asia, that is, in Ionia, Lydia and Syria but he was never able to do it. Finally, after having taken with him

Timothy and after having visited the Churches founded by him, he went there with some companions. But upon arriving, the Spirit disallowed him to preach there. And Paul obeyed promptly. So he wanted to go to Bithinia and arranged everything to go there, but again the Spirit of Jesus prohibited him, and immediately St. Paul bowed to obedience.

So he went down to Troas. Here an angel appeared to him dressed as a Macedonian who, standing on his feet, besought him: Oh, have pity on us, come to Macedonia and help us. And St. Paul, in obedience, also left Troas, crossed the sea, landed in Samothracia and without stopping went directly to Philippi, the capital of Macedonia. And there he stayed, notwithstanding that in the beginning the result was meager, and that there he was imprisoned and scourged to blood, until the Lord made him see that he could leave from there. To appreciate properly this obedience, we must understand that to go from place to place required months of long and dangerous travels. St. Paul, however, when it was a matter of obedience never doubted, nor hesitated nor excused himself.

Homage: *Examine your conscience on this point: Do I obey because I understand the reasons or because God commands it?*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

THE POVERTY OF ST. PAUL

Poverty can be a necessity of one's condition, but poverty loved in the midst of riches is a virtue that Our Lord Jesus Christ has sought and practiced. "He, though being rich, says St. Paul, made himself poor for us". He wanted a poor mother, he lived in poverty and he died very poor.

One who detaches his heart from money acquires spiritual freedom to serve the Lord. And poverty practiced as practiced by a religious is also Christian heroism that belongs to the evangelical counsels.

1. St. Paul recommends poverty with insistence: "When we have food and clothing, let us be content with them. Let us enrich ourselves with the eternal goods of Paradise, because we have brought nothing to this world and no doubt we will not be able to bring anything out after death". And, in fact, what help can riches give us at death? More often than not they are thorns that torment us even in our life.

Let us bear in mind: Poverty as a virtue is one of the beatitudes promised by Jesus Christ: "Blessed are the poor in spirit".

2. St. Paul, according to what they tell us ordinarily, was not of a very rich family, but only well-to-do. He could have lived a comfortable enough life, yet he renounced everything to serve Jesus Christ in the Holy Gospel. Like the Apostles, he went from city to city, from region to region with the outfit counseled by Our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, without knapsack, with just a pair of sandals, and barely the necessary to cloth himself. And to get by life? He is content with any bed that often was the bare earth, the pavement of a room, under the poor protection of a plant. He traveled for entire days now under the beating of the sun and now against the ferocity of the cold and of rain.

And his food? Scarse, often received as alms, always exceedingly frugal: when he could, it is gained by making mats for soldiers because if he said that even the worker of the gospel merited his sustenance, he then wrote to his children: "You yourselves know that I have not sought from you gold or clothing or money. You know that what I needed I gained through the work of my hands". And he himself reminds how in several places he suffered hunger, thirst and extreme shortage of everything.

3. The spirit of poverty wants that, first of all, we content ourselves of our life's condition: if poor, as poor. Will some privation or humiliation be our lot? Let us accept everything in a spirit of patience and in union with O. L. J. C. who lived and died exceedingly more poor than us.

In food, in dress, in lodging, let us be content with everything. Secondly, let us not be anxious with thinking: What shall we eat or what shall we dress? Our Father knows what we need. On our part let us work as much as we can, let us take care of the things that we have, let us not waste anything and run a just economy. Finally, one who wants to advance even more, let him do away even with what he has. Depriving oneself of some things while living is a lot more meritorious than leaving them in death, even if for motives of beneficence.

Rather, let each one look for occasions of mortification. Never spend without due permission. Also seize opportunities to do some good for others, especially when it is about the Press Apostolate.

EXAMPLE. In Corinth the Apostle Paul had harvested an abundant harvest of souls. He had arrived there toward the year 53 A.D. according to the most common opinion. There he asked as alms some lodging in the house of a certain Aquila, a fervent Christian. This man was poor and for his living he had to open a shop where with others he worked by

making tents for soldiers. St. Paul shared bread with that family and no doubt he was content with the least possible so as not to cause too much burden on his benefactor. On the contrary, he reached this point: he busied himself with learning the trade and when there was time left after preachings and prayers, he also very carefully worked making tents. He never lost time. He, the great Apostle, put himself at the level of the most humble laborer of a shop. Moreover, while all were intent on working and he himself worked, he taught the new religion in order to convert those workers who were pagans. He knew very well the value of time, especially in the face of eternity.

Homage: *Recite the Our Father and then give an alms to the poor. One who is rich must not have too much, one who is poor must not suffer.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

THE HUMILITY OF ST. PAUL

Humility is like the violet. It loves to be hidden and in the meantime it is so sweet-smelling and dear as to make itself desired and sought by all. The humble person, in fact, thinks lowly of himself, loves to hide and to be esteemed as nothing. Meanwhile the perfume of his virtue wafts among men who, while they despise the proud, bow down even before a simple innocent child. Also, the humble person attracts upon himself the kind and loving looks of the Lord, wins over the divine mercy, gains so many special graces and is by God himself exalted. "If you do not become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven".

1. St. Louis Gonzaga took St. Paul as his model of humility. In fact, St. Paul makes us first consider the example of the Divine Master who "humbled himself till his death on the cross". He assures us that God "consoles the humble", and recommends that we "put on humility" and "associate with the humble" and "walk in the spirit of humility". And he challenges the proud to say of what they can be proud: "What do you have that you have not received? And if you have received all, why do you boast as if you had not received all?"

Humility has two parts: contempt of oneself based on a clear knowledge of one's misery, and obliviousness to the esteem of others. Humility enters the mind, the will, our words and our works. It is the negative foundation of the entire spiritual edifice.

2. St. Paul's humility shows from all his works and writings. To his disciples in Corinth he said: "I am among you in an attitude and look of humility and abjection". After having worked more than all the apostles and filled the world with

his word and miracles, he wrote: "I am the least of all, and I am not worthy to be called an apostle because I have persecuted the Church". And he confessed his errors and attributed to the mercy of God his not being lost. He lived also in continuous fear for his sins that so many times had already been forgiven and he had already purged them through many acts of penance. "I do not remember and know to have some sins now, but not for this I am sure of myself. Who judges me is Jesus Christ". And he continually lived in fear of yet offending the Lord and made great acts of penance that were generically designated by the words: "I chastise my body and place it in subjection".

3. How much we feel proud in front of this our great saint! He said that due to the Holy Gospel he had been considered as the trash of the world and a worm to be trampled down, and we instead want always that everybody have regard for us, praise us, approve us. He did not think highly of himself, but willingly thought of his miseries. On the other hand, we forget too often our defects and sins, while deep in us we take delight in every good result and action. He did not expect to command, lived in the holy fear of God. We, however, pretend always to impose ourselves and to let the superiority that often we don't have be felt.

So let us put ourselves well in God's presence and embarrass ourselves for so much pride of ours. Let us propose to become truly humble. Without humility there can be no virtue or sanctity.

EXAMPLE. St. Paul had already given example and preached in Damascus and Arabia, succeeding in converting many to Christianity.

He was the most penetrating of all the sacred orators. He had been filled with a very high doctrine, having received direct revelations from Our Lord Jesus Christ. He returned now to Jerusalem to present himself to the Apostles and entrust to

them his life and rebuild in the holy city what he had ruined through persecution.

But the Apostles repelled him, and the faithful rejected him, accusing him of hypocrisy. This episode is a mystery in the life of St. Paul. And Paul, “the vessel of election”, bowed his head in humiliation. And, more wonderful, he presented himself then to Barnabas, already a disciple with him, narrated to him the grace of God and asked him to let him be accepted in the Church. And thus he was accepted. And everybody talked and blessed God for this grace. And Paul thought that the grace given him would serve as a stimulus for the conversion of the Pharisees in Jerusalem and he knew he was called by God to bring his name even to the children of Israel.

Jesus appears to him in the temple, telling him to get out of Jerusalem. St. Peter calls him to himself and invites him to withdraw to Tarsus, his city. Without seeing the motives, Paul again bows his head as a useless servant and goes back to hiding for some years. Barnabas will have to look for him to find him. After the training God made him the sun of the Church, and Paul continued to say: I am the last of the brethren.

Homage: Repeat often during the day: By myself I can do nothing, with God I can do everything,, to God, honor, to myself, contempt.

Ejaculation: O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.

THE CHASTITY OF ST. PAUL

There is a virtue so precious that it is called the “beautiful virtue”. To indicate it are called to mind the most expressive symbols like the limpid mirror, the immaculate lily, etc. It is the virtue of Jesus, Mary, the Saints. It is the virtue that allows us to reserve to God all our energies, that prepares for the soul indescribable delights, that merits in Paradise a privileged place close to the spotless Lamb, Jesus. Only he that possesses it is capable of those heroisms of sanctity that make the Catholic Church beautiful: the zeal of missionaries and of the apostles, the spirit of sacrifice of the martyrs, the faith of confessors, the love of virgins. The young person who is chaste is a saint. One who is unchaste, even if he had the best qualities, in disgust of him we flee to God.

1. St. Paul is the teacher of this beautiful virtue. He exalts Christian virginity and says that it is the image of the immaculate union between Christ and the Church and fruit of this supernatural union. He gives to widows holy rules for the custody of continence, strengthens the elderly in chastity, prods the young to practice it, proclaims it as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, preaches it as the foundation of Christian families, searches it as a sign of vocation and recommends it with very jealous care to the ministers of God.

He even saw how necessary is this virtue as to make it almost equivalent to sanctification: “This is the will of God, that you become holy, that you abstain from fornication”. He held in horror every sin in this matter, such that he did not even want it to be mentioned: let not any sort of impurity, or turpitude, or evil talk, or immoral joke be even named.

2. St. Paul made no secret of his chastity that he esteemed as a very precious treasure: *Habemus thesaurum*: we have a treasure. And he wanted so much that everyone knew how to

keep himself continent because, with the light of the Holy Spirit, he did not hesitate to say that in matter of chastity he could be an example: I would like that every man be as I am.

He chastised his body and brought it to servitude, in order to offer it continually to the crucified Jesus as an immaculate victim.

He had to bear from the devil and from the flesh terrible temptations. By means of prayer and divine grace, he transformed into merit the temptations of the devil and into perfect charity the temptation of the flesh. In such a way that the Holy Spirit, wanting to indicate to Virgins a model to imitate and an example to follow, showed St. Paul.

Thus, he lived chastely till his death, saying to all: I say also to the continent that it is a good thing that they remain as they are similarly as I do.

3. The beautiful virtue is very delicate. As an object of glass is blurred by a breath and as a lily is damaged by a touch, so it is quickly seriously hurt. A thought truly consented to, a desire, a word, a glance, an act is enough to commit a serious sin, while on the other hand, as St. Paul says, this treasure is kept in a fragile vase and the temptations especially at a certain age are very grave.

Two things can make us safe: prayer and flight from the occasions of sin. Prayer: that is, frequenting of the Holy Sacraments and great fervor in receiving them, devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, ejaculations every time and as soon as one is tempted.

Flight from the occasions, especially guarding the heart, control of the eyes, decency of speech, promptly driving away every bad thought, absolute avoidance of every dangerous company and literature, a withdrawn life. What in substance the Divine Savior recommends: Watch and pray.

EXAMPLE. Saint Thecla was born in Iconium, where St. Paul founded one of the first Christian communities. Of a

pagan and very distinguished family, she was very learned in philosophy, a fan of literature and the arts. Her parents had promised her as a spouse to a young man named Tamiride, one very rich and of noble kin.

But after hearing Paul preach, she was converted. Hearing from Paul the excellent values of virginity, she vowed herself to God and left Tamiride. Accused by her parents as being a Christian, she was threatened with fire if she did not renounce the new religion. Making the sign of the cross, she threw herself into the burning stake prepared for her. But a sudden rain extinguished the fire and she did not get hurt.

She was sent to Antioch and threatened to be given as food to the beasts if she did not renounce chastity. She remained unmoved and the beasts, meek with her, did not touch her.

She was thrown into a pit of serpents but none of them hurt her.

Many converted to Christianity seeing such prodigies and hearing her exhortations. Freed and back in Iconium, she lived until 90 years of age, practicing virginity and every virtue and engaging in works of zeal for the conversion of unbelievers.

Homage: *To control one's eyes today.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

THE MISSION OF SAINT PAUL

1. In creating us, the Lord assigns to each one a place in the world, a career¹ in life, a special vocation. And in accord with this special vocation he gives to each one the fitting inclinations and attitudes. He also prepares all that complex of graces that are necessary for that special office. Among the principal and most noble careers and missions, the most principal and noble is the vocation of saving souls. By it, one exercises the most high and delicate office of Jesus the Savior and becomes cooperators, as Saint Paul² writes, with that God who is the lover of souls: “*God, you who love souls*”. Then the most important part of this mission is entrusted to those who work for the good press.³

Saint Paul exalted this same mission of saving souls when he said: “*Pro Christo legatione fungimur*” we are the ambassadors of Jesus Christ.⁴

2. The Lord called Paul to this high office.

After knocking him down on the road to Damascus, he told Ananias to go to instruct and baptize him. Ananias protested: But, Lord, this man has come here to massacre all the Christians. – And the Lord: Go however in peace and don’t be afraid because he is an instrument chosen by me to bring my name to the gentiles, before kings and the children of Israel. I shall make him see how much he must suffer for me.

¹ “*Carriera*”: in the sense of employment, way to follow with total dedication.

² Cf 1Cor 4:1.

³ In the first draft it was written “the most delicate part”. An assertion, however, of great importance, proving what consideration Fr. Alberione gave to the apostolate of the good press.

⁴ 2Cor 5:20.

And the Lord had given him all the attitudes of an apostle.

He was good-looking. His constitution is robust, although he is short in stature. His character is sanguine and fiery, as shown by his pale face and small and soon to be bald head. His eyes are penetrating and lively, his demeanor gentle and affable. His genius is extraordinary, his will indomitable, his virtue heroic, his eloquence irresistible, his heart generous, his science vast, his spirit ready and his versatility one of a kind.

He is also endowed with extraordinary gifts: prophecy, as when he predicts bad things happening to some stubborn people; miracles, and he did many of them.⁵

MSP
16

3. And to what office or mission has the Lord called us? First of all, it is fitting that we often have recourse to the Lord to know what he wants from us. That is, to do as Saint Paul who on the road to Damascus asks: Lord, what do you want me to do? Pray especially after Holy Communion.

Secondly, let us see if in us there are signs of vocation: that is, a completely proven virtue, nourished by a savoury and an alive piety founded on the humility of a child, sustained by immovable faith. Knowledge that is also required for one who intends to dedicate himself to the job of writer, an office that demands much know-how today. Love for this life of sacrifice, of movement, of many adventures, exposed to all criticisms and many contradictions, destined for the salvation of many and that will end up in great glory in heaven. Do we correspond to this vocation? Through study? Through piety? Through willing work for the good press?

⁵ He adds in the ms: (*Vita di S. Paolo – D. Bosco – pp. 46-62*). Citation that proves his wide use of that source.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SAINT PAUL

[1.] Correspondence to the divine graces is so necessary that without it we would not do except aggravate our conscience.¹ We ought to recall the tremendous sentence of the Divine Savior: "Many are called but few are chosen".²

Now, what does correspondence imply?³ That we respond to the voice of God declaring ourselves *ready*: here I am Lord; since it is exactly this cheerful readiness in giving ourselves to God that merits divine benevolence: "*God loves a cheerful giver*".⁴ That one answers *with generosity*; and it means also at the cost of some sacrifice as every road has its difficulties and the mission to save souls has some truly grave ones. That one answers *with constancy*, because the man who puts his hand on the plough, Jesus has said, and then looks back, is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven.⁵ To the beginners, Saint Bernard has said, the reward is promised, but to the one who perseveres is it really assigned.

[2.] And such exactly was the correspondence of Saint Paul.

He answered with *promptness*: the same day that he received baptism he was already an apostle. In the same place where all feared him as a blasphemer and persecutor, he invited all to bless and acknowledge Jesus Christ. And there was need that they invited him to withdraw first for some time in order to pray and meditate.⁶

¹ In the ms he had written, also here: *corrispondenza*, then corrected to *coscienza*.

² Mt 20:16.

³ What *does it involve*, or *demand*.

⁴ 2Cor 9:7.

⁵ Cf Lk 9:62.

⁶ Cf Acts 9:30.

He corresponded with *generosity*. The difficulties fired him, the tortures inflamed him. After the stoning he stood up more exuberant and ready. Led before Agrippa to be judged, he spoke with such ardor that the judges had him led away almost so as not to be persuaded by him to become Christians.⁷

With *constancy*: In Miletus he found many priests gathered together. This is the discourse he gave them:⁸ Now I go to Jerusalem, guided there by the Holy Spirit that in all places where I pass, makes me know the chains and tribulations that await me. But nothing of that frightens me, nor do I esteem my life more precious than my duty. For me it is of little importance to live or die, as long as I finish my career giving glorious testimony to the gospel that Jesus Christ has entrusted to me.

MSP
19

[3.] Correspondence to the graces that from God are given to us must also be prompt, generous and constant.

Prompt, even if God, in calling us to a higher vocation, said to us as he did to the Apostles: leave all, follow me, I shall make you fishers of men.⁹ Even father, mother, brothers, sisters ought to be abandoned.

Generous: we must know that the devil envies us and would want to destroy us, that our flesh is always lazy to do good, that the world does not approve except what is bad. Now we should not give attention to any of these, or mind them. Let us pray and advance in the Lord!¹⁰ And until when?

With constancy, until the end. Yes, until the end of our life, until we give off our soul in the arms of Mary, kissing the crucifix. Blessed is he, Jesus said, who, when death comes, he will find in the field of labor.¹¹

⁷ Acts 26:1-32.

⁸ It is his moving farewell discourse to the elders of Ephesus. We can read it in Acts 20:18-35.

⁹ Mt 4:19.

¹⁰ In the original text there is: "*avanti in Domino*".

¹¹ Cf Lk 12:37.

EXAMPLE. In Lystra Paul and Barnabas had worked many miracles and won many souls for God. But some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium purposely to upset the mission.¹² Those evil people worked and said so much that all the people revolted against the two apostles, but especially targeted was the more ardent, that is, Saint Paul. They unloaded on him a hail of stones so terrible that Paul fell to the ground. Believing him dead, they dragged him out of the city to abandon him to corruption. When the disciples knew about this, they gathered around his body to weep and pray. But Paul gets up, sound and robust, and returns to Lystra among the stoners themselves, ready to restart his preaching if that would have been the will of God. He did not leave from there had he not known afterwards that God wanted him to go elsewhere.

MSP
20

¹² Cf Acts 14:19ff.

THE ZEAL OF SAINT PAUL

1. The intrinsic qualities of true zeal are the following: it is ardent, prudent, tireless.

It is *ardent*: because when it is born in a heart, and grows there, it is transformed as in a passion; and at this point the apostle reaches the most of his strength, since all his soul is absorbed and even his body and his passions are absorbed by the same passion that makes him say: “*Da mihi animas, cætera tolle*”:¹ *cætera*, that is, all the rest, including also my life.

It is *prudent*: because taking aim only at souls and nothing more, disposes everything with weight, number and measure so that the greatest quantity² of souls may be saved.

Tireless: since it is propped up by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It knows all the failures due to one’s weakness and misery and accepts them as occasions for merit. Rejections, insults, sneers, calumnies, persecutions do not stop him. He does not even notice the fatigue. Everything is nothing! Provided souls are saved,³ said Saint Paul. And what is more beautiful than this, exclaimed a holy missionary, than to abandon everything, fly to inhospitable shores, save a soul and receive the crown of martyrdom?

MSP 22 2. Here precisely is the greatest glory of Saint Paul! His zeal was *ardent*. He had showed his ardor when due to his zeal for the law he roused persecution against Saint Stephen.

¹ “Give me souls, take the rest”: motto attributed to St. John Bosco.

² In the Italian text there is the word “*copia*”, to be understood in the sense of *abundance*, according to the Latin use.

³ “*Provided souls are saved*”. This can be considered as an expression that sums up all the apostolic zeal of saint Paul. For the idea of “saving” souls, compare 1Cor 9:22: “I made myself weak with the weak, to gain the weak; I made myself all for all, to save someone at all costs”.

Unable then to stone, he guarded the vestments⁴ and encouraged the persecutors. Once converted, his zeal became very ardent passion. Persecutions in Damascus, in Jerusalem, at Lystra, in Thessalonica, in Antioch and in Rome did not stop him.

A *prudent* zeal: he knew how to flee when it was time, as in Damascus; how to confront when it was needed, as in Jerusalem; to the Jews he brought arguments drawn from Sacred Scripture because they believed in it; in front of the Areopagus he took arguments from reason, quoted one of their poets:⁵ since it was prohibited to introduce a new divinity or to make [objections] against the Gods (that had cost the life of Anaxagoras and Socrates) under pain of death, he even said that he had come to preach the unknown God adored by them.

He was *tireless*: the more his body became weak due to the beatings of persecutions, the effects of toil, hardships, chains, the more his soul seemed to become young with new life. In the letter written by the Council of Jerusalem to the pagan converts in Antiochia, Syria and Cilicia, that venerable assembly of Apostles says: “We have judged well to send you Paul and Barnabas, men very dear to us who sacrificed their life for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ”.⁶ A more beautiful testimony could not be desired.

3. How shall our zeal be? Ardent? – It will become ardent if we will not think except directing and turning all our life and aspirations towards that mission that the Lord wanted us to be entrusted with. Don’t look anymore at what the others are doing or saying. We have a career before us. Therefore, advance, *in the Lord*, full of holy enthusiasm. We must, it is

MSP
23

⁴ Acts 7:57.

⁵ Acts 17:28. “In him, in fact, we live and move and have our being, as even some of your poets have said: Because we are his progeny”. A quotation from *Fenomeni*, by the poet Aratus of Soli, of the III century B.C.

⁶ Acts 15:26.

true, however: take care of our health, take the needed rest, talk with discretion, maintain our peace, dispose of all with evangelical prudence so as not to merit the reproach of Our Lord Jesus Christ: “The children of darkness are more prudent than the children of the light”.⁷ Mindful also of the precept of the Savior: “Be prudent like serpents”.⁸ – Don’t allow opposition or fatigue to tire you. We shall rest in heaven, said the saints. Paradise is precisely called “*requies*”, that is, rest.⁹ The greater the toil, the more abundant the reward. *Satagite, magis satagite*:¹⁰ said Saint Paul. Work, work. And why? To assure your reward and follow your vocation.

MSP
24

EXAMPLE. While traveling to Jerusalem Saint Paul stopped for some days in Cesarea.¹¹ The prophet Agabus arrived there also. When he visited the Apostle, he took from him his belt and tying his feet and hands with it, he said: behold, what the Holy Spirit openly inspires me: the man who owns this belt will in this way be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem.

This prophecy moved all the bystanders, whence the very companions of Saint Paul, weeping, begged him not to go there. To them Paul courageously answered: Ah, hear me, I pray: do not cry. With your tears you increase the affliction in my heart and then nothing more. Know that I am ready not only to meet chains, but also to suffer death for the name of Jesus Christ.

⁷ Lk 16:8.

⁸ Mt 10:16.

⁹ On the theme of “rest”, cf Heb 4:1: “We must therefore fear that, while the promise to enter into his rest still remains in vigor, one of you be judged excluded”; and the whole chapter.

¹⁰ It seems, more exactly, like a recommendation of the apostle Peter (2Pt 1:10): “*Quapropter fratres magis satagite ut per bona opera certam vestram vocationem et electionem faciatis; haec enim facientes non peccabitis*”; “Therefore, brothers, try to make ever more secure your vocation and election. If you do this you will never stumble”.

¹¹ Cf Acts 21:10ff.

Everybody, acknowledging in this the divine disposition and seeing the resoluteness of the Apostle, said in unison: May the will of God be done. And the Apostle went away.

HOW WAS ST. PAUL'S ZEAL

1. In order to be true, zeal must be born of a heart fully in love with the Lord. The apostle must have a mission conferred by the legitimate authority and must work for the Church. Only a heart aflamed with true love for the Lord can feel that ardor for souls that spares nothing, not comforts, not interest, not life, not oneself. It's a zeal that never stops, even in the midst of human contradictions, zeal that first of all saves one's soul.¹

One who does not work with a divine mission can be likened to those preachers who have not been sent and do not receive the blessing of the Lord. – One who does not work in union with the Church ends up dispersing. Sad to say, how many heretics, how many schismatics have strayed in this. Everything must start from the Pope and return to the Pope: "*Where Peter is, there is the Church*".² One who does not work with Jesus Christ,³ scatters, and he does not work with Jesus Christ who is not closely united to the Pope.

MSP 26 2. Our holy Apostle had true zeal because founded on love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. Already we have considered it: his heart burned with the most intense and pure affection for the Lord, on account of which he knew how to suffer all and bear

¹ The thought that to do good to other persons, one must "first" save one's soul, was familiar to Fr. Alberione. We recall a well-known text: "Let there be the conviction that in these apostolates are required greater spirit of sacrifice and deeper piety. Failed attempts, sacrifice of sleep and schedule, money that is never enough, misunderstandings of many, spiritual dangers of every kind, keenness in the choice of means... Save people, but first save yourself! Saints are needed who precede us in these paths that are not yet beaten and in part not even indicated" (*San Paolo*, Nov. 1950; cf CISP p. 807).

² "Where Peter (the Pope) is, there is the Church": cf St. Ambrose, *Enarratio in Psalmum XL*, n. 30, PL 14, 1134B.

³ Cf Mt 12:30: "He who is not with me, is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters".

all. And he longed for nothing except to make known Jesus Christ and gain souls for him. From Jesus Christ he had received his mission, yet he went to Jerusalem to give account of it to Saint Peter as the first pope.⁴ Also, Saint Paul, when he was in Antioch of Syria, had a marvelous vision. Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and commanded him to go to Jerusalem. In fact, Saint Paul went there, dwelt in Jerusalem for some days, conferred with Saint Peter about the Gospel and so waited for Saint Peter to establish where he would have preached. And the Vicar of Jesus Christ sent him exactly to the Gentiles. – His concern and principal recommendation to the faithful was always that they stood united to the Church. At least thirteen times⁵ among the Acts and his letters we find that Paul repeats these ideas: obey your pastors, don't believe those who teach you differently from what the Church teaches you, abide by the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem, etc.

3. If we want to be zealous for others, let us see to it that we have great ardor for piety and for our virtue. Only he who loves Jesus Christ can make him loved. One can always doubt somebody who affirms that he wants to do good and does not deeply feel this determination: I want to be a saint. – Let us also love the pope as the vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ, as our father, our teacher, guide. One who contradicts the Pope must be shunned. Only in close union with the Pope can we usefully work for God and for souls. Let us make Communions for the Pope, read with respect and veneration what he writes and says. – It's not our glory that we must seek, not to attract the applause of men must we take care, but only to draw souls to the Church, so that in the Church, the ark of salvation,⁶ they may find salvation.

MSP
27

⁴ Cf Gal 1:18ff.

⁵ In truth, it is difficult to establish with precision the number of those appeals, or at least indicate their texts.

⁶ "*salute*": cast from the Latin "*salus*". Today we would say "ark of salvation".

MSP
28

EXAMPLE. We know from this the truth about the zeal of Saint Paul: he made use of everything. Elymas⁷ was destroying his work and he in the name of God orders him: you who are full of every deceit and iniquity, you shall remain blind.

In his wanderings he always looked for the big cities, those most cultured and commercial, where he established a nucleus of believers that could serve like a hearth and a center from which the faith could spread to everywhere around as Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Philippi, Antioch, Rome.

He admonished, corrected, scolded, threatened where it might be needed⁸ and even arrived at the point of excommunicating a young man who had dared to scandalize his companions.⁹ When it was necessary, he also knew how to make his rights prevail and for well three times he appealed to the rights he had as a Roman citizen, and let the propagandizing of the Gospel be respected. In Ephesus he was taken into a school and he changed it into a Church for preaching. Making use of the work of others in every city, he ordained worthy priests. The women themselves helped in the spread of the Gospel and some of them¹⁰ are recorded in his letters as persons to whom the Church and souls were very much indebted.

⁷ Cf Acts 13:8ff.

⁸ In the thought of Fr. Alberione, the Apostle lives in the first person when after he recommends to Timothy: "Announce the word, insist at every opportune or not opportune occasion, admonish, reprove, exhort with all patience in teaching" (2Tim 4:2).

⁹ Cf 1Cor 5:5: "Let this individual be consigned to the power of Satan for the ruin of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord".

¹⁰ For example: Priscilla, wife of Aquila (Acts 18:2); Lydia, "a believer in God" (Acts 16:15); Phoebe, "deaconess of the Church of Cenchreae" (Rom 16:1); Perside, "who has worked for the Lord" (Rom 16:12); Lois and Eunice, respectively grandmother and mother of Timothy (2Tim 1:5); Apphia (Philem 2), etc.

FRUITS OF THE ZEAL OF ST. PAUL

1. Even the most zealous apostle can encounter three kinds of hearers: those with good will, those with no will, and those with bad will. So it was with the Divine Savior. The Jews with good will followed him, converting at his preaching and adoring him as true God. The Jews with no will did not move to hear him, or else they remained indifferent, waiting for something better, that is, an earthly liberator. The Jews on the other hand with bad will persecuted him, slandered him, and demanded his death on the cross.

So, not due to the fault of the good Apostle, but solely because of the neglect or malice of the hearers, he does not always get the fruit that he should. But meeting with good hearts, the Apostle alleviates them through the teachings of the Gospel; when he finds open minds, he enlightens them; he wins souls, draws them to himself, gains them for God and sometimes raises them to the greatest heights. Since he is an Apostle truly full of sanctity, eloquence and supernatural gifts, he wins over sometimes even the most hardened hearts, transforms even the sinners into saints.

2. Thus it was with our Apostle. He converted an immense number of souls, such that he could afterwards write that to all the world the Gospel¹ was announced. Palestine, Syria, Galatia, Thrace, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, Malta, Cyprus, etc. were as many fields of his evangelical conquests. Everywhere he made his word heard with fruit. Many of his disciples even became saints: Saint Barnabas, Saint Titus, Saint Timothy, Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, etc., notwith-

¹ Cf Col 1:5f: "Of this hope you have already heard the announcement from the word of truth of the gospel that has reached you, as also in all the world it bears fruit and develops"...

standing that before they were simple pagans. In Antiochia of Pisidia he made a splendid discourse in the Synagogue.² The listeners withdrew stricken by his words and everybody waited with impatience the following sabbath, some for the joy of salvation, others for curiosity to hear of novelties and still others because ready to contradict him. – The governor Felix who sought only to extract money listened to him with interest but did not give in to Christianity. In the island of Cyprus, on the contrary, the governor called Paulus received baptism. Even Festus and Agrippa remained indifferent, though agreeing that Paul was right, while the devout virgin Thecla³ became an apostle and protomartyr of Christianity, as Stephen had been the protomartyr among men.

MSP
31

3. No wonder if we do not always obtain the fruit of our works of zeal. Often that depends on the listeners themselves. But let us take care to remain always humble in front of successes because they are victories of divine grace. Don't be discouraged in front of failures because they are the trials with which God wants to test⁴ our constancy and fidelity.

On the other hand, let us think that it's not enough to hear good words, read holy exhortations or listen to sermons. We need to examine ourselves if we have good will, or none, or our will is bad. Only with the first can we truly enjoy profit. The others just aggravate our conscience. Much will be expected of him to whom much has been given. Good will also is given to one who prays: "*Your heavenly Father will give the good spirit to those who ask him*".⁵ Let us therefore ask for it with great fervor.

² Acts 13:16ff.

³ The Author refers to a very widespread apocryphal text that in the Syriac version bears the title "History of Thecla, disciple of the Apostle Paul" (cf *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. II, UTET 1975, pp. 1083-1101).

⁴ In the sense of: *put in trial*.

⁵ Cf Lk 11:13.

4. In Athens there was a kind of Senate or academy called Areopagus.⁶ There the learned of every class or category gathered together where they dealt with very elevated matters. There also the Apostle went, not wanting to miss any good occasion to preach. He spoke eloquently and even elegantly, announcing the unknown God, the coming of Jesus Christ, the final judgment with the resurrection of the flesh.

MSP
32

After his discourse, those who were of good will joined him and among them were Saint Dionysius, Damaris and some others. On the contrary, some derided him and made fun of him as a madman, especially because he had talked about the resurrection of the dead. These had bad will, immersed in their vices. Still others, being indifferent in matters of religion, said to the Holy Apostle: we shall hear you about this another time. – Thus the Apostle always found himself among persecutors, mockers, the indifferent and the vicious. But among them he also met men who had a right conscience although ignorant in matters of faith. Among them he gathered abundant harvests as to be able to say: “I have made many more fruits than all the other Apostles”.

⁶ Cf Acts 17:16-34.

SAINT PAUL
APOSTLE OF THE GOOD PRESS

1. The principal apostolates are five: of prayer, of the press, of example, of the word, of works. Let us consider first that of the press.

Today it has become the leading power of the world¹ such that we can say that whoever owns the direction of the press owns the direction of the world. Since it exalts first, edifies and then destroys. It seduces and drags as it wants, when it wants, how it wants. Nothing can escape its dominion: not armies, not the chaotic masses, not the kings, not the subjects, not the governments, not the peoples, not the religiosity of peoples, not their morality, not civilization, not the uncivilized states, not the economic, social and political life; not the individual or society. It is the fulcrum with which it is possible to elevate the moral, political, social, religious, military, artistic, commercial, juridical, etc. world.

He would not be fooled, Leo XIII has written, who wanted to attribute to the bad press all the evil that is in society today.

2. The press did not have at all times its importance of today because not always did it have its present speed and perfection. However, it had much of it even during the time of Saint Paul and what it had then of power, to it the Apostle gave importance. Then the most circulated book was Sacred Scripture and Saint Paul at least 37 times between the Acts and his Letters, invites the faithful and in a particular way the Jews to read it. – While disputing in the synagogues and in his Letter to the Hebrews, at every occasion he cites and comments the divine Scriptures. The Council of the Apostles

¹ Bear in mind that the Author wrote these pages in 1918.

held in Jerusalem wrote and wanted to send a letter, we would say today an encyclical or circular to all the faithful. Saint Paul brought it to the various Churches and read it to the faithful, happy to act, we would say today, as a mailman.

He wrote 14 Letters that are, Saint John Chrysostom says, the resuscitated gospel, an almost infinite number of editions that readers had, have and will have till the end of the centuries. And it will always be Saint Paul who will exercise this Apostolate of the press for all times.

3. Mons. Ketteler² wrote that if Saint Paul returned to the world he would make himself 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 to exercise this apostolate! We can write, we can compose, we can print, we can disseminate, make people read, remove from their hands dangerous magazines and books.

MSP
35

What is possible for us? In the special circumstances of our life? It matters to do good, how much we can, all that we can. One gives offerings, one gives away his inheritance, one makes some sacrifices, one works with all the fervor of his spirit, another spends his life for the good press. And we, what do we do? And how?

Take courage: if the bad are so zealous for their press, what should we not do for the good? – Take courage: there will be many sacrifices to undergo, but the reward also will be great, even very great, in heaven.

EXAMPLE. In Ephesus the Apostle Paul had gathered a good harvest of souls. The new converts full of zeal came to Paul confessing their sins with seriousness in their resolutions.

MSP
36

The Apostle noticed that one of the most dangerous occasions for them were the much widespread bad books. Saint

² See note 2 on p. 19.

Paul invited them to bring all of them to a public plaza. He made a big pile of them and set them on fire.

Selling them would have exposed others to the danger of spiritual ruin. The value of the burned books was very considerable. Some say that from the indications that the Acts of the Apostles give us, we can believe that they could amount to about one hundred thousand francs.

No doubt, Saint Paul's discourse against the bad press ought to have been very fiery and persuasive! And to think that today every preacher with his talk is incapable of removing the people from the reading of dangerous magazines.

SAINT PAUL
APOSTLE BY EXAMPLE

1. The efficacy of the apostolate of example is not quite much considered, and yet example has great value. In fact, who can escape its influence? – In his letters Saint Paul admonishes us at least 21 times to give good examples, to beware of giving bad examples to others. Do good not only in the presence of God, but also in the presence of men, so that we can be the good odor of Jesus Christ inasmuch as our good conduct stirs many to good. Let our gentleness be known to all men. Be without complaints and be simple children of God. Do not be deserving of any reproof in the midst of a depraved world, before which you shine like stars with the word not of your tongue but of your life, to the glory of Jesus Christ. And to the Corinthians: take care that your life present not motive of scandal, so that you may not have in your conscience the ruin of souls. – Exactly what Jesus Christ had said: Woe to him who scandalizes an innocent child!

2. The Apostle, however, was not content of recommending the apostolate of example. He himself and more than everybody practiced it. Let us not give any scandal so that our ministry may not fall into contempt. It is not sin if I eat certain foods (once prohibited to the Hebrew people), but if some became scandalized when seeing it, I shall not eat it forever.

In Troas Saint Paul met a cousin of his called Luke. He was a physician of Antioch, of great talent and an elegant writer. Ever since he saw Saint Paul, full, of zeal and ardor, his life completely changed. He became similar to him in fervor and zeal. With him he preached, instructed the peoples. With him he was exposed to insults and slanders. With

him he bore beatings and persecutions. When he felt exhausted and tired, he looked at Paul and the spirit of sacrifice and love for souls was rekindled in him. He wrote the Gospel that is said precisely to be of Saint Luke and his also are the Acts of the Apostles. The example of Saint Paul had been so efficacious in his spirit that he believed it useful to propose Saint Paul even as model of others and so the most detailed facts that we have about the Apostle are supplied to us by Saint Luke.

MSP
39

3. Let your light shine, Jesus Christ had said, before the world so that they may see your good works and glorify the Eternal Father. This in general. But more particularly¹ Saint Paul also tells us in what thing we ought to give good example: Let your gentleness be known to all. Abstain even from the appearances of evil. And to Titus: make yourself a good example to the faithful in speech, in teaching well, in integrity of life, in seriousness of manners, in saying always and only holy things. To Timothy also he wrote: even in chastity be of good example, as also in charity and faith.

How much good we could spread around us if we always had true considerateness in everything. The first believers were pointed out² by finger: Look, how the Christians live, people said. Can we say: anyone that sees me can get edification from me? Do I preach what is good with my life?

MSP
40

4. What must be the true reason of these facts that we read in the life of Saint Paul? He had gone to Damascus to arrest the Christians and bind them and, once converted, he started exactly there his preaching? The answer is: he wanted to repair the scandal.

In Jerusalem he had been among the most ardent persecutors of the Church. Well, it's exactly there that he went re-

¹ "more particularly": added successively in the ms.

² In the italian text there is the word "segnati", which means "marked".

peatedly and with every insistence to preach. Why? The reason he himself said it: hoping that the example of his conversion might influence his countrymen.

When he spoke in the synagogues he often gave his example, narrated his conversion and concluded urging the Jews to follow his example. And his example was a great deal efficacious and many who were encouraged followed him.

SAINT PAUL
APOSTLE OF PRAYER

1. Saint Paul gave great importance to the apostolate of prayer. And with reason, since this was the apostolate of Jesus in his private life. This was the apostolate of Jesus in his eucharistic life. To the Philippians [Paul] wrote: I know that your prayers help to save me. To the Colossians he recommended: Persevere in prayer, pray together also for me, so that the Lord may give value to my words in preaching the Gospel. And not only, but he explained himself more clearly when he told the Thessalonians: Finally, I recommend you to pray so that the gospel may be preached everywhere and may be well received as it was among you, and so that we may be liberated from evil men.

This apostolate is easy, and we can say that there has not been any saint that has not embraced it. It is of great effectiveness, even for the most obstinate sinners.

2. Saint Paul learned from his own experience how much prayer is worth for the salvation of souls. In fact, he had seen Saint Stephen who while he was being stoned prayed for his executioners. – And with those prayers he obtained especially the conversion of our Paul. Saint Augustine said precisely that we would not have Saint Paul had we not had Saint Stephen. – And every time he needed to receive special graces, Saint Paul prayed. Before his baptism, he spent three days in fasting and prayer. Before being ordained bishop, he spent some time also fasting and praying. Before undertaking his apostolic voyages and setting about for the work of converting the gentiles, he passed three years in Arabia where he did penances and prayers for himself and for the conversion of souls. After having preached in Ephesus and Tyre, before leaving the faithful of those cities, he prayed for a long time

to obtain perseverance for them. Nor did he do this only sometimes, but clearly said to the Thessalonians: We pray continually for you so that the Lord may deign to give you faith. He wrote the same recommendations to the Romans.

3. Saint Paul informs us about the persons for whom it is meritorious to exercise the apostolate of prayer: "I beg you in the first place to make prayers, requests and supplications for all men, for kings and for all those who are constituted on top". Let us pray for the Supreme Pontiff, for governors, for Bishops, for priests, for sinners, for the just, for children, for heretics, for schismatics, unbelievers, the dying, the souls in purgatory.

MSP
43

Those who are enrolled in the Apostolate of Prayer no doubt very easily and much better can exercise this part of zeal for the welfare of others. In fact, it is enough that they recite with the best dispositions the prayer: "Divine heart of Jesus, etc.". By it we include all the needs of others because all are enclosed by the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. – However, it is of help to pray often also for some more needful sinner, as certain souls who are in serious spiritual dangers would be, for special dying people, for religious vocations, for some relative, friend or not practicing acquaintance.

EXAMPLE. Paul and his companion Silas had gained a big harvest from their preaching in Philippi of Macedonia, but after having freed a girl from a demon, a persecution rose against them. Accused before the judges of introducing a new religion, the accusers tore their vestments almost to indicate their horror and the people flew into a rage. Without being examined, they were beaten, struck until they bled, covered with wounds and imprisoned. The guard did not only keep them well closed but also locked their feet with shackles.

MSP
44

Paul and Silas, seeing closed for them the hope of converting other souls and calming the crowd through their

words, had recourse to prayer. Happy for having suffered something, they sang and prayed, sure that the Lord would have done more than what they themselves could not. And, behold, a terrible earthquake: the chains of the prisoners fall, their shackles are shattered and the doors break open. The jailer noticed it. Seeing the doors open and believing that the prisoners had fled, he pointed his sword to his chest and was about to kill himself when from the inside Paul shouted: What are you doing? We are all here. Being assured and enlightened by the grace of the Lord, he threw himself at the feet of the Apostle saying: What must I do to save myself? He was instructed by Saint Paul and baptized with his whole family and with many others. The magistrates repented for having maltreated Paul and Silas without motive and declared them free.

SAINT PAUL
APOSTLE OF THE WORD

1. Saint Paul says clearly and as a general rule: *“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”*: Faith comes from hearing the word of the gospel. Now, this is the great means used by Our Lord Jesus Christ who employed three years in preaching the divine word. This is the great means used by the Apostles who gave themselves with all the fervor of their spirit to evangelize the world. And we can understand it: the gospel truths announced through live voice speak to the mind, heart and senses, to the whole man, and Jesus Christ instituted preaching as the ordinary means for the diffusion of the gospel: *“Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved”* (Mk 16:15). Hence, the Church always had great concern to promote preaching, popular instructions, religious conferences, catechisms, meditations, explanations of the Gospel, etc.

2. And it is here where the zeal of Saint Paul mostly shines. His talk was always adapted to his hearers, full of warmth, convincing, penetrating, although simple in its sublimity and empty of vain rhetorical ornaments. His word was fluent and inexhaustible. Made a prisoner in Rome, he invited to his prison the Jews to instruct them in his religion. They came and such was the vivacity of his talk, the force of his arguments that his hearers did not tire and Paul’s discourse lasted from morning to evening.

In Lystra the people became so enthused of his word that they called him Mercury, that is, the god of eloquence and at all costs they wanted to sacrifice to him a calf as it was done for pagan divinities.

Saint Anselm, talking of his preaching, says: Saint Paul

traveled from the Red Sea to the Atlantic carrying everywhere the light of truth. He was like the sun that illumines the whole world, so that rather it can be said that the world and the peoples were lacking for Paul, than that Paul was lacking to somebody. This is the measure of his zeal. Saint John Chrysostom, a great devotee of Saint Paul, said that it was his ardent desire to see Saint Paul at the pulpit, because compared to him the orators of antiquity would appear languid and cold. The Church prays: "*Deus, qui multitudinem gentium beati Pauli Apostoli prædicatione docuisti, etc.*".¹ And elsewhere: "*Sancte Paule Apostole, prædicator veritatis, et Doctor gentium...*".²

MSP 47 3. Saint Paul, speaking about the preachers of the truths of the gospel, exclaims: how holy are their steps, that is, the toils of these announcers of the good news!

Lovely and holy is it to make known our Creator, lovely and holy is it to make known Our Lord Jesus Christ, also the Church, her doctrine, her sacraments, her precepts. – And you: what could you do in your circumstance? It would be an excellent thing to teach catechism. The same thing must be said of spreading always around good sayings, good words, good advices. Certainly, for everybody it's possible to give good talks to companions and friends. Good discourses are a great help to common edification. In your letters, in your relations with relatives, how many good things can you disseminate. They will be seeds that in their time will give out fruits of eternal life.

MSP 48 4. A fact that demonstrates exceedingly well how much God blesses good preachers comes to us from tradition.

Saint Paul was in the city of Reggio Calabria and as usual he tried to do some good through preaching. But they did not

¹ "O God, you have taught all peoples through the preaching of Saint Paul the Apostle...".

² "St. Paul the Apostle, preacher of truth and doctor of the gentiles...".

want to hear him, on the contrary, the more obstinate were making noise to disturb his preaching. So he said to them, showing a stump of candle: "Listen at least until it is consumed". They waited a little and the candle was placed on top of a pillar of stone. But when it was consumed, the pillar of stone ignited and burned until the Apostle finished a long and convincing discourse. The people were filled with enthusiasm and moved by the words of Paul and by inner grace converted en masse to Christianity. On the place of the miracle was erected afterwards a temple in honor of Saint Paul and a special feast is celebrated there with solemnity. In the *oremus* (let us pray) of the Mass it is said: "O God, who through the preaching of the Apostle Paul, while a pillar of truth divinely shone, you deigned to teach the people of Reggio with the light of faith, grant us, we pray, to merit to have as intercessor in heaven who we have had as preacher of the Gospel on earth" (Cesari, att. ap. V.2).

SAINT PAUL
APOSTLE BY HIS WORKS

[1.] The zeal for the salvation of souls has made the true apostles think and also realize so many works that help the clergy and preaching, the good propaganda. Thus in our days have arisen the Opera for the Propagation of the Faith, the Opera of the Holy Infancy for the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the world, the Opera called the Crusade for the dying that proposes to obtain the graces necessary for the dying, the Popular Union that aims to direct and coordinate the struggle of Catholics against the coalition of the Socialists, anarchists, Liberals and Masons, the Electoral Union that should bring to the Government, to the Province and to the City men of right conscience, the Union of Catholic Youth that tends to preserve so many young people from corruption, the Union of Catholic Women that works for the Christian character formation of the woman, the Economic Union that wants to save the democratic and popular forces from the usurers and from Socialism, the Pious Union for Frequent Communion, Peter's Pence, etc.

[2.] Saint Paul in his ardent zeal for the Christian religion knew how to multiply his enterprises and works making himself all for all in order to save all. In Jerusalem a very painful famine was raging. The people lacked food. Many were reduced to eating almost only herbs. Saint Paul therefore promoted in various regions a big collection that helped to alleviate the sufferings, but especially was instrumental in conciliating the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity and thus succeed more easily to convert them. The Council of Jerusalem, called apostolic, was of capital importance in the Church. Its fruits continue to ripen even now. It was assembled by Saint Peter, but Saint Paul, we

can say, provoked it by proposing his questions and then saw to it that its decisions were executed.

One of the wisest structures of the Church, one of her works, even one of her most useful organizations for the good of souls was the founding of the dioceses headed by men of remarkable wisdom and zeal. They were like hearths from which radiates all around the Christian spirit, that is, faith and morals. Now, the work of Saint Paul was always this one in every region: preach, organize a diocese, form a clergy headed by a holy bishop. It was through this work that he established those churches that were the steadfast rocks against the rage of persecutions and often against the same heresies.

3. Already during the time of Paul but especially today, organization is the work of works: in unity there is strength. A thousand disorganized wills don't have the power of ten men united together. Now, it was the Pope who instituted or approved, encouraged, recommended, preached, inculcated the organizations that we have hinted above. Catholics are sometimes deaf as it has been, for example, in France. They notice, however, late that the harm is on them. When, instead, they obeyed they enjoyed the most delicious fruits. Let us not dispute, but act. Let us follow the banner of the Pope, with humble and steadfast docility. Let us support through the press and through our word the Popular Union, the Electoral Union, the Union of Catholic Women. Let us become part of the Union of Catholic Youth, of the Apostolate of Prayer, of the Crusade for the dying, of the works for the suffrage of the souls in purgatory and of those others to which we can adhere.

But let not our adhesion be a simple formality, but one that is alive and involving our soul.

EXAMPLE. One of the works that mainly reveal the mind of Saint Paul fond of his children and full of zeal is that of

MSP
51

MSP
52

his visits. After founding a Church, he left to go elsewhere to work on other foundations. After some years passed, he returned to visit the first spiritual children. So were the repeating apostolic voyages that cost him great weariness, but that gave immense joy and great spiritual fruit to the neoconverts. And what did Saint Paul do during these visits? First of all, he tried to fortify the Christians for perseverance, since in the midst of great pagan corruption the difficulties were many and not light. Then he took away the abuses that might have introduced themselves during his absence and even these could easily happen especially due to religious ignorance. Furthermore, he established new dioceses, expanded them, ordained new priests. It is incredible how much people wanted him. In Ephesus, when he was about to leave, knowing that they would not have seen him again, everybody wept, embraced him, said many prayers for him and recommendations.

Thus through the work of his apostolic visits he was promoting the good that the visits of the bishops to our parishes promote: indeed much more, generally.

THE POWER OF SAINT PAUL

1. Today starts the third part of the month consecrated to Saint Paul. Here we shall consider the devotion to Saint Paul. First of all let us see how great is the power of the Holy Apostle in heaven.

We can have as much trust in a saint as our knowledge that his prayers are heard by the Lord and the more we know that he loves us.

Regarding power, it is always in proportion to the merits that the saint acquired on earth. God judges according to justice and rewards according to one's merits. Now, justice wants precisely that the saint enjoy the special glory of special merits. Neither does a saint acquire this power only in heaven. Some prelude, some sign can already be seen on earth. And if his power of intercession on earth was great, his power of intercession in heaven will be greater.

[2.] We must not and cannot make comparisons on the merits and preeminence of the saints. It is certain, however, that Saint Paul occupies one of the very first places in paradise. If it is true that the crown will be in proportion to the efforts and pains suffered and to the love that has inspired them, we must say that Saint Paul worked and suffered more than everybody and that the love that animated him was very ardent. If it is true that charity, purity, zeal, martyrdom, and the spreading of the faith are great merits, what shall we say of Saint Paul? How powerful therefore must be his intercession?

And a taste of his power we have had on earth.

In Ephesus, for example, such was the number of the miracles he did that the people stole his kerchiefs, towels and sashes that he used. And these things were carried here and there as sacred relics. Applied to the sick and to the possessed, the former recovered and the latter were liberated.

MSP
55

[3.] How great therefore must be our trust and esteem for the power of Saint Paul! If he was that holy, how much will the Lord hear his prayers! If he was so powerful on earth, how much more he must be in heaven. – Also, let us not be afraid of asking him too much. Let us never doubt that he cannot grant our petitions. Do we perhaps ask more than the resurrection of a dead person? Well, the Lord accomplished the resurrection of a dead person through the prayers of Saint Paul.

And if on earth his handkerchiefs had such power as to drive away the demons, what must we say of his prayers? – More: let us remember well that the saints are honored chiefly by asking them big graces. It is this trust in their power of intercession that exalts them. Do we need sanctity? Victory over our strongest passion? Knowledge needed for our state? Health that has been shaken by ailments? Let us pray, let us pray with trust. We shall obtain all without any doubt. – But let us remember that the power of Saint Paul will not fail us. Only our trust in him will fail and that this faith will be the measure of his listening.

MSP
56

[4.] In Troas Saint Paul had gathered on a Sunday the faithful for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. He, however, prolonged his preaching much more than usual, as he had to leave the following day for another travel. The crowd was big and the cenacle was on the third floor of the house. While all were listening, a boy by the name of Eutichus, either through desire to see the apostle who was short of stature, or to hear him better, went up the window sill. But the boy, either because of the heat, the length of Paul's discourse or tiredness had ended up sleeping and in sleeping had fallen to the pavement of the street, instantly dying. People run to help but it was useless and every cure came late. – But Saint Paul went down to the street, put his body over the cadaver, blessed him and embraced him and with his strong faith resuscitated him. From everywhere the people applauded the Apostle.

SAINT PAUL LOVES US

It is a great thing to know that the Saint with his prayers can obtain for us whatever we need. But then another question comes to us spontaneously: does this Saint love us? Does he think about us? Is he concerned about us? – Yes, I answer: and much.

1. Every father loves his children, every apostle those he has evangelized, every teacher his students. Now, Saint Paul is our father because he is our special patron. We have chosen him as our adopted father, and he has accepted us as his adopted children, and for his children he wants to do the role of a father, as he wrote to the faithful of one of the Churches he founded: Remember, even if you had many teachers, I alone am your father, because I have generated you in the grace of the gospel. Saint Paul is the apostle all aflame with love for souls. Already on this earth he lived for them and his letters are full of the most | tender expressions of affection. Now we are instructed by him. The doctrine that you learn is his doctrine. What is said to you is almost always taken from his Letters. He teaches us through the splendor of his examples. How much affection therefore does he not have for us from paradise?!

2. It is also necessary to take note that for us in particular he has a heart that is completely special. He loves us because we want to imitate him in saving souls. Now this is exactly what he desires most: nothing, even now in heaven, after God's glory, enters most in his desires. Even more because in order to save souls we choose the most effective instrument, that of the press, he blesses us in a particular manner. Therefore from paradise he looks at us with tenderness. We can say that he lives with us, in our midst. He feels all the

MSP
59 beatings of our hearts, observes all our desires, shares in the little battles of our heart, watches | over us in dangers, comforts us in our pains, obtains for us from the Lord countless graces, lightens our sorrows, provides us with the necessary nourishment, moves many hearts to do good to us.

3. What a consolation is this for us: we are poor and are sinners. We would not merit from the Lord if not chastisements, but between us and the Lord there is a great saint that pleads our cause, that defends us, intercedes for us, thinks for us more than we can think for ourselves. Saint Paul has eyes that scrutinize, they are vivacious, almost impetuous, but deep down they are full of that robust and profound affection that made him write: "I would like to give my life for you". Oh! What a consolation! Saint Paul loves us, rather, he is for us, full of interest for us!

MSP
60 **EXAMPLE.** In Colossi of Phrygia there was a rich citizen by the name of Philemon. He was converted thanks to the preaching of Saint Paul and followed so well his teachings that | he became a model Christian and his house was called Church because it was always open for matters of piety. Among his servants there was one, however, called Onesimus, who stole from him much money, fled to Rome and consumed everything because of vices. By chance he heard the talks of Saint Paul who he had known in the house of his master in Colossi and then was a prisoner in Rome.

Knowing the heart of Paul, he had recourse to him, confessed to him his sins, asked to be taught in the faith and was baptized. Onesimus felt so much affection for Saint Paul that from that moment on he served him as a son. The Apostle would have kept him at his side, but he did not want to do it without the permission of Philemon, the servant's master. So he sent him to him with a letter, assuring him that Philemon would have treated him well and accepted him. In his letter Paul says: "I thank the Lord for your love towards all the be-

lievers... I address to you a prayer for Onesimus my son who I have generated in my chains. I send him to you and I request you to receive him as the thing I love most... Because if he is so dear to me, must he not also be dear to you?! Receive him as you would receive my very me, if you love me. If he has caused you some harm or owes you something, put it on my account. I expect from you this consolation". With such a letter Philemon received well the servant Onesimus, forgave him, then filled him with gifts and sent him back to Saint Paul so that he might serve him. Onesimus was faithful, grew in virtue and science at the school of Saint Paul. Saint Paul ordained him priest, then Bishop. He died a martyr of the faith and the Catholic Church remembers him on 16 February.

How good is Saint Paul with those who have recourse to him! From sinner Onesimus becomes a Christian, a saint, a Bishop, a martyr of the Church. How Saint Paul loves his spiritual children!

THE SPIRIT OF THE APOSTOLATE

Two kinds of graces we must especially ask from Saint Paul: those that are more conformed to his spirit, and those that are more conformed to our needs.

1. *The graces conformed to his spirit.*

First of all, those that are conformed to his spirit. Every saint has his spirit, as St. Paul says: there is a certain division, a certain distribution of graces: a saint is like this and another is like that. From the variety results in the Church that beauty and splendor that makes her admirable. And in heaven that diversity in merits and glory that makes the Apostle say: “a star differs in luminosity from another”. St. Louis Gonzaga is an angel in flesh. St. Dominic has as motto the truth. St. Francis of Assisi charity. St. Francis de Sales is the saint of meekness. Blessed Cottolengo of faith. Don Bosco has the ideal of young people. And each saint in Paradise is delegated to obtain a certain kind of grace: St. Louis to obtain purity, St. Thomas Aquinas science, St. Isidore is for farmers, St. Philip for priests.

2. *The spirit of the Apostolate*

So now, what must be the particular spirit of Saint Paul? What is the kind of graces that he asks more? The spirit of St. Paul is that of the Apostle. He was born, called and made to be an apostle. The Scriptures, Tradition, the idea that has remained in Christianity, the sentiment itself that awakens in our hearts when we hear his name, is that of a great apostle. He starts at least seven, among his fourteen epistles, with affirmation that he is apostle, and in that to the Galatians, he says expressly: “Paul, created apostle, not by men, or by means of a man, but by Jesus Christ and by God the Father”.¹ So much so that he appeared to modernists as the founder of

¹ Gal 1:1.

his own religion; so much so that when we only say Apostle, through antonomasia we understand St. Paul; so much so that, while the divine Scriptures do not give us of the apostles except a few pages, often only a few lines, regarding Saint Paul they give a very special breadth. He is the Apostle, the maker of apostles. As for the graces to ask him, this kind especially: the apostolic spirit. Under his protection are various missionary societies, institutes for the spread of the Gospel, so many seminaries. The press has in him their special protector. Many preachers invoke him. St. John Chrysostom, a great orator, often recommends himself to him.

3. *What grace St. Paul grants*

From here we understand what graces St. Paul wants especially to give us: the spirit of zeal, of love for souls; the desire to work for the Press Apostolate, and to favor, using all means, the associations destined to combat Masonry, Socialism, immorality. Saint Paul wants to obtain for the press many vocations, for writers the grace to write with Christian spirit, for propagandists that of making to penetrate everywhere the good books and good magazines. St. Paul wants to obtain many vocations for the clergy, for the missionaries, for the pious and religious life.

These are the graces that he obtains more. He has been converted. He wants that we ask for the conversion of the bad. He knelt before the cross. He wants that all bend the knee before Jesus Christ. Talking about ourselves, in a special way we must ask for the grace of vocation, the grace to know it, the grace to dedicate ourselves to it with total thrust, the fervor and the ardor that we are capable of. And talking of the House, we must ask the formation of that good spirit that is necessary for her. Regarding this, we understand little of it, but St. Paul sees it. Let us ask him to guide us, enlighten us, or, better, lead us by the hand.

EXAMPLE. In Philippi St. Paul met a pythoness: a witch or a sorceress as we say it. She was possessed, and with her

divinations she earned much for her owners before the ignorant folk that went to her to be racked in their brains. She began to follow St. Paul and his companions, shouting: "These are men of God who will teach you the way of salvation". St. Paul allowed her this somewhat, until he turned to her and said in a threatening tone: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out immediately from this girl". The demon obeyed, the witch remained without her witchery and the owners without their earnings. But for Saint Paul a tempest took place. He was beaten to death, put in prison, covered with wounds. He knew that he exposed himself to such danger, but to prevent an evil and to do some good, he did not hesitate to expose himself to it. That sorceress wanted to let it be seen that the same doctrine taught by St. Paul was hers, and that St. Paul should leave her in peace and that one could become a Christian even while still following the sorceress. That is what the bad journalists do. They also preach a little good, shouting at every instance: progress, civilization, liberty, fatherland, but to fill their pockets. The people follow them, and they work for their shadowy interests and live transforming the noble job of the journalist into a commercial and business intrigue. St. Paul wants to give these graces: that bad journalism may be unmasked, that the good one may live and become big. He wants to give true vocations to the press.

Homage: *For three times during the day, give encouragement to do good to those who have to deal with us.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

SANCTITY

1. In the second place, from Saint Paul we must ask the graces that are more necessary for us. And these are two: our sanctification and the acquisition of the virtue that is most necessary for us. Sanctification is the general grace to be asked all our life. The acquisition of the most necessary virtue is what we need at the present moment. Our sanctification is necessary as the principal scope of life: “One thing alone is necessary”¹ Jesus Christ said to Martha, worried about too many things. Of what use to us will be riches, honors, pleasures if we did not save ourselves?² “Be perfect – Jesus still said – as your Heavenly Father is perfect”.³ But this perfection is not attained suddenly. One must start from a virtue and then struggle until he possesses it. Virtue by virtue, with force, praying, working, examining one’s conscience and being on watch.

2. Saint Paul always had before him this very high ideal that guided him in everything: saving himself, perfecting himself, becoming holy, even at the cost of the most painful sacrifices: “as long as I finish my course”.⁴ And he preached it to others: “Tend to perfection”,⁵ be saints. “Let us conduct ourselves in everything with much patience in tribulations, in anxieties, in necessities, in beatings, in prisons, in the midst of uprisings, in fatigues, vigils, fastings; with chastity, knowledge, longanimity, meekness, Holy Spirit, charity, the word of truth, the power of God, the weapons of justice left and right; through glory and ignominy, infamy and good name, as seducers and yet truthful, as unknown and yet

¹ Lk 10:42.

² Cf Mt 16:26.

³ Mt 5:48.

⁴ Acts 20:24.

⁵ Cf 2Cor 13:11.

known, as dying and behold, we are alive; almost melancholic and yet always cheerful, almost beggars but making many rich, almost lacking in everything yet possessors of everything”.⁶

In his life also he did his best to acquire especially true charity, which is “patient and kind, that supports all things”⁷ until death... He mastered his character, restrained his anger, became strong as a lion and meek as a lamb.

MSP
63

3. “Make us saints, Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus” was the invocation that Bl. Cottolengo let his patients repeat until 50 times. This should be the cry, the sigh, the breath, even, of all of us. It was of the young saints Louis, Stanislaus Kostka, John Berchmans. It was of all the saints who lived of this and for this. Let us make ourselves saints. A beautiful place in heaven: that’s everything. So what of the rest? Let us ask Saint Paul in our every prayer, morning and evening, for this grace.

Moreover, what virtue do we chiefly need? What virtue do we lack most? Is it charity, humility, patience, obedience? Let us ask it from Saint Paul. When we shall have obtained one, we shall ask another. And with force let us fight our passions, valiantly like Saint Paul. “*In reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiæ*”⁸: for the rest, at the end of our life, a crown of justice awaits us that God will put on our heads.

MSP
64

EXAMPLE. How willingly the Lord hears the prayers of Saint Paul and grants them is evidenced from this incident of his life. After a thousand hardships and efforts he was able to save himself from shipwreck and land in the island of Malta. His companions were all drenched. It was very cold and Saint Paul promptly gave himself to gathering wood to light

⁶ 2Cor 6:4ff.

⁷ 1Cor 13:7.

⁸ 2Tim 4:8.

a little fire. In the meantime, a great number of people gathered there. When Saint Paul came in with branches, he was bitten by a viper. The inhabitants said among themselves: that man must be really a bad one if barely after escaping the water, God allows him to be bitten by a serpent. But the Apostle prayed. While all were waiting to see him collapse due to poison, he continued to talk about God and exalt his virtues. The people therefore enthusiastically believed him to be a god, but the Apostle explained to all the promises of the gospel: He who believes in me... even if he drinks poison, will not die...⁹ Many surrendered and converted. The island of Malta afterwards always preserved great veneration and devotion for Saint Paul.

⁹ Cf Mk 16:16-18.

HOW TO PRAY TO SAINT PAUL - I

There are so many prayers that the Church has approved and even attached indulgences to in honor of the great Apostle Paul. But for us the most suitable for our special needs is the chaplet to Saint Paul.¹ In it, in fact, is gathered what especially we must ask from our Protector.

It is made up of five brief prayers, each one with a special purpose and always concluded by the three invocations “Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in you”,² “Queen of Apostles, pray for us”, “Saint Paul the Apostle, pray for us”.

MSP 66 Five are the graces that more ordinarily must be asked by a good devotee of Saint Paul. That is, victory over our principal passion through the acquisition of the contrary virtue, the spirit of poverty, that Saint Paul preached and of which he gave constant example, | prompt and cheerful obedience in everything, chastity according to our special state, zeal for the salvation of souls that can be exercised in various forms. Now these graces are asked precisely in the five short prayers of that chaplet.

Starting then to talk about these short prayers, we observe that in them there are always three thoughts. A thought of praise to God, another of admiration toward the Apostle, and a third of supplication for ourselves. – Praise to God is always given, since He is the master, the beginning and end of everything, the beginning and end therefore even of what marvelous is there in Saint Paul. – Admiration toward Saint Paul is just and dutiful, because through it we bow down our heads before a sun of science and hero of virtue. – Supplication for ourselves is easy so that we may understand how useful it is in our miserable conditions.

¹ See the text on p. 207 and an ulterior explanation on p. 208.

² Starting about 1925, this invocation was substituted by the following: “Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, have mercy on us”.

Coming to each of the thoughts expressed in these prayers, its beauty and value shines out better. In fact:

MSP
67

1. In the first prayer we bless the Lord for the miracle done in converting Saint Paul. We admire the Apostle for his docility to the grace of God. We ask to be converted every day from our principal defect.

2. In the second prayer we bless the Lord for having given to us in Saint Paul a perfect teacher of the lovely virtue.³ We happily admire the Apostle for his teachings. Attracted by the perfume of his virtues, we pray to him to obtain for us the grace to follow him.

3. In the third prayer we praise the Lord for having given to Saint Paul perfect obedience. We admire the Apostle as the perfect model in this virtue and we pray to him to make us sharers in it.

4. In the fourth prayer we praise God for having given to Saint Paul a great love for the goods | of heaven as to detach him from those of earth. We admire the Apostle for his spiritual poverty. We ask through his intercession the same virtue.

MSP
68

5. In the fifth prayer we bless the Lord who gave to Saint Paul so great a zeal. We admire his apostolic labours and we ask to be able to follow him at least from afar.

EXAMPLE. When Saint Paul had landed in the island of Malta, the governor Publius invited him and his companions into his house and honored him greatly. Saint Paul did not leave unrewarded even the smallest favor or honor given him as minister of God.

Publius' father was in bed, afflicted by a fever that had led him to the point of death. Paul went to see the sick man and after saying to him words of affection and consolation, started to pray. Then, rising, imposed his hands on the sick and immediately he was cured. The good old man ran to em-

³ The "lovely virtue" indicates chastity, or purity.

brace his son, blessing Paul and that God that Paul preached about.

Publius, the father and his whole family, Saint John Chrysostom says, after instruction in the faith, received baptism. Many sick people were then brought to Paul and through his prayers and blessings they got healed.

We admire the big heart, the great faith and the great power of intercession of the Apostle.

HOW TO PRAY TO SAINT PAUL - II

Certainly the devotions that redound to the greatest honor of God and the most profitable for us are the Holy Mass and Communion.¹ And we can do nothing better than offer to the Lord the Holy Mass and receive Communion, presenting it to God through Saint Paul. – Let us see what it means, how a good thing it is, how it is done.

The Mass and Communion, like all the works of cult and devotion, always end up in God, the sole beginning and end of our life. We can, however, present them through the saints, make them in union with the saints, for the saints and in the saints themselves. In other words: that we, in order to meet the pleasure of Saint Paul, who so esteemed the Mass and Communion, do these two works of piety; that to God we present them through the hands of Saint Paul; that we try to accomplish those works of piety with that spirit of devotion that the Apostle brought to them; that we put on them the same intentions as his.

What a holy thing it is. These are the practices that better obtain for us the blessings of Saint Paul. In fact, what could be more holy, more dear to the heart of Saint Paul than the Holy Mass and Communion? To Saint Paul, who with these things occupied all his spirit and with such ardor and love that he did not notice that time was fleeting? So much so that twice we know that in attending Holy Mass, confessing and preaching, he spent the whole day.² – What could be more pleasing to Saint Paul, when we know that the Mass and

¹ This distinction between the Mass and Communion is explained by ancient practice, very frequent, of receiving Communion even outside the eucharistic celebration.

² Or, more precisely, the whole night.

Communion give to God so much honor and serve to merit for us so many graces?

In his Letters he gives various recommendations related to the celebration of those mysteries. He wants that we bring to them the greatest purity of conscience, that the women wear veils in church even out of reverence toward the Angels who with trembling assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

MSP
71

Then, how should we stay in church, during Holy Communion and during the Divine Sacrifice?

Let us remember the zeal of Saint Paul for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and in making known the price of the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And convinced of meeting God's pleasure in that of Saint Paul, let us be attentive while attending to so many Masses and making many Communions.

Then when we come to church, it will help us much to ask ourselves: How would Saint Paul hear the Mass and make the Communion if he were in my place? How did he behave? – Let us also ask him to lend us his love, his ardor, especially that ardor and that love that now in heaven he possesses very intensely.

Regarding our intentions, for us certainly it will not be possible to put better intentions than those that Saint Paul had on earth and that especially now he has in paradise. Our Mass and Communion offered through the hands of Saint Paul to the Lord will surely have more access to the heart of God and through the intercession of Saint Paul will obtain for us greater graces.³

³ At this point, at the end of the last page of the handwritten notebook, a note by another hand states: "*The writing of Fr. Alberione stops here*". This confirms the fact that the meditations that are missing to complete the "month" were written by the loyal Giuseppe Giaccardo, then waiting ordination.

THE PATIENCE OF SAINT PAUL

A third grace is to be asked from Saint Paul in conformity to his spirit and for us very necessary. And the Apostle with his great heart and with particular efficacy obtains it for us.

This grace guarantees for the apostolate results and success, victory in the work of sanctification: it is *patience*. This virtue, or better, this complex of virtues that constitute her, is a prerogative of charity: “charity is patient”; it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and therefore sign and measure of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul; it is the proof of our attachment to God: “patience produces tried virtue”.

Above all, patience, Saint Paul says, crowns the work of our sanctification and apostolate.

1. *What is patience and its necessity.*

Daily life offers very many occasions to give us precious merits of patience: and we know as well how to qualify the many acts of impatience in the face of difficulties and in contact with our small crosses.

Patience is therefore a virtue that sustains us in the face of difficulties and makes us tolerate trials willingly.

“So that you do not tire yourself and lose heart”, says Saint Paul.

So therefore he makes us hear his advice: “Patience is necessary for you”.

Necessary for the apostolate: he is not a good minister of God who is not patient, and the true ministers of God are known by this sign and bear fruits by this great means, patience. “As ministers of God, with much patience”. Much patience is the great badge.

Necessary for sanctification: we make ourselves saints through perseverance in the spiritual struggle, through the steadfastness of our faith, through the purification of temptation and the merit of the cross.

“In your patience you will save your souls”, and Saint Paul immediately added: “In patience let us run to the battle that God offers us”; “patience is necessary for you, so as to come in possession of the promises”.

2. How St. Paul won the merit of patience.

He won it for himself and for the souls that professed devotion to him.

We admire, we are amazed and we are deeply moved how a man could have lived a life of so many pains. But tribulation, Saint Paul says, is the fate of souls dear to God, and from the beginning Jesus said to Ananias: “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name”. “Much patience is the sign of my apostolate”, he writes.

And still he writes: “I complete in my body what is lacking in the passion of Jesus Christ”. It means that the passion of the Divine Savior gets renewed in the body of Saint Paul, and the Apostle in his measureless love and in his limitless patience became similar to Jesus Crucified and a living copy of the Divine Master. This is the patience that sanctifies him.

And his ministry and his passage in this world was continually in the midst of difficulties and tribulations. “In the midst of toils, often in prison, exceedingly in beatings, frequently in-between death, three times scourged, one time stoned, three times shipwrecked, a night and a day deep in the sea, in dangers of every kind, in hunger and thirst, in the cold and in tempests, in anguish... fears in my mind and threatening plots from the outside”, and he often felt the boredom of life... and always he bore it, and God invited him to have faith. Paul believed in God and became a sharer in his power, and the God of consolation made him overflow with joy in every tribulation.

3. Let us ask from St. Paul the grace of patience.

The devotees of St. Paul share in the great gift given to St. Paul. He says: “To you was given not only to believe in Jesus Christ, but also to suffer for him”.

Difficulties and tribulations are therefore gifts.

Do we have patience? Let us examine ourselves. It is our first duty. Patience does not passively tolerate a painful condition because nothing can be done otherwise. Patience is humility, it is faith, it is joy, it is gratitude. Let us examine ourselves again.

In the midst of our cowardice and lamentations, let us lift our eyes to Saint Paul. We cannot look at him without feeling ourselves humiliated, without being moved, without being drawn to follow him. Saint Paul has this attraction.

And let us ask him for patience, the crown of the apostolate and of our sanctification. The Church has approved a prayer asking for patience from St. Paul. It is not recited in vain. The advice with which she inculcates it to us out of great desire to see us saints and apostles is too insistent.

EXAMPLE. During his second apostolic voyage, Saint Paul still thought of evangelizing only Asia. In a vision the Holy Spirit called him to Europe, in Macedonia and he landed in Philippi. He preached and worked conversions, then freed a poor slave girl from a demon, but because of this miracle her owners lost the source of their profits. Full of fury, they accused the Apostle before the magistrates of inciting the city and of preaching a religious doctrine not allowed to the Romans.

Without an investigation and a process the magistrates commanded Paul and Silas to be stripped. They had them scourged, and when their flesh went to tatters and their blood dripped and wounds covered their persons, thus mangled, they locked them in shackles and threw them into a dark prison.

Paul and Silas did not even excuse themselves, they did not lose heart. Glad of the blows and the blood, they thanked God with their prayers and at midnight began to sing.

God rewarded quickly their patience. A strong earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. Their chains were broken,

their shackles split and the doors burst open. But the prisoners stayed put.

The jailer trembled at the deafening noise and at the fact of the open doors, and attempted to kill himself. Paul saw this, shouted as loudly as he could in spite of his extreme weakness and stopped the rash act. The jailer with his family went to the feet of Paul and Silas, and asked: "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe", Paul answered. And he taught the jailer and his family and baptized them. And the water that regenerated the custodians of the prison also immediately rehabilitated the two holy prisoners Paul then made supper and gave communion to the new Christians. Furthermore, the magistrates, entering into themselves, sent the lictors to set free the two Apostles. St. Paul answered: "We are Roman citizens and the judges have condemned us without process, scourged us publicly and bound in prison and now they want to send us away secretly? Let them come to free us". The magistrates were appalled. They had violated the laws and violated the majesty of the Roman people! And they humbled themselves before the two condemned by them and asked forgiveness. They besought them to leave the city and accompanied them to the gates with an honoring retinue. Patience zealed Paul's and Silas' victory.

Homage: *Offer with thanksgiving to God the greatest pain that afflicts you.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

JESUS CHRIST, UNIVERSAL CENTER

The Gospel of Saint Paul does not come from men, but from God. St. Paul has not preached about human things, neither through words nor through the methods of human wisdom, “so as not to render vain the Cross of Christ”.

There are, however, some things in the teachings of Saint Paul that are profound and difficult, but Saint John Chrysostom gives us at once the key, the secret to penetrate them and to understand them: to love Saint Paul. The more we love, the more we understand. The more we love, the more we enter to share in the secrets of his heart, in the wisdom of his soul, in the treasures of his spirit and to understand him and govern ourselves like him.

We shall meditate on the basic teachings of Saint Paul, the conclusions that he drew from them for himself and for us, the practice that we should learn. And the basic teaching of Saint Paul is this: restore all things in Jesus Christ.

1. *St. Paul teaches that Jesus Christ is the universal center.*

This teaching is an historical declaration. The last enemies of the church even today believe to oppose to Christianity this strange difficulty: the religion of Jesus Christ is a theory and only a theory. Twenty centuries ago Saint Paul already closed their mouths and convinced them of their historical ignorance: the Christian religion is the history of the world: Jesus Christ is the center of history!

“The riches of the grace of God has overflowed in us in the infinity of his wisdom and prudence, in making known *his mystery of love that will ordain, in the fullness of times, the restoration of all things in Jesus Christ*”.

Saint Paul wants to say: all the centuries, the empires and history preceding Jesus Christ, were for the preparation of the world of the Gospel. The centuries following are the

development of the Gospel, and the future ones will be the history of the progress of the Gospel.

We know from faith that the centuries were fitted for Jesus Christ, the center of history. Jesus Christ is the heart of all. And as all the blood exits the heart and nourishes all the tissues, so all that is good comes from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the head of all and the Greek word means this. And he commands all and everything is ordained to him. And all men and times and nations and events depend on him.

This teaching is a theological and philosophical principle. It is the paraphrase of the words of Jesus: I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever stays in me produces much fruit, and without me you can do nothing. There is no wisdom if not from Jesus Christ and what does not come from Jesus Christ, Saint Paul says, is ignorance, loss, dirtiness.

“From him everything, through him everything, in him everything”.

This teaching is the basic thing in the doctrine of Saint Paul.

Upon it are based and from it come all the other teachings: the church, justification, faith, the Christian sacrifice, the practical life...

And he concludes therefore: “Jesus Christ is everything and in everything”, he is at the bottom and at the center, at the head and around all things, and “it is necessary that he reign!”.

2. The application of the teaching that Saint Paul makes.

St. Paul applies the first application to himself and models all his life on these things: he is seized by Jesus Christ, he imitates Jesus Christ, lives Jesus Christ.

But St. Paul is solicitous in drawing even for us the most beautiful applications: “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth, until Christ be formed in you!”¹ “Put on Jesus Christ, think like Jesus Christ, imitate Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ, because if one does not love Jesus Christ, he

¹ Gal 4:19.

is already lost. Have the feeling of humility of Jesus Christ, and may the grace of Jesus Christ be always with you".²

It would truly be necessary to transcribe all the practical part with which St. Paul exhorts us, because all the practice of the Christian life and the supernatural beauty of the soul consists in our conformity to Jesus Christ, and the name of Jesus Christ more than three hundred times St. Paul writes in his letters with infinite devotion and indescribable benediction.

The application to us.

The most natural, the one that honors St. Paul, that makes us appear like intelligent disciples, ought to be this one: love Jesus Christ, read the Gospel, receive Communion with fervent devotion, visit the Divine Master in the Most Holy Eucharist!

Indeed, this one. But another application is closer, and it is the way to come here: stay with St. Paul, love St. Paul, be devoted to St. Paul!

One who has found St. Paul has found Jesus Christ: the heart of St. Paul is the heart of Jesus Christ. St. Paul establishes us, builds us, roots us in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit makes him say: "The foundation is Jesus Christ, and I am the wise architect that builds on him".

Therefore, one who is with St. Paul is just in his affairs: just in his thoughts, just in his spirit and for us it is of such capital importance being just in our doctrine: we are ministers of the truth.

One who is devoted to St. Paul goes to sanctity through the short way, because St. Paul builds him on Jesus Christ, so that grace flows to him through the easiest and widest channels.

St. John Chrysostom says: many err, many commit grave sins. Stay with Saint Paul and you will be saved from error and sin.

Let us examine ourselves again, we who have had from

² This chain of quotations according to sense, characteristic of Timothy Giaccardo, testifies on the one hand to his knowledge of the Pauline letters (retained by memory), and on the other to his way of using their concepts with liberty. This applies also to the chain of quotations that follow.

God St. Paul as our patron... if we perhaps commit this wrong to God... Devotion to Saint Paul is God's mercy.

EXAMPLE. Athens was, during the time of St. Paul, the intellectual capital of the gentile world. There was located the Areopagus, the supreme assembly of the best philosophers and politicians, literati, jurists who opined and kept vigil on the most exalted matters.

Paul had announced the Christian faith in the plaza. Those superficial men had derided him. But some more serious ones had invited him to explain at the Areopagus the new doctrine.

He accepted and went there. In no other place as on that hill the pagan civilization offered him a more seducing picture.

Paul on the contrary had his heart full of Jesus Christ crucified and his spirit concerned with the souls in front of him: he put forth the Catholic dogma.

"I announce to you that God that you adore without knowing, in whom we live and move and have our being. And he will judge the world *through a man appointed by him*".

The Areopagites shook their heads and derided him without reflecting, but Paul had gained the wisest among them: first was Dionysius, and a woman named Damaris and others with them. They approached Paul and embraced his faith.

Thus in Athens a Christian community was established composed of great humble men.

Dionysius the Areopagite was the first Bishop of Athens. He wrote marvelous things about the heavenly hierarchy that St. Paul revealed to him. He was then the first Bishop of Paris where he was crowned with martyrdom.³

Homage: *Repeat often during the day the greeting: Praised be Jesus Christ.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

³ These bits about Dionysius (identified with the "pseudo-Dionysius", author of the *De Cælesti Hierarchia*) and about the presumed Parisian Episcopate, are apocryphal.

THE VALUE OF GRACE

This is another topic that surpasses the abilities of our intelligence, that should be meditated with profound humility of heart and very fervent grateful heart, that is ineffable for its wonders and crushing for its importance.

Often we are naturalists and not Christians. The world is often pagan and not Christian. Even while dealing about saints and the most holy things, the learned are often rationalists, not Christians! What makes us Christians is grace. The teaching of Paul is totally penetrated by his doctrine on grace: its role, its importance, the necessity to count on it. And on it we shall meditate.

1. *The necessity of grace.*

A man without soul is a dead man. A soul without grace is a dead soul.

There is a great difference between one who has grace and one who does not have it, like between life and death, earth and heaven, hell and paradise, sin and God.

Let us not count on doing even the least merit without grace. Without it we don't even conceive of the desire or the thought to save ourselves. And if we fall into sin, without grace we shall not rise! Grace is necessary in order to do good. He who gives the soul to the spiritual seed which is the word of God, is the Lord. He who makes it fruitful is the Lord. He who makes it grow is the Lord. He who leads it to the fruits is the Lord.

In the order itself of nature, our activity depends on the nourishment coming from God. We count on our intelligence and strength to the degree God communicates to us...

So, nobody should boast. Who, in fact, can perceive in us something coming from us?

2. *Paul's teaching on grace.*

We can synthesize it in three principles, of the greatest importance: "I am such by the grace of God". St. Paul is a

creation of grace and grace becomes the powerful lever of his apostolate. This soul of his being as such gives testimony to this origin exactly when the Holy Spirit makes him talk about his revelations and tortures for Jesus Christ, and of the great things of his apostolate.

Hence, he confesses somewhere else: "The angel of Satan beat me, but God answers me: My grace is sufficient for you"; "I see in my members the law that is repugnant to my spirit. Who shall free me from it? The grace of Jesus Christ".

Second principle: "By ourselves, with the forces that come from us, we are not capable of forming a good thought. We cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus".

Grace has saved us, not the value of our works. The grace that superabounded where sin abounded, and therefore for salvation it is not a question of men who run, who agitate, but of the mercy of the Lord who takes the things that are nothing to save those that are something.

The third principle of St. Paul is this: We are cooperators of God both for our sanctification and for what God calls us to accomplish of good with him. Hence, ours is the duty to not to despise the grace by which God shows us mercy and to resuscitate it, keep it alive. The grace by which he makes fruitful this grace in us.

3. The practical application to us.

First let us enter into the persuasion, into the sentiment and under the impression that in this matter we are ignorant and very much behind in practice.

Let us examine ourselves if in the fulfillment of our duties we count on the grace of God; if in following the way of our vocation we count on the grace of God; if in our spiritual work, in the exercise for sanctification we count on the grace of God.

The grace was for St. Paul the soul and the lever. Devotion to St. Paul will lead us to this treasure of heavenly gifts, to base ourselves on the grace of God.

And so we shall be richer when we shall be poorer. We shall be stronger when we shall be weaker. We shall be more efficacious when we shall be more inept, and from being sinners we shall become children of heaven.

God is used to choose the things despised to show his power, provided that the despicable beings trust in him and not in themselves.

EXAMPLE. A very extraordinary grace of the Divine Master has confirmed the very abundant grace that he had poured on the soul of Saint Paul: his rapture into the third heaven. And this prodigy took place in St. Paul on the way from Antioch to Jerusalem, when with St. Barnabas he went to bring the first time alms to the poor of the Holy City.

St. Paul does not dare to narrate this rapture, neither does he talk about it with anybody. After fourteen years the Holy spirit makes him write about it to the Corinthians, to confirm the grace of the apostolate that he had lavished on him in superabundance. St. Paul, in fact, had been consecrated bishop in Antiochia and elevated to the dignity of apostle, segregated for the mission while already he was a vessel of election for the holiness of his life. And the Divine Master gave proof to him of his love: St. Paul does not know if he has entered paradise with his body or not, but he was raised up to the third heaven, to the highest sublimity of paradise and there saw beauties that the human eye never sees, and heard harmonies that the human ear never heard, and experienced delights so mysterious that never entered the human heart.

God showed him a sign of the fullness of grace that was in him, that had been communicated to him through the imposition of hands and that would have assured him divine success in his mission.

Floweret: *An examination of conscience on this point: do I count on grace in my things?*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

PROPAGATE THE CULT OF SAINT PAUL

People act in this manner in all things: love erupts in praise, love ignites, love wants to make grow the one it loves.

Even the Lord acts like this toward his loved ones. St. Paul did this toward Jesus Christ: “that Jesus be preached, that Jesus Christ reign, that Jesus Christ be loved”.

He who loves wants to make loved, wants to make others participate in the fruits of his love.

The true devotee of St. Paul preaches St. Paul, makes him known, makes him to be prayed to, makes him to be loved.

We are all indebted to St. Paul! The graces of St. Paul are admirable! Devotion to St. Paul gives strength to the spirit!

People say: devotion to St. Paul is not popular. It is the devotion of the learned, of the Fathers of the Church, of the Bishops!...

It was, however, the devotion of the people at the start of the Church: and the hour comes and is now that the devotion to St. Paul must again take its place in the hearts of the Christian people.

1. What is the meaning of spreading devotion to St. Paul.

It means to make St. Paul known, make people pray to him. Devotion to St. Paul is something great for a soul and it is a great gift of the mercy of God.

Hence, it enters souls with more difficulty.

But when it has started to enter, it makes its way, steals the heart, furnishes with power the spirit, transforms life and does not fall anymore, and continually grows. Make St. Paul known: his conversion, his work for souls, his tribulations, his heart, his letters, his life, his mission, his grace.

He, the knight of the Holy Spirit, the lover of the heavenly Father, the devotee of Mary.

His life is very interesting. The history of the redemption of the gentiles, of our redemption, is edifying.

To make St. Paul loved: because he has loved us first and loves us with an indescribable love; because our heart, in the love of St. Paul, puts on the love of Jesus Christ and ordains its entire life to the heavenly fatherland.

To let St. Paul be prayed to because his power is equal to his love He hears us in all our needs and God listens to him. The graces that are obtained are many. The testimonies of thankfulness increase every hour and now many pages cannot contain the prodigies of his goodness.

2. Why spread the devotion to Saint Paul.

Because God has honored him first. We shall not honor Saint Paul as God has honored him! God will be pleased, gratified and honored if we will give much glory to his apostle.

God the Father has announced his conversion and life in the prophecy of Jacob to Benjamin seven centuries before St. Paul was born. The Divine Master says that he is his vessel of election. The Holy Spirit separates him for a special ministry, inspires a book to narrate his life, a letter, the second to the Corinthians, to make apology for him. It is therefore God's will that devotion to Saint Paul increase.

Holy Mother the Church invites us to honor him.

The government of the Church, the teaching of the Church, the liturgy of the Church present to us at every step the authority of St. Paul, the magisterium of St. Paul, the example and intercession of St. Paul, in the Papal bulls, in the solemn definitions, in the breviary and in the Holy Mass.

The feasts of St. Paul are four: his conversion, 25 January; his martyrdom, 28 and 30 June; the dedication of his church in Rome, 18 November; and sexagesima Sunday which is a celebration of his apostolate.

God will allow us to explain at length this allusion in a Pauline anthology.

There is a third motive, and it is our duty. Duty of justice

because we are debtors to St. Paul of a continuous providence: we are Paulines. A duty still of acknowledgement, because from his generosity comes his love and overflowing protection! If we say that the St. Paul House is a continuous miracle, we say very little! Therefore it's for us to make St. Paul known, loved and prayed to. Even the world waits this from us: from the point that it designates all the house simply by the name *San Paolo*.

3. *How we shall propagate the devotion to Saint Paul.*

Let us believe: who has found St. Paul has found Jesus Christ; who has found the heart of Saint Paul has found the heart of Jesus; who prays to St. Paul bases himself on the power of God. Therefore St. Anthony Zaccaria, St. Ignatius, St. Francis of Assisi and St. John Chrysostom are fervently and intimately Paulines.

Let us examine ourselves if our devotion is already born so as to be propagated. Propagating the devotion is the sign and measure of its existence in us.

Let us not suffer this humiliation in front of God and the Church.

St. Paul in every letter: in the abbreviation I. M. I. P. in headings. St. Paul in letters, on addresses, in postcards, in gifts. Invite people to acquire the letters of St. Paul. St. Paul in the prayer of every day for the press apostolate. Inspire trust in St. Paul. Read his life. Have his picture attached. Cite St. Paul in preachings. Testimonies and examples. Preach willingly about St. Paul.

Devotion to St. Paul is a life. Let St. Paul live in thoughts, in charity, in sacrifice. Inject into souls the Pauline spirit. Put in order the world in the spirit of St. Paul: these are the diffusing acts of Pauline souls.

EXAMPLE. St. John Chrysostom, among the devotees of St. Paul and propagators of devotion to the Apostle, holds a principal place. He writes: "Hearing the reading of the letters

of St. Paul, I cheer up, I exult and burn with desire at the sound of that so dear to me. I am saddened and suffer that not all know, as would be opportune, this man". He gives this testimony: "That little that I know, if I also know something, I owe to assiduous familiarity with the works of Saint Paul and to the great love I have for him", because one who loves knows more than others the things of the persons loved.

In praise of Saint Paul, he wrote seven long marvelous discourses. He wrote commentary to his letters.

"Let us open our eyes, he says, to the splendor of the words of the Apostle and we shall not walk in the midst of darkness and expose ourselves to the danger of grave sins".

He preached in the spirit of Saint Paul and supported the cause of God against the whole Orient, the emperors and was victorious like Saint Paul.

Often St. Paul appeared to him on the pulpit, and he dictated to him the words that Saint John took and communicated to the souls.

In the spirit of Saint Paul, he wanted that parents guide their families, magistrates ruled the nations, widows and virgins regulated their lives.

During a terrible atmospheric and marine danger that threatened Constantinople, he orders public prayers and accompanies in procession his people to the feet of the Holy Apostles Peter and Andrew, founder of the church of Byzantium, and of St. Paul and his disciple St. Timothy. As by enchantment, whatever storm stopped and then he visited the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in thanksgiving.

Enlightened by the doctrine of Chrysostom, the Church, vivified by the sanctity of the great patriarch, venerates in him the splendor and the grace of the soul of Saint Paul.

Homage: Offer a picture or at least talk one time about St. Paul, and invite people to pray to him.

Ejaculation: O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.

THE MARTYRDOM AND GLORY OF ST. PAUL

The Apostle who lived the life of Jesus Christ, had to resemble the Divine Master also in accomplishing it.

When the Savior had fulfilled the prophecies and accomplished the redemption, he bent his head and gave up his spirit to God. St. Paul also, in his testament, wrote to his beloved Timothy: "I have finished the course, I have accomplished my mission".¹

He had not only reached the end of his days, but had brought to conclusion and fulfillment the mandate entrusted to him by God: the nations had joined the people of God, the Church was established among the gentiles, and the individual churches connected and obedient to the church of Rome.

Therefore, he added: "As for me, the time for my departure has come... There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me".² And he had desired so much to be with Jesus Christ, but had still to seal with martyrdom together with Peter the foundation of the church of Rome.

Let us meditate on the martyrdom of St. Paul, his glory and the resolution we ought to do.

1. *The martyrdom of St. Paul*

Peter and Paul were in the Orient, in Corinth, when they came to know of the persecution unleashed by Nero against the Church of Rome. They immediately went to the faithful of the capital city, of the Mother Church, to console them, comfort them and sustain them.

But the persecution was aimed with every astuteness against the leaders. Peter and Paul were bound and thrown

¹ Cf 2Tim 4:7.

² Cf 2Tim 4:8.

into the Mamertine prison. They converted their guards, Saints Proceso and Martiniano with forty other soldiers. They were therefore pulled out and condemned to death, accompanied to execution. They walked together. It is easy to imagine the mutual exhortation of those hearts that had confided all to each one, loved each other and had respected each other, as no one else in the world had done.

At some point a sudden order commands separation. The two apostles believed that a single death would unite them. They embraced each other in fraternal embrace, they kissed. The eyes of Paul poured out copious tears on the Prince of the apostles and they greeted each other.

And St. Paul said to the head of the Church: "Peace be with you, O foundation of the Church, Pastor of the flock of Christ!"

And Saint Peter answered the Apostle: "And you go in peace, O preacher of good works, mediator and leader of the salvation of the just!"

And they separated: on the same day however their souls joined each other in heaven, welcomed together by the Divine Master.

In the place of the kiss, the faithful erected a small chapel called the "Church of the Kiss".

St. Peter was crucified on the hill of the Vatican.

St. Paul was led much farther still, through the road of Ostia until the Acque Salvie.

He was accompanied by some disciples, Luke, Dionysius and Timothy.

Along the way, he opened his heart even to the soldiers. Three converted.

They arrived at the place decreed.

There was a woman, a disciple, that wept. Paul encouraged her.

Then he commended his spirit to God, inclined his head before Him, in an act of profound adoration and full submission. And the axe of the executioner glinted in the sun, descended

and cut off from the bust the very holy head... and from the cut veins poured out with the blood very pure milk, symbol of the purity and charity of the Martyr. And the tongue of St. Paul still repeatedly pronounced, in an act of devotion, and confessed, the name of Jesus. His plucked head made three leaps, and where it touched the earth, a fountain sprung out and even today these three fountains exist and gush out.

St. Stephen, the protomartyr, took from the hands of the disciples the soul of Saint Paul and presented it to Jesus Christ who crowned it with the double crown of glory.

2. The glory of St. Paul.

Now, we little mortals, being full of egoism and attached to the things of the earth, cannot understand a soul full of merits, and the love of God for this soul.

“Eye has not seen, nor ear has heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”.³

St. Paul enjoys this happiness and glory. But who will describe it? He who soon after he converted, was already a vessel of election; who was rapt till the third heaven at the start of his mission; who considered himself the least among the Christians, and was the greatest in charity; who lived the life of Jesus Christ? Who will describe the encounter of Saint Paul with the Divine Master? Oh! may the Lord grant us to contemplate in heaven the glory of the Apostle that astounds and testifies to the mercies of God.

The glory that Saint Paul has given to God among the gentiles, the glory to which St. Paul has led the peoples, is the “glory of the grace of God”, and it is the glory that invests the soul of St. Paul.

The Church gives glory to Saint Paul throughout the centuries. St. Paul is always joined to St. Peter. He is invoked in every act of government, of magisterium and in liturgical worship.

³ 1Cor 2:9.

Saint Paul is quoted. The spirit of Saint Paul is the Christian spirit and he is proposed as model and argument.

The world glorifies Saint Paul. St. John Chrysostom directs to Rome this prophetic speech: "O Rome, I admire you and I praise you. You are great because of your law and regulations that govern the world. You are great because of your dominion that presides over all the peoples. You are great because of your arts in which you have showed off treasures. You are great in the great men that get educated in you. But I admire you more because you possess the two bodies of Peter and Paul, who, like two eyes, see and, like two suns, illumine the whole world". "Oh, the glory of Rome, when, at the judgment, the body of St. Peter and the body of St. Paul will rise from the urns!"

To Saint Paul gave homage the geniuses and luminaries of the world. To Saint Paul have recourse souls that need grace, merits and virtue. Today, there is a competition of studies, veneration and writing revolving around the Apostle.

The grafting of the nations to the Gospel in order to promote Christian civilization, Saint Paul accomplished it.

The world will not glorify the Apostle enough, because it will not understand enough his work, but his glory will be for the ages, as his mission has saved all the ages.

3. *Our resolution.*

Let us also give glory to the Apostle: it is our duty.

Read his life and Letters. Pray to St. Paul. Celebrate his feasts with special devotion and solemnity. Make beautiful the services in his churches. Help the institutions that live under his patronage. Become cooperators of the Pious Society of Saint Paul and propagate its initiatives.

Live in the spirit of Saint Paul, as it flows out from his soul and from his letters.

Saint Paul gave his blood for the faith. Let us meditate on his advice: "He who wants to live in Jesus Christ will suffer persecutions. He who wants to belong to Jesus Christ, cruci-

fies his flesh and its evil habits". We who search for worldly pleasures and the enjoyment of comforts, let us examine ourselves if we renounce our likes and those of men in order to please God.

Saint Paul waits for us in heaven: he writes his cooperators in the book of life. It's there that we must reach him. Our homeland is not here. Let us believe him and follow him.

EXAMPLE. A drop of milk that came out of the cut neck of Saint Paul fell from the sword to the garment of the executioner, worked a miracle, like the drop of water that flowed from the heart of Jesus. Grace filled that heart, enlightened that soul. The executioner repented, threw away the axe, knelt down to pray to St. Paul. He was a Christian! The lictors also followed him: they also are Christians. It is the superabundance of the grace of St. Paul: the executioners save themselves. After three days Saint Paul also appears to Nero, inviting him to penitence. But the monster becomes terrified, refuses grace, becomes even more cruel and dies in his sin.

The hearts that come near to St. Paul receive salvation.

Homage: *Let us do a good work in honor of St. Paul and let us repeat: "This is not our city" but we are headed to heaven.*

Ejaculation: *O Saint Paul the Apostle, etc.*

Appendix

THIRTY THOUGHTS FOR A MONTH TO SAINT PAUL¹

1 June:

Saint Paul is called the Apostle par excellence. Reading his Letters, that of Apostle is the title that appears more often that he attributes to himself, now with humble acknowledgement, now with profound awareness, now with forcefulness and pride. It is the title to which he holds most.

2 June:

We do not understand Saint Paul except close to souls. He would be considered as not understanding the apostle who wanted him detached from them that are his desire and crown.

3 June:

Saint Paul is the “Teacher of the gentiles”: his life is a teaching, and his Letters are a living and palpitating teaching. Also for this he was chosen as protector of the Congregation.

4 June:

Saint Paul is called the “Teacher of the gentiles” and was in truth the most faithful and profound interpreter of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹ In the *Calendario Paolino 1964*, written through assignment by Fr. Alberione, the following thoughts were proposed as “Prayer intentions” for each day of the month of June, dedicated to Saint Paul the Apostle. We propose them for eventual reutilization.

5 June:

Take the key, open that Heart. Enter the wound of the side of Jesus: Wisdom is there. You will know the secret of all religion, of all revelation and the love of Jesus for us.

6 June:

Saint Paul stands before us as our protector, that is, the provider of what concerns our particular life. He is the one who talks about us before the heavenly Father and prays to the most holy Virgin.

7 June:

Saint Paul is the protector of the whole Institute, so that it may maintain itself in the truth and every member may grow in sanctity, in the wisdom of the Gospel and in the true spirit of poverty.

8 June:

Saint Paul has an idea that haunts him: Jesus Christ; has an ideal to which he tends with all his powers: Jesus Christ; an impassioned love that is the push of all his life: Christ.

9 June:

Jesus Christ is the lens, the prism that helps Saint Paul to study all the aspects of the life of man and to solve all the problems of the Christian life.

10 June:

A tireless walker, founder of churches in the whole world, igniter of hearts: this is the figure of Saint Paul, whose heart was the heart of Christ: “Cor Pauli cor Christi”.

11 June:

Let us take Jesus Christ from Saint Paul, and neither his conversion, nor his life, nor his apostolate, nor his chains, nor his martyrdom will have a reason to exist.

12 June:

Saint Paul is the singer of God, the preacher of the glory of God, the promoter of his cult, the champion of the laws of God, the segregated for Christ, the prisoner for Christ, the man who lives in Christ.

13 June:

Among the imitators of Saint Paul who perfectly followed his steps in the way of perfection and reached the halo of sanctity, the names of Timothy, Titus, Dionysius, Luke, Clement, Thecla... shine.

14 June:

All those called by the apostle were formed, developed, launched in the lecture of the apostolate, in the battlefield of Christ, to win souls for him.

15 June:

“Christ did not please himself”, Saint Paul tells us. The apostle must not in any way allow himself to be led to seek himself, to please himself. He would go against his own mission, against the idea itself of apostle.

16 June:

Saint Paul had a very firm faith, a secure hope, an ardent charity: “Who will separate me from the love of Christ?”.

17 June:

Saint Paul is a model of poverty. In abundance he knew how to live soberly, and in penury he knew how to be contented.

18 June:

Saint Paul was a model of prayerfulness. The spirit of prayer was that which propped him in the midst of so many sufferings and temptations. Pointing out to Ananias Paul the convert, the Lord says regarding him: "*Ecce enim orat: you will find him praying*".

19 June:

Saint Paul stands before us as the model of every virtue. In imitating the Divine Master, first he practiced and then taught others. Thus he drew to himself many souls and behind him there is a cortege of saints.

20 June:

One who comes near to Saint Paul little by little transforms himself, learns to live like him, to pray like him. He quickly makes his heart big and becomes generous, broad in his outlook and ardent and tender in his love for Christ.

21 June:

Always straining forward like Christ the propagandist, like Paul, walker for God. Feeling the Apostle's "Christ lives in me" is to accompany the Church in her difficult journey.

22 June:

Saint Paul is the type of the apostle. He was the tireless Apostle who "made himself all for all". He was always everywhere and for all. He was the courageous Apostle who traversed the world in order to renew it in a new light: Jesus Christ.

23 June:

Know Saint Paul better. Regarding his elevated human and spiritual personality, much has been written but much remains to be done still. “Know your Father”: his holy life, his apostolate, his doctrine, his power before God.

24 June:

Feeling that “Christ lives in me” is to follow and accompany the Church in her difficult journey today. Always straining to advance!

25 June:

We are not sons and daughters of Saint Paul if we are not always on the go in our spiritual work, in knowing ever better the Lord, the Gospel, the doctrine of the Church, our Constitutions, and in observing religious life ever more perfectly and progressing in the apostolate.

26 June:

Like Saint Paul, the apostle of the editions must be a great heart that embraces all of humanity, his activity tireless and heroic. He must learn from his model the art of making himself “all for all”. The secret is love: “In all things, charity!”.

27 June:

One who dedicates himself to the Pauline life must possess an interior life that is full and abundant. If he has this, he will surely do a great apostolate, even if he is an ignorant, misunderstood and unknown person.

28 June:

Saint Paul is our model. He tells us: “Imitate me as I imitate Jesus Christ”. He proposes himself as example in the way of imitating Jesus Christ.

29 June:

You must be the branches that attach to the vine. The vine is Christ. The one who represents Christ is the Pope. The more you feel yourselves united to the Church and to the Pope, to the Eucharistic Christ and teacher in the Gospel, the more will your life be happy, centered on Jesus, and the more you will accomplish well your mission in the Church of God.

30 June:

The power of Saint Paul is as great as his love. If we need greater graces and we ask for greater graces, let us give proof of greater trust in Saint Paul's love for us, let us give greater pleasure to God who has given us Saint Paul, let us give with Saint Paul greater honor to God because God has made him powerful.

III

SAINT PAUL MODEL OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

PREMISE

In the spring of 1947 Fr. Alberione, reaching the 40th year of his priestly ordination, after the end of the tragic war and having started the construction of the votive temple of the Queen of Apostles, allowed himself a moment of pause in his intense activity, retiring in the Pauline house of Albano for a month of Spiritual Exercises. The expansion of his communities in Italy and abroad required an additional effort of animation on the part of the Founder, and he felt urging in himself the need to compare with his original inspiration and with the figures that gave rise to it: the divine Master Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

*The choice of his theme is significant: the Pauline Letters on which to look at himself as in a mirror, through the life and behaviour of the Apostle, guided by a book of the German Jesuit Fr. Otto Cohausz: *La missione sacerdotale nella dottrina di San Paolo* (The Priestly Mission in the Doctrine of Saint Paul).¹*

On this outline, followed step by step, in the same order and Latin language of the titles, Fr. Alberione developed his meditations and “reflections”. It is these last, above all the examinations of conscience he made before the tabernacle and expressed in the form of prayer to the divine Master, that make up the very and original element of the present little work.

Appeared printed the first time in 1972 edited by Fr. Stefano Lamera with the title “L’Apostolo Paolo modello di vita spirituale” (The Apostle Paul Model of Spiritual Life), it was republished with the title “Paolo Apostolo” by Fr. Giuseppe Di Corrado in 1981 (Recension text, First series of the Opera Omnia).

¹ Ed. Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1938², p. 306. – On the close rapport between this source and the writing of Fr. Alberione, see the notable comparative study of Fr. ANTONIO DA SILVA, in “Conoscere Don Alberione”, Quaderno 2, Luglio-dicembre 1982, pp. 95-105.

The basis of the work was and remains the original manuscript (54 handwritten pages, with small and clear handwriting), conserved by Sr. Rosaria Visco, Daughter of Saint Paul, one time secretary and driver of the Founder, who kindly ceded it to Fr. Giovanni Roatta. After the edition of Fr. Stefano Lamera, it ended up in the Archives of the General House of the Society of St. Paul.

The little book is subdivided into 18 chapters, in which Fr. Alberione – in a direct comparison with the figure and mission of Saint Paul – traces the image of the priest, who in imitation of the convert of Damascus must be a new man, “exclusively of God”, “a miracle of grace”. He must understand men, feel with them and lead them to God.

These brief pages reveal to us in what measure the thought and example of the Apostle of the Gentiles has entered the life and mission of Fr. Alberione, and how the latter, “educated and formed” in the school of Paul, shows himself to be a deeply spiritual man, a master of the spirit who never removes his gaze from God who has constituted him minister of Christ, preacher, salt and light.

As for the editorial style, it is obvious that it is influenced by the nature of the writing: very personal notes, destined for one’s meditation and prayer in other successive moments of engagement with God, in Christ, through Saint Paul. His concepts are barely sketched, and his punctuation shows to be approximate. Even his biblical citations are sometimes incomplete and imprecise.

Such citations which are very frequent had been quoted from the Latin text of the Vulgate, according to the Cohausz source.

J.M.J.P.

G.D.P.H.

SP[IRITUAL] EXERCISES¹
Albano - 26 April - 5 [May 1947]

I adore my God: Beginning, End, Judge.

I thank and praise his Goodness, in the past, today, [in] the future.

I repent: I am here to render account to J[esus] of my priesthood.

I invoke complete conversion: mind, will, heart.

Do with me as you will that I be: hating sin as God hates it, accomplishing the Divine Approval like J[esus] Christ.

In Christ through Paul.

¹ The square parentheses indicate that the text has been completed by the editor. In the edition of 1972 (*L'apostolo Paolo modello di vita spirituale*, edited by S. Lamera) the date given is 26 April 1954.

1. “IMITATORES DEI SICUT FILII CARISSIMI”¹
(Eph 5:1)

PA a) I must, *being* a son, resemble my Father, to please him.
1 The Son who pleased Him totally was Jesus Christ: “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased” [cf Lk 3:22].

If Christ lived in me: mind, heart and will, the Father would see J[esus] C[hrist] in me; I would be pleasing to Him...

But I am not *another Christ*:
My mind,
my heart,
my will...

PA b) “I exhort you therefore, be my imitators!” (1Cor 4:16).
2 Great profit can be drawn from a human type of saint, priest, apostle.

Imitate Paul in order to imitate Christ, in order to see in a being who is only a man how it is possible to be a saint, a priest, an apostle like Christ.

“You know how you must imitate us” (2Thes 3:7). That is, in order to see how Christ lived.

Paul is for us life, doctrine, mediator, intercessor.

PA c) “...To give you ourselves as examples to be imitated”
3 (2Thes 3:9).

Our great need: let Christ live, reproduce him in us, so that our people, our readers, and men may read in our life the life of Christ: the Gospel.

The written and spoken word, public and private, that of Paul, that of Christ. – *Meditate on their life*.

Conduct, private and public, that of Paul, in order to be that of Christ. – *Meditate on his letters*.

¹ “Imitators of God as beloved children”. *Charissimi* in the original. The letter *a*, which opens the first paragraph, in the original is found ahead of the title.

My prayer and my apostolate, the ones of Paul, in order to be the ones of Christ. – *Pray and act for Paul in Chr[ist]*.

Goal: “To give you an example (*form*) to imitate”.

Prayer: Joyful mysteries, *Miserere*.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

I am here before your Tabernacle to give you account of my life, of my priesthood, of my particular mission.

PA
4

Infinite goodness and like in an obstinate contest with respect to my obstinate malice and daily incessant lack of response and deafness! You have won over me. As you have won over Saul. – I surrender... All of you only, always You, and in You and for You.

Forgive me, O Master. – Do not be silent. I feel that you have led me into this solitude to talk to me... *enlighten me*.

Forgive me, O Master. – Have also for me the Heart that you had for Peter, the Magdalene, Matthew, Thomas...

Do accept this prodigal son, this unworthy priest, this unfaithful one to your every plan and desire.

“*I have squandered every good thing...*” [cf Lk 15:14]: my mind, my heart, my time, my energies, relationships, helps, health and material things.

There is everything to rebuild, because I don’t have virtue, I don’t have the faith that you would want, I don’t have sufficient piety, I don’t have zeal for God and for souls.

Rebuild in me your Self... I want to leave you free to do what you want... Work on me... “until Christ is formed in you!...” [Gal 4:19] from these wreck and ruins...

I trust in you, Sacred Heart of the Master.

I trust in you, Sacred Heart of the Mother.

2. “VAS ELECTIONIS”¹

“He is for me a chosen instrument, to bring my name to the peoples, to kings and to the children of Israel... – I shall show him how much he will have to suffer for my name” (Acts 9:15-16).

PA a) “Chosen instrument” for his gifts of nature, formation,
5 grace.

There is much similarity between Paul and the priest in this accumulation of divine gifts.

From eternity God laid his eyes on him: “he has chosen us before the creation of the world, destined us to be his adopted children through the work of Jesus Christ so as to become holy and immaculate before him in charity” [cf Eph 1:4-5].²

I had many gifts of nature: intelligence, health, character, inclination, energy.

I had many good things in my formation: family, parish, school, companions, institutes.

I had much preparation on the part of the Holy Spirit: baptism and the other sacraments; inclination for this vocation; very loving preparation of God: probandate, novitiate, profession, ordination.

PA b) “To bring my name”. Vocation similar to ours.

6 *Called* to preach: through his voice [and] writing; in direction and in school; in the confessional and during conferences; in catechisms and family conversations: always, in all

¹ Literally “Vessel of election”. – The numbering of the titles in the first five chapters was indicated with Roman numbers; in the rest with Arabic numbers. We have standardized, adopting always the Arabic number.

² The scriptural reference is not *Phil* 3:12, as referred by the Author in the original, but *Eph* 1:4-5 as corrected.

the world, “all the nations”. Using the most powerful means, the most respondent to the needs of today.

Called to guide by example and by voice. The priest is a great educator of children, of the youth, of the woman, of men. By means of private direction or governance: “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” [Mt 28:20]. It means “director, guide of souls”, “individually or collectively”.

Called to sanctify. Paul had to destroy, build, expand, liberate, elevate to God, sanctify.

The Priest also is: “apostle of Jesus Christ, preacher of the gospel, dispenser of the mysteries of God, minister of Christ”.

He must intervene in the destinies of time, prepare the extension, penetration and peaceful establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

He is a vessel of election, full, overflowing.

c) “I will show him how much he will have to suffer for my name...”

PA
7

Two sufferings: mortification, “to put to death”, all of my ego, mind, body, spirit...; the suffering of the apostolate: repugnance within, struggles outside: against Satan, the flesh, the world.

Examination: “In a big house there are not only vessels of gold” like Paul, Leo, Francis, Alphonsus, Bosco, etc.; “and of silver”, ordinary workers, but strong and constant; “but also of wood”, of little value and little used: “and of terracotta”, tepid, lazy, worldly; “some are destined for noble uses, others for more contemptible ones” [cf 2Tim 2:20].

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

I have been taken from nothing, lifted from dung, placed among the princes of the Christian people, made minister of Christ and preacher, salt, light. For what purposes:

PA
8

To *know better* my God: in the Bible, in the teaching Church, in nature.

To *believe better*;³ to have one day a deeper vision of God; to preach to the peoples “in the midst of whom you must shine like stars in the world” (Phil 2:13).⁴

[To] *serve better* the Lord: in things of the greatest glory to God, of the greatest advantage for souls and for eternal results. To do the will of God, manifested externally. To guide souls to accomplish it on earth in the way that it is accomplished in heaven.

[To] *love better*: establish a continuous, intimate, felt union with God; pray more, better, for all; love the Lord with all your heart, above all things.

Examination. I see myself inferior compared to so many priests, religious, simple Christians, men, and perhaps beasts, “like the animals that perish” [Ps 48:13], at least in many things.

Convert me as you did with Saul... I am more in the deep, because I have sinned after having known you! I feel that it is useless and hard to kick against the goad.

I surrender. Have mercy through Mary: Rosary, *Miserere*.

³ In a typewritten edition following the compilation of the original, the Author by his hand inserts at this point another Latin citation which we translate: “Do everything without murmuring and without criticising, so that you may be irreprehensible and simple, children of God immaculate in the midst of a perverse and degenerate generation, in which you must shine like stars in the world...” [Phil 2:14-15].

⁴ The verse of the letter to the *Philippians* is 2:15 and not 13 as quoted.

3. "PAULUS APOSTOLUS"¹

"To me...has been given this grace to announce to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ, and to make shine before the eyes of all what is the fulfillment of the mystery hidden for ages in the mind of God, creator of the universe, so that it may be manifested now in heaven by means of the Church, to the Principalities and Powers, the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:8-10). PA 9

a) Apostolate is the continuation of the work of Christ. He is the Apostle: "the apostle and high priest of faith" [cf Heb 3:1]; and he gave to St. Paul, to the Twelve, to the Priests the Apostolate. Apostolate is to dedicate one's energies to win for Jesus Christ (Kingdom of God), to build up the Church, to give God to men and men to God. PA 10

b) The Apostle believes, wills, works. PA

St. Paul *believed*: "to whom God wanted to make known the glorious riches of this mystery in the midst of the pagans... The justice of God through faith in Jesus Christ..." [cf Col 1:27; Rom 3:22]. 11

Willed. "I spend and overspend myself... Made all for all... Apostle by the will of Jesus Christ" [cf 1Cor 9:22].

Worked. A superior mission; certain of victory; for the whole world; consuming oneself.

So also the priest: let his faith be living; let him will seriously; tirelessly, until death.

Lovely and great it is to consume oneself for so high ideals among men: "those who shall have taught many in justice shall shine like stars forever" [Dan 12:3].

¹ "Paul apostle [of Jesus Christ]", cf Rom 1:1; 1Cor 1:1; 2Cor 1:1...

PA 12 c) Aids: the human *heart*, that is naturally Christian, aspires to truth, virtue and peace;
the big world accepted the gospel because in no other way it had peace and good; today the circumstances are the same;
the power of God: “we have had the courage in our God to announce to you the gospel”;
 the *gospel* itself, which is the solution to every doubt, freedom from sin, virtue and sacramental: “the word of God is living, efficacious and sharper than any two-edged sword; it penetrates until the division between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow and scrutinizes the sentiments and thoughts of the heart” [Heb 4:12].²

The apostolate of interior life is the first; then:
 the apostolate of suffering,
 the apostolate of example,
 the apostolate of prayer,
 the apostolate of the editions,
 the apostolate of works.

Examination: What will become of me? On that great day? – Examination.

Sorrow: I offer as satisfaction my humiliation, the merits of Jesus Christ, the apostolate of Mary and of the holy Apostles and Priests.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA 13 I adore you, O Master and Apostle of the Father. I thank you for having brought to us from heaven the Gospel and your doctrine revealing to us the mystery of the redemption willed by the Father.

I bless you for having called me to the apostolate to give the good news to all about your admirable riches. May you be blessed for the fruits obtained! But how saddened am I

² Text erroneously attributed by the Author to 1Cor 2:28.

and almost drowned and lost because of the immense good that I have not done... To whom shall I have recourse if not to Your Heart? And to your and my Mother Mary? I have no one but You... I hope only in You... “In no other is there salvation” [Acts 4:12].

Would that I had *studied* more and felt more the faith like Paul, Alphonsus, Francis! More faith in your help.

Would that I possessed more *zeal* for the glory of God and for souls. The rights of God, the eternal salvation of my brothers are immense values... and me? What coldness!

If I had been more *humble* and never sought myself... more *diligent* in preparing my sermons.... more fervent in praying before giving them, more caring for the editions!...

The Apostolate repairs the scandals. There are so many of them. Till where the consequences extend themselves, I do not know... and so? “He never stopped preaching and writing”. I bear in mind the thirty Doctors of the Church... I admire them... I invoke them... I imitate them.

Rosary, invocation of the writers,³ *Miserere*.

³ They are the *Invocations of the writers* found in the book of prayers of the Pauline Family and now are called: *Litany for the formation of promoters of social communication*.

4. "HOMO DEI"¹

PA "In fact, we are his work, created in Christ Jesus for the
 14 good works that God has predisposed for us so that we may
 do them" (Eph 2:10).

PA a) "In fact, we are his work". The Priest is a new being,
 15 extraordinary. Besides his second birth, "he is born again".
 He is the man of God, because transformed and made rich
 and united to Christ doing works proper of God. He is filled
 and transformed by² grace, by him who is "rich in mercy".
 From persecutor to apostle.

Every priest who is worthy of his mission is a miracle of grace. He commands sin and the devil. He distributes graces and is obeyed by God. Peoples see in him a being out of this world, and when all is lost they still hope in him. The sacred chrisim has transformed the aspirant into a being belonging entirely to God, because made his "new work".

PA b) He deals with the things of God that have been en-
 16 trusted to him:

Sings to God: "Toward midnight Paul and Silas, in prayer, sang hymns to God" [Acts 16:25]. The breviary is the *work of God*. The prayer of the priest is quite different from the prayer of the simple Christian.

Moves men to praise God: "I shall announce your name to my brothers". The priest is the preacher and herald of God.

Defends the rights of God and brings men to God. Without the priest the golden calf is adored: Bacchus, Venus, etc... It was like this in the pagan world before Christianity, like this where the priest speaks not. The priest is Christ-God. If he

¹ "Man of God": cf 1Tim 6:11.

² Often we read in the writings of Fr. Alberione the use of the preposition in the ancient form, as in this case.

goes away, other divinities come in that are the devil among men. When grace is removed, the devil enters the heart.

The priest: “I have appeared to you to constitute you *minister and witness* of those things that you have seen and of those for which I shall still appear to you... I send you to open their eyes, so that they may pass from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God and obtain the remission of their sins and the inheritance in the midst of them who have been sanctified through their faith in me” (Acts 26:16,18).

c) A committed man, bound to God. He is *for God*: “Reserve for me Barnabas and Saul” [Acts 13:2]. He lives for God, not for the flesh, not for human interests, not for positions or honors... “You, man of God, flee these things” [1Tim 6:11]. It would be sad, humiliating, destructive... “you that preach not to rob, you rob” [Rom 2:21]. *Exclusively* for God: “You, man of God, tend to piety [1Tim 6:11]... Our fatherland is in heaven...” [Phil 3:20].

PA
17

To be familiar with God, to convert the world is something of him alone who truly belongs to God. God’s *favorite*. God defends him, consoles him, sanctifies him as such. He is the pupil of God’s eyes. He lives in peace even if the world heaves under his feet, like Peter on the waves held up by Christ.

The priest: “if we live, we live for the Lord. If we die, we die for the Lord. Whether we live or die, we are therefore of the Lord” [cf Rom 14:8].

Lord, “you have judged me worthy of trust calling me to the ministry, I that formerly had been a blasphemer... but I received mercy” (cf 1Tim 1:12-13). – Therefore: nobility, thanksgiving, humility, correspondence.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

Your mercy is infinite: I will not be able to understand it completely. I want to adore it more than scrutinize it. How come you have chosen to be a Priest, a man of God, a being

PA
18

so mean, so great a sinner, that you foresaw would have betrayed you in your expectations?...It was entirely and only your mercy.

I am a miracle of God! Your infinite mercies have led me to the priesthood: “by the grace of God, I am what I am” [1Cor 15:10].³ Ordination transformed the Twelve, ordination made me a new being, God on earth.

I am identified with Christ: his interests are mine. His intentions are mine. I speak his words. My doctrine is his. My life is that of Christ. I do the works of Christ, or, better, it is Christ who does them for me: “Peter baptizes, it is he who baptizes... Judas baptizes, it is he who baptizes”.⁴

I am bound to God: I must live according to Jesus Christ. I must be busy only with what regards his honor: “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” [Lk 2:49].

Forgive me for so many contemptible actions, for wasting graces and time.

Rosary; *Miserere*.

³ In the text the Author writes: *gratia Dei sum* (I am) *id quod sumus* (we are): note the singular-plural alternation.

⁴ St. Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, VI, 7.

5. "PRO HOMINIBUS CONSTITUTUS"¹

"Every high priest, taken from among men, is constituted for the good of men in those things that regard God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" Heb 5:1). PA 19

a) The first place among the tasks is "to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins", not to preach or organize works. PA 20

It's a work "in the things that regard God", not as scientist, or artist, or politician in the first place. "Nobody, in fact, when he gives military service, becomes involved in the chores of common life, if he wants to please him who has enlisted him" [2Tim 2:4].

To honor, thank, satisfy God through Jesus-Host is the motive and purpose of the Mass.

Let the Mass have for the Priest the *first* place. Let it be the center of the day, the exercise of that power for which he works in heaven, in purgatory, in all the Church, in the world. It is a perpetual "Glory to God in the highest" and a perennial "peace to men loved by God". It brings the greatest relief and the surest salvation to humanity.

Another task: to guide. Of Jesus it is said: "Upon disembarking, he saw a great crowd and had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things" (Mk 6:34).

b) "*For men*", not for physical health, not for human science, etc. but in their relations, needs, duties toward God, with respect to eternity: "in the things that regard God". It's not the people for the priest, but the priest for the people. Terrible is the sentence [of Paul]: "all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" [Phil 2:21]. And he attests of PA 21

¹ "Constituted for the sake of men".

himself: “thus I force myself to please everybody in everything, without seeking my advantage but that of all, so that they may reach salvation” [1Cor 10:33].

On the encounter:² there are personalistic ascetical orientations of living for oneself, an oppressive pessimism, perhaps due to failures, a unilateral work.

The need is this: to be for all, to live in contact, to aim at the masses, with a compassionate heart, for sinners, for the men of today.

PA
22

c) Understand and empathize with men: “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

Have sentiments like those of Jesus: “I have come to save”.

Keeping ourselves humble: “he is able to deal gently with the ignorant and the wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people” [Heb 5:2-3].

Console the afflicted. Support and defend the tempted and the innocent. Win over the sinners. Never knock down as the Pharisees do, but heal like Jesus: “I am the resurrection and the life” [Jn 11:25].

Jesus “therefore had to make himself in everything similar to his brothers, to become a merciful and faithful high priest in the things that concern God, so as to expiate the sins of the people. In fact, because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested” (Heb 2:17-18).

TO JESUS MASTER

PA
23

My ministry was too much action, lacking in prayer. I presumed of myself, I did not fear the dangers. Often I was

² On the contrary.

the one that needed correction, not the others. I was often weak; often violent. More simplicity, less astuteness. More souls, less organization.

Constituted for all men, I did not always bear in mind all the means, above all humility.

I am certain of my vocation, but I did not correspond as I had to. I did not have your Heart, O Jesus, always.

Divine Master, I should be You.

Divine Master, you alone should appear.

Divine Master, all that is good is yours.

Divine Master, I am a useless servant.

Divine Master, I am a harmful servant.

Divine Master, to you alone be honor.

Divine Master, all the contempt to me.

Divine Master, give me space for penitence.

Divine Master, increase contempt for me.

Divine Master, join me to your passion.

Divine Master, that I may suffer what is enough for my sins.

Divine Master, that I may suffer what is necessary for the sins committed because of me.

Divine Master, that I may suffer what I must so that the seed sown may grow.

Divine Master, that through my suffering and praying I may help all my spiritual children.

Divine Master, since I'm nothing, may I obtain everything through the Masses.

Rosary, *Miserere, Agnus Dei.*

6. "PRÆDICATOR"*

PA
24

"Gospel of which I have been constituted announcer and preacher" [2Tim 1:11]. "Try¹ to present yourself before God as a man worthy of approval, a worker that has nothing to be ashamed of, a scrupulous dispenser of the word of truth" [2Tim 2:15].

a) *Preach the truth*: "announce it, insist in season and out of season, admonish, reprove, encourage with utmost passion in teaching" [2Tim 4:2].

./ Preach, official duty,

./ indispensable and very effective instrument,

.../ more urgent today: "A day will come, in fact, wherein sound doctrine will not be tolerated anymore, but for the itch of hearing something, men will surround themselves with teachers according to their desires, refusing to listen to the truth in order to turn to fables" (2Tim 4:3-4). Therefore, "it is a duty for me: woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!..." [1Cor 9:16]. Christians, vocations, religious observance... these are fruits of preaching, mainly.

PA
25

b) *A scrupulous dispenser of the word of truth*.

./ preach well *quantitatively*,

preach well *qualitatively*.

./ Preparation through study, of the Scriptures, theology, morals, liturgy. Preaching is about the sacred. It's not literature, politics, etc.

.../ Preaching that is *ours*: with immediate preparation.

.../ Dogma, morals, liturgy should come in there, but not at every preaching everything is exacted.

* "Preacher".

¹ In the Latin text quoted we find "Take care of yourself with solicitude...".

...../ Be up to date, entering into the ideas of the listeners so that they come out with our ideas.

Correspond to the needs of the listeners and to their quality. Be supernatural in your motives, manner, goal.

Let the sermon be *one*: of *architectural* unity (e.g. St. Thomas), or *organic*, developing a seed (the prodigal son), or *psychological* (Segneri, the ashes).

Let it be acceptable in language, exposition, moderation.

c) St. Paul: rich in natural oratorical qualities, filled with gifts, always equal and always new, and always animated by the charity of Christ: “If even I spoke the language of men and angels...” [1Cor 13:1]; “who will separate us from the love of Christ?” [Rom 8:35].

PA
26

Without human respect: “is it perhaps the favor of men that I intend to gain?... If I still pleased men, I would not anymore be a servant of Christ!” (Gal 1:10).

Without strewing flowers and deluding spirits, but looking for the true good.

Without irritations and discouragements, because many words of God fall down without fruit... but there is also somebody that bears fruit.

It is a tiresome ministry: “In going, they go weeping... but in returning, they come with joy, carrying their sheaves” [Ps 125:6].

“I bear all things for the elect, so that they too may reach the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory” (2Tim 2:10).

I want to always make better my homilies in quality and quantity, I am not a worker immune to confusion...²

Prepare at least a summary. Afterwards prepare for a long time at leisure.

² Probably the Author means to say that not *always he was clear* in his exposition.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA You have taught a heavenly doctrine; with confidence,
27 with simplicity, to all.

You have sent me to preach: I am a priest.

You have given me as protector a great preacher: Saint Paul.

You have entrusted to me good souls to be instructed: select young men.

You have supplied me with various and powerful means: word, press, cinema, radio.

Have I accomplished well your mandate? I cannot say yes, exteriorly. Interiorly, not always I have prayed enough; not always there was all the love; was constancy lacking perhaps sometimes?

*Liber scriptus proferetur,
in quo totum continetur,
unde mundus judicetur.*³

When my listeners shall stand in front of me on the last day, they will be able to say that I have not always led the way by example, that there was not enough humility, that prayer was lacking so that the seed sown would sprout: "*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?...*".

Rosary. *Miserere*.

³ Sequence in the Roman Missal *Dies iræ* that is recited during the Masses for the dead. The Author had written *totus* instead of *totum*.

7. "MILES CHRISTI"¹

“Together with me, take your part of sufferings like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2Tim 2:3). “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against the enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:10-17). PA 28

a) “There is battle...; take up the armor of God”: as men, as Christians, as priests: three states of struggle. “The Son of God has appeared to destroy the works of the devil” (1Jn 3:8). PA 29

In all the three states there is struggle.

More in the priestly state: a life without struggle is not possible. Today it is even more necessary.

J[esus] C[hrist] had to struggle. Paul had to struggle.

b) The weapons are not of the flesh, neither are they purely natural: above all, spiritual: faith, prayer, charity. Science, art, the party, sports, strength are not enough... PA 30

¹ “Soldier of Christ”.

These are needed:

./ “the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God”: always sow ideas that are right and clear, preaching and writing.

Let the combatant (especially if a priest) be in the truth: sincerity. Fight only true error and true vice. But truth is always said, with simplicity, everywhere.

./ “Put on the breastplate of righteousness”. Let the combatant be holy, irreprehensible, righteous with everybody, even with the adversaries.

.../ “As shoes for your feet, put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace...”. Let not susceptibility, jealousies, human respect, allurements or disapprovals subdue the Priest.

PA c) “Take the shield of faith”. Always stand by the clear
31 doctrines of the Church, the teachings of the Gospel, on the side of the true and the just.

“Take the helmet of salvation”. The helmet covers the head: never thoughts that discourage.

“Furthermore, pray unceasingly with every kind of prayers and supplications” [Eph 6:18]. It is the most powerful weapon. Without it, all labor is useless. With it, every labor assures the intervention of God.

Am I among the cowardly? Among the obstinate?

I must be like Paul: “Even if an angel from heaven...”. He appeals to Caesar... Overwhelmed in a place, he goes to another...

“I have fought the good fight...” [2Tim 4:7].

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’
32 sake” (Mt 5:10).

“Love your enemies and do good to those who persecute you” (Mt 5:44).

“Lord, my rock, in whom I find refuge; my shield and my bulwark” (Ps 17:3).

“My grace is enough for you” (2Cor 12:9).

“Fear not, little flock, because it has pleased the Father to give you his kingdom” (Lk 12:32).

The spiritual weapons are fit for every success: “they have from God the power to strike down the fortresses, destroying the reasonings and every bulwark that rises against the knowledge of God, and rendering every intelligence subject to the obedience of Christ” (2Cor 10:4-5).²

Overcome myself at every moment, through an obstinate struggle against my senses.

Overcome evil with good sown in examples, in sermons, in patience.

Overcome error by means of prayer, study, more numerous editions. “Be strong in fidelity and meekness” (cf Sir 45:4).

Bless me, Jesus.

Rosary. *Miserere*.

² The quotation made by the Author (“II Cor V,3”) is not exact.

8. "SAPIENS ARCHITECTUS"*

PA 33 "You are the field of God, the building of God. According to the grace of God that has been given to me, like a skilled master builder I have put the foundation. Another will build upon it" (1Cor 3:9-10).

a) [Paul] chose and exploited well the terrain. Corinth, a very corrupt city, gave good fruits because Christianity is life, active, transforming, unifying. Where Aphrodite¹ dominated, the first virgins multiplied. Many were the Christians and very fervent, the delight of the Apostle. St. Paul aimed at the masses.

Let us be cultivators of *all*, not of a small fraction, or of some privileged soul, or of some nice young man.

PA 34 b) He chose well the construction materials:
./ The great dogmatic truths.

./ He exposed with order, passing from the simple to the difficult, from the known to the unknown.

.../ He established well the motive of credibility, which is the Divine Authority. Not convictions and reason.

.../ Then he inculcated the true Christian life:
for the individual,
for the family,
for society.

"These are the three things that remain: faith, hope and charity. But the greatest of these is charity!" [1Cor 13:13].

The thought about judgment and eternity is dominant.

Piety is well understood: it is part of the duties toward God and means for the Christian life within the family, in society and in private. That is:

* "A skilled master builder".

¹ Pagan divinity that had a temple in Corinth with a great number of priestesses.

“Prompt will to dedicate oneself to all that concerns the service of God”.

Religion is not Egocentric: “earthly well-being”.

[Religion] is Theocentric: “thy will be done”.

“So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal” (2Cor 4:16-18).

c) St. Paul’s style is unitary: the old law has accomplished its role. The new one perfects and elevates the individual and society. The Church is Christ who continues his work until the end of time. Do not abandon what is natural among the individual and social duties, but do them with a new spirit. Guide the souls and the community with the old principles but better known, felt and lived: build on top! From the catechumen to the perfect Christian.

PA
35

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

Lord Jesus, if I have not always said what pleased You, destroy and repair. I am not aware of having erred, but you see everything, and you are the Repairer.

PA
36

I’m sorry rather for not having explained more clearly, with gentle firmness, preceding with example. You are Way, Truth, Life: may I feel it better, to make it felt better. Not many spiritualities, but the one that You have revealed.

That we all may follow you, o Jesus-Truth, venerating and studying the dogmas!

That we all may follow you, O Jesus-Way, venerating and practicing your precepts, examples and counsels!

That we all may follow you and live you, O Jesus-Life, practicing union with You! That we be the living branches

of You-Vine, grafted to You by means of the Sacraments, the sacramentals and prayer.

Thus I shall be a builder of myself, and a builder of souls in whom you want to live: "I in you, you in me".

Rosary, *Miserere*.

9. "CONFIGURATUS MORTI EJUS"¹

The cross is the "summit of God's wisdom and power" [cf 1Cor 1:24-25] not only as *meritorious cause* of our salvation, but also as *exemplary cause*: "becoming conformed to his death" (Phil 3:10). PA 37

a) *Baptism* is death and resurrection: "With him you have been buried in baptism, in him also you have risen through faith in the power of God who has resurrected him from the dead" (Col 2:12). PA 38

The [*religious*] *profession* is a more complete death: "You are dead and your life is now hidden with Christ in God!" (Col 3:3).

The priestly *ordination* is the solemn burial and the act of death of a young man already dead for some time: "So also you, consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 6:11-12). That is, sin and a purely natural life are taken away so that Christian life, religious life and priestly life may be lived.

b) St. Paul during the hour of Damascus died to all of his past of sin, errors, obstinacy, Pharisaism, and to all that chained him to the earth: blood ties, the tradition of his race, earthly future, life projects. "Circumcised on the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee as regards the law; in regard to zeal, a persecutor of the Church, blameless as to justice deriving from the observance of the law" (Phil 3:5-6): this is the man that died in Damascus. And see how he was completely and deeply buried,² so that he could not attempt anymore to get up: "But what could be gain for me, I have considered as loss PA 39

¹ "Conformed to his death".

² In the italian text there is an old word: *funerato*.

for the sake of Christ. Better still, I now consider everything as loss compared to the sublimity of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have consented to lose all these things, *considering them as waste* in order to gain Christ” (Phil 3:7-8).

He buried all that the world offered him: power, importance, influence, despising suspicions, derision, persecutions and scorn.

He abandoned all claims, forgot his needs... He became indifferent to praise and blame: “For me it is of little importance to be judged by you or by any human tribunal; on the contrary, I do not even judge myself, because even if I’m not aware of any fault, not for this I am justified. My judge is the Lord!” (1Cor 4:3-4). Without possessions, without human support, without physical strength, without anything of his own to save, not even his life, he will work for all, always, until death; that he also challenges: “Where, O death, is your victory?” [1Cor 15:55].

Even this one is a gain: “Life is changed, not ended”.³

PA
40

c) The habit points to everybody that we are dead. In ceremonies we appear like Jesus Christ: “man of God”. With the *earthly* man dead, the spiritual man lives.

Unbelievers think of the priest as: a crazy dreamer, a fanatic, a gloomy man, an ambitious one, a masochist, one who frustrated his life and goes around to waste the life of his fellowmen: “We judged his life as madness and his death as dishonorable” [Wis 5:4].

The Priest not only can *appear* to be dead, *he must be dead!*

Am I? “The prince of this world is coming; he has no power over me” (Jn 14:30).

³ Preface of the Mass for the dead.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

“From being dead that we were because of sins, he has made us alive again with Christ...” (Eph 2:5). *No sin*, therefore, in the priest, neither mortal nor venial; no consent to evil. “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, as to subject you to its desires; don’t offer your members as instruments of injustice to sin, but offer yourselves to God as alive that have returned from the dead and your members as instruments of justice for God” (Rom 6:12-13). I must absolve, exorcise, and remove sin by every means even from the others. I shall be able to do it if I shall hate sin as Jesus Christ hated it: “Who of you can convict me of sin?” [Jn 8:46].

PA
41

Kill the *propensity*, the inclination to sin: “We who are already dead to sin, how shall we still be able to live in it?” (Rom 6:2). It does not die a quick death, but a death that is slow, at each day. We are all men, including myself, a priest that has more numerous and terrible dangers.

St. Paul writes about himself after his death in Damascus: “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell; I desire the good, but I am not able to realize it; in fact, I do not do the good that I want, but the bad that I do not want, that I do. Now, if I do what I do not want, it’s not me that does it, but the sin that dwells in me... In fact, I approve within me the law of God, but in my members I see another law that wages war against the law of my mind and makes me a slave to the law of sin that is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who shall free me from this body of death?” [Rom 7:18-20,22-24].

I feel it, O Jesus! I do not pretend not to feel, but I pretend not to consent thanks to your grace which is sufficient: “My grace is sufficient for you” [2Cor 12:9].

Rosary, *Miserere*.

10. "UT SEQUAMINI VESTIGIA EJUS"¹

PA 42 "Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:11).

PA 43 a) The sorrows of the Savior and the pains of the faithful priest have a correspondence: one in mission, they are also one in trials and sufferings to redeem the world: "By your holy cross and death you have redeemed the world".² Every faithful priest accompanies Jesus to Calvary.

But they are also companions in glorification: "Sharers in sufferings, you are also sharers in consolation" (2Cor 1:7).

PA 44 b) "He suffered outside of the gate of the city" [Heb 13:12]: in a cursed place, thrown out, unworthy of civil society, dragged outside, isolated.

He is insulted by everybody: by the learned, by the powerful, by the priestly class, by the people.

Charged with every crime except that of unchastity.

Afflicted with every pain, internal and external. Even the Father is silent.

He ends up in the most ignominious torture: "It is finished" [Jn 19:30].

After torments invented *only* for him, as for an exceptional criminal: the thorns, three tribunals, recognized innocent and condemned, condemned in anticipation for having done many miracles, because of jealousy, with a great fear that he would return to life...In fact, he placed on his shoulders the sins of *all* men in the presence of the Father.

This happens to the priest if he is worthy of his name. He must be driven away by all: "He suffered outside of the gate

¹ "That you may follow his steps": cf 1Pt 2:21.

² Penitential verse used in the stations of the Via Crucis.

of the city". All are against him. And yet he is convinced that he must atone for himself and for his people.

The Crucified One, thus vilified, is our model: to be cursed by everybody is an honor for the holy priest. Let the applauses of the world be feared: "Blessed are you if they insult you, persecute you and, lying, say all kinds of evil against you..." [Mt 5:11]. Jesus Christ hanging there, outside of the city, was the Way, the Truth and the Life... And those who remained in the city? Deceit, vice, degeneration... Persecuted? It is often the honor and vesture of the good priest: "If the world hates you, know that before you it hated me. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; since instead you are not of the world, but I have chosen you from the world, for this the world hates you" (Jn 15:18-19).

c) It is also a shield,³ a force, a surety if you are to be re-
jected by the world. It puts us in a state of renunciation, zeal,
purity, righteousness, true love for God, detachment. In em-
bracing with joy the cross of Christ, we become protected
against our enemies, we definitely aim at God, we become
powerful in prayer, we live a joy that foretells heaven, a new
strength is born in the priest, being repeated is: "Now is the
judgment of this world; now the prince of this world will be
cast out" (Jn 12:31). What Paul writes about Jesus happens to
the priest: "He humbled himself making himself obedient till
death and death on the cross. *For this God has exalted him*
and given him a name that is above every other name, so that
at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on
earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim that Jesus
Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:8-11).

PA
45

TO J[ESUS] M[ASTER]

I meditate on three points in order to practice "Let get out
of the camp" [cf Heb 13:13].

PA
46

³ The Author adopts here a rare form (*scuto*) instead of the present *scudo*.

1) It is the priestly way: “Let us approach with sincere hearts with full confidence, with hearts purified of every evil conscience and the body washed with pure water. Let us maintain without vacillating the profession of our hope, because the one who has promised is faithful. Let us try also to encourage each other in charity and in good works, without abandoning our meetings, as some have the habit of doing, but instead exhorting each other, much more that you can see how the day is approaching” (Heb 10:22-25).

2) St. Paul cites as examples heroic priests and prophets: “Who through faith conquered kingdoms, practiced justice, received the promises, closed the mouths of lions... Others, finally, suffered scorn and scourgings, chains and imprisonments. They were stoned, tortured, sawn, killed by the sword, wandered around covered with the skin of sheep and goats, needy, distressed, maltreated. Of them the world was not worthy! Roaming through the deserts, the mountains, among the caves and the caverns of the earth” (Heb 11:33,36-38). The Church ever shone of these heroic priests, and she boasts of them as she boasts of the wounds of Christ.

3) Onward with confidence! “We too, therefore, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, putting aside what weighs us down and the sin that besets us, let us run with perseverance in the race that is before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. In exchange for the joy that was put before him, he submitted himself to the cross, despising its ignominy, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Think attentively of him who has supported against himself so great a hostility of sinners, so that you may not tire, losing courage. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted until blood” (Heb 12:1-4).

Rosary, *Miserere*.

11. “*SEMPITERNUM HABET SACERDOTIUM*”¹

a) The existence, the power and the value of our priesthood depends on the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

PA
47

Having to apply in time and in space the fruits of his oblation, J[esus] C[hrist] has chosen some instruments that may lend him their hands, tongue and intention. He assumes them, absorbs them and works by means of them. They are the celebrating priests who make present everywhere the sacrifice and dwelling of Christ, and in doing it seals the union of souls with Him, like the procurator who while working on a business signs in the name of the one who has sent him and authorized him, and makes his own the act with all the consequences that result. He who acts worthily and is a good priest with him will be with the great Priest forever: “Father, I will that where I am, there also may be my minister” [cf Jn 17:24].

b) Priests succeed one another, like the particles in the tabernacle that change, but Christ the Priest remains forever. “They have become priests in big numbers, because death prevented them from lasting for a long time; he, however, since he always remains, has a priesthood that does not end. Hence he can perfectly save those who through him come to God, since he always lives to intercede for them” (Heb 7:23-25). And even more clearly: “Having offered one sacrifice for sins once for all, he has taken his seat at the right hand of God, now just waiting that his enemies be put under his feet. Because with one oblation he has made perfect for good those that are being sanctified” (Heb 10:12-14).

PA
48

Our priestly being is a being united to him. The entire and only force, power and grace reside in the Pontifex of our religion that has no other sacrifice or true Pontifex.

¹ “He has a priesthood that is eternal”: cf Heb 7:24.

Therefore let us learn the priestly virtues, having to be a single priesthood with Him: fear of God, sorrow for sins, humility and above all love for God: “He loved me and gave himself for me” [Gal 2:20].

PA
49

c) The Crucified One is also the hope and consolation of the Priest: “Every high priest, *taken from among men*”, therefore so much more for the priest! “to offer *gifts and sacrifices for sins*” [Heb 5:1], especially of the Priest. Therefore I am confident: “In fact, if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!” [Heb 9:13-14]. Our indignity at the altar terrifies us, but the blood of Jesus who offers himself to the Father gives us sure confidence. He himself offers it in the Transubstantiation:² “that will be shed for you for the remission of sins”; “will purify our conscience from the works of death”: for me, a priest! The burden disappears with the Transubstantiation.

In every mass we give satisfaction for our personal sins, for the sins committed by others because of us, to stop the consequences of the scandals given, and for the sins of the people. Every mass placates the Divine Justice.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA
50

Your Priesthood is my security: I pray and act in You, for You, with You. Everything becomes efficacious and fruitful because it draws power from You who “was heard because of his reverent submission” [Heb 5:7].

² Change of substance – from that of wine to that of the blood of Christ – during the Eucharistic consecration.

I trust that you will communicate to me the spirit “to serve the living God” (Heb 9:14), according to the reason for which you have immolated and immolate yourself on our altars: to become an ever better servant of the Father and to receive personal graces and graces for the community.

I know that you as High Priest *understand* all the needs of this poor priest: “In fact, we do not have a high priest that does not know how to sympathize with our infirmities, since he himself has been tried in everything like us except in sin” [Heb 4:15]. From the cross he understood and sympathized with the Apostles, especially Peter. “Let us therefore with full faith come to the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace and be aided at opportune time” (Heb 4:16).

And beyond this life, you, Jesus Priest, show me the happy ending of every toil and pain: “We see him now crowned with glory and honor because of the death he has suffered” (Heb 2:9).

“Priest forever”. “Thus, in expectation that his enemies be put as stool under his feet”... “Having therefore, brothers, full freedom to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus through this new and living way that he has inaugurated for us by means of the veil, that is, his flesh, having a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a sincere heart in the fullness of faith” (Heb 10:19-22).

Rosary, *Miserere*.

12. “ARMA INIQUITATIS PECCATO”¹

PA
51 “You know very well that like a thief in the night, so the day of the Lord will come. And when they will say: ‘Peace and security’, suddenly ruin will strike them like the travails of a woman in labor, and nobody will escape” (1Thes 5:2-3).

PA
52 a) More than any other person, the Priest must destroy sin, even from its roots because:

he must fear a more terrible hell: “Why do you boast of evil, arrogant in your iniquity?... You prefer evil to good, lies to truthfulness... For this God will destroy you forever, will break you, tear you away from your tent and uproot you from the land of the living” [Ps 51:3,5,7].

It is an enormous harm to souls, depriving them of immense graces. He allows them to miss fervor and life. He ceases to be salt, light, the city placed on the mountain, to become a “corpse of four days that already emits foul odor” [cf Jn 11:39].

PA
53 b)² Death comes with mortification (= to mortify, to kill): “Mortify therefore that part of you that belongs to the earth: fornication, impurity, the passions, evil desires, and that insatiable avarice that is idolatry” (Col 3:5). It means to prevent the faculties of the body and soul to make themselves “weapons of iniquity”: mind, heart, eyes, ears, tongue, throat, hands, feet, touch, notwithstanding the countless excuses, allurements and inducements.

It means continuous vigilance, rejection of the very first movements, flight from the occasions: pride, curiosity, sensuality, gluttony, indolence.

¹ “Instruments of injustice for sin”: cf Rom 6:13.

² “b)” in the original is indicated by the letter “c”); this will take place also in n. 63.

It means to excavate the enemies in their hideouts, to attack them, imposing on ourselves sacrifices so that the ego may submit to the spirit.

Moreover, take away all the exuberant forces of the natural man prone to sin.

These are the things that put in motion the natural man: esteem, power, success, celebrity, profit, enjoyment, family, satisfaction. May God, and only God, be the polar star of our conduct.

Men seek many things: amusements, comforts, furnishings, deference, the halo of the virtuous, prosperity. "No doubt piety is a great gain, joined however to moderation! In fact, we have not brought anything into this world and nothing can we bring away from it" (1Tim 6:6-7).

Do not look for well-being or human benevolence, not even from your family.

c) Let not human opinion allure or terrify us. May praise and adulation be repugnant to us. May failures, blame, contempt and calumnies not knock us down: let us want to please God alone. Persecutions, tribulations, death cannot take away our merit or our God: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, anguish, persecution, hunger, nakedness, dangers, the sword? As it is written: Because of you we are put to death all day; we are treated like sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us" (Rom 8:35-37).

PA
54

The Priest is much prone to consider the esteem and opinion of men since he must work in public.

TO JESUS MASTER

"In fact, you have divested yourselves of the old man with his deeds" (Col 3:9). This divine superiority, this freedom from natural inclination is won through continuous and tire-some work: wrenching away from the old man, piece by

PA
55

piece, what he has and what he wants. The three passages are: “*Let him deny himself*”, “*Let him take up his cross*”, “*Let him follow me*” [Mt 16:24]. Give them everyday!

Let us transform nature. Welcome the supernatural, the new man.

Let us question our *intentions*: why undertake this thing? Why go out? Why this conversation? Why do you prefer that person? To please God better? Or because it pleases you?

Let us ask our *discourses and judgments*. Why do you judge in this way your colleague, your brother, this initiative, this preaching? Why do you promote or place obstacles? Is it because the honor of God is involved, or your interest, or your honor, or your talent?

Let us ask our *frame of mind*: why am I sad? Why do criticisms, failures and difficulties impede the glory of God? Or why is your self-love wounded? Why are you glad today? Are you humanly satisfied? Or because the glory of God has gained something?

Am I dead? Or alive more than ever even under the funeral sheet? Even under the chasuble and the stole?

I shall have therefore to rectify my intentions, dispositions and judgments. Nothing that is purely human. Everything made supernatural. “Let Christ live in me!” [cf Gal 2:20]; “Renew in me a steadfast spirit” [Ps 50:12].

Rosary, *Miserere*.

13. "VIVENTES DEO IN C[HRISTO] J[ESU]"¹

"Offer yourselves to God as living come back from the dead and your members as instruments of justice for God" (Rom 6:13). PA **56**

a) Dead to sin, "your life is already hidden with Christ in God!" [Col 3:3]. It is a new life, but an inner one, the better one, supernatural. It is Christ who lives in us. The spiritual man lives. PA **57**

St. Paul completely died during the hour of Damascus, but he rose after baptism a new man, a new Christ.

From baptism a new man comes out: the Christian.

From the profession [of vows] a new man comes out: the religious.

From Ordination a new man comes out: the Priest.

b) The new priestly life is fully active: the brain, the imagination, the aspirations, the word, the conduct; the *profession* is that of Jesus Christ Priest. PA **58**

He is transfigured, a celestial being, a propagator of eternal things: "If therefore you have risen with Christ, look for the things that are above, where Christ is found, seated at the right hand of God; think of the things that are above, not of those that are of the earth" (Col 3:1-2). The interests of God are his, as the interests of Jesus Christ. He feels with Christ, talks like Christ. His life repeats that of Jesus Christ.

It is however a life that develops, goes on and increases through *continuous care*. "You have put on the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its Creator" (Col 3:10).

¹ "Living for God in Christ Jesus".

First: that he live far from the world, to protect himself from every weakening: “You are not of the world” [Jn 15:19]. The world is devoid of Christ and of God.

Second: let him feed on Christ. Feeding his *mind* with Him: “May the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly; teach and admonish yourselves with every wisdom, singing to God from your hearts and with gratitude psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles” (Col 3:16). Feeding *the spirit* with Him: Eucharistic life; communicating with Jesus very often during the day through visits, spiritual communions, renewed union even through external means.

Nourishing your hearts with Him: “How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! My soul languishes and longs for the halls of the Lord. My heart and my flesh exult in the living God. Even the sparrow finds her home, the swallow her nest where to lay her little ones, near your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God” (Ps 83:2-4).²

PA
59

The Priest will become a true Giver of life in this manner, wherever he will bring the spirit of which he is nourished. He will pour out to souls what his heart is full of.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA
60

He died to give me life: “I am the resurrection and the life” [Jn 11:25].

My ministry will be effective in proportion to my spiritual life. All people feel that they must learn from a man of God. That difficult to describe divine thing that transpires from his person, his reasonings, from his simple, pious and recollected life leaves an impression: men perceive that “divine something”; they feel themselves to be in the presence of something superior. It is the resurrected man elevated above any earthly thing: “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we, too, shall live with him, knowing that Christ risen from

² In the original, Psalm 85 had been erroneously quoted.

the dead will not die anymore; death has no more power over him” (Rom 6:8-9).

Also the body will rise in the other life and will have the reflection, the virtues, the merits and the supernatural life of the soul: splendor, impassibility, immortality, agility, subtlety. “When Christ your life will be revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (Col 3:4).

Therefore: “We await as our savior the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to conform it to his glorious body, in virtue of the power that he has to subject all things to himself” [Phil 3:20-21].³

Rosary, *Miserere*.

³ The passage quoted by the Author was *Rom XI, 12*.

14. "CONSIDERATE PONTIFICEM"¹

PA 61 "Therefore also Jesus, to sanctify the people with his blood, suffered outside the gate of the city. Let us also go out from the camp and go towards him, carrying his disgrace" (Heb 13:12-13).

PA 62 a) *Let us go out* to consider: "Therefore, holy brothers, participants of a heavenly calling, *fix well your gaze* on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of the faith that we profess" (Heb 3:1).

He is an *exceptional dying person*: holy, cruelly dying between thieves. "We do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb 2:9-10).

The *dying person is our God*. "To which of the angels has God ever said: You are my son, today I have generated you? Furthermore: I shall be for him a father and he will be for me a son?" [Heb 1:5]. The angels assist him dying. – This dying one will be assisting us – At the bedside of their dying father, children!

PA 63 b) He dies "outside of the gate": "in order to expiate the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17). "Since therefore children have in common blood and flesh, he also has become sharer of them, to reduce to impotence by his death the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and thus liberate those who through fear of death were subject to slavery for all their life" [Heb 2:14-15].

¹ "Contemplate the Pontifex".

“To *sanctify* the people through his blood” (Heb 13:12).

Every virtue and grace comes from the cross.

To *make us sharers* of his sorrows: “In fact, we have become sharers of Christ” (Heb 3:14), that is, we have become only one thing through expulsion from Sion, since ours are his merits: merits of the head of the family. Every son has as his own the goods of the father. “Because of this he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that...those who have been called may receive the eternal inheritance that has been promised” (Heb 9:15). It is the new covenant. “In fact, the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have the same origin” [Heb 2:11]; with the same blood is the priest sanctified who applies it to the people sanctified. “Made perfect, he became the cause of eternal salvation for all those who obey him” [Heb 5:9].

To show us *his love*: “Christ has loved you and has given himself for us, offering himself to God in a sweet-smelling sacrifice” (Heb 5:2).

The Crucified One, therefore, as object of thought, preaching and predominant love, according to the example of St. Paul and of the Church.

c) *The example* of every virtue, *fidelity* to one’s office and mission: “he made himself obedient until death”; *zeal* for souls: “he loved me and gave himself up for me”; *meekness*: “insulted, he did not answer with insult, and though suffering he did not threaten revenge” [1Pt 2:23]; *unselfishness*: “he stripped himself”; *patience*: “maltreated, he allowed himself to be humiliated and he did not open his mouth; he was like a lamb being led to the slaughterhouse, like mute sheep before its shearers, and he did not open his mouth” [cf Is 53:7; Acts 8:32]. *Perseverance*: “I have glorified you on earth, finishing the work that you have given me to do” [Jn 17:4].

PA
64

I meditate, detest, learn, promise, love.

Lord, two graces: learn to pray and to love You.

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA
65

I consider in You the Priest and the victim. You are the great Priest of our faith: “proclaimed by God high priest according to the order of Melchisedech, about whom we have much to say, difficult to explain” (Heb 5:10-11).

I, too, belong to this priesthood: you are my head, my glory, my joy. What greatness! “Such in fact was the high priest that we needed: holy, innocent, without stain, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; he has no need every day, like the other high priests, to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, because he has done this once for all, offering himself” [Heb 7:26-27]. The host is of infinite value, the Offerer is infinitely worthy; the offering is made for all men for all times and for all eternity; it is renewed in perpetuity on earth and eternally in heaven... Therefore one time is enough! “But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption” (Heb 9:11-12). “Christ in fact did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a figure of the true one, but into heaven itself, to appear now before God in our favor” (Heb 9:24).

I, a priest, collaborate with Him, and by Him I am adopted as an instrument to offer Him in the Mass where He acts as the true and first Offerer, as the Host is.

Rosary, *Miserere*.

15. "SOLLICITE CURA TEIPSUM"*

“Try hard to present yourself before God as a man worthy of approval, a worker that has nothing to be ashamed of... Avoid profane gossips...; in fact, their words spread around like gangrene” (2Tm 2:15-17). PA 66

a) Try hard: PA

1) Because your *dignity* demands perfection. You are a temple of God, his minister, consecrated to him, you must give sanctity to souls. 67

2) Because of your *position*: “divine ambassador, apostle of God, mediator of men, teacher of nations, preacher of the gospel”.

3) Because of your *tasks* and offices: to direct, absolve, perform always works of cult to God.

4) To preserve yourself from *tepidity*: a tepid priest is a priest without value. Preserve yourself from *sin*: whoever is not delicate falls into it and allows the barriers of defense to fall. Preserve yourself from *sacrilege* where the priest ends up who sins at least from time to time. Preserve yourself from apostasy, remorse, a bad death, *damnation*, dangers to which the priest who commits sacrilege exposes himself easily.

5) A sterile ministry, mere appearance and not reality, inner turmoil are consequences of an interior life abandoned.

b) Maintain the spirit of your vocation: detachment from the world, live for God, for the Church, for souls: “For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2Tim 1:6). PA 68

“I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, exhort you to behave in a manner worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility, meekness and patience” (Eph 4:1-2).

Let us avoid what is dangerous:

* “Try hard”.

./ “let us purify ourselves of every contamination of the flesh;
 ./ of every contamination of the spirit”;
 .../ “I chastise my body”: eyes, taste, heart;
 .../ “and place it in subjection”: positive priestly effort;
/ spiritual discipline: thoughts, humility, meekness.

PA
 69

c) Cultivate the priestly spirit through
 ./ works of piety;
 ./ reading of the Bible, of the lives of saints, study of sacred subjects;
 .../ true interior life: to live “in the presence of God, from God, for God, with God”.

To priests who neglect the interior life are applicable the words of St. Jude: “Waterless clouds carried away by the winds, or trees at season’s end without fruit, dead twice, uprooted, wild waves of the sea casting up the foam of their own shame, wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever” (Jude 12-13).

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA
 70

Give me, O Divine Master, your light:
 to know you and to know myself.
 Your wisdom is infinite.
 You gave me the light of my eyes.
 You gave me the light of reason.
 You gave me the light of faith.
 You give me even more the light of glory: so that I may be
 able to contemplate you forever in heaven.
 Therefore I pray to you to give me the grace to use well my
 eyes, my reason and the gift of faith.
 Enlighten me especially on these points:
 1) “watch yourself”: the need to take care of myself;
 2) mortify all my senses, internal and external;
 3) make better my prayer both in quality and quantity;
 4) struggle to exterminate pride that I detest with all my
 strength; wanting only, always and in everything your glory.
 Rosary, *Miserere*.

16. "ZELUS DOMUS TUÆ"¹

There are two kinds of zeal. The first, the one of Saul, which is false: "Surpassing in Judaism the majority of my contemporaries and compatriots, I was fierce in upholding the traditions of my fathers" (Gal 1:14); the second, the one of Paul, which is true: "I feel a divine jealousy for you" (2Cor 11:2).

PA
71

a) *False zeal* is: *reckless*: "Saul was devastating the Church"; *unloving*: "breathing threats"; *limitless*: "I fiercely persecuted the Church of God and devastated it" [cf Gal 1:13], unlike Gamaliel. *How to explain it?* Because of uncontrolled *temperament*, anger allowed to be free. Because of blind and unilateral *love* for tradition. Because of false *partisan spirit*: "I, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee", that generates narrow-mindedness, lack of critical sense and equity.

As consequences: he strikes due to blindness, he destroys; it includes abandonment of God.

"If you have in your heart bitter jealousy and a contentious spirit, do not boast and don't lie against the truth. This is not wisdom that comes from above: it is earthly, carnal, diabolical" (Jas 3:14-15).

b) *True zeal*:

./ only for the glory of God and for souls;

../ in the same way of the zeal of Jesus Christ;

.../ endowed with the characteristics of Paul after his conversion.

"The wisdom that comes from above (true zeal) is instead:

- above all *pure, modest*; that is, reserved, humble;
- then is *peace-loving*, even in the thick of self-defense;
- *meek*, humble, even though firm;
- *docile*, persuades, wins over, does not impose itself;
- *welcoming*, receives, praises the good of all and always;

PA
72

¹ "Zeal for your house".

- *full of mercy*, loves to forgive and is compassionate;
- *gives good fruits*, from their fruits you will know them; *impartial, sincere*;
- *a fruit of justice... sowed in peace* for those who work for peace” (Jas 3:17-18).

PA
73

c) “As servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and in good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything!” (2Cor 6:4-10).

TO J[ESUS] MASTER

PA
74

Zeal is the flowering of love for God and for souls.

Ignite in me the fire of your Heart: a pure flame, not one with smoke; a flame that consumes many and low tendencies; a flame that gives light and warmth; with a light that is peaceful, with a warmth that gently increases.

“You do not know of what spirit you are” [cf Lk 9:55].

This flame will grow:

1) if I know how to mortify my heart, my eyes, my taste, my natural sympathies and antipathies;

2) if I know how to be more withdrawn, doing what St. Paul wants: “Pay close attention to yourself and to reading” [cf 1Tim 4:13,16];

3) if I shall love the Holy Eucharist, celebrating better, receiving communion better, visiting better the Blessed Sacrament; making, in substance, the day eucharistic.

4) if I launch myself decidedly on the road of penance.

Rosary. *Miserere*.

17. "IN DOMO DEI"¹

The priest is the "Minister of the Church". "I write you all this... so that you may know how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the Church" (1Tim 3:14-15).

PA
75

By the name *House of God* we understand the Church, wherein there are superiors, equals and faithful.

a) *Holy pride* for belonging to a society that is indefectible, perfect, the highest among all institutions; even infallible and supernatural: the Catholic, apostolic Roman Church.

PA
76

Love in action. Love the Church "as Christ has loved her and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, purifying her through the cleansing of water accompanied by the word, so as to present to himself the Church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, holy and immaculate" (Eph 5:25-27).

"For them I consecrate [sanctify] myself, so that they too may be sanctified in the truth" (Jn 17:19).

./ Sanctify myself;

../ Sanctify every member;

.../ Feel with the Church;

..../ Zeal: "I complete in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, in favor of his body which is the Church" (Col 1:24).

...../ Sanctify ourselves for the Society of St. Paul!

b) For the Superiors in the Church: "We then request you, brothers, to have regard for those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; *esteem them very highly in love* because of their

PA
77

¹ "In the house of God".

work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1Thes 5:12-13). It is their duty.²

./ Recognize *Authority* in God;³

./ docility to their dispositions;

.../ sincere collaboration;

.../ avoid those who always have ready advices, who pretend to know better, “who have an appearance of piety, but deny its virtues...” [2Tim 3:5].

PA
78

Love one’s Brothers: “Therefore, if there is some consolation in Christ, if there is some comfort from charity, if there is some communality of spirit, if there are sentiments of love and compassion, you make full my joy through the union of your spirits, the same charity and the same sentiments. Do not do anything out of spirit of rivalry or vainglory, but each of you, in all humility, consider the others as superior to himself, without looking for his own interest, but that of the others” (Phil 2:1-4). And “...to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the vocation you have received, with all humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another with love, trying to preserve spiritual unity through the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3). Because: one is your Heavenly Father, one is your Redeemer, one your hope, one your goal. The good of one is the good of all and viceversa. Ex[ample:] St. Paul and Timothy.

PA
79

c) With the faithful, the aspirants, and all the confreres:

./ due esteem, almost reverential;

./ total dedication to the community;

.../ care for each individual (like St. Paul for St. Timothy);

.../ needed firmness, always tempered by gentleness.

² Probably: *It is your duty*; or: *It is a debt* that you have towards them.

³ The listing of the points does not follow the order in the manuscript in which they are without interruption. We have preferred this arrangement to facilitate the reading.

Is my character integral? “We have never said words of adulation, as you know... And not even have we sought human glory, whether from you or from others.... On the contrary, we have been loving in your midst, as a mother nourishes and cares for her creatures” (1Thes 2:5-7).

TO J[ESUS] M[ASTER]

I must consider my particular duties, for I have badly represented you, O Lord, in the midst of your children. I have so many male vocations, so many female vocations, so many Cooperators, benefactors, students, and companions; so many readers: “I am indebted to all”.

PA

80

Have I paid in full the debt of prayer?

[Have I paid in full] the debt of example?

[Have I paid in full] the debt of instruction?

[Have I paid in full] the debt of vigilance?

[Have I paid in full] the debt of correction?

[Have I paid in full] the debt of suffering?⁴

I need the hour of the office as daily examination.

I need to withdraw from details, giving trust.

I need to work to elevate the religious spirit, the studies, the apostolate; for a good organization of our forces and of poverty.

⁴ The part of his writing that we give in square parentheses, the Author cites repeating the quotation marks.

18. THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST ¹

PA “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the
81 Holy Spirit that is in you and that you have received from
God, and that you do not belong to yourselves?” (1Cor 6:19).

PA 1) The H[oly] Spirit is the uncreated gift that produces the
82 created gifts. “Gift of the most high God”. “The love of God
(created gift) has been poured into our hearts through the Holy
Spirit that has been given to us (uncreated gift)” [Rom 5:5].

Grace is the supernatural life that makes us live the divine
life and makes us capable of producing fruits and works of
eternal life.

The saint, therefore, is the composite of soul, body and
Holy Spirit.

There are three kinds of life: either the flesh reigns or
commands, and we have the *animal man*, or reason reigns
and commands, and we have the *rational man*, and the Spirit
lives and acts, and we have the child of God. “I believe in the
Holy Spirit... *giver of life*”.

PA 2) *Birth*: in the manner of Christ, Son of God by nature:
83 “the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, therefore...”; so with
us: “by water and the Holy Spirit...” the adopted son of God
is born that St. Paul says is holy: “The Spirit Himself gives
testimony to our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom
8:16). In baptism the demon is exorcised to give place to the
Holy Spirit: “Give place to the Holy Spirit!”.

St. Thomas: “Christ has been conceived in sanctity through
the work of the Holy Spirit, in order to become Son of God
by nature; all the others are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, in
order to become children of God by adoption”.

PA 3) *Grows*.

84 How may the life of the Spirit be destroyed or nourished?
It may be destroyed in proportion with which one acts just

¹ This last chapter does not follow the book of Cohausz; and this explains why the title, unlike the others, is written in Italian.

humanly, simply following nature or, worse, becomes an “animal-man”. “Don’t extinguish the Spirit” [1Thes 5:19]; “do not sadden the Spirit” [Eph 4:30].

It may be nourished by attracting the Spirit of God, that is, by exercising the interior life.

The Holy Spirit guides the soul to sanctity by means of faith, hope, charity, the infused virtues, heavenly light, inspirations, etc...

The seven gifts are neither inspirations nor virtues, but dispositions that incline the soul to correspond to inspirations and to practice the infused virtues.

Wisdom = delicious knowledge of spiritual things: “recta sapere”; *Intelligence [Intellect]* = “intus legere” [to read from within]; *Counsel* = “What do you want me to do?”; *Science* = leads from creatures to the Creator; *Fortitude* = “strength from above”; *Piety* = makes us consider God as our Father and inspires confidence; *Fear* = fear of displeasing God.

4) *Operates* “All those who are guided by the Spirit of God are children of God” [Rom 8:14].

The apostolate is fruit of the Holy Spirit. In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus applies to himself the words of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for this he has consecrated me, and has sent me to announce to the poor a glad news, to proclaim freedom to prisoners and to the blind sight; to set in liberty the oppressed...”. In fact, he said: “Today, this Scripture that you have heard with your ears has been fulfilled” [cf Lk 4:17-21]. The anointing is the unification of the [divine and human] natures in the unity of the person.

On the day of Pentecost: “[the Apostles] were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues” [Acts 2:4].

On J[esus] C[hrist] descended the Holy Spirit in the guise of a dove; and this was the sign to recognize the Messiah: “The Messiah is he upon whom the Holy Spirit shall descend”.

Immolation: “Christ... with an eternal Spirit offered himself without stain to God” [Heb 9:14].

Joy: “At that very moment Jesus exulted in the Holy Spirit” [Lk 10:21].

Think: what do you think of life, of the religious state, of the priesthood.

Pray = “The Spirit Himself prays for us” [cf Rom 8:26].

He wants = Every good thing passes through the superiors.

He speaks = “He who speaks, let him speak as though with the words of God” [1Pt 4:11].

He works: in heaven, in purgatory, throughout all the earth. I take from God, I count on God, I look for God.

TO JESUS MASTER

PA 86 I adore your word: “I shall pray to the Father and he will send you another Paraclete” [Jn 14:16].

“It is expedient² that I go, because if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I shall have gone, I shall send him to you” [Jn 16:7].

“When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will teach you everything” [cf Jn 16:13].

“He will remind you all that I have told to you” [Jn 14:26].

PA 87 “Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1Cor 15:58). “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2Cor 5:1).

“We look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen” [2Cor 4:18].

“So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure” (2Cor 4:16-17).

² Expression that translates the Latin “*Expedit*”.

IV

PRAYERS TO SAINT PAUL

CHAPLET TO SAINT PAUL

This is the first “chaplet” that has been included among the prayers of the Pauline Family. It is found in the first collection, that of 1922, but it goes back to 1917. Structured according to the traditional scheme of the Rosary, it enunciates the five “mysteries” of the apostolate lived by Saint Paul: his conversion, his virginity or celibacy for the Kingdom, his obedience, his poverty and his apostolic zeal. Each of these five points, in its turn, is divided into two modulations: contemplation and petition.

1. [CONVERSION] I bless you, O Jesus, for the great mercy granted to saint Paul in changing him from a fierce persecutor to an ardent apostle of the Church. And you, O great saint, obtain for me a heart docile to grace, conversion from my predominant defect and full configuration to Jesus Christ.

O Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life: have mercy on us.

Queen of Apostles: pray for us.

Saint Paul the Apostle: pray for us.

2. [VIRGINITY - CELIBACY] I bless you, O Jesus, for having elected the apostle Paul as model and preacher of holy virginity. And you, O saint Paul, my dear father, guard my mind, my heart and my senses so that I may know, love and serve only Jesus, and conserve all my strength for his glory.

O Jesus Master, etc.

3. [OBEDIENCE] I bless you, O Jesus, for having given through saint Paul examples and teachings of perfect obedience. And you, O great saint, obtain for me humble docility to all my superiors, sure that in obedience I shall find victory against my enemies.

O Jesus Master, etc.

4. [POVERTY] I bless you, O Jesus, for having taught me through the works and words of saint Paul the true spirit of poverty. And you, O great saint, obtain for me the evangelical spirit of poverty, so that after having imitated you in life, I may be your companion in the glory of heaven.

O Jesus Master, etc.

5. [APOSTOLIC ZEAL] I bless you, O Jesus, for having given to saint Paul a heart so full of love for God and for the Church, and for having saved so many souls through his zeal. And you, our friend, obtain for me a lively desire to exercise the apostolate of social communications, of prayer, example, works and word so that I may merit the reward promised to good apostles.

O Jesus Master, etc.

THE CHAPLET TO ST. PAUL (Meditation)¹

This morning we have opened the day with the chaplet to St. Paul, intending to dedicate to him the present day, the first Monday of the month. It is useful that we pause to consider the meaning of this chaplet, so that we can always recite it with greater devotion.

The Institute has three intentions when reciting this chaplet:

- 1) an ever more wise and efficacious recruitment of vocations, and ones that are ever more select;
- 2) their religious formation, as can be seen from the various parts of the chaplet;
- 3) the Pauline spirit in the apostolate, so that this may be understood, loved and realized according to our Father, who we have chosen as our model.

¹ Meditation dictated on Monday 6 October 1952 to the Pauline communities in Rome.

1. In the first point,² as in the others following, we start with the words: “I bless you, O Jesus...”. What predilection on the part of Jesus for this our Father, and what affectionate correspondence on the part of Paul when he knew Jesus! Therefore: “I bless you...for the great mercy granted to St. Paul”. What mercy? That of having stopped him on the road to Damascus; of having changed him “from a fierce persecutor to an ardent apostle of the Church”. Yes, the mission of St. Paul in the Church is amazing. In the development of all history, Paul occupies an eminent place. How much do we owe him for the organization of the Churches, for those examples of virtue and piety that he has left for all Christianity, for those Letters of his that merit for him an imperishable memorial! And truly he is a memorial to Jesus Christ who has wanted to enlighten him, to win him to the last fiber of his heart, and has wanted to make of him an instrument of his glory and of the good and salvation of souls.

And what do we ask? That the Lord also give us a great “docility to grace” and that he give it to us through the intercession of St. Paul. Docility to grace! Everything of the Institute is grace, and one who enters it has an inestimable complex of graces, and unfortunately they are not sometimes appreciated enough. How many times we are deaf and hard of heart! Not always, for example, do we sufficiently sanctify Sunday; not always do we study with dedication, with true love for civil or sacred science. Furthermore, we ask “conversion from our principal defect”, because all of us are full of passions, and among them there is always the one that dominates and overwhelms the heart of man, when the heart does not know how to strengthen itself and resist. On the contrary, change your principal defect into your principal virtue. What St. Paul had before his conversion of hate against Jesus Christ and against the Christians, he likewise had of love and even much more towards Jesus Christ and souls after his conversion.

² As in the first of the five prayers which form the “chaplet”.

2. In the second point we ask for the grace to form our hearts and to orient them totally to God: that is, to perfectly accomplish in us the first and principal commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind, with all your strength, with all your heart" [cf Lk 10:27]. Every Christian tends to this, but the profession of the religious is the profession of eternal and perfect love for Jesus Christ, in such a way that one's energies, intelligence and sentiments are directed to God only and always. Virginité of the mind, of the will, of the heart. Is not this the advice the Apostle gave in his letters and preaching?

St. Thecla, St. Timothy, St. Titus, St. Luke and other countless souls had the grace to understand this well to its depths when St. Paul spoke, and now and in the course of centuries, there is search to imitate and follow his examples. "I would like all to be like me... But each one has his own gift from God" [cf 1Cor 7:7]. But may a garden filled with lilies flourish in the Institute and especially in this house.

3. Docility to grace is shown in a particular way with obedience. Here we have St. Paul preacher and model of obedience. He wanted everything to be in order in society, that is, every subject depending on the dispositions of those constituted in authority, so that in subjecting themselves with docility to authority, they would not resist God. Hence, honor to those to whom honor is due, obedience to them to whom obedience is due, tribute to them to whom tribute is due.

Thus, every community must be ordered so that there may be order and submission in the Church. From how many parts do we hear raised voices of rebellion against what the Church teaches and sets forth! People are always tempted to resist authority established by God, and this means to oppose God. Submission! After his conversion, St. Paul allowed himself to be guided by Jesus like a child, like a baby. If at the beginning he had immediately started to preach the Gospel of Jesus because he believed such to be the will of God,

he however did not oppose the will of God: to first withdraw so as to accomplish his transformation and formation.

And also when he was already in Antioch, among the other eminent members of the Church, St. Paul behaved humbly, demanding nothing before the voice of the Holy Spirit intervened. Also during the rest of his mission, he was always docile, guided by God, by Jesus Christ, by his voice. Let us ask for this spirit of obedience, of submission of the mind, will and heart to God.

4. Christian perfection – a Doctor of the Church has written – has eight steps. They are the eight beatitudes of the Gospel. But at the first step is poverty: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 5:3]. Hence, start with poverty. If poverty is broken, it is difficult, even impossible, to arrive at the other steps. Poverty would appear to be a virtue that regulates us only in regard to material things, but it is the beginning. Therefore the Divine Master invited his own: “Leave all, sell what you have, give to the poor, then come and follow me” [cf Lk 18:22].

St. Francis of Assisi who possessed the true spirit of Jesus, first of all wanted that his own left everything and entrusted themselves totally to God and to his providence.

Leave everything! Spirit of poverty that applies to us a little in all the parts of the day. Now in the apostolate, now in the other individual things that concern the government of ourselves, our relationships and the dispositions that we make in our regard. There are persons who never enter the spirit of poverty because they don’t know how to ascend. The first step is poverty. It’s a great virtue, a great vow notwithstanding that we say that virginity and obedience are more perfect.

5. Poverty is also shown in love and zeal for the apostolate. The heart of St. Paul was entirely filled with love for Jesus Christ and for souls, entirely filled with love for the Church. And what contribution has he brought to the Church, if he was able to say: “I have worked more than everybody”!

[1Cor 15:10]. And he had suffered and toiled so much, he who did not want to be a burden to anybody and earned his bread through the sweat of his brow, also through material work after the example of Jesus who we adore and admire in his house at Nazareth.

Paul's great love for souls is expressed by the phrase "*Caritas Christi urget nos*"³ that urges him to make himself all for all. He felt the needs of everybody, the joys of everybody and he gives witness to it in his Letters.

Do we love souls? Those who do not have zeal for their own souls cannot have zeal for the souls of their neighbors. But those who have true zeal in sacrifice certainly will think, desire and have zeal for the salvation of their neighbor.

Do we understand the Pauline mission? It must extend to everything and to everybody. It is also the mission of Jesus Christ: "Go into the whole world, preach the Gospel to all creatures" [Mk 16:15]. Do we practice the apostolate of the editions, of prayer, of example, of works, of the word? If we want the reward of St. Paul in heaven, we must follow his steps, his examples, and ask so that he may ignite our hearts with his flame.⁴

³ 2Cor 5:14: "The love of Christ impels us".

⁴ Summarizing this meditation dated 6 October 1952, the secretary Fr. Antonio Speciale wrote in his Diary: "In reciting the chaplet to Saint Paul, we must ask for three graces from our Protector and Father: a) The recruitment of Pauline vocations; b) The formation of these young people who it will please the Lord to send us; c) Zeal for our apostolate". And on 8 June 1954 he added: "[The Primo Maestro] has written another note by his own hand affirming that the Chaplet to St. Paul (as it is in the book of our prayers) has been written by him to obtain from the Apostle of the Gentiles vocations for our Congregation and ends his writing thus: 'and in fact thereafter many came'". – Other related testimonies: "This chaplet has been composed and its recitation has started at that time when the search and formation of vocations was more difficult than now... It is for vocations: first, to look for them, second, to form them and third so that we can correspond to our own" (To the Apostoline Sisters, June 1961). – "The Primo Maestro said that the chaplet was used during a moment of great need. It was the prayer for vocations and for the Pauline spirit" (Fr. Saverio Boano, SSP).

PRAYER TO ST. PAUL
TO OBTAIN PATIENCE

This was published for the first time on the bulletin "Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa" of 1922 (n. 13 - 3 December, p. 4). Present in the first collection of Pauline prayers, it was included in all the successive editions of the manual, and probably owes its composition to the need for spiritual strength in the face of the difficulties of the beginnings. We can understand, in fact, that the "patience" being invoked here through the intercession of the Apostle is to be understood principally in its etymological meaning: ability to "pass over", that is, to undergo and support the adversities, the obstacles and even the personal sufferings in view of the apostolate.

O glorious St. Paul, who from persecutor of the Christian name have become a very ardent Apostle due to your zeal, and who, to make known Jesus the Savior to the last regions of the world, have suffered imprisonment, flagellations, stonings, shipwrecks and persecutions of every kind, and finally have shed your blood to the last drop, obtain for us the grace to receive, as favors of the divine mercy, the infirmities, trials and misfortunes of the present life, so that the uncertainties of this our exile may not dampen our enthusiasm in the service of God, but may make us ever more faithful and fervent. Amen.

LIVE AGAIN, PAUL!

This inspired invocation ended a sermon of Fr. Alberione given in Alba during the solemn feast of Saint Paul in 1934. It was successively printed in the bulletin "Eco di Casa Madre" of the Daughters of Saint Paul.⁵

⁵ Cf ECM 7 [1934] 3-4. The sermon was given in the temple of Saint Paul, during Vespers, before the whole Pauline Family. According to the

Live again, Paul! Again, with your knowledge, with your spirit, with your zeal, with your fervor, with your sanctity.

Live and enlighten minds in darkness, live and support in their struggles the ardent apostles of our days; live and bring to souls close to you, who love the closest communication with God, your sublime teachings and contemplations!

Live as you have lived in St. Mark, as you have lived in St. Titus, as you have lived in St. Timothy, as you have lived in St. Luke, as you have lived in St. Thecla.

TO SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE

A more recent prayer that we find in the manual of 3 August 1944. Interwoven with references to the Pauline letters, it is a kind of "universal supplication" directed to the Apostle and lastly to the Lord Jesus for the spiritual and apostolic needs of his "sons and disciples".

O holy Apostle, through your doctrine and charity you have taught the whole world. Look kindly on us, your children and disciples.

We expect all through your prayer before the divine Master and before Mary, Queen of Apostles.

Grant, O Doctor of the Gentiles, that we live of faith, that we save ourselves through hope, and that charity alone reign among us. Obtain for us, O Vessel of Election, docile correspondence to divine grace, so that it may not remain unfruitful in us.

Grant that we may always better know you, love you and imitate you; that we may become living members of the Church, the mystical body of Jesus Christ. Stir up many and holy apostles. May the warm breath of true charity traverse

news account: "People returned to St. Paul for Vespers. The Primo Maestro gave the sermon..." (*Ibid.*, p. 2). In ECM the title is "The word of the Primo Maestro (Feast of St. Paul)". The commemoration fell on 30 June, but that year it was celebrated on Sunday 1 July (*Ibid.*, p. 2). – Cf FSP34, p. 94.

the world. Grant that all men may know and glorify God and the divine Master, Way, Truth and Life.

Lord Jesus, you know that we do not have any trust in our forces. Through your mercy, grant us to be defended against any adversity, through the powerful intercession of Saint Paul, our teacher and father.

PRAYER FOR THE ORIENT

Published on the bulletin "San Paolo" dated August-September 1949, this prayer carries the date 20 August and reflects the apostolic concern of Fr. Alberione, made acute by his recent travel to the Extreme Orient (May-June 1949).

O Holy Apostle Paul, vessel of grace and Doctor of the Gentiles, through your charity look down from Heaven at the millions of pagans who live in this Orient. You were the Apostle, the Defender and Friend of the Gentiles: be now their perpetual Protector. Stir up Missionaries for these good nations, ignite them with your zeal, bless those who dedicate themselves to the apostolate of the press, of the cinema, of radio. Dispose all to receive the Gospel. May they enter the Church. May good pastors arise among them. May Religious Institutes flower. And may many Saints perfume these lands. May the whole Orient sing Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. May the name of Mary resound everywhere. And may even these peoples be one day your joy and crown in Heaven. Amen.⁶

⁶ In the bulletin there is this date and signature: *St. Bernard 1949, Fr. ALBERIONE*. – FROM THE *Diario* of A. Speciale we learn that in Japan the Founder had blessed the new Radio Station and encouraged the launching of the apostolate of Cinema. – In a following date, 14 August 1953, the Secretary quoted the following affirmation of Fr. Alberione: "In the Orient, where I have passed (Japan, the Philippines and India), our young boys and even the Professed and the Sisters recite the prayer to St. Paul for the conversion of those peoples".

FOR ONE'S NATION

Published in the 1952 edition of the manual, it was addressed to the Italian nation. Afterwards the horizon has been extended to all peoples.⁷ The themes are in great part the same as what we find in the "Consecration of Italy to Mary".

O Saint Paul, teacher of the gentiles, look with a loving smile at this nation and its children. Your heart expanded to receive and embrace all peoples in the embrace of peace.

Now, from heaven, may the charity of Christ impel you to enlighten all with the light of the Gospel and to establish the kingdom of love.

Stir up vocations, comfort those who spread the Gospel, make all hearts docile to the divine Master.

May this people ever find in Christ the way, the truth and the life. May its light shine before the world and may it always search for the kingdom of God and his justice.

O holy Apostle, enlighten us, comfort us, bless us all. Amen.

⁷ "O Saint Paul, teacher of the gentiles, look with a loving smile at this blessed land of Italy (...) and at her children. Your heart expanded to receive and embrace all peoples in the embrace of peace. Now, from heaven, may the charity of Christ impel you to enlighten all...".

V

ARTICLES AND INTERVENTIONS
OF MATURITY

PREMISE

The following texts are taken first of all from “San Paolo”, the internal bulletin of the Society of Saint Paul, and successively from the recording of some meditations given by Fr. Alberione to various communities of the Pauline Family, meditations that have as their content the life and doctrine of the Apostle. The breadth of his interventions is very diversified: in fact, we find articles that are quite developed, while of others we have saved only very brief fragments that however glitter like the luminous tesseras of a mosaic. In their entirety they delineate the prominent features of the Apostle Paul.

Everything is reported according to the chronological order of the publication, with the respective references to the source.

A. FROM THE BULLETIN “SAN PAOLO”

LIKE PAUL PREACHER AND WRITER

What God has joined, ordering to preach and moving to write, proceeds united and directly through the same path. Even more, the identity of the mission is reasserted and made to live. One part completes and guides the other. Thus, as we have learned from Saint Paul the preacher and writer, with the same mind and with the same heart.

(Alba, 15 May 1935)

THE MONTH TO ST. PAUL

It has three purposes: to make us *know*, retain and believe the great teachings of the Apostle: “*Doctor of the Gentiles*”; lead us to the *imitation* of his great virtues, especially love for God, for Jesus Christ, zeal for souls: “to live Jesus

Christ”; inspire us to confidence and *devotion* to our Protector and Father, given to us by special providence of the Lord.

The reading of his letters and of his life, his *month* will have as fruits the knowledge of Saint Paul: “Do you know your Father?”.

The practice of the virtue that we need most and upon which we have focused our resolution after the example of the Apostle, will lead us to imitation: “Do you resemble your Father?”.

The prayer to Saint Paul will give as fruit for us during this month: more copious gifts of Pentecost, eucharistic life on the Feast of Corpus Domini, more holiness of affection on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, more generous attachment to the Church and to souls on the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul: “Do you pray to your Father?”.

(Alba, 1 June 1935)

PASTORAL LOFTINESS

Care and vigilance must be employed so that the apostolate may maintain itself in that pastoral loftiness that is in the letters of Saint Paul.

(Alba, 1 March 1936)

CENTENARY OF HIS CONVERSION

This [XIX] centenary is to be remembered in a special way by the Pious Society of St. Paul and by the Daughters of St. Paul out of:

a) gratitude to the Apostle, our Father, Exemplar and Doctor; we owe him everything;

b) to know better the Apostle through his Letters, his Life, the Acts, the Liturgy;

c) to imitate him in his virtues, sanctifying especially what leads us to a definitive conversion; examination of conscience, the Sacrament of Confession, interior struggle to overcome the old man and to let Jesus Christ live;

d) to pray to him so that sin, every sin, may forever be banished; so that all our forces and energies may be directed to the Lord with total dedication; so that these energies of mind, will, and heart may be strengthened as in St. Paul by extraordinary grace, because of which he said: "*I can do all things through him who gives me the power*".

Pray for my conversion...

(Alba, 21-I-1937)

BROTHERS IN SAINT PAUL

Beloved brothers in St. Paul,

I have a very strong desire to see or see once more all the alumni, the aspirants, the confreres, especially the more elderly ones. All those who work with much love in the various ministries or activities following the steps of our Father Saint Paul, present themselves to me in my mind at every moment. I would like everyone to feel a felt word of gratitude, of faith, of love for the Divine Master and to say to everybody: eyes to heaven, knees kneeling on earth, your hearts inflamed. Each one will receive as he has worked; above all, however, imitate Jesus, Way, Truth and Life.

(Rome, St. Bernard 1940)

TWO CHARACTERISTIC SIGNS

[In our bookstores] The book of the Gospel and the image of Saint Paul will be exhibited conveniently.

(São Paulo, 27 March 1946)

THE PACT AND THE INTERCESSION

Immense benefits have come to us and also events that have something of the prodigious, even during these last months because of the *pact* recited with vivid faith and be-

cause of the *oremus* [prayer] to Saint Paul of the humble soul. This is *a true source of energy*; the principal one upon which we have always leaned with certainty and with full fruit...

The *Oremus* says: "Lord, you know how we have neither virtue nor power. Through your mercy, grant us to be freed, through the intercession of Saint Paul, from all adversities".

(October-November 1947)

SOULS IN WAITING

[There are] Souls that are waiting! Let no one miss, as far as we can, the divine light. It is the life of Saint Paul. It is to feel the apostle of "Christ lives in me"; It is to accompany the Church in her difficult journey today. Always bent on advancing, like Christ the propagandist, like Paul the trekker of God.

(April 1949)

SONS AND ACTIVE IMITATORS

The Society of St. Paul has in itself graces and an organization such and of a special nature as to be able to transform much its aspirants, and to make them truly sons and active imitators of Saint Paul. Her confidence remains still the same.

(From Japan, July 1949)

RADIO ST. PAUL

Over and above human happenings, the Church has confidence in this [Japanese] nation respected by all for its ingeniousness, morals, industriousness and the orderliness of its inhabitants. The Society of Saint Paul, in the spirit of the great Apostle, adopts the fastest and most efficient means of

good. After the press, the cinema, it's the radio. She seeks *only and always* the glory of God and the peace of men. She desires nothing except what is good.

The program of the transmissions of this radio station is that indicated by Saint Paul in his letter to the Philippians: "Brothers, all that is true, all that is honest, all that is just, all that is holy, all that is amiable, all that is of good repute, all that is virtuous, all that is praiseworthy".

(From Japan, July 1949-II)

THE WORD IS NOT BOUND

The Superiors should remember that, according to the precept of our Father Saint Paul, the word of God is not a prisoner and that human progress furnishes means that are ever more perfect and effective, and must not be rejected inconsiderately or accepted with superficiality.

(December 1951)

LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

A true Pauline is on the frontline of this love after the example of the Apostle Paul.

(February 1953)

PAUL MODEL OF FORMATORS AND OF FORMANDS

Let the master of spirituality accompany charity with firmness and frankness. Rather than allow himself to be led by the desires and the not good tendencies of the young men, *let him guide them to high goals, asking them decisively to imitate Saint Paul the Apostle.*

Example of a young man who in everything entrusts him-

self to his Master so as to always orient his life according to his direction is Saint Paul.

St. Paul had a very strong character. What power worked in him his conviction, his faith! And yet he always showed docility to whoever Providence assigned to guide his steps.

When Paul was stopped on the road to Damascus, he asked: "Lord, what do you want me to do?". But Jesus, instead of He himself revealing to him other plans, sent him to Ananias, so that he might learn from him what he had to do. From here St. Francis de Sales like Leo XIII explain the office and the need of a good direction. In fact, Leo XIII writes: "To St. Paul it is said: 'Enter the city and there it will be said to you what you must do'. Thus it was always practiced in the Church. This is the doctrine unanimously professed by all those who in the course of centuries shone for science and sanctity".

After having perfected and stabilized his conversion, and after having entirely directed his life and existence to Jesus Christ, Saul withdrew to Tarsus and stayed there in humble silence, although a great fire burned in his soul. He did not move until Barnabas arrived to invite him to Antioch. Coming from Antioch, Barnabas represented the Church. He went there immediately, in obedience. There he found doctors and prophets: among them Saul is mentioned last. To make him enter his own apostolate among the gentiles, it was necessary that the Holy Spirit talk to the elders: "Set aside Saul and Barnabas for the mission for which I have destined them". And the elders made known the divine command. After the fasting, they laid their hands on the two.

Only then does Saul begin his stable apostolate.

Thus Ananias, Barnabas and the elders of Antioch are the guides or, let us say, the spiritual directors for St. Paul. They did well their part and Saint Paul did it well. And the Church received the apostle who worked more than all, whose soul and heart always palpitate in the Church.

(July-August 1953)

THE TRUE FOUNDER

Our deepest gratitude goes to Jesus, the Divine Master in his Sacrament of light and love; to the Queen of Apostles, our Mother and mother of every apostolate; to St. Paul the Apostle, who is the true Founder of the Institute. In fact, he is its Father, Teacher, exemplar and protector. He himself has made this family through an intervention so physical and spiritual that not even now, reflecting upon it, can we understand it and much less explain.

Everything is his. Of him, the most complete interpreter of the Divine Master, who applied the Gospel to the nations and called the nations to Christ. Of him, whose presence in theology, in morals, in the organization of the Church, in the adaptability of the apostolate and of her means to the times is very great and substantial and will remain such until the end of the centuries. He moved everything, enlightened everything, nourished everything. He was its guide, its treasurer, its defense, its support everywhere that the Pauline Family has established itself. He merited the first Church and the beautiful *sculptured glory* that reproduces him in his apostolate and in his fatherhood with respect to the Paulines.

It did not happen as when one is elected as protector of a person or of an institution. It is not that we have elected him; it is, instead, Saint Paul who has elected 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.

(July-August 1954)

FATHER, TEACHER, PROTECTOR

Saint Paul the Apostle is our Father, Teacher and Protector. He has done everything. This one is called the Work of Saint Paul. The meaning is not the one understood when people say: such person is of Turin, that is, he was born in Turin. Instead,

the meaning in our case is the one understood when people say: that young man is of Peter, that is, he is the son of Peter. Thus, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "In Christ Jesus I have generated you through the Gospel". The life of the Pauline Family comes from the Eucharist, but communicated by Saint Paul.

(Alba, August-September 1954)

WEAKNESS AND SANCTITY

When it is a matter of overcoming the difficulties that oppose our doing good, how much weakness and how much inconstancy in our efforts! And how many times we allow ourselves to be dragged by sentiments and passion! Saint Paul described with efficacious accents this deplorable weakness: "I do not do the good that I want and do the bad that I do not want... Because I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see in my members another law that opposes the law of my mind and makes me a slave of the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy me! Who shall free me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Rom 7:19-25). Therefore, as the Apostle declares, the remedy for this miserable state is in the *grace of redemption*.

For Saint Paul, sanctity is the completed maturity of man, the perfect man...

What was the effect in Saint Paul of the idea that Jesus Christ was the true God and His doctrine was the word of salvation? "I overflow with joy in every tribulation", St. Paul wrote from his prison.

(September 1954)

"IF SAINT PAUL WERE LIVING TODAY..."

[The Pauline Family] resolves to represent and live St. Paul, today, thinking, being zealous, praying, sanctifying itself as Saint Paul would do if he lived today. He lived the two precepts of love for God and neighbor in a manner so

perfect as to let Christ be seen in his person: “Christ lives in me” [Gal 2:20].¹

He has created the Society of Saint Paul of which he is the founder. It is not the Society of Saint Paul that has elected him, but he has elected us. Rather, he has generated us: “I’m the one that has generated you in Christ Jesus, through the gospel” [1Cor 4:15].

If Saint Paul were alive he would continue to burn of that twofold flame of the same fire, of zeal for God and for his Christ, and for men of every nation. And to make himself heard he would ascend the highest pulpits and multiply his word through the instruments of contemporary progress: the press, cinema, radio, television. His doctrine would not be cold and abstract. When he arrived, he did not appear just for an occasional conference, but he *stayed* and *formed*: to get the consent of minds, to persuade, convert, unite to Christ, launch a fully Christian life. He did not leave unless he was morally certain of the perseverance of his own. He left some presbyters to continue his work; he returned there often through his word and writing. He wanted news, stayed with them in spirit, prayed for them.

He says to the Paulines: Know, love, follow the Divine Master Jesus. “Imitate me, as I do Christ!” [1Cor 11:1]. This invitation is general, for all the faithful and for his devotees. For us there is something more, as we are his children. Children have their life from their father. Therefore, live in him, by him, for him in order to live Jesus Christ. His words to his children in Thessalonica to whom he reminds that he made himself *form* for them, are appropriate: “To give ourselves to you as example to imitate”.² Jesus Christ is the perfect original; Paul was made and made himself form for us, wherefore in him we are forged in order to reproduce Christ. Saint Paul-

¹ The Pauline citations of Fr. Alberione in this article as in others are given in Latin. We have preferred to translate them in Italian, with relative biblical reference.

² “*Ut nosmetipsos formam daremus vobis*”: 2Thes 3:9.

form is not such for a physical reproduction of bodily appearance, but to communicate to us to the utmost his personality: his mentality, his virtue, his zeal, his piety... everything. Let the Pauline Family, composed of many members, be Paul-living in a social body.

Know and meditate Saint Paul in his life, works, letters; so as to think, reason, talk, work like him. And invoke his fatherly assistance.

(September 1954)

A YEAR TO SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE *(from 25-1-1957 to 25-1-1958)*

After having consecrated a year to the Divine Master Jesus and another year to the Queen of Apostles, we feel the need and together the duty and usefulness to consecrate a year to Saint Paul the Apostle, our guide and protector.

Many had asked for it immediately after the year dedicated to the Divine Master, since St. Paul was his most profound interpreter.

The goals that we propose are:

1) To show our gratitude to our Father who has looked after us, guided us and enlightened us in the difficult journey of so many years, particularly the first ones.

2) To know better St. Paul: about his surpassing human and spiritual personality much has been written, but much still remains to be said. "Know your Father": his holy life, his apostolate, his doctrine, his power before God. To know the Apostle of Christ, the Teacher of the gentiles, the Minister of the Church, the Vessel of election, the Preacher of the gospel, the Martyr of Christ. To know in what part He has entered in dogmatic and moral theology, in the liturgy and organization of the Church.

3) To imitate better his virtues. He was a true *Man of God*: a man full of graces in an exceptional manner, a man to whom have been particularly entrusted the things of God, a

man in a special way bound to God, a man who was able to say: "His grace has not been vain in me" [1Cor 15:10]. He is a singer of God, preacher of the glory of God, promoter of the worship of God, defender of the laws of God, the segregated of God, the prisoner of Christ, who lives in Christ.

4) To pray to Saint Paul. For three reasons: the power of the Saints before God is in proportion to their work done for Him on earth. He is also the father of the family, and a father thinks of his children. We can obtain his goodness by means of our prayers.

5) To love the Apostle. When we simply say the "Apostle" we intend to refer to Saint Paul. His figure so elevates itself above the common: "I have worked more abundantly".

6) To obtain so that those who are scattered in the various nations may know, after the example of St. Paul, how to wisely and in a holy manner distinguish what they must conform to, what they must bring and communicate and what they must avoid. Invoke the *Teacher of the gentiles*, our father and model.

Practices.

1) Open with a solemn ceremony the Pauline year on 25 January 1957.

2) During the reading in the refectory, in spiritual readings, even in private prefer the biography and Letters of the Apostle.

3) Invoke him in the work of religious sanctification, making several times his novena and reciting often, especially on Mondays, his chaplet and the other prayers that we have in the book of Prayers.

4) Start to imitate him in a special virtue.

5) Celebrate with particular fervor and solemnity his month and feasts. Preach about him more often. Entrust to him the vocations, the apostolate, our machines, our initiatives. Decorate his images and choose little sacrifices to do.

Each one then will have his own pious and personal initiatives.

We shall receive many and precious graces.

* * *

Some encouraging expressions of St. Paul:

“Therefore, my dearest brothers, remain steadfast and immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1Cor 15:58).

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2Cor 5:1).

“When Christ your life will be revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (Col 3:4).

LET US PRAY – “O God, you see how we do not trust in any action of ours. Grant us kindly to be defended against all adversities by the protection of the Doctor of the gentiles” (Sexagesima Sunday).³

(January 1957)

COURSE OF MEDITATIONS
FOR EVERY MONDAY OF THE WEEK
IN THE YEAR OF SAINT PAUL

His life

1. “The one who chose me from the womb of my mother” (Gal 1:15): Providence in the life of Saul (birth in Tarsus, a city of culture; educated as a Pharisee; learned a trade). Natural qualities and education ordained for the great saint and apostle.

2. “I surpassed in Judaism the majority of my contemporaries” (Gal 1:14): progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures, first contacts with the Christians, very fierce persecutor: righteousness, act according to conscience.

3. “The one who called me with his grace was pleased to reveal to me his Son” (Gal 1:16): his conversion. It was all-embracing: mind, heart and life.

³ The text of this collect, like that of the three Pauline verses quoted above, was reported in Latin.

4. "So that I might announce him among the pagans" (Gal 1:16): vocation to the apostolate. The signs of vocation.

5. "Immediately, without consulting any man" (Gal 1:16): prompt and generous correspondence to grace. He left the religion he loved, a lucrative and honorable profession. From doctor of the law to... nothing! Full of talents and capabilities... Inactive! Expecting.

6. "I went to Jerusalem following a revelation... so as not to find myself in the risk of running or of having run in vain" (Gal 2:2): submission to Authority in his apostolate, also with very great firmness in the defense of truth and in the new freedom of Christ.

7. "Paul, servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle" (Rom 1:1): Paul's gratitude for his vocation. Gratitude that is wise and practical.

8. "For which I suffer even to the point of being chained" (2Tim 2:9): the apostolate of Paul, his voyages, the trials endured by the Apostle.

9. "For me, in fact, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21): the life of Paul is a continuous act of love for Christ. The equilibrium of the Apostle between prudence and zeal.

10. "My blood is about to be shed in libation" (2Tim 4:6): martyrdom as supreme proof of Paul's love for Christ.

His doctrine

11. "The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of whoever believes" (Rom 1:16): Christ is the only hope of salvation.

12. "I exhort you, therefore, brothers, to offer your bodies as a sacrifice" (Rom 12:1): remain in Christ, live for Christ and in Christ, the beginning and end of our person, of our vocation and of our eternity.

13. "Ministers through whom you have come to the faith and each one according that the Lord has given to him" (1Cor 3:5): see God in those He has sent, look up to Him, obey Him! (cf chapters 1-4 of 1Cor).

14. "Knowledge puffs up, while love builds" (1Cor 8:1): not the science taken in itself builds, but the one that is used

well; know how to renounce even to your rights for the sake of charity (1Cor 8–10).

15. “Strive after charity” (1Cor 14:1): charity as remote preparation for Holy Communion; charity in the exercise of life (1Cor 11:17–14:40).

16. “We have spoken frankly to you, Corinthians, and our heart is wide open to you” (2Cor 6:11): for the peace and for the grace of the Church in Corinth Paul forgets the offenses, he forgives and prays (2Cor 1–7).

17. “Much more in labors, much more in imprisonments” (2Cor 11:23): the price of the apostolate (2Cor 10:1–13:10).

18. “Blessed be God... he destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:3-5). “Though he was of divine nature... he stripped himself” (Phil 2:6): live your life after the example of the Divine Master.

19. “He is the one, in fact, who ... has transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col 1:13): the Father has done and given all by means of Christ, and he wants everything again through the same Way. “This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1Thes 4:3): let us not lose ourselves in useless words or things, but with all our strength accomplish every day our duty.

20. “Preserve the traditions that you have learned” (2Thes 2:15): wait for the reward for the accomplishment of our duties. “No one, when he lends military service, bothers himself with the affairs of ordinary life” (2Tim 2:4): one who has dedicated and consecrated himself to God must not worry anymore about anything that is not He (cf the pastoral letters).

21. “He is made similar to the Son of God and remains a priest forever” (Heb 7:3): Jesus, Priest and Victim, Model of every consecrated soul.

His cult and devotion

22. The power of St. Paul in heaven is great and He uses it for his children, for his collaborators and for the souls redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

23. “It is not anymore I that live, but the Christ in me”

(Gal 2:20): Paul, the living example of the Pauline religious (The Chaplet).

24. The heart of the children toward their Father: know him in his doctrine, in his person, in his examples.

25. The characteristics of the Pauline devotion: its universalism or Catholicity, its resolve to adapt, its fidelity to the Pope.

26. Saint Paul and his devotees: Saint Titus, Saint Timothy, Saint Luke, Saint Thecla, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Anthony M. Zaccharia, founder of the Barnabites, the churches in his honor, the Paulines.

27. Saint Paul and dogmatics.

28. Saint Paul and moral, ascetical and mystical theology.

29. The heart of the children toward their Father: pray to him for our sanctification and for our apostolate.

30. The heart of the children toward their Father: imitate him in his virtues, in the vastness of his heart, in considering him as always actual.

31. Saint Paul in the liturgy: 25 January, 29 June (with St. Peter), 30 June: instruction, prayer, practice.⁴

(February 1957)

XIX CENTENARY OF THE LETTER OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS (58-1958)

The editing apostolate of St. Paul has its greatest expression in his letter to the Romans.

In the Motherhouse, in order to recall the great event, it was decided to choose one of the big stained-glass windows (14 sq.m) in which is represented the city from which said letter has left (Corinth), and the city to which it was brought (Rome). The stained-glass window executed by a famous German company exudes an excellent artistic and religious

⁴ This P.S. appears at the end: "Listed are only thirty titles of meditation, since several Mondays are impeded in the course of the year. If there will be place, each preacher still will choose topics. FR. ALBERIONE".

effect. The original thought was that, positioned above the *gloria*, it would continually be before the eyes of our people, for their edification and inspiration. That is its place.

The *Osservatore Romano* (22-1-1958), giving the report about the solemn celebration of this centenary in the *Istituto Biblico* of Rome says:

“The letter to the Romans of Saint Paul is one of the few, perhaps the only biblical writing of some extent about which the almost totality of exegetes agree in attributing to him an exact date of composition”. And it is the year 58, a little before the Easter.

And it adds that this celebration is of great utility particularly to clarify the Catholic doctrine in front of the Protestants for the purpose of obtaining their reconciliation with the Catholic Church.

The reasons for the centenary celebration are especially: gratitude to the Divine Master, inspirer of his most faithful and profound interpreter in writing the marvelous letter;

the consideration of the great dogmatic, moral and liturgical teachings contained in it;

the attachment that Saint Paul shows to Rome as center of Christianity and seat of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. “Your faith is announced to the whole world”;

the wonderful profundity, joined to the divine light, in applying to the needs of every time and place the Gospel of Jesus Christ;

the model, in content and form, of every priest-writer-Pauline;

the universality of Saint Paul, the dominator of history and of observances, the organizer of the Churches, the Apostle of all the gentiles, the vindicator of true freedom in homage to Jesus Christ, the Divine Master...⁵

(February 1958)

⁵ The article continues with the quotation of the *Introduction* to the Bible translated and commented for the SSP editions by Fr. Eusebio Tintori and gave furthermore a lengthy summary of the Pauline letter, probably redacted by another author.

TO SAINT PAUL, THE TREKKER

THE PAULINE FAMILY
 TO ITS FATHER, TEACHER AND PROTECTOR
 ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
 ANTICIPATING THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
 OF HIS COMING TO ROME 1960-1961
 OUR DEVOTED HOMAGE.⁶

Saint Paul walked: the Divine Master conquered him on the *road* to Damascus, and Paul, after taking the opposite path, did not stop anymore.

He walked with his life: from full Pharisaism to the conquest of the total Christ.

He walked in apostolic voyages: towards all the nations, conquering peoples to the faith, up until martyrdom.

He walked after death: through his doctrine he invaded theology, morals and liturgy.

He walked in many hearts: stirring up apostles, writers, martyrs.

He walked in so many temples, religious institutes, dioceses, cities.

He walks today more than ever, in every direction, even carried by members of the 342 Pauline houses

who love him, pray to him, preach him. – FR. ALBERIONE.

PEDAGOGY AND PAULINE PERSONALITY

What is the best formation? What is the supreme personality? What is the Pauline ideal? How and when is it realized and lived?

Like the one of Saint Paul: when we can say “I live now not I, but the Christ that is in me”.

(April 1961)

⁶ We do not know the origin and destination of this dedication, neither of the lines that follow. The text, typewritten on a sheet without date (but going back to the spring of 1960), has been given to us by Sr. Mercedes Mastrostefano FSP, who we thank for her collaboration.

GIVE THE GOSPEL

The Pious Society of Saint Paul in the Motherhouse (Alba) in 1921 has instituted the General Association of Libraries... It is placed under the protection of Saint Paul, Patron of the Apostolate of the Editions, and of Mary Most Holy, Queen of the Apostles... Giving the message of salvation by making the good news – the Gospel – heard. This was the life of Saint Paul, from the moment in which the voice and the command of God arrived: “Set me aside Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have destined them”. [Paul] was silent only after he was beheaded.

(May 1961)

ALWAYS STRAINING FORWARD

The cause for the beatification of the servant of God Maggiorino Vigolungo has been introduced.

Maggiorino Vigolungo [was] animated by the spirit of the Apostle Saint Paul, always straining forward.

(January 1962)

CONVERSION AND SANCTIFICATION

The year dedicated in a particular way to sanctification starts with the feast of the conversion of Saint Paul (25 January 1963) and ends on 25 January 1964. Therefore, with the same solemnity.

The starting date is chosen for this reason: Saul, in chapter 22 of the *Acts*, narrates his conversion: “While I was journeying and found myself already near to Damascus, suddenly towards midday a great light came from heaven and enveloped me in its splendor. I fell to earth and heard a voice that told me: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’. And I answered: ‘Who are you, Lord?’. He said to me: ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, who you are persecuting’... I then said: ‘*What must I do, Lord?*’”. This expression indicates the total conversion of Saul and at the same

time total availability to God's will. Now, true sanctity consists precisely in conformity to God's will and abandonment in his hands. Already he had reached perfection.

Saint Paul is for us here a perfect Master of sanctification: on the contrary, attachment to our ideas, our whims, our tastes, our wants are obstacles to true sanctity.

Do we want to arrive there? At least after a year of spiritual work, full detachment from ourselves, to live fully in the divine will.

We should note that Saul was subjected to a person of authority in the Church, that is, to the same Church that he had persecuted before. Not whatever person is a guide unto himself in the Church, but each of us must submit himself to the Church: "Go to Damascus, it will be said to you what you must do". And Jesus sent him to Ananias.

(January 1963)

BOOK AND SWORD

(*Explanation of the Pauline emblem*)⁷

The INSCRIPTION on the book is taken from Saint Paul: "*Ut innotescat per Ecclesiam multiformis sapientia Dei*".⁸ Saint Paul points out our position as children and humble servants of the Church. Due to the approval of the Holy See of our Institutes, we are inserted in the Church herself, the guardian and teacher of the wisdom revealed by God. And St. Paul adds: "All that is true, pure, just, lovely, holy and amiable... let them be the object of your thoughts" [Phil 4:8].

Thus, we have been made always disciples and always teachers in the same position about which Saint Paul talks: "I have preached to you what I have first learned from the Lord" [cf 1Cor 11:23].

⁷ On 20 August 1964, the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Saint Paul, Fr. Alberione wanted to explain the meaning of the Pauline emblem during the commemorative mass. We report only a part of the homily.

⁸ "So that through the Church the multiform wisdom of God may be revealed" (cf Eph 3:10).

SWORD: This has a twofold meaning. Saint Paul was beheaded at the Tre Fontane near Rome, the victim of his zeal; he has worked for the Gospel "*more abundantly*",⁹ and died by the sword.

Another meaning. Saint Paul says: "The word is a sword" [cf Heb 4:12] that divides and separates man from the spirit of the world and from the slavery of evil. And man, freed from earthly ties, runs through the road marked by Jesus Christ: "He who wants to come after me, let him deny himself... and follow" [Mt 16:24].

Consider the exhortation of Saint Paul to arm ourselves against evil, and among the arms is "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" [Eph 6:17].

[*Conclusion of the homily*] The journey in time will be happy if the Institute as a whole and the individual religious will always travel on the rails of humility and faith.

In Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life; the protection of Mary, Queen of the Apostles; the example of Saint Paul, who more than all the other Apostles used the technical means, his letters, together with his word.

(July-August 1964)

GREAT

Saint Paul: great preacher to the Gentiles.

(October-November 1965)

1967: CENTENARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

We foresee a solemn celebration by the whole Church.

The Pauline Family will participate in it with all its spirit, not only externally, but by nourishing its faith in the Church, in the Authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and in devout and filial service to souls as Religious.

⁹ Cf 1Cor 15:10.

For us in particular:

As Pauline Family, under the protection of Saint Paul the Apostle, we must give a particular solemnity to the whole year 1967: know, love, imitate, pray to our Protector and Master.

Among the homages: progress in editorial work through the instruments of social communication.

For every house: its own progress in the apostolate.

St. Paul, great *preacher* and great *writer*: Protector and model to be imitated.

Also for this reason the Pious Society of Saint Paul was placed under the protection and example of the Apostle.

In the present time, social communications advance ever more through instruments side by side with the spoken word.

* * *

It has been written that Saint Paul was born a preacher and also a writer. The Lord already had for him plans of grace and salvation for countless souls.

Not only in his life, but during all centuries and even today he talks to humanity.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul work together, although each one has a particular mission to carry out.

Paul (Saul), former persecutor. Converted to Jesus Christ, after about ten years from his conversion, he became an apostle.

He prepared himself according to the light of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit: in penitence, prayer, work and study for the apostolate, for the conversion of the Gentiles (the pagans).

Around the year 45 he began his missionary trips. The center of his activities has been Antioch, the metropolis of the Orient.

His ardent and illuminating word in Jesus Christ has won innumerable souls.

He founded very many churches, prepared and established as heads Bishops, bore sufferings and persecutions that he himself described, particularly in one of his letters.

* * *

He communicated the life of grace to souls by means of his word and when he was away, he arrived through his letters.

He wrote 14 letters.

His manner of writing is very personal, true mirror of a soul made to dominate, ardent, daring, sure of the truth, affectionate like a mother and strong like a father.

The letters of saint Paul are a very precious commentary of the Gospel, immediately recognized by the faithful as words not of a man but of God. Saint Peter recognized them as Holy Scripture (2Pt 3:15). He wrote: "Think that the patience of our Lord is your salvation, as previously Paul, our dear brother, has written you according to that wisdom that has been given him, and how he does in all his letters in which he talks about these things. His letters contain some things that are difficult to understand, the meaning of which, as of other passages of Scripture, is twisted by the ignorant and the weak to their perdition".

* * *

Saint Paul by himself wrote more pages than saint Matthew, saint Mark and saint Luke together have written in their three Gospels.

He still preaches with his immortal letters that will be the admiration of all the centuries, and will always be for consolation, instruction and edification in the Church.¹⁰

(December 1966)

[NOTE. *During the XIX centenary of the martyrdom of the apostles was also dedicated an entire successive number of "San Paolo", January 1967 containing a summary of the preceding study and a development, with three meditations on the writings of the apostle Paul. The meditations resume the same themes treated in the articles already reported*].

¹⁰ The article in *San Paolo* continues with a summary description of the individual letters and a rather extensive summary of each of them.

B. FROM TAPE-RECORDED MEDITATIONS

SAINT PAUL, OUR TEACHER AND MODEL

(From *Exercises and retreats*, August 1935)¹

This morning I would like to say to you two words about St. Paul. Let us therefore recollect ourselves around him. You are the Daughters of Saint Paul and you love much your father, don't you? Precisely because you love him, you like to listen to him to get his way of thinking, to be able to imitate his surpassing virtue.

I. SAINT PAUL IS A GREAT TEACHER IN DOCTRINE

Because not only has he explained some dogma, but has commented on them, explained them and, so to say, expanded on them in such a way that some, though exaggerating, proclaimed that the Christianity of St. Paul was deeper and more sublime than that taught by Jesus as the holy Gospels report it. But of course that is a mistake, since no disciple is greater than his Master and St. Paul was simply a very faithful follower of the divine Master, a true Apostle and a good Christian.

It is true, however, that St. Paul penetrated the dogmas with such wisdom and clarity of vision that his doctrine is a very splendid explanation of the Gospel. St. Paul is therefore a great teacher of truth. Reading him, especially for the first time, comes out a little hard because his arguments are difficult. Effort therefore is needed, but every time we make a little effort, he becomes easier.

It would be nice, or rather, bad if a daughter received fourteen letters from her father and did not read any of them. What should we say? We would say that the daughter has no respect for her parents and that it is not important for her² to be educated.

¹ Cf *Alle Figlie di San Paolo*, 1934-1939, pp. 314-320, nn. 147-155.

² In the original text there is an old Italian expression.

Of his letters, St. Paul sends some to particular Churches, some to his disciples. Every letter describes for us an aspect of the figure of the Master, but that to the Romans, the total Jesus Christ.

St. John Chrysostom said that all that he knew he owed to St. Paul because his letters were his favorite nourishment.³

The Letters of St. Paul, in fact, lift us up when we feel ourselves inclining to earth, they lead us to the highest perfection and for you they have a special language. If you tell me that you find it difficult to understand them, I answer you: "Tell St. Paul: Father, explain to us!". What light must St. Paul give, and what graces before the one of making his Letters understood? All the souls that have taken pleasure in reading St. Paul became robust souls. He who reads St. Paul and familiarizes himself with him comes to acquire little by little a spirit similar to his. The reading alone of the Pauline writings obtains the grace of becoming true Paulines. You may find it hard even to read Italian, which in his Letters is somewhat abstruse. St. Paul will enlighten you and will act such that you may understand, perhaps better than elsewhere.

Let us remember that all the books of the Holy Bible were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, hence, more than intelligence, grace operates in them. It happens like in the holy Eucharist: during holy Communion, there go the elderly man as well as a child of seven years, the poor countryside parish priest as well as the bishop and the Pope.

And do we believe perhaps that the first graces are those of healings? The main graces are those that are about heavenly gifts: therefore, read and read again and if you do not understand, it does not matter.

When, during Sunday, you sing the psalms, do you understand them? "No". And for this, do you stop to sing? It's not important that you don't understand: the Lord understands!

³ Cf St. John Chrysostom, Preface to *Omelia sulla Lettera ai Romani*, PG 60, 301-302.

If one of you, today, thinking that at the end of the Exercises, to express better her sorrow for sins against the Lord, recited the penitential psalms without understanding even a word of it, she would accomplish a very beautiful thing and would receive pardon.

If we do not understand Paul's Letters, let us read them just the same. How many men in other countries consider it an honor to sing in the choir and don't know a word in Latin! (To compensate for such lack now we are preparing the Italian-Latin *Missal*.)

Don't be afraid if you do not understand! The baby does not understand what its mother wants it to say, and yet it repeats the words with her. Did it understand something perhaps when they brought him to the baptismal font? And yet the sacrament produced its fruits!

You see? The prayers that we ourselves improvise not always are so perfect, because we are made on purpose to damage even the holiest things, but what the Church does is always excellent, always! Therefore, read.

"And when we shall have read without understanding anything?" I have told you already: it does not matter. St. Paul has understood, the Lord too, and the Church.

Does a sick man perhaps understand what the doctor prescribes for him on the prescription slip? Eh, no, most of the time! People say: "This is the doctor's handwriting! The doctor's handwriting!"

But St. Paul says: "*Attende tibi*", that is, "Pay close attention to yourself"⁴ and elsewhere: "Jesus died for sinners",⁵ or: "Compete in good works, live in peace".⁶ And who does not understand these things?

So during the Visit, often during the year, let the Letters of St. Paul be read.

⁴ 1Tim 4:16.

⁵ Cf Rom 5:8.

⁶ Cf Rom 12:17-18.

II. SAINT PAUL IS OUR MODEL IN EVERY VIRTUE

In him we find every sort of virtue: individual virtues, social apostolic virtues, the virtues that perfect man in himself and those that are expedient for him in his relations with other men. Not by chance has the Lord given you St. Paul as a model!

St. Paul was a model of faith. When on the road to Damascus, as soon as he fell from his horse and heard the voice of the Master that said to him: "I am that Jesus who you persecute",⁷ he never again doubted the truth of the Christian religion and brought his faith to the last confines of the earth. He announced it to the shepherds, to the mountain dwellers, to the civilized peoples of the time: to the Galatians, the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians and his voice was heard in Athens, in Rome, in Jerusalem and in the entire Orient.

His doctrine was so clear, his faith so vigorous that he conquered and persuaded at the same time, so that St. John Chrysostom rightly exclaimed that he carried all peoples in his heart, and that it's people that were lacking for him rather than he was lacking for people.

St. Paul therefore had an immovable faith, a sure hope, an ardent charity: "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?"⁸

Courageous and happy, he went to meet the sword and death, and the sword and death did him good service because they united him more closely to Jesus Christ.

St. Paul was poor. In fact, in abundance he knew how to live frugally and in penury he rejoiced.⁹ Enclosed in a humid prison and with his health poor, the food and clothing wanting, he exclaimed: "I treat my body severely and I force it into subjection, so that after having preached to others I may not be rejected myself",¹⁰ almost as if the mortification he practiced in certain periods of his life that was more or less a continuous holocaust was not enough for him.

⁷ Acts 9:5.

⁸ Cf Rom 8:35.

⁹ Cf Phil 4:12.

¹⁰ 1Cor 9:27.

He was a model of chastity: “I would like all of you to be like me”,¹¹ he said talking to the virgins and the Holy Spirit made him say this, like the same Spirit that puts on the lips of the priest the words of the consecration that for an unbeliever would appear temerary: “Hoc est corpus meum”.¹²

St. Paul was a model of obedience. God led him through very difficult circumstances and he never refused obedience, not even when it was a matter of going to Jerusalem where he knew a very furious persecution was waiting for him. And in fact he was arrested, bound and beaten, but such was the will of God and he did it willingly.

Once he comes out with an outburst and says that he feels alone,¹³ but it is a loving and resigned outburst similar to the one of Jesus on the cross when he exclaims: “My Father, why have you abandoned me?”¹⁴

St. Paul sums up in himself all the virtues of an apostle, and firstly zeal and prudence.

Zeal: “Who is weak and I do not feel that pain? Who is scandalized and I am not indignant?”¹⁵

Prudence: In certain occasions St. Paul reveals himself to us as one with a truly acute intelligence, a man holily clever,¹⁶ of a cleverness so intense that we would almost condemn it as human prudence. But it is quite different. He loved the Lord and he loved him in a practical way and he knew how to make use of, when necessary, of all the licit means that God put at his disposition.

St. Paul was a master of prayer. He was man of prayer. The spirit of prayer was the one that upheld him in the midst of so many sufferings and temptations. The man who prays is strong.

¹¹ Cf 1Cor 7:7.

¹² Mt 26:26: “This is my body”.

¹³ Cf 2Tim 4:16.

¹⁴ Cf Mt 27:46.

¹⁵ Cf 2Cor 11:29.

¹⁶ Cf Acts 17:23; 23:6-9.

The Lord himself, indicating the convert Saul to Ananias, said: "Ecce enim orat: You will find him praying".¹⁷

The piety of St. Paul was a eucharistic piety. With what fervor he recommends the Sacrifice to the priests and holy Communion to the faithful.¹⁸ Like an evangelist, with the faith and precision of an eyewitness to the sublime scene of love, during the last Supper! And of the Madonna he says little, but he says the best:¹⁹ he talks about her divinely.

III. LET US BE DEVOTED TO SAINT PAUL

And we, do we imitate our Father in prayer? Are we devoted to St. Paul? It would be strange if a daughter never spoke to her father!

During the year, let us celebrate with love his feasts and call to mind that of fifty-two Sundays at least forty have in the holy Mass the Epistles of St. Paul. Let us spend well the month of June in his honor; in the houses wherein you have the chapel let there be special functions, let his Letters be read often, let his life be read. The life of the Madonna, of St. Paul, of St. Joseph, and then? And then you start anew and if there is time left you may read others, but ahead of all and first of all let these be the three most venerable names.

Furthermore, in honor of St. Paul, begin and end every action with the recital of the ejaculation: *O holy Apostle Paul, pray for us.*

Let the picture of the Father be prevalent everywhere: in the sleeping quarters, in the study rooms, in the apostolate halls, in the corridors, in the refectories, in the bookstores. At morning time, as soon as awake, let us invoke him, and thus in the evening and during the day, especially in times of difficulty.

He will give you his spirit of fortitude: you are the weak sex, but it does not matter because you have a Father that is strong.

¹⁷ Acts 9:11.

¹⁸ Cf 1Cor 10:16-17; 11:23-29.

¹⁹ Cf Gal 4:4.

Of how many virgins does the Church not talk about, of holy virgins who lived in monasteries and who were models of fortitude! Many of these holy souls fed on the Letters of St. Paul.

May the Apostle form you with an enlightened and working piety. One who makes himself his devotee cannot fail to be good because he does not accord with the capricious, the tepid, with those who are too sensitive. Under his protection even these will rouse themselves and will have his graces and helps.

Let us be convinced that St. Paul is a very loving father. What affection he did not nourish for his first disciples: St. Titus, St. Timothy, St. Thecla, St. Luke and Philemon! How many saints did not flower around him! They flowered then, they will flower to him even now.

Very well, may the Lord bless you through the intercession of the apostle Paul. May it please him to make it happen so that when you return to your offices, you may enrich yourselves day after day with innumerable merits, like the hard-working gleaners who at the end of their day have very lovely sheaves.

May the Lord grant that you become ever more enlightened, wise, strong; to make you walk continually on the four wheels,²⁰ on the train that runs fast toward its destination.

May Jesus bless your family, keep it on the right way, on the path traced by your father St. Paul and for this give you the grace to obey individually and as a group, that is, as the whole Congregation, because to reach successfully the port, the ship needs not only the good attitude of each navigator, but equally the good motors that make it ease out and float.

Walk according to the spirit of the Congregation, forward always, always constant and may the Lord lay his holy hands on the head of you all and each one, so that you all and each may realize the desires of the divine Master Jesus Christ.

²⁰ The four wheels of the Pauline cart are: piety, study, apostolate, poverty (cf AD 100, 163).

IN ADORATION WITH SAINT PAUL

*(To the Pious Disciples,
Rome, feast of St. Scholastica, 10 February 1947)*

The plans of God regarding the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master were very clear during that year in which, on the feast of St. Scholastica, began your special mission. The various happenings have been for the greater glory of God and for your greater sanctification.

Resolution for today: to be, ever more each day, Pious Disciples, conformed to Mary; the close companions of Jesus Host; active members of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church, for the whole of life and for eternity.

Our life does not end with death. *"Life is changed, not ended"*: with death our life is not destroyed, but is changed. As long as the body is sound, it can host the soul. When instead it is not anymore fit to contain it, the soul is accepted by God, in Heaven. When the house of this earthly dwelling becomes demolished, the soul is accepted into eternity.

What do people do in Paradise? They continue to do what they have started on earth: the same mission, the same occupations. In Paradise, one will possess the degree of sanctity reached during life. As one dies, so he remains forever.

Start quick to gain merits! Some, instead of gathering the fruits, only stop to smell the flowers. There are demons that tempt the Sisters for this: to let them smell the flowers. I am pleased that you adorn the church, the altar with flowers that symbolize your virtues, your holy desires. Holy desires are meritorious. For example, if going to bed you have this desire: I would like that this night all the holy souls of Purgatory leave their pains, to rest in Paradise; such a holy desire is meritorious. When you consent to a bad desire, that is sin.

There are persons who lose their life smelling flowers. They live of desires. In spring, you admire the cherry tree laden with flowers, but then you wait for the fruits to follow the flowers. So also for us, as much as we can, let us make the fruits follow our desires.

Don't look for too many changes, too many methods. Don't yearn a little one thing, a little another, but fruits, so many fruits! As much as it is possible for us. Our life must be fruitful. On our deathbed the soul collects what it has sown, and in eternity it remains with that degree of grace, of merit and of sanctity with which it will find itself on the last moment. Its glory will be in proportion to this.

In Paradise apostolate will not be changed. The soul chooses it here on earth and that choice is not only for this life, but for eternity.

What does St. Therese do in Paradise? She prays for the Missionaries. What does St. Louis do? He obtains for the youth the grace of chastity so well practiced by him in life. What do the Popes do? They pray for the Church.

In Paradise you will pray for the apostolate of the press, the radio, the cinema.

In Paradise you will pray for the honor of the Eucharistic Jesus, for Priests, for the Sisters. You will pray to the Divine Master, so that his desire may be realized: "*Venite ad me omnes*";¹ so that all may recognize him, follow him, love him.

The Pious Disciples in Paradise will do what they must do starting from this earth: contemplation of God, vision of the eucharistic mystery, of the Most Holy Trinity.

In the Eucharist is concentrated every mystery: the Most Holy Trinity. But it rests in the eucharistic heart of Jesus the Divine Master. We do not see, but "*præstet fides supplementum, sensuum defectui*".² In Paradise our eyes will be fixed on God: we shall see him as he is, not only in a vision as St. Margaret M. Alacoque³ had, but all the Trinity, all of Heaven, in Jesus Christ the Master. All the Church gathers and is the mystical Body of Christ.

¹ "Come to me, all of you" (Mt 11:28). Recall that this phrase, engraved on the tabernacle of the chapel of Adoration in the dome of Alba, struck the young Alberione and determined his specific vocation.

² "Let faith supply the insufficiency of the senses": from the eucharistic hymn "*Pange lingua*" by St. Thomas Aquinas.

³ To whom the Sacred Heart of Jesus appeared.

Our life in Heaven will be a life of imitation of the Divine Master.

Have you followed Jesus on earth? Well, in Heaven you will be the chosen host of souls that “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” [Rev 14:4].

Mary Most Holy has always followed Jesus: at Nazareth, during his public life, on Calvary, at the tomb, till the day she saw him ascend to the Father. Then she followed him to Heaven.

In Paradise, you will be united to the Master Jesus in disseminating the truth, in making known the Father: “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ” [Jn 17:3]. You will unite yourselves to the Divine Master to obtain the salvation of mankind. He wants that all men be saved.

What you have to do now on earth: find in the Eucharist all your delight, your sweetness, your joy. You will do it and you will have it even in Heaven. Up there your joy will not only be virginal, it will also be beatifying; an immense joy, different from what you can taste here. Jesus will reveal himself as in a monstrance great as Heaven, and you will be there to adore him, love him, and sing his praises. Gather together up there, there may be all the souls of your Family around the great monstrance, with Mary Most Holy, the first Pious Disciple, the blessed Virgin: She will intone the *Magnificat*, the eternal canticle, which you will all echo in never-ending and blessed youthfulness.

Sometimes you see beautiful rays⁴ that sculptured Angels in adoration carry around the Holy Host. Do you want to take their place? Your place, your joy, your vocation: around the Eucharistic Jesus on earth and in Heaven. Choosing your vocation in life means choosing it for eternity.

Now, some suggestion for the Adoration.

During the few days that I have passed on the plane,⁵ I had to make my Visit on flight, spending the Hour in the

⁴ Ostensories for the exposition of the Host.

⁵ When Fr. Alberione talked in this way, he had already done by plane his first trip to the two Americas (December 1945 - April 1946).

spiritual presence of the Eucharist and the Most Holy Trinity. I therefore put St. Paul in the presence of Jesus-Sacrament and I committed him to present all of you and myself in adoration before the Divine Master.

Oh, St. Paul, how he had a heart full of Jesus! Jesus gave him some loving preferences not granted to others. He himself explained to him the Gospel, since St. Paul did not find himself in the company of the other Apostles, and St. Paul allowed himself to be taught and he corresponded.

When during Adoration you feel yourselves weary, put St. Paul before Jesus to adore, to supplicate, and especially to obtain holy Priests, holy religious; so that vocations to the Pious Disciples may multiply [...].

On my part I ask Jesus so he may apply to you the blood that flowed from his right and left hand; the slap on his face; the crowning with thorns; and the wounds on his feet, so that every time at the end of the two-hour Visit, a group of souls may enter Paradise: this consoles the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

On Wednesday put yourselves in adoration with St. Joseph. One of the most beautiful statues of St. Joseph that I have seen is that one placed in our Nativity Scene in Rome. St. Joseph is kneeling down in front of the Child, he looks at him, contemplates, is rapt in love. That is adoration. After the Madonna, St. Joseph was the first adorer and is a model of adorers.

Accompany in your Adoration the guardian Angels, all the Angels of Paradise... Put yourselves in the midst of these Angels, look for your place and in order to find it, recite many acts of sorrow because to stay with the angels you need a very pure heart.

The Angels will help to disseminate on earth the doctrine of Jesus. More than a billion men do not know the Lord. The Angels will help you in your ministry also of prayer, adoration and devotion.

Put yourselves especially in adoration with Mary Most Holy! What beautiful prayers and acts of adoration were hers, both on earth and now in Heaven! Unite yourselves to Mary Most Holy and with her, through her, in her adore,

thank, pray, make satisfaction. Say this to Mary Most Holy: "I put your intentions, I pray with you, in you. I let my prayer pass through your most pure hands".

When you pray in this way, you repair the sins of press publications, of the radio, of cinema, the offenses and coldness of persons consecrated to God, the sins of governing people and teachers.

Ask the Divine Master to draw all men to his school of truth, goodness and grace.

SAINT PAUL, MODEL IN THE PRACTICE OF THE COMMANDMENTS

(Meditation given in Rome, 2 June 1956)

Saint Paul the apostle stands before us as the great *doctor of the gentiles*, as the one who in the most effective way has adapted to the times the word of Jesus, the Gospel.

He stands before us as the *model* of every virtue. In imitating the Divine Master, first he acted and then taught others. Thus, he drew to himself so many souls and following him there is a train of saints and apostolic souls. Saint Paul stands before us as the *protector*, that is, as the provider of what concerns our particular life. He is the one who speaks about us before the heavenly Father, who speaks about us before the most holy Virgin in heaven. He is the protector of the whole Institute, so that it may keep itself in the truth and every person advance in sanctity, in the wisdom of the Gospel and in the true spirit of poverty.

This morning, however, let us consider saint Paul as our model in the practice of the commandments. The observance of religious life as also of priestly life, is a consequence of the observance of the commandments. From the observance of the commandments one easily passes to the religious and priestly virtues.

If we observe well the first commandment, that is, if our piety is right, we easily move on to religious and priestly piety. But if there exists no right piety and no great love for

prayer when you are young, you will never pray well because youth is the foundation of manhood and old age. If a candlestick is not firm at the base, it will fall together with the candle that it holds. When you have not acquired the habit, there is no resistance, there is no character...

When a young man is respectful of the name of God, is faithful to the promises and resolutions that he does, is accurate in his confessions... with ease he will observe the vows as it is prescribed by the second commandment.

When a young man truly sanctifies the day of the Lord and does not only wait for Sunday to rest and entertain himself, but to have more time to pray and to exercise himself in piety, then if he will become a priest he will think that Sunday is the day of the Lord in which it is necessary to let the word of God be heard more strongly and he will prepare himself for this.

If a young man is accustomed to obey in his family and to live in peace with his siblings, he will know how to obey in the Institute in higher matters, in those that concern religious and priestly life. But from him who does not observe the fourth commandment, don't expect him to improvise the vow of obedience: he will orally profess it but the substance and the habit will not be there.

When one as a child observes well the fifth commandment, he will have thereafter charity towards all, will be good to his companions; his thoughts, sentiments, words and actions will be charitable, he will love common life and social life in common.

It is what is built during youth that remains: "Accustom the young according to the way to be followed, and not even as old people will they depart from it" (Prov 22:6).

One who observes the sixth commandment during his youth and overcomes strong trials preserving his purity, will always remain pure in his thoughts, sentiments, words and conduct. He will fear the spectacles that can obscure the candor of his soul, he will foster love for the withdrawn life and will observe the vow of chastity.

Equally may be said of the seventh commandment. It is necessary to respect the things of others, respect what belongs to the Institute, not to waste anything, to have respect and delicateness for all that belongs to others starting from a young age. Then the vow of poverty will be easy.

One who is sincere as a young man will always be sincere, in the home or outside the home and all will esteem him for his rectitude and frankness: “it is so, it is so”, “it is not so, it is not so”; but if there is no habit of sincerity, if there are hypocrisies and lies, the construction of life does not have a good foundation and it will not come to produce its fruits that are the trust and esteem of men.

So also may be said of the last two commandments. When there is no holiness in inner thoughts and sentiments, when one does not dominate pride, anger, envy, disordinate affections, it is not possible to arrive at religious life and observe it well. In fact, only when the rich young man gave assurance that he had observed the commandments since was young did Jesus say to him: “If you want to be perfect...”. The observance of the commandments is absolutely necessary, and one cannot progress in his vocation and in what is good if there is not this foundation.

Saul had erred regarding his idea about Jesus Christ. Giving credit to what they generally say, he had not seen Jesus and had not seen his miracles, but he had great rectitude of heart, a scrupulous observance of the law, “more zealously” he says “than my contemporaries”. Saul defended the law. Hence, his prior persecution against the Christians, but in good faith, only because of zeal for the law. When, however, he was enlightened by Jesus Christ, the zeal that before he had had against the Gospel and the Christians, he changed into zeal toward the Church of Jesus Christ. And who spent himself more than he? Who worked more abundantly than he?

Saul loved the prayer recommended by the law, so we understand well why Jesus says to Ananias: “...for he is praying”. Soon after his conversion on the road to Damascus, Saul prayed, but he prayed even more in the desert in the years of

his preparation for his ministry. And in that spirit of humility that he practiced all his life, in that love for Jesus that that made him say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom 8:35), in that zeal for God and for souls that made him exclaim: "Woe to me if I do not evangelize" (1Cor 9:16), and in that total dedication that made him bear stonings, persecutions, scourgings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, there is the fervor and zeal of youth.

Saint Paul practiced *poverty* in a total manner. Notwithstanding that he belonged to a well-to-do family, he gained his bread working: "I worked with my own hands" (At 20:34).

And the *obedience* that before he gave to the law and to the Jewish priests, he gave afterward to Peter and the Church.

In Rome there are places sanctified by the zeal of the Apostle, by his preaching, by his imprisonment: the Mamertine Prison, the place of his torture and the place of his martyrdom. These places make us reflect. Since St. Paul was accustomed to observe the commandments that are of the natural law, he was then docile to the will of God and to zeal for the Christian law.

Youth is the foundation of all our life. He will be a good religious who as a youth will have loved work, delicateness of conscience, study, apostolate, poverty or, better, the observance of the seventh commandment. It is necessary to lay the foundations of life. And he who does not lay as the foundation of life the observance of the commandments later on will find himself in hardship. It is very difficult to remedy when one has reached manhood. When one continues to house his vices, he ends up going to sleep in the tomb with the same vices: "Their bodies... will lie down in the dust with them" (Job 20:11), and so there will be transgressions of the vow and of the commandment, transgressions of religious and Christian life, even of simply human life.

Let us think for a moment about what the Gospel says regarding the rich young man. A young man presented himself to Jesus and asked: "*What must I do to save myself?*". Jesus answered: "*Observe the commandments*". The young man

answered that he had always observed them. Only then did Jesus give him the counsel for greater perfection.

Now, an examination of conscience: do we observe the commandment about piety? Do we respect the name of God and keep our promises? Do we really sanctify the feast and consider it as the day of the Lord that must be sanctified more than the others? Are we obedient? Do we love our brothers and companions? Are we delicate in regard to the sixth commandment? Do we care for and respect the property of others, especially that which is being used in the house? Are we sincere? Do we care for inner sanctity, regarding thoughts and desires that are mentioned in the ninth and tenth commandment? Is inner sanctity more important than the outer one, because what cannot be done externally cannot even be desired internally? Is there observance of the commandments? Do we lay a good foundation for life to assure our salvation?

Now let us recite the chaplet to St. Paul so that we can put into practice the commandments with fidelity, as St. Paul has done and thus arrive at a well-lived religious life, apostolate, and to a great sanctity.

SAINT PAUL'S PREPARATION FOR HIS GREAT MINISTRY

Grow in humility and in love¹

The month dedicated to Saint Paul is the month of June and it ends with the Solemnity that for us is a feast of first class. On the other hand, it is a feast of first class even for the whole world.²

¹ Meditation tape-recorded by the Apostoline Sisters at the SAIE in Turin, where they have lived in the years 1959-1963. It is addressed almost certainly to the members of the Pauline Family gathered in the Chapel of the SAIE, in Corso Regina Margherita, n. 2.

² Until the liturgical reform of Vatican II, on the 30th of June takes place the Commemoration of Saint Paul the Apostle, kept as a Solemnity in the Liturgy proper of the Pauline Family.

Let us make a small consideration about the preparation of Saint Paul for his great apostolate, for his great ministry. The Lord has prepared him with wisdom and love. The Lord has caused him to be born in a pagan country. On the other hand, he had his own religion: the Hebrew, Mosaic religion. He was a Roman citizen because he was born in Tarsus, and he had the chance not only to study the Hebrew language but also the Greek one and then the Latin language, because in that city there was Greek education and the city was mainly inhabited by pagans, even by Romans who were found in that region.

The Lord allowed Paul to make even some mistakes in his youth, believing that the only true religion was – as in fact it was – the Hebrew religion then. He felt the need to fight those who did not follow it and instead followed Jesus Christ: since he had had no instruction, had not heard about or seen the Savior Jesus as was the case with the other apostles – and therefore his zeal for the Mosaic religion –, believing that Jesus was an impostor who wanted to make himself God when he was not..., so according to his convictions, here he is persecuting the Christians. But the Lord called him back, gave him a great light on the way to Damascus. And what did Jesus say about him? He said to Ananias: “He is a vessel of election, a chosen vessel, so that he may bring my name before kings and before the world, and I shall show him how much he will have to suffer for my name” (cf Acts 9:15-16).

Oh! The Lord allowed that Saint Paul should have a miserable body subject to ailments, such that he had need, often had need, of a physician. The Lord allowed some mistakes to keep him humble. The Lord, however, gave him a spirit that was ardent, generous, ready to follow the truth when he saw it, knew it and was persuaded of it. And how afterward he became an ardent apostle: so as from persecutor [he became] the apostle that has accomplished more than all, whether in his work, in his preaching, or in his sufferings. How many sufferings he met in his life!

If we looked at our past life, we find two things: first, some humiliations: errors, sins, defects, miseries; and we see on the other hand so many mercies of God. In creating us, the Lord has given us many gifts. In Baptism he has poured upon us many graces. We have been educated in a good Christian family. In the parish and in the church we have received religious teachings. We have made our first confessions, our first communions and then, accompanied by the grace of God and by good parents and by good priests, little by little the voice of God, your vocation to a more perfect life.

As for our mistakes and sins, much humiliation. And the result is this: always walk in humility. "I have erred: I confess to almighty God, to the blessed Virgin Mary, etc...and to all the saints, because I have sinned much.... through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault".³

But then the second part, that is, trust in God: "Lord, you who have loved me so much, who have followed me and have laid your holy hand on my head notwithstanding my ingratitude and lack of response... Lord, I have understood that you love me and that you want me close to you and that you want me to be saint. Although I have many times failed to correspond to your grace, to your inspirations because of my pride, my weakness, you have continued to come close to me and to enlighten me, and to let me hear your inspirations. You have increased your grace seeing my weakness. This means that you have accompanied me as a Father, O Lord, and that you want me to be a saint". "The hand of God is upon me",⁴ everyone can say.

Two thoughts, therefore: humiliation because of our lack of correspondence and trust in the grace of God. Great confidence that the Lord, who has already given us so many graces, may still add grace to grace, mercy to mercy. Now, based well on humility and encouraged by the thought of

³ From the prayer *Confiteor*, quoted in Italian.

⁴ Cf Ezek 1:3. It is known that Fr. Alberione has applied this expression, occurring in the prophets, to himself and to his mission (cf UPS I, 374).

God's mercy and goodness, encouraged by the thought of the fatherly care that he has over us, let us love the Lord! Humility and love are the two coefficients of sanctity. Humility, so that we may always consider ourselves for what we are: poor sinners and weak people, and always needful of the grace of God, and that from ourselves we have had nothing, that everything came from God, and that we are always a nothing, but that God is everything. Love this Jesus who has loved us, love him, trust in Him, hope in his mercy. Humility so as to allow ourselves to be guided. Persons who don't allow themselves to be guided in the spirit and want to do their own will, according to their own convictions, continue to commit errors and mistakes. Persons on the other hand who have learned to be humble and therefore always stand before the Lord with bowed head and confident, fill their life and day with merits. If Jesus has loved us so much while we were so ungrateful toward Him, how much more will he love us now that we have good will, how more [numerous] will be his graces now that he sees that we want to love him, that we want to follow him and want to be sincerely his!

Humility, therefore, and love. Indeed! Always acts of humility and confidence: "By myself, I can do nothing, with God, I can do everything".⁵ Of myself, I only have sin, but from God I have innumerable graces: "Lord, you have followed me even when I fled from you, even when I was deaf to your calls. But now I surrender and want to regain the time lost and to love you much more than I have loved you less in the past. And I also want to draw souls to you – care for vocations – so that many will love you, serve you, engage in the apostolate".

In this Mass let us ask well for the two graces: humility and love. And to make practically the conclusion: "I trust not

⁵ Cf Act of humility, in *The Prayers of the Pauline Family*. Cf also GIACOMO ALBERIONE, *Preghiere*, Prayers composed by the Founder of the Pauline Family, Opera Omnia, Ed. San Paolo, 2007, p. 54.

in myself". That saint said: "Lord, I'm afraid of myself, because I'm so weak, I have so many temptations, I still am proud and arrogant. Lord, I trust not anymore in myself... and you, too, Lord, don't trust in me; guide me, don't trust in me because I'm only capable of making mistakes and sins, but with you I can do all". Yes! Guided by God, abandoned in God, docile to spiritual direction, day by day we shall enrich ourselves with merits.

Today, this evening, more rich in merits. Therefore, it is worth living! Because there are those who live even a long life and load themselves with debts before God, and there are those who sometimes don't have a very long life but arrive at the end with many merits! Look at Saint Therese who dies at age twenty-four,⁶ Saint Louis who dies at twenty-four,⁷ Saint Agnes who dies at fourteen.⁸ They are great saints. And there are persons who, multiplying their days of life, multiply also their acts of ingratitude, indifference, irresponsibility. So, what is the worth of living if not to accumulate some debts with God? A short or long life, it does not matter. What counts is to spend well the days that the Lord gives us, because those days that we don't have – because it can happen that one dies young – of those days that will not be lived, we don't have to answer to God for them. Instead, we have to answer for what has been given to us.

What a great wisdom is this, if we live in humility and love! So, then, a holy life, full of merits.

Praised be Jesus Christ.

⁶ Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897), known also as Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, entered very young in Carmel where she lived few but intense years of spiritual journey.

⁷ Louis Gonzaga (1568-1591), a Jesuit, lived in a heroic way an existence dedicated to prayer and to works of charity. He died taking care of the sick with the plague. He was proclaimed patron of the youth in 1729.

⁸ Saint Agnes, according to tradition, was martyred in Rome around 304/305 at the age of 12-13 years. She was considered the protectress and model of girls belonging to Catholic Action.

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL

*(To the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd,
Albano Laziale, 23 January 1961)*

The only feast of a conversion that is celebrated in the Church is the one that we shall celebrate on Wednesday, that is, the conversion of St. Paul, because it has been a very great conversion. It has been a conversion that has brought a very great good to the Church. And it has been a conversion that was all-embracing from the depth of the soul.

Conversion means: to leave a road that is not good to take one that is good. Even sometimes, when we leave in order to go to some place, we take the wrong way and at a certain point perhaps we notice it, and so we turn back. We return in order to find the right way. That's it.

So also in life: at times we mistake the way. So at a certain point when we notice it by the grace of God, there you are: the desire to put ourselves again on the way that is pleasing to the Lord, which is the way of perfection, of sanctity, of apostolate.

There are difficulties for a conversion. The first is to admit that we are not on the right road. If we, while we make the examination of conscience, we find that our conduct is not so good, if we find that we still live in indifference, if we find that we lack fervor, etc.: admit it.

Persons who know each other and recognize each other. Some know by themselves their defects. Other persons, on the contrary, do not know them, but if they are notified these persons recognize them, that is, they admit their error. They admit their error, and therefore the act of humility attracts grace. To the humble the Lord always gives his grace.

The proud neither know nor admit. They do not know themselves because they do little examination of conscience and they do not recognize their errors when others employ the charity of notifying them. They excuse themselves, they defend themselves. Hence, no conversion because they don't

even depart. Departure is always to know ourselves or to admit, in order to arrive at true conversion.

Second: let us suppose that there is grace and humility or knowledge and admission of our errors. So, secondly, what is required? Required is good will: "I search for God, I want to reach sanctity. I recognize that this state is not pleasing to the Lord, that, instead, the Lord is expecting much more from me".

Recognize ourselves or know ourselves.

Look a little at your study, how it goes. Look at your conduct. Look a little at the proceeding and observance of your religious life, how are they. Check a little your spirit of faith or charity or humility or obedience. That's it.

So, if there is good will, you immediately have recourse to prayer and confession: you condemn your past life and you want to regain the time you lost. Good will!

St. Paul had taken a wrong path, but he thought it was right and believed that he was doing his duty. But the Lord stopped him: "Why are you persecuting me?" [Acts 9:4]. And so he opened his eyes – not the eyes of the body because he was dazzled by the light, he became blind – but opened his spirit to the light. He understood: "Who are you, Lord?" [Acts 9:5]. I am Jesus who you persecute [cf Acts 9:5]. It's hard for you to resist grace. And so he immediately surrendered: "What do you want me to do?" And the Lord commanded him to go to Damascus and there he would have found one who would have spoken to him in the name of God. Now, he showed immediately his good will: "What must I do?"

On the contrary, there are persons who start to pity and excuse themselves. Hence, good will is lacking. What, therefore, must be done? Have the great gift of good will. This is a gift of God! Indeed!

"The one who gives and the will" [cf Phil 2:13]. The Lord gives the power to succeed and the will. The will is a gift of God. He gives the power and the will, that is, grace – the power – to become better, to convert ourselves, and then the will because the power depends on prayer and the will de-

pend on us. But the will itself must be aroused in us and obtained by means of prayer.

St. Paul converted himself from persecutor to great apostle. The greatest apostle as far as works are concerned, the good that he has accomplished, the churches that he has founded and the souls that he has won for Jesus Christ. A conversion therefore of the greatest utility to the Church.

Certainly, no one of us is a persecutor, but how many defects we have! And this is the point on which to pause: our defects. To see what thing there is still in us to be converted, that is, to make better.

The Church makes us repeat every day: “Lord, convert us”. It means that all of us need some conversion either from a defect or other. We need conversion!

So, on the occasion of the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, examine ourselves more deeply. But don’t be melancholy because you find some defects. No. Humble yourselves, pray, and be serious in your will!

Fighting our defects, fighting is that which makes us rich in merits. Of more worth many times – and, we can say, mainly most of the times – are internal struggles. One who has more love to struggle against himself, against his pride, etc., rather than delude himself thinking that he is already a saint, one who has more love so as to struggle, gains many more merits.

What a great merit is a victory against ourselves! Sometimes it is more than a rosary, sometimes it is certainly even more than a communion, I say. Not always, but sometimes, yes.

Overcome ourselves! Overcome ourselves.

The book that they made us always read when we were clerics was: *The spiritual combat* by Scùpoli. It’s the struggle against defects. Do away with defects to be able to put in their place the opposite virtues. One who is proud, replace with humility, and one instead who is inclined to envy, replace with charity. One inclined to laziness, replace with fervor. Let the feeble person ask the Lord for strength, which is a cardinal virtue and also a gift of the Holy Spirit.

So on this occasion, ask from Saint Paul the grace of a true conversion. “Today, I want to do better. Indeed! Yesterday perhaps I have done well or something has been missing, but today better”. Every morning: “*I begin*. Yes! And I begin and furnish myself with strength by a well-made communion, by a mass well attended, by a meditation with a good conclusion, concluded with some good resolutions”. Onward, indeed!

And your will is good in each one. Yes. However, someone mistakes good will for empty sentiment, sometimes. The empty sentiment of *I would like*.

“Some *I would like* or some *I want* of that kind – St. Teresa said – pave the floor of hell”.

Here it is: *I would like*: vague, uncertain, weak. Nobody makes himself a saint with a *I would like* or *I want* of that kind. Obstinate persons make themselves saints: *I want*. If I do not succeed now, I try again.

Like an ant that wants perhaps to go up a wall and goes up a little and then falls and starts again, resumes the effort and then perhaps falls again, and finally after many attempts arrives... It arrives, look at it... Take the example of the ant.

This morning we have made our meditation on the book of Scripture: “Go, and learn from the ant, lazy one!” [cf Prov 6:6]. Eh, *lazy one*, go and learn from the ant! Try and try again. To try and try again is always meritorious. It is always an act of love for God. And even when you do not succeed, there has already been the act of love for God and finally the Lord will give you victory. Of course! You holy, are you not? Oh, don’t joke in God’s ways!

I want! Or, as Alfieri said: “I want, I ever want, I very strongly want”. And he succeeded in overcoming his character, in overcoming himself. Thus are all the saints. Nobody is born a saint. We make ourselves saints, if we want.

I give you my blessing that in all of you good will may enter.

VI

TESTAMENTARY DIRECTIVES

PREMISE

The passages that follow are drawn from two works that we consider “testamentary” because of the great value attributed to them by the Founder himself. We mean the so-called charismatic history of the Pauline Family, “Abundantes divitiæ” (1953-1954) and “Ut perfectus sit homo Dei” (1960).

The few hints contained therein presuppose discourses already antecedently begun and developed. Their significance assumes the value of a “memorial” and a norm, to be held in the greatest consideration.

SAINT PAUL FATHER, TEACHER, MODEL, FOUNDER

[The “humiliating story” of his lack of correspondence] has produced in him¹ a profound conviction that became his fervent entreaty: everyone must regard Saint Paul the Apostle alone as father, teacher, exemplar and founder. It is so, in fact. [The Pauline Family] was born through him, it was he who nourished and raised it, its spirit is from him. (AD 2)

THE SAINT OF UNIVERSALITY

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 as indeed as the Apostle, and thus every apostle and every apostolate could draw from Him.

¹ Bear in mind that in AD the author talks of himself in third person: “he” is therefore Fr. Alberione.

The Family was consecrated to Saint Paul.² The cure of P.M.³ too is to be attributed to Saint Paul. The Pauline Family has an enormous opening onto the whole world, and in its whole apostolate: studies, apostolate, piety, activities and production. Publications for all categories of people, as well as all matters and events [are to be judged] in the light of the Gospel; its aspirations are those of the Heart of Jesus in the Mass; [all this] in the one apostolate “to make Jesus Christ known” [cf Jn 17:3], to enlighten and to support every apostolate and every good work, to take all peoples to its heart; to make the Church’s presence felt in every issue: a spirit of adaptation and understanding for all public and private needs, [for] the whole of worship, [for] law and the intermarriage of justice and charity. (AD 64-65)

IN THE SPIRIT 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.

² Two congregations of the Pauline Family have Saint Paul as their special patron, the Society of Saint Paul and the Pious Society of the Daughters of Saint Paul. Their spirituality is based on the *Letters* of Saint Paul and on the apostolic life as shown in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Even the other Institutes of the Pauline Family have of the Apostle Paul the spirit and devotion.

³ P. M. = Primo Maestro. “The Abbot Serafini Mauro O.S.B. (1859-1925) Secretary (from 1918) of the Sacred Congregation of the Religious, had suggested the term ‘Maestro’ as proper title of the Superior General of the to-be-established Pious Society of Saint Paul. In reality, in the decree of Mons. Giuseppe Francesco Re, dated 12 March 1927, we find the title ‘Primo Maestro’ of the Pious Society of Saint Paul referred to the Founder of the same. The title ‘Primo Maestro’ became afterwards familiar and took the place of ‘Signor Teologo’” (cf G. BARBERO, *Nel XIX Centenario del martirio di S. Paolo: Il Sacerdote Giacomo Alberione e gli Istituti Paolini*, in *Palestra del Clero*, 46 [1967] 246-261). Successively (28-7-1929), the Founder himself invited the members of the Pauline Family to call him by the name of “Primo Maestro”. – The “cure” alluded to here by the Founder took place in 1923.

There are not many details in [the Pauline Family], or unusual devotions, or excessive formalities. The aim is to live in Christ the Master and in the Church. 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.

A secret of greatness is to model oneself on God by living in Christ. Thus the notion of living and working in the Church and for the Church; of being wild olives grafted onto the living olive,⁴ the eucharistic Lord; of reflecting on and nourishing oneself with every word of the Gospel, in accord with the spirit of saint Paul – [is] always to be crystal-clear.

(AD 93-95)

PAUL IN ROME

...from Rome go forth *those who are sent* in all directions. This thought was fixed in his heart from the time he went to Rome to represent the diocese for the Congress of Popular Union,⁵ and he was able to stop and pray at Saint Paul's tomb.

(AD 115-116)

WORK

Redemptive work, apostolic work, tiring work. To expend in God's active service the whole of our strength, even our physical activity: is not this the way of perfection?... Is there no obligation...to comply with the duty to earn one's living? Was not this a rule that Saint Paul imposed on himself? Is it not only by *fulfilling* this social duty that the apostle can stand up to preach?

(AD 128)

⁴ Cf Rom 11:24.

⁵ This circumstance remains to be made accurate. Probably the journey took place in 1911. But we must also take into consideration the hypothesis that it happened in one of the years between 1918 and 1920, in which the P. U. held in Rome three national congresses of the Diocesan Councils.

PAUL, THE DISCIPLE WHO KNOWS THE MASTER

In his study of the various spiritualities ... it appeared more and more clear that each one has good points. But when one 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 (AD 159).

This angle contains religion, dogma, morals and worship; this perspective encompasses the whole Jesus Christ; through this devotion Jesus Christ completely embraces and conquers the human person. Piety is complete and the religious, like the priest, thus grows in wisdom (study and heavenly wisdom), age (virility⁶ and virtue), and grace (sanctity) on up to the fullness and perfect age of Jesus Christ; on up to Christification: "*Vivo ego, iam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus*".⁷ All devotions to the person of Christ, God and Man, converge in this devotion. (AD 160)

THE "WELCOME" OF SAINT PAUL

Dear Brothers, I welcome you ... in this House⁸ destined wholly to reconciliation and sanctification of our souls, for a reflection on and an updating of our ministry and apostolate.

⁶ The sense of the word is obviously "adult age", "maturity".

⁷ "It is not anymore I that live, but the Christ in me" (Gal 2:20). The textual expression is: "*Vivo autem iam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*".

⁸ It is the Casa Divin Maestro in Ariccia (Rome), where on April 1960 took place a course of Spiritual Exercises lasting a month, preached by Fr. Alberione for the Major Superiors of the Society of Saint Paul. The talks of the Founder, first published in four volumes (*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei, Albano-Ostia* 1960-62), have been republished in 1998 in a single volume *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, Series Opera Omnia, Ed. San Paolo.

Saint Paul, our Father, Teacher and Protector welcomes you. With what love he has guarded and supported us! You have glorified him, taking his teaching, devotion and name to so many countries. He was both Father and Mother for all his sons and daughters. And the Pauline Family, which is his, flourished. Truly, were you to have ten thousand teachers, one alone is your father: “*per evangelium ego vos genui*” (1Cor 4:15).⁹ (UPS I, 11)

THE SPIRIT OF THE APOSTLE

A great responsibility [of the Pauline priests]! There must be that one *spirit* which filled the heart of Saint Paul: “*cor Pauli, cor Christi*”;¹⁰ the *devotions* are the same; and the various *goals* are geared to a common and general goal which is to give the whole Christ to the world, in a way He defined himself: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” [Jn 14:6]. (UPS I, 20)

THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

The spirit of an Institute is defined as “such a characteristic and stable way of seeing, experiencing and desiring, that we reproduce it in our way of living”. It comes down, basically, to this: to live wholly the Gospel of Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life, as interpreted by Saint Paul, under the gaze of Mary, Mother, Teacher and Queen...

Jesus has sent his Apostles out with these words: “Go and make disciples of all nations” [Mt 28:19]; Saint Paul, became *Magister gentium*,¹¹ lived for this bidding and died for it. (UPS I, 52)

⁹ “Through the gospel I have generated you”.

¹⁰ “The heart of Paul was the heart of Christ”.

¹¹ “Master of gentiles”, i.e. of pagans (2Tm 1:11).

PAUL, MASTER OF POVERTY

Saint Paul writes to Saint Timothy: “As for the rich of this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God” (1Tim 6:17).

He praises the charity of Philemon towards the Christians of Colossae: “For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints (the faithful) have been refreshed through you” (Philem 7).

He writes to Saint Timothy: “There is great gain in godliness with contentment... but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many and senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs” (1Tim 6:6-10).

To the Hebrews: “You joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one” (Heb 10:34).

To the Philippians: Paul thanks them for the offerings received; then he adds: “I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want” (Phil 4:11-12).

“*Paupers est veluti murus religionis diligenda*”¹² (Saint Ignatius of Loyola).

“Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation!” [Lk 6:24]. *Woe!* Look at all the abbeys, monasteries and institutes that are set to fall or have already tumbled down. It is a warning for us.

¹² “It is necessary to love poverty as strong wall of religious life” (cf St. Ignatius, *Const.*, p. VI, cap. 2).

The rich are not only those who have a lot and delight in it. Some people have only a little but they treasure it and go out of their way to increase it in any way they can. This is effective poverty but affective wealth. (UPS I, 454-455)

MASTER OF CHASTITY

Saint Paul teaches: "The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord" [1Cor 7:32]. Moreover, "I want you to be free from anxieties. The married man is anxious about worldly affairs" [1Cor 7:32-33]. "I wish that all were as I myself am, but each one has his own special gift" [1Cor 7:7]. Thus Saint Paul has around and behind him an array of saints: Luke, Timothy, Titus, Thecla and so on. (UPS I, 490)

MASTER OF OBEDIENCE

When Paul was stopped on the road to Damascus he enquired of Jesus Christ who appeared to him: "What shall I do, Lord?" [Acts 22:10]. He is given the answer, he obeys then and always. At the end of his life he obeyed the order of his executioner, bowing his head; supreme obedience! Then the "*corona justitiae*".¹³

There is no other path to holiness and peace like this: "*fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra*".¹⁴ (UPS I, 524-525)

INTERPRETER OF THE DIVINE MASTER

St. Paul is *the foremost interpreter of the Divine Master*. Jesus taught him without recourse to intermediaries just as was the case when he was converted.

¹³ "The crown of justice" (2Tim 4:8).

¹⁴ "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10).

In the twenty or so places where Paul mentions the mystery of Christ, he speaks of the relationship between Christ and Christians as members of his mystical Body. In Paul's words we are incorporated in Christ our Head. We are part of the building which is the Church. We are grafted into him, and thanks to a successful graft we, a wild olive, become a new and fruitful olive. (UPS II, 148)

THE "CODE" OF SAINT PAUL

The Pauline has received his own code of conduct from the Apostle who is his Father and Teacher: "charity is patient – kind – is not jealous – is not arrogant – is not boastful – does not insist on its own way – is not irritable – is not resentful – does not rejoice at wrong – but rejoices in the right – it bears all things – hopes all things – excuses all things" (cf 1Cor 13).

This code holds good for all Christians too. In fact Saint Paul was addressing the faithful in Corinth.

For Religious there are other reasons for unity among members:

1. *With Superiors*. To them we owe: veneration, inasmuch as they represent God; prayers, so that they may have God's necessary help for their office; obedience, for the office entrusted to them; continual and cordial collaboration.

Saint Paul, writing to the Romans, (ch. 13), says: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid... Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For

the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due”.

(UPS III, 30-31)

VIRTUE OF THE APOSTLE: ZEAL

Saint Paul writes to the Romans: “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, who I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine...” (Rom 1:8-13).

Is not what Saint Paul writes appropriate for our spirit, activity and zeal?...

Saint Paul writes to the Philippians: “For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness, which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil 1:8-11).

He writes to the Corinthians of the sufferings that accompany his apostolate: “...in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (2Cor 11:27-30).

Two thoughts:

1) the true religious, and even more so the priest, because of their profession, must love sacrifice and suffering;

2) they must want to do the greatest spiritual and also corporal good for their neighbor.

Saint Paul writes: "I do not seek my own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved" [1Cor 10:33].

He goes on: "It is you, not your gifts, that I seek" [Phil 4:17], "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?" [2Cor 12:15]. And again to the Corinthians:¹⁵ "You yourselves know how I lived among you all the time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which befell me through the plots of the Jews" [Acts 20:18-19]. Instead to the Thessalonians, he writes: "For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God" [1Thes 2:9]. "But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" [1Thes 2:7-8]. (UPS III, 55-58)

THE BLESSING OF SAINT PAUL

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own based on law, but that

¹⁵ *A slip.* In reality, the discourse is addressed to the elders of Ephesus convoked at Miletus (cf Acts 20:17ff).

which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Phil 3:7-9).

The blessing of Saint Paul be upon us: “May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ” (2Thes 3:5).

The conclusion of this instruction is prompted by Saint Paul himself. He writes to Timothy: “As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing” (2Tim 4:5-8). (UPS III, 61-62)

POSTFACE

THE PAULINE FAMILY “SAINT PAUL LIVING TODAY”¹

Premise. The parable of the Good Samaritan in the narration of Saint Luke is preceded by the question addressed by a doctor of the Law to Jesus: “Master, what must I do to have eternal life?”. Jesus answered: “What is written in the Law? What do you read there?”. That man said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself” (Lk 10:25-30). The synthesis of God’s will is therefore: love of God and love of neighbor.

1. The integral project of blessed James Alberione

1.1. Let us take into consideration the charism of a religious Congregation: it is the inseparable unity of the love of God and love of neighbor realized through a spirituality fit for a specific apostolic commitment.

Even the charism stirred up in the ecclesial community by the Spirit through blessed James Alberione has been structured by the Founder himself on the synthesis of a spirituality for an apostolate. Even in the Pauline charism a spirituality in view of a particular apostolate: evangelization through the good press, has been chosen.

During the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Saint Paul, Fr. Alberione reminds everybody: “The Pauline Family aspires to live integrally 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*). It is necessary, therefore, “to reflect on and nourish oneself with every phrase of

¹ From the talk of Fr. Silvio Sassi at the Convention on Saint Paul on 3 January 2008, in view of the Pauline jubilee year (28 June 2008 - 29 June 2009).

the Gospel, according to the spirit of Saint Paul” (*AD* 95). The Pauline spirit is the spirit of Saint Paul that can be learned “from his life, his letters and his apostolate” (*AD* 94).

1.2. The Gospel, interpreted and lived through Saint Paul, allows an experience of the “total Christ” and “in this vision there is religion, dogma, morals and cult; in this vision there is the integral Jesus Christ; through this devotion the complete man is taken and conquered by Jesus Christ” (*AD*, 160). The Christ through Saint Paul is “integral”; because of this the experience of faith involves the whole human personality. The Alberionian “allness” in spirituality is recapitulated in the integral Christ (dogma, morals and cult) for the totality of the human personality (mind, heart and will).

As we can see, Fr. Alberione is attracted by “totality” whether in the contents of faith in Christ or in the proposal and practice of the Christians. If we go looking for the roots of this concern, we encounter a motive of *pastoral nature*: the life of faith as it is proposed and lived between the end of 1800 and the first years of 1900, when the seminarian and the young priest Alberione is being formed and is starting his ministry. A meticulous documentation could back up the simple affirmations that I’m showing concerning the ecclesial realities of those years.

Observed from an internal point of view, the elaboration of faith is often subject to a partial vision and, at times, to watertight compartments: the truths of faith thought of as a well-structured complex in its contents; the liturgy done in Latin and carried on through a rigorous ritual discipline; morals presented as norms to be observed above all in some areas of life.

Evaluated in her being a missionary, the Church is living a moment of abandon on the part of so many: “The four pious women who receive communion every morning, the four young men who gather around the parish priest every evening are not the whole town: they are not all the people. Many other sheep stay outside the sheepfold and they don’t come

to the Pastor because they don't know him, because perhaps they oppose him, and they oppose him because they don't know him. It is necessary to save all the souls. It's necessary that the Pastor go to them. Today you go these souls by means of the press" (UCBS, n. 12, 1922).²

Even if it is complicated to reconstruct it, this difficult ecclesial reality, internal and missionary, is the spring that will nourish at first the excesses of modernism and successively the convocation and the celebration of the Vatican II Council: both are occasioned by the need for a significant change in the life of faith.

In his own way Fr. Alberione is to be numbered among those who have anticipated the renewal of Vatican II, especially in thinking and proposing an integral faith; this relaunching of the faith goes hand in hand with the mission, that is, with the other innovative contribution of Fr. Alberione: evangelizing through the press.

1.3. In support of what we have said concerning Fr. Alberione's sensitivity to an "integral faith" proposed with an "adequate apostolate", we can meditate:

"We have to correct our tendency to divide Christ, to break up what He has united. For some time we have noticed this in several preachers and writers. Man is one although with three distinct faculties: when he acts, all three faculties serve to do good or bad, though with the predominance of one or the other faculty.

These are needed:

- A *Catechism* full of Gospel and Liturgy.
- A *Gospel* full of catechetical and liturgical notes.
- A *Liturgy* (for example, the Missal) full of Gospel and Catechism.

In fact, we have to bring Christ to man and give the total man to God through Jesus Christ. If we separate Dogma,

² *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa* (cf *La primavera paolina*, pp. 645-646).

Morals and Cult we shall make of man a mutilated being that will not reach salvation, since he is not inserted in the whole Christ" (*San Paolo*, November-December 1954).³

Illustrating the benefits of the liturgical reform willed by the Vatican II Council to better familiarize the people with the Bible, Fr. Alberione asserts: "This continuous de-Christianization of life, of art, of thought, etc depends on the lack of liturgical-biblical oxygen in which we for centuries have made people live. From the phenomenon of centuries that see the separation of Liturgy and Bible, come out painful consequences: the majority of people that did not understand the Mass, the Sacraments, the ceremonies... A preaching detached from the Bible was not felt as the word of God, but rather as human reasoning" (*Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 685).

1.4. To venture into something new in understanding religion as totality and proposing it in a new way through the "written preaching", Fr. Alberione relies totally on Saint Paul, taken up as model for a new spirituality and a new apostolate.

Reading the first texts (1918-1927) of the *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa* collected by the bereaved Fr. Rosario Esposito in *La primavera paolina*, we can realize how Saint Paul closely joins itself to the press apostolate.

Publishing without quoting the source a passage in the book of Fr. Giovanni Borgna, *Il Re dei tempi. Mano alla Stampa* (Asti, 1914), the figure of Saint Paul is connected to the press by a slogan attributed to Mons. Wilhelm von Ketteler (1811-1877): "The expression of Mons. Ketteler, Archbishop of Magonza: 'If Saint Paul returned to the world, he would make himself a journalist' has made the rounds of the world, and I firmly believe it... This cathedra did not exist at the time of St. Paul, but it exists now: it is the good periodical. This is the 'pulpit of humanity': the 'perpetual mission' as Leo XIII called it" (*La primavera paolina*, pp. 63-64).

³ Cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 847.

The expression constitutes a constant quote in the Pauline community of the beginnings: “And yet, if Saint Paul were alive, he too would put out a magazine!... And Saint Paul would allow us to imitate him and to do what he would do!” (*La primavera paolina*, p. 542).

“Almost a century ago Mons. Ketteler already exclaimed: ‘If Saint Paul returned to the world, he would make himself a journalist!’... The Christian civilization is today already in the hands of publications. It has as foundation the gospel, as material element the gentile nations and as Apostle of attack, of union, of grafting the Apostle Saint Paul. The Catholic journals continue his mission: Saint Paul is their protector. And he will kindly protect those who disseminate journals” (*La Primavera paolina*, p. 667).

“The apostolate of the Good Press is today the voice, the support, the soul of all the apostolates. The future of society is in its hands. It is the most effective means of preaching: a means to which Saint Paul would dedicate himself, if he returned to the world, the form of evangelization in which in a special way is concretized today the command of Jesus: Teach all nations, preach to every creature” (*La Primavera paolina*, p. 907).

1.5. In a sermon dated 3 February 1958, remembering that in that year the 19th centenary of the Letter to the Romans was being celebrated, Fr. Alberione affirms: “The letter of Saint Paul to the Romans is the first and principal specimen of the apostolate of editions, the example that should be the model of every Pauline edition... In what way must this grandiose Pauline Letter be considered the model of our editions? In the sense that upon it should be modelled all the preaching, all the editing activity, all the diffusion. But in what way? By putting on first of all Jesus Christ... If we want to communicate grace or virtue to souls, we need to possess them because no one can give what he does not have. External activity, good words, or what is taken from others, will be able to help in some way, but it is not the substance... Saint Paul, moreover, interprets, explains and adapts the

principles of the Gospel to the men of his time, especially the pagans. We, too, following his example, must always have in mind the audience that we address, as the readers, the moviegoers, so as to give them what can most do them good.

Saint Paul is our Father. From him we must take the spirit, the mentality, the love for Jesus Christ and for souls... Imitate this our Father in his zeal. St. Paul had in his heart all peoples: he affirmed that his heart opened to contain all peoples; in his intentions, in his prayers and in his desires all were present” (*Spiritualità paolina*, pp. 88-94).

Fr. Alberione points out the fundamental elements in the evangelization of Saint Paul: strong experience of God and selective attention to the universality of his receivers, to whom the Apostle turns taking into account their particularity.

1.6. During the fortieth year of the birth of the Society of Saint in 1954, recalling the years of the foundation, Fr. Alberione writes: “Saint Paul the 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 is the true Founder of the Institution. In fact, he is its Father, Teacher, exemplar, protector. He himself has made this family through an intervention so physical and spiritual that not even now, reflecting about it, can we understand it and even less explain it... It did not happen as when we elect a protector for a person or an institution. It is not that we have elected him; instead, it is Saint Paul who has elected us. The Pauline Family must be Saint Paul living today, according to the mind of the Divine Master, working under the gaze and with the grace of Mary Queen of the Apostles” (*San Paolo*, July-August 1954; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, pp. 145 and 147).

1.7. In *San Paolo* of October 1954, Fr. Alberione indicates with force the ideal of being Saint Paul today: “‘O God, you have enlightened the nations through the word of the Apostle Paul...’. This corresponds to the second goal of the

Pauline Family: preaching of the dogmatic, moral and liturgical doctrine of Jesus Christ and of the Church through the fastest and most effective modern means.

She resolves to represent and live St. Paul today, thinking, working with zeal, praying and sanctifying herself as Saint Paul would do if he lived today. He lived the two precepts of love for God and neighbor in a so perfect way as to show Christ himself in his person: 'Christ lives in me' (Gal 2:20).

He himself has made the Society of Saint Paul of which he is the Founder. The Society of Saint Paul did not elect him, he elected us, or rather, he generated us: 'It is I that has generated you in Christ Jesus through the gospel' (1Cor 4:15).

If Saint Paul were living, he would continue to burn with that twofold flame, of the same fire, of zeal for God and for his Christ, and for all men of every country. And to make himself heard, he would ascend the highest pulpits and multiply his word through the instruments of progress: press, cinema, radio and television... Let the Pauline Family, made up of many members, be Paul living in a social body" (*Carissimi in San Paolo*, pp. 1151-1152; cf *Anima e corpo per il Vangelo*, pp. 61-63).

1.8. During the month of Spiritual Exercises of 1960, Fr. Alberione affirms: "The Pauline Family has now become complete" (*Ut perfectus sit homo Dei*, I, 19). Then he enumerates the Congregations, the aggregated Institutes and the Pauline Cooperators giving a rapid description of them and concludes: "One must be the *spirit*, the one contained in the heart of St. Paul, 'the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ'; the *devotions* are the same, and the various *ends* converge in a common and general goal: give Jesus Christ to the world, in a total manner as He has defined himself: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'" (*Ibid.*, I, 20).

Taking up again his reflection on the Pauline Family, he defines it as the "Pauline parish" and explains: "These Institutes are united 1) Through their common origin 2) Through their general goal 3) Through the same Pauline spirit, even in the diversity of their works 4) Through their converging, co-

operative, dynamic activity nourished by a single lymph” (*Ibid.*, I, 381).

Gathering the thread of these reflections, we can synthesize:

- Saint Paul fascinates Fr. Alberione by how the Apostle combines mysticism and apostolate.
- Fr. Alberione finds in Saint Paul the religious experience of the totality of Christ (Way, Truth, Life) and the integrality of the person (mind, heart, will) at the service of preaching to the far away.
- The successive foundations are all characterized by the explicit objective of “being Saint Paul living today” in a social body. The development of the various foundations is an original way of making Saint Paul live again today.

2. “To be Saint Paul living today”: the commitment of the Pauline Family

2.1. After our rapid recall of the project of blessed James Alberione, we hint at the need for “*creative fidelity*” on the part of the entire Pauline Family in order “to be Saint Paul living today”.

The *point of departure* is the invitation of Christ also for us: “Come to me, all of you” (Mt 11:28). In fact, if as persons and as Institutions, we do not have the pastoral sensitivity that Fr. Alberione defines as “the art of giving God to men and of giving men to God in Jesus Christ” (*Vademecum*, n. 1205), our faith is solitary.

In this context – I’m addressing the members of the Institute Jesus Priest – it can be useful to recall what the young Fr. Alberione writes for diocesan priests: “One who reduced his priestly life to the mass and breviary, or wrote on his flag and took as his motto only the words *I-God*, would not be a priest. Better suitable for him would be the cloister wherein he could sanctify himself and perhaps with prayer sanctify

others, but not the life of the secular priest. For this latter it is not enough to pray, to mortify himself, to live withdrawn, to avoid sin as an individual. From him the Lord has the right to ask for some souls... For the Priest an individual sanctity is not enough, one must work in the vineyard of the Lord. Let him therefore have this motto: *I-God-Souls-People*" (*Woman associated with priestly zeal*, n. 16).

Starting from Vatican II, the "missionary" dimension of the faith has been expanded in a more explicit way and pronounced distinctly for every baptized person and therefore, for us, also for all the members of the Pauline Family.

If wanting or reduced to the minimum is our desire to share what we have encountered in the experience of faith, it is difficult to define ourselves as baptized and Pauline. The pastoral Orientations of the Italian Episcopate for the first decade of 2000, *Communicate the gospel in a changing world*, are formulated upon the definition of "A Church of disciples and missionaries". The final Document of the V General Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate and of the Caribbean (May 2007) develops starting from the ecclesiological vision of "missionary disciples".

The providential opportunity of the Pauline jubilee year can relaunch in the Church the "missionary" dimension of the faith because without this characteristic, all the life and the entire teaching of Saint Paul would be incomprehensible.

2.2. Giving attention to the papal teachings and to the descriptions of the Christian sociologists of his time, Fr. Alberione does not remain indifferent in the face of the flight of the multitudes from the Church. His awareness of this mass phenomena does not lead him to pessimistic considerations about the negative situation of the world, but is transformed into "pastoral" energy: "We must always lead souls to heaven, but we must lead not those who lived ten centuries ago or thereabouts, but the ones who live today. It is necessary to take the world and men as they are today, to do good today" (*Notes in Pastoral Theology*, n. 93).

Talking to the General Congress of the States of Perfection (26 November 1950), Fr. Alberione summarizes, using the words of a Cardinal, the pastoral convictions that have motivated him as a Founder from the start: "It will be useful to consider the words of Card. Elia Dalla Costa: '...either we look courageously at reality, beyond the small world that is around us, and so we see as urgent the need for a radical reversal of mentality and method, or else in the space of a few years we shall have created a desert around the Master of life; and life, rightfully, will eliminate us as dead branches, useless, cumbersome'" (*San Paolo*, November 1950; cf *Carissimi in San Paolo*, p. 807).

His missionary sensitivity has shown him the need for a pastoral "radical reversal of mentality and method".

2.3. It is in Saint Paul that Fr. Alberione draws the indispensable elements so as to translate them into the today of the early 1900's. It is a partial truth to affirm that Fr. Alberione has only placed the press and the following means of social communication at the service of the Gospel. His true innovative work is the elaboration of a complete Project of new evangelization: "The world has need of a new, long and deep evangelization" (20 August 1926; cf *La primavera paolina*, p. 680).

We have seen that Fr. Alberione finds in Saint Paul the totality of Christ for the whole human person and new means of evangelization (voyages, letters, choice of pagans).

In order to be "Saint Paul living today", the totality of the Institutes of the Pauline Family must "think together" about a complete Project of new evangelization, having as point of reference what blessed Alberione points to us in Saint Paul. Hence, it is necessary to put together the common "*Pauline Spirit*" in order to articulate "the convergence of the various apostolates" in a missionary faith.

2.4. The "Pauline spirit" in living and preaching Christ the Master, the Way, the Truth and the Life, cannot exhaust itself in the "instrumentality" of the converging apostolates. It requires, above all, a deepening and assimilation of the experi-

ence of Christ upon the example of Saint Paul who, after encountering Christ, revolutionizes his understanding of the faith and of the recipients of God's revelation. Thanks to his new vision of the faith, Saint Paul is capable of adjusting the announcement of Christ to the pagans, unchaining the Gospel from the Jewish-Christian mentality.

The *apostolic innovation* of Saint Paul (evangelization of the pagans) is closely connected to his renovated experience of the faith (centrality of Christ reformulated with categories different from those of Judaism).

Fr. Alberione made his own the missionary dynamism of Saint Paul in the elaboration of the Pauline charism: a renovated experience of the faith lived and proposed with an apostolic innovation. It is the encounter between the totality of Christ the Master Way, Truth and Life and the totality of the person (mind, heart, will) realized through the press and the successive means of communication.

It is a pastoral sensitivity that reacted to a broken experience of faith, presented in a partial way and confined to "oral preaching".

Starting from Vatican II, the ecclesial community is invited to a new experience of faith for a new missionary renewal. The apostolic exhortation of Paul VI *Evangelii nuntiandi* (08-12-1975), the encyclical *Redemptoris missio* of John Paul II (07-12-1990) are among the most precious contributions for this new vitality.

After the approval of the Conciliar Decree *Inter mirifica* (04-12-1963), the universal magisterium, the various episcopal conferences and the entire ecclesial community increasingly have become aware of the importance of the phenomenon of communication, whether media, multimedia or web, by important documents and effective initiatives.

For the entire Pauline Family this magisterium is an essential element for its creative fidelity to the heritage of blessed James Alberione.

2.5. In order "to be Saint Paul living today" it is necessary to place in fruitful relation a profound knowledge of Saint

Paul and a documented evaluation of today (situation of persons in various societies and culture, the life of the Church, the complexity of the phenomenon of communication). If one of the two elements of this binomial is absent, our attempts will be necessarily limited.

We too must reflect on the constant intertwining between a renewed experience of Christ and a new missionary ability: both elements mutually enrich each other. We cannot fall again into the brokenness of the life of faith, already noted by Fr. Alberione during his time, nor in a pastoral good for other centuries.

Communication is for the whole Church and, in particular for the Pauline Family, a continuous invitation to conversion as to how we live and propose the person of Christ, whether in an explicit way or “talking of everything in a Christian way”.

We Paulines must remain among the pioneers who develop some important indications of the magisterium in communication: “The present phenomenon of social communications urges the Church to a kind of pastoral and cultural revision, so as to be capable of facing in an adequate way the epochal passage that we are living” (John Paul II, *Il rapido sviluppo*, 24 January 2005, n. 8).

As we can see, the Pope invites the Church to a “pastoral and cultural revision”: it would be fruitless to believe that we are “Saint Paul living today” because in evangelization we make use of the most recent technological invention. We must ask Saint Paul for the grace to understand that a “missionary faith” needs, above all, a reflection on the nature and quality of the experience of faith to which we want to give testimony.

FR. SILVIO SASSI
Superior General SSP

INDEXES

NOTICE

The numbers point to the pages in the present volume. The numbers followed by “*n*” direct to the notes, while those followed by “*i*” direct to the “introductions” or “premises” of the individual passages.

In the *Index of the names of persons*, due to the big number of references, the voices for *Jesus Christ*, *St. Paul* and *Fr. Alberione* have been omitted.

INDEX OF BIBLICAL CITATIONS

<p>Job 20:11: 255</p> <p>Ps 17:3: 173</p> <p>Ps 48:13: 158</p> <p>Ps 50:12: 188</p> <p>Ps 51:3,5,7: 186</p> <p>Ps 83:2-4: 190</p> <p>Ps 85: 190ⁿ</p> <p>Ps 125:6: 169</p> <p>Prov 6:6: 264</p> <p>Prov 22:6: 253</p> <p>Wis 5:4: 178</p> <p>Sir 45:4: 173</p> <p>Isa 53:7: 193</p> <p>Ezek 1:3: 258ⁿ</p> <p>Dan 12:3: 159</p> <p>Mt 4:19: 80ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 5:3: 211</p> <p>Mt 5:10: 172</p> <p>Mt 5:11: 181</p> <p>Mt 5:44: 172</p> <p>Mt 5:48: 115ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 6:10: 273ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 10:16: 84ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 11:28: 9; 249ⁿ; 286</p> <p>Mt 12:30: 86ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 16:24: 188; 238</p> <p>Mt 16:26: 115ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 20:16: 79ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 26:26: 245ⁿ</p> <p>Mt 27:46: 245ⁿ</p>	<p>Mt 28:19: 271</p> <p>Mt 28:20: 157</p> <p>Mk 6:34: 165</p> <p>Mk 16:15: 101; 212</p> <p>Mk 16:16-18: 117ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 2:49: 164</p> <p>Lk 3:22: 154</p> <p>Lk 4:17-21: 203</p> <p>Lk 6:24: 272</p> <p>Lk 9:55: 198</p> <p>Lk 9:62: 79ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 10:21: 204</p> <p>Lk 10:25-30: 279</p> <p>Lk 10:27: 210</p> <p>Lk 10:42: 115ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 11:13: 90ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 12:32: 173</p> <p>Lk 12:37: 80ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 15:14: 155</p> <p>Lk 16:8: 84ⁿ</p> <p>Lk 18:22: 211</p> <p>Jn 3:8: 171</p> <p>Jn 8:46: 179</p> <p>Jn 11:25: 166; 190</p> <p>Jn 11:39: 186</p> <p>Jn 12:31: 181</p> <p>Jn 14:6: 271</p> <p>Jn 14:16: 204</p> <p>Jn 14:26: 204</p> <p>Jn 14:30: 178</p> <p>Jn 15:7: 54ⁿ</p> <p>Jn 15:18-19: 181</p> <p>Jn 15:19: 190</p> <p>Jn 16:7: 204</p> <p>Jn 16:13: 204</p>
--	--

Jn 17:3:	250; 268	Acts 26:2-23:	62 <i>n</i>
Jn 17:4:	193	Acts 26:16,18:	163
Jn 17:19:	199		
Jn 17:24:	183	Rom 1:1:	159 <i>n</i> ; 231
Jn 19:30:	180	Rom 1:8-13:	275
		Rom 1:16:	231
Acts 2:4:	203	Rom 2:13:	51 <i>n</i>
Acts 4:12:	161	Rom 2:21:	163
Acts 7:57:	83 <i>n</i>	Rom 3:22:	159
Acts 8:32:	193	Rom 5:5:	202
Acts 9:1-30:	62 <i>n</i>	Rom 5:8:	243 <i>n</i>
Acts 9:4:	262	Rom 6:2:	179
Acts 9:5:	244 <i>n</i> ; 262	Rom 6:8-9:	191
Acts 9:11:	246 <i>n</i>	Rom 6:11-12:	177
Acts 9:15-16:	156; 257	Rom 6:12-13:	179
Acts 9:30:	79 <i>n</i>	Rom 6:13:	186 <i>n</i> ; 189
Acts 13:2:	51 <i>n</i> ; 163	Rom 7:18-20,22-24:	179
Acts 13:8ff:	88 <i>n</i>	Rom 7:19-25:	226
Acts 13:16ff:	90 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:14:	203
Acts 14:8ff:	51 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:16:	202
Acts 14:13ff:	64 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:17:	53 <i>n</i>
Acts 14:19ff:	81 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:26:	204
Acts 15:26:	83 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:35:	169; 244 <i>n</i> ; 255
Acts 16:1:	51 <i>n</i>	Rom 8:35-37:	187
Acts 16:15:	88 <i>n</i>	Rom 10:38:	49 <i>n</i>
Acts 16:25:	162	Rom 11:12:	191 <i>n</i>
Acts 17:16-34:	91 <i>n</i>	Rom 11:13:	9
Acts 17:23:	245 <i>n</i>	Rom 11:24:	269 <i>n</i>
Acts 17:28:	83 <i>n</i>	Rom 12:1:	231
Acts 18:2:	88 <i>n</i>	Rom 12:17-18:	243 <i>n</i>
Acts 20:17ff:	276 <i>n</i>	Rom 13:	274
Acts 20:18-19:	276	Rom 14:8:	163
Acts 20:18-35:	80 <i>n</i>	Rom 16:1:	88 <i>n</i>
Acts 20:24:	115 <i>n</i>	Rom 16:12:	88 <i>n</i>
Acts 20:34:	255		
Acts 21:10ff:	84 <i>n</i>	1Cor 1-4:	231
Acts 22:3-21:	62 <i>n</i>	1Cor 1:1:	159 <i>n</i>
Acts 22:10:	273	1Cor 1:24-25:	177
Acts 23:6-9:	245 <i>n</i>	1Cor 2:9:	140 <i>n</i>
Acts 26:1-32:	80 <i>n</i>		

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---|
| 1Cor 2:28: | 160 <i>n</i> | 2Cor 4:17: | 53 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 3:5: | 231 | 2Cor 4:18: | 204 |
| 1Cor 3:9-10: | 174 | 2Cor 5:1: | 204; 230 |
| 1Cor 4:1: | 77 <i>n</i> | 2Cor 5:14: | 212 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 4:3-4: | 178 | 2Cor 5:20: | 77 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 4:15: | 227; 271; 285 | 2Cor 6:4ff: | 116 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 4:16: | 154 | 2Cor 6:4-10: | 198 |
| 1Cor 5:5: | 88 <i>n</i> | 2Cor 6:11: | 232 |
| 1Cor 6:19: | 202 | 2Cor 9:7: | 79 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 7:7: | 210; 245 <i>n</i> ;
273 | 2Cor 10:1-13:10: | 232 |
| 1Cor 7:32-33: | 273 | 2Cor 10:4-5: | 173 |
| 1Cor 8-10: | 232 | 2Cor 11:2: | 197 |
| 1Cor 8:1: | 231 | 2Cor 11:23: | 232 |
| 1Cor 9:16: | 168; 255 | 2Cor 11:27-30: | 275 |
| 1Cor 9:22: | 10; 82 <i>n</i> ; 159 | 2Cor 11:29: | 245 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 9:27: | 244 <i>n</i> | 2Cor 12:9: | 53 <i>n</i> ; 173;
179 |
| 1Cor 10:16-17: | 246 <i>n</i> | 2Cor 12:15: | 276 |
| 1Cor 10:33: | 166; 276 | 2Cor 13:11: | 115 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 11:1: | 227 | Gal 1:1: | 112 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 11:17-14:40: | 232 | Gal 1:10: | 169 |
| 1Cor 11:23: | 237 | Gal 1:11-24: | 62 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 11:23-29: | 246 <i>n</i> | Gal 1:13: | 197 |
| 1Cor 12:3: | 52 <i>n</i> | Gal 1:14: | 197; 230 |
| 1Cor 13: | 274 | Gal 1:15: | 230 |
| 1Cor 13:1: | 169 | Gal 1:16: | 230; 231 |
| 1Cor 13:1ff: | 56 <i>n</i> | Gal 1:18ff: | 87 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 13:7: | 116 <i>n</i> | Gal 2:2: | 231 |
| 1Cor 13:13: | 174 | Gal 2:7: | 9 |
| 1Cor 14:1: | 232 | Gal 2:9: | 12 |
| 1Cor 15:10: | 164; 212;
229; 238 <i>n</i> | Gal 2:20: | 10; 184; 188;
227; 232f;
270 <i>n</i> ; 285 |
| 1Cor 15:55: | 178 | Gal 4:4: | 246 <i>n</i> |
| 1Cor 15:58: | 204; 230 | Gal 4:19: | 128 <i>n</i> ; 155 |
| 2Cor 1-7: | 232 | Eph 1:3-5: | 232 |
| 2Cor 1:1: | 159 <i>n</i> | Eph 1:4-5: | 156; 156 <i>n</i> |
| 2Cor 1:7: | 180 | Eph 2:5: | 179 |
| 2Cor 4:16-17: | 204 | | |
| 2Cor 4:16-18: | 175 | | |

Eph 2:10:	162	Col 3:3:	177; 189
Eph 3:8-10:	159	Col 3:4:	191; 230
Eph 3:10:	237 <i>n</i>	Col 3:5:	186
Eph 4:1-2:	195	Col 3:9:	187
Eph 4:1-3:	200	Col 3:10:	189
Eph 4:30:	203	Col 3:16:	190
Eph 5:1:	154; 298		
Eph 5:2:	193	1Thes 2:5-7:	201
Eph 5:25-27:	199	1Thes 2:7-8:	276
Eph 6:10-17:	171	1Thes 2:9:	276
Eph 6:17:	238	1Thes 4:3:	232
Eph 6:18:	172	1Thes 4:13:	53 <i>n</i>
		1Thes 5:2-3:	186
Phil 1:8-11:	275	1Thes 5:12-13:	200
Phil 1:21:	231	1Thes 5:19:	203
Phil 2:1-4:	200		
Phil 2:6:	232	2Thes 2:15:	232
Phil 2:8-11:	181	2Thes 3:5:	277
Phil 2:13:	158; 262	2Thes 3:7:	154
Phil 2:14-15:	158 <i>n</i>	2Thes 3:9:	154; 227 <i>n</i>
Phil 2:21:	165		
Phil 3:5-6:	177	1Tim 1:12-13:	163
Phil 3:7-8:	178	1Tim 3:14-15:	199
Phil 3:7-9:	277	1Tim 3:15:	50 <i>n</i>
Phil 3:10:	177	1Tim 4:13:	198
Phil 3:12:	156 <i>n</i>	1Tim 4:16:	243 <i>n</i>
Phil 3:13-14:	11	1Tim 6:6-7:	187
Phil 3:20:	163	1Tim 6:6-10:	272
Phil 3:20-21:	191	1Tim 6:11:	162 <i>n</i> ; 163
Phil 4:8:	237	1Tim 6:17:	272
Phil 4:11-12:	272		
Phil 4:12:	244 <i>n</i>	2Tim 1:5:	88 <i>n</i>
Phil 4:17:	276	2Tim 1:6:	195
		2Tim 1:11:	168; 271 <i>n</i>
Col 1:5f:	89 <i>n</i>	2Tim 2:3:	171
Col 1:13:	232	2Tim 2:4:	165; 232
Col 1:24:	199	2Tim 2:9:	231
Col 1:27:	159	2Tim 2:10:	169
Col 2:12:	177	2Tim 2:15:	168
Col 3:1-2:	189	2Tim 2:15-17:	195

2Tim 2:20:	157	Heb 7:26-27:	194
2Tim 3:5:	200	Heb 9:11-12:	194
2Tim 4:2:	88 <i>n</i> ; 168	Heb 9:13-14:	184
2Tim 4:3-4:	168	Heb 9:14:	185; 203
2Tim 4:5-8:	277	Heb 9:15:	193
2Tim 4:6:	231	Heb 9:24:	194
2Tim 4:7:	49 <i>n</i> ; 138 <i>n</i> ; 172	Heb 10:	52
2Tim 4:8:	53 <i>n</i> ; 116 <i>n</i> ; 138 <i>n</i> ; 273 <i>n</i>	Heb 10:12-14:	183
2Tim 4:16:	245 <i>n</i>	Heb 10:19-22:	185
Philem 2:	88 <i>n</i>	Heb 10:22:	49; 49 <i>n</i>
Philem 7:	272	Heb 10:22-25:	182
Heb 1:5:	192	Heb 10:23:	52 <i>n</i>
Heb 2:9:	185	Heb 10:34:	272
Heb 2:9-10:	192	Heb 10:38:	49 <i>n</i>
Heb 2:11:	193	Heb 11:1:	49 <i>n</i>
Heb 2:14-15:	192	Heb 11:6:	49 <i>n</i>
Heb 2:17:	192	Heb 11:33,36-38:	182
Heb 2:17-18:	166	Heb 12:1-4:	182
Heb 3:1:	159; 192	Heb 12:11:	180
Heb 3:14:	193	Heb 13:12:	180; 193
Heb 4:1:	84 <i>n</i>	Heb 13:12-13:	192
Heb 4:3:	49 <i>n</i>	Heb 13:13:	181
Heb 4:12:	160; 238	Jas 2:17,26:	50 <i>n</i>
Heb 4:15:	166; 185	Jas 2:19:	50 <i>n</i>
Heb 4:16:	63 <i>n</i> ; 185	Jas 3:14-15:	197
Heb 5:1:	165; 184	Jas 3:17-18:	198
Heb 5:2-3:	166	1Pt 2:21:	180 <i>n</i>
Heb 5:7:	184	1Pt 2:23:	193
Heb 5:9:	193	1Pt 4:11:	204
Heb 5:10-11:	194	2Pt 1:10:	84 <i>n</i>
Heb 6:19:	53 <i>n</i>	2Pt 3:15:	240
Heb 7:3:	232	Jude 12-13:	196
Heb 7:23-25:	183	Rev 14:4:	250
Heb 7:24:	183 <i>n</i>		

INDEX OF PLACES

- Achaia: 30; 89
 Acque Salvie: 139
 Alba: 26; 33; 34; 40*i*; 213*i*;
 219; 220; 221; 226; 236;
 249*n*
 Albano Laziale: 151*i*; 153;
 261; 270
 Antioch: 30; 66; 76; 81; 83;
 87; 88; 90; 95; 133; 211;
 224; 239
 Arabia: 72; 98
 Areopagus: 20; 24; 83; 91;
 130
 Ariccia: 270*n*
 Asia: 20; 30; 66; 125; 276
 Athens: 20; 30; 88; 91; 130;
 244
 Atlantic (ocean): 102

 Bisanzio: 137
 Bithinia: 67

 Cenchrae: 31; 88*n*
 Cesarea: 84
 Cilicia: 83
 Colossae: 30; 32; 110; 272
 Constantinople: 137
 Corinth: 30; 53; 69; 71; 88;
 138; 174; 174*n*; 232; 233;
 274
 Cremona: 20*n*; 47*n*
 Crete: 31; 54
 Cyprus: 30; 89; 90

 Damascus: 21; 50; 63; 64; 72;
 77; 78; 83; 96; 152*i*; 177;
 179; 189; 209; 224; 235;
 236; 244; 255; 257; 262;
 273
 Egypt: 20
 Ephesus: 20; 23; 29; 30; 31;
 56; 80*n*; 88; 93; 98; 106;
 107; 276*n*
 Europe: 125

 France: 105

 Galatia: 89
 Greece: 20

 Iconium: 75; 76; 81
 India: 215*n*
 Ionia: 66
 Israel: 73; 77; 156; 177
 Italy: 20; 89; 216*i*; 216*n*

 Japan: 215*n*; 222; 223
 Jerusalem: 29; 30; 65; 72; 73;
 80; 83; 84; 87; 93; 96;
 104; 133; 193; 244; 245

 Listri (o Listra): 51; 51*n*; 81;
 83; 101
 Lydia: 32; 66; 88*n*

 Macedonia: 29; 31; 67; 89;
 99; 125
 Magonza: 19
 Malta: 54; 89; 116; 117; 119
 Mamertine (prison): 139; 255
 Miletus: 29; 80; 276*n*

Mondovi: 25	238; 244; 248; 251; 252; 255; 260 <i>n</i> ; 269; 269 <i>n</i> ; 270
Nazareth: 203; 212; 236; 250	
Orient: 137; 138; 215; 239; 244	Samothracia: 67
Ostia: 139	São Paulo: 221
Palestine: 20; 89	Soli: 83 <i>n</i>
Paris: 30; 130	Syria: 20; 66; 83; 87; 89
Philippi: 32; 67; 88; 99; 113; 125	Tarsus: 65; 73; 224; 230; 257
Philippines: 215 <i>n</i>	Thessalonica: 83; 227
Phrygia: 110	Thracia: 89
Pisidia: 90	Thyatira: 32
Red (Sea): 102	Tre Fontane: 238
Reggio Calabria: 102; 103	Trent: 49
Rome: 30; 36; 54; 55; 83; 88; 101; 110; 135; 138; 141; 208 <i>n</i> ; 221; 233; 234; 235;	Troade: 31; 67; 95; 108
	Turin: 25; 256 <i>n</i>
	Tyre: 98
	Vatican: 139; 256 <i>n</i>

INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Achaio: 30
 Agabus: 84
 Agnes (St.): 260; 260<i>n</i>
 Agrippa: 20; 54; 80; 90
 Alexander: 29
 Alfieri Vittorio: 264
 Alphonsus de' Liguori (St.):
 157; 161
 Álvarez: 57
 Ambrose (St.): 86<i>n</i>
 Ampliatius: 30
 Ananias (St.): 63; 64; 77;
 124; 146; 224; 237; 246;
 254; 257
 Anaxagoras: 83
 Andrew (St.): 137
 Andronicus (St.): 30
 Anselm (St.): 101
 Anthony M. Zaccaria (St.):
 47; 48; 136; 233
 Apelles (St.): 30
 Aphrodite: 174
 Apollo: 30
 Apphia (St.): 32; 88<i>n</i>
 Aquila (St.): 30; 69; 88<i>n</i>
 Aratus (of Soli): 83<i>n</i>
 Aristarchus (St.): 30
 Artemas: 30
 Asyncritus (St.): 30
 Augustine (St.): 62; 98; 164<i>n</i></p> <p>Bacchus: 162
 Barbero Giuseppe: 268<i>n</i>
 Barnabas (St.): 47; 47<i>n</i>; 51;
 66; 73; 81; 83; 89; 133;
 163; 224; 236</p> | <p>Benjamin: 135; 177
 Bernard (St.): 79
 Boano Saverio: 212<i>n</i>
 Bonomelli Geremia (mons.):
 20; 20<i>n</i></p> <p>Caius (St.): 29
 Cesare: 54; 172
 Cesari: 103
 Claudia: 30
 Clement (St.): 145
 Cohausz Otto: 151<i>i</i>; 152<i>i</i>;
 202<i>n</i>
 Cottolengo Giuseppe Bene-
 detto (St.): 49; 112; 116</p> <p>Da Silva Antonio: 40<i>n</i>; 151<i>n</i>
 Damaris (o Damaride) (St.):
 91; 130
 De Bérulle Pierre (card.):
 62<i>n</i>
 Demas: 30
 Di Corrado Giuseppe: 151<i>i</i>
 Diana of Ephesus: 20
 Dionysius the Areopagite
 (St.): 30; 89; 91; 130;
 130<i>n</i>; 139; 145
 Dominic (St.): 112</p> <p>Elimas: 88
 Epänetus: 30
 Epaphra (St.): 30
 Erastus (St.): 29
 Erma (St.): 30
 Erme: 30
 Erodione (St.): 30</p> |
|---|--|

Esposito F. Rosario: 19*i*
 Eubulus: 30
 Eunice: 31; 88*n*
 Eutichus: 108

Felix (governor): 90
 Festus: 90
 Filologus (St.): 30
 Fortunatus: 30
 Francis de Sales (St.): 62*n*;
 112; 224
 Francis of Assisi (St.): 112;
 136; 157; 161; 211

Gallo Giuseppe (Ing.): 34
 Gamaliel: 197
 Giaccardo Joseph Timothy
 (B.): 39*i*; 40*i*; 41*i*; 42*n*;
 44*n*; 58*n*; 122*n*; 129*n*

Ignatius Martyr (St.): 20
 Ignatius of Loyola (St.): 136;
 272; 272*n*
 Isaiah: 203
 Isidore (St.): 112

Jacob: 135
 Jason: 30
 John Berchmans (St.): 116
 John Bosco (St.): 64*n*; 78*n*;
 82*n*; 112; 157
 John Chrysostom (St.): 20;
 44; 44*n*; 46; 58; 59; 93;
 102; 113; 120; 127; 129;
 136; 137; 141; 233; 242;
 242*n*; 244
 Joseph (St.): 65; 246; 251
 Jude (St.): 164; 196
 Julia: 31

Junia (St.): 30

Ketteler Wilhelm (Mons.):
 19; 19*n*; 23; 93

Lamera Stefano: 151*i*; 152*i*;
 153*n*

Lassalle Ferdinand: 19*n*

Leo the Great (St.): 157

Leo XIII (pope): 20*i*; 92;
 224

Linus (St.): 30

Lois: 31; 88*n*

Louis Gonzaga (St.): 71; 112;
 116; 249; 260; 260*n*

Lucy (St.): 30

Luke (St.): 31; 95; 96; 139;
 145; 210; 214; 233; 240;
 247; 273

Magdalene (St.): 155

Margaret M. Alacoque (St.):
 249

Mark (St.): 214; 240

Martha (St.): 115

Martiniano (St.): 139

Marx Karl: 19*n*

Mary (Christian of Rome): 31

Mary (Most Holy): 24; 25;
 65; 74; 80; 116; 134; 158;
 160; 161; 214; 215; 216;
 225; 236; 238; 248; 250;
 252; 258; 271 – *cf also*

Regina degli Apostoli

Mastrostefano Mercedes:
 235*n*

Matthew (St.): 155; 240

Melchisedec: 194

Mercurius: 101

- Mnason: 30
- Nero: 138; 142
- Olier Jean-Jacques: 62; 62*n*
- Olimpiade: 31
- Onesimus (St.): 27; 30; 110; 111
- Onesiphorus (St.): 30
- Patroba (St.): 30
- Persides: 31; 88*n*
- Peter (St.): 20; 30; 62; 65; 66; 73; 84*n*; 86; 86*n*; 87; 104; 137; 138; 139; 140; 141; 155; 163; 164; 185; 220; 233; 238; 240; 255
- Philemon (St.): 27; 30; 32; 110; 111; 247; 272
- Philip (St.): 54; 112
- Phlegon (St.): 30
- Phoebe (St.): 31; 88*n*
- Porelli: 47
- Priscilla (St.): 30; 88*n*
- Processo (St.): 139
- Publius: 55; 119; 120
- Pudens: 30
- Quartus: 30
- Re Joseph Francis (mons.): 268*n*
- Regina degli Apostoli (Mary): 24; 25; 26; 34; 118; 151*i*; 207; 214; 225; 228; 236; 238; 268; 271
cf also Maria
- Ressia G. B. (mons.): 25
- Richelmy Agostino (card.): 25
- Roatta Giovanni: 151*i*
- Rufus (St.): 30; 31
- Scholastica (St.): 248
- Scùpoli Lorenzo: 263
- Segneri Paolo: 169
- Serafini Mauro (abbot): 268*n*
- Silas (St.): 30; 99; 100; 125; 126; 162
- Socrates: 83
- Sosipater: 29
- Sosthenes (St.): 29
- Speciale Antonio: 212*n*; 215
- Stachi: 30
- Stanislaus Kostka (St.): 116
- Stefana: 30
- Stephen (St.): 30; 63; 83; 90; 98; 140
- Sulpizius (St.): 62*n*
- Tamiride: 76
- Teresa d'Avila (St.): 264
- Tertius: 29
- Thecla (St.): 75; 90; 90*n*; 145; 210; 214; 233; 247; 273
- Therese of Lisieux (St.): 249; 260; 260*n*
- Thomas (St.): 155
- Thomas Aquinas (St.): 112; 169; 202; 249*n*
- Timothy (St.): 31; 51*n*; 66; 88*n*; 89; 96; 137; 138; 139; 145; 200; 210; 214; 233; 247; 272; 273; 277
- Tintori Eusebio: 234*n*
- Titus (St.): 31; 46; 89; 96; 145; 210; 214; 232; 247; 273
- Trophimus (St.): 29

Tryphena (St.): 31

Tryphosa (St.): 31

Tychicus (St.): 29

Tydricus: 29*n*

Urban: 30

Venus: 162

Vigolungo Maggiorino: 236

Vincent de Paul (St.): 62*n*

Visco Rosaria: 152*i*

Zema: 30

ANALYTICAL INDEX

Act:

- pray and – for Paul in Christ: 155

Adoration:

- in – put St. Paul before Jesus as mediator: 251
- in – with St. Paul: 248ff

Alba:

- the church of St. Paul in – and its “thesis”: 33

Apostle:

- believes, wants, works: 159
- is the title St. Paul attributes to himself and appreciates most: 143
- must never seek himself: 145
- *Paulus Apostolus*: 159ff
- St. Paul – by example: 95ff
- St. Paul – of the Good Press: 92ff
- St. Paul – of the word: 101ff
- St. Paul – through prayer: 98ff
- St. Paul – with his works: 104ff
- St. Paul is the type of the –, tireless, fearless, for Jesus Christ 146
- St. Paul sums up in himself all the virtues of an apostle: 77; 245

- the – of the editions: big heart, tireless activity, “make oneself all for all”: 147
- the spirit of St. Paul is to be –: 112
- the spirit of the –: 271
- To St. Paul the – (prayer): 214
- virtues of the –: zeal: 275f

Apostolate:

- all the vocations of the apostle were formed, developed and launched in the –: 145
- fervor of initiatives on the part of St. Paul: 24
- is continuation of the work of Christ: 159
- is fruit of the Holy Spirit: 203
- is giving God to men and men to God: 159
- know the – of St. Paul: 147
- one who has a full and abundant interior life will do a great –, even if ignorant: 147
- repairs scandals: 161
- St. Paul model of apostolic life: 149f
- the editorial – of St. Paul has its greatest expression in his letter to the Romans: 233

- the spirit of the –: 112ff
- various forms of – (interior life, suffering, example, prayer, editions, works): 160

cf also Ministry

Apostolate of prayer:

- has for intention all men: 99
- is easy: 98
- is very important: 98
- practiced by Jesus: 98
- St. Paul learned by experience the value of –: 98

Apostolate of the word:

- God blesses the preachers: 102

Apostoline (Sisters): 212*n*;
256*n*

Architect:

- *Sapiens architectus*: 174ff

Arma iniquitatis peccato
(*instruments of injustice for sin*): 186ff

Authority:

- rapport with –: 274

Baptism:

- from – comes out a new man: the Christian: 189
- the – is death and resurrection in Christ: 177

Believe (to):

- in God: goal of our vocation: 158

Benediction:

- the – of St. Paul: 276f

Benevolence:

- humility attracts the divine –: 71

Book:

- and sword (description of the Pauline emblem): 237f

Branch:

- you must be the – that stays united to the vine (Christ, the Pope, the Church) to do well your mission in the Church: 148

Care:

- of St. Paul in the formation of his Cooperators: 29
- pay attention to yourself: 195ff

cf also Formation

Celibacy:

- in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 207

cf also Virginity

Centenary:

- of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul (1967): 238ff
- XIX – of the conversion of St. Paul (1937): 220
- XIX – of the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (1958): 233f

Chaplet to St. Paul: 118f; 207ff

- apostolic zeal in the -: 208
- celibacy in the -: 207
- conversion in the -: 207ff
- each point contains three thoughts: 118
- it is made up of five points: 118
- meditation on the -: 208ff
- obedience in the -: 208
- poverty in the -: 208
- the best prayer for us: 118
- three intentions in reciting the - (vocations, formation, Pauline spirit in the apostolate): 208
- virginity in the -: 207

Charity:

- a flame with twofold rays: love for God and neighbor: 56
- all the life of St. Paul was an exercise in - for his neighbor: 59
- grant, O Doctor of the Gentiles, that only - reign in us: 214
- is absolutely necessary: 56
- is inseparable from the state of grace: 56
- is nourished by meditation and by reading of holy things: 57
- is the "code" that the Pauline has received from St. Paul: 274

- let all be done in -: 58
- of St. Paul for God: 56ff
- possessed in very high degree by St. Paul: 56
- St. Paul exhorts us to love one another in peace: 60
- St. Paul's - was ardent: 145
- sought continuously by St. Paul: 116
- spiritual weapon of the Christian struggle: 171
- the - of St. Paul towards his neighbor: 59
- the qualities of true love for neighbor: 60
- the secret of all is -: 147
- towards our neighbor induces us to do works of charity both corporal and spiritual: 59
- towards our neighbor: sign of love for God: 59

Chastity:

- *beautiful virtue* par excellence: 74
- example of St. Thecla: 75f
- inculcated by St. Paul: 74
- is a very delicate virtue: 75
- lived by St. Paul: 74
- makes us reserve for God all our energies: 74
- of St. Paul: 74ff
- protected by prayer and flight from the occasions: 75
- St. Paul, model of -: 245
- St. Paul, teacher of -: 273

Children:

- and active imitators of St. Paul: 222
- imitators of God, like very beloved -: 154
- St. Paul teaches that we are - and humble servants of the Church: 237

Christ:

- imitate Paul to imitate -: 154
- is the way, the truth and the life: 216
- let - live, be reproduced in us: 154
- let us imitate St. Paul as he has imitated -: 34
- Living unto God in Christ Jesus: 189ff
- meditate on the life of St. Paul and of -: 154
- praying and acting for Paul in -: 155
- St. Paul renounces everything in order to gain -: 178
- the apostle is a "soldier of Christ": 171ff
- the total - is Way, Truth and Life: 270
- understands the priest: 185
cf also Jesus Christ

Church:

- accompany in her difficult journey the -: 146
- be proud to belong to the -: 199

- In the house of God: 199ff
- love for the - of the Pauline: 223
- love the - by loving one's brothers: 200
- love the - by obeying one's superiors: 199
- love the - with works: 199
- St. Paul is present in the - in a very lively and substantial manner: 225
- St. Paul teaches that we are children and humble servants of the -: 237
- the - gives glory to St. Paul through the centuries: 140
- the priest is a minister of the -: 199
- to feel the "Christ lives in me" means to follow and accompany the - in her difficult journey 147
- you must be the branch that remains united to the vine to accomplish well your Mission in the -: 148

Church of St. Paul:

- a duty of gratitude to our Protector: 33
- an almost material need: 34
- center of diffusion of the devotion to the Divine Master, to the Queen of the Apostles and to St. Paul: 26
- invitation to cooperate for the construction: 34

- it's the church of prayer for the mission of the good press: 34
- it's the church of the good press: 34
- its "thesis": 33f
- sweet sigh nurtured for long in the heart: 33
- the first stone of the –: 35f
- the reasons for its construction: 33f
- the spiritual center where the hearts of our fifteen thousand Cooperators converge: 33

Code:

- the "code" of St. Paul (charity): 274

Collaboration:

- toward Superiors we owe veneration, prayers, obedience, –: 274

Collaborators:

- among the – of St. Paul are also many women: 31
- St. Paul dedicated much care to the formation of his –: 29
- St. Paul entrusted to his – the continuation of his mission: 29

Comfort:

- hope is motive of –: 53
- the Crucified is the hope and – of the Priest: 184

Commandments:

- one who does not base his life on the observance of the –, later will find himself in hardships: 255
- St. Paul has practiced the – with fidelity: 256
- St. Paul, model in the practice of the –: 252ff
- the observance of the – is absolutely necessary: 254

Comment:

- the letters of St. Paul are a very precious – of the Gospel: 240

Communication (social):

- today it develops more than the oral word because of the perfection of the instruments: 239

Communion:

- it is dear to the heart of St. Paul: 121
- together with the Mass, it is the most fruitful devotion: 121

Conditions:

- for conversion: 261f

Confidence:

- in the grace of God: 258
- we expect all from the prayer of St. Paul: 214

Configuration:

- conformed to his death: 177ff

Conformity:

- in – to the will of God stands true sanctity: 237

Congregation:

- reasons why St. Paul was chosen as protector of the –: 143

cf also Institute

Consider the Pontifex: 192f**Construction:**

- invitation to help for the – of the church of St. Paul: 34

Conversion:

- all of us need –: 63
- and sanctification: 236f
- first condition for a –: knowing that we are not on a good path: 261
- in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 207ff
- in what does it consist: 62
- it means: leaving a road not good to take another that is good: 261
- of St. Paul: 21; 62ff; 261ff
- of St. Paul: of the greatest advantage to the Church: 263
- opportunity to celebrate the feast of the – of St. Paul: 21
- requires serious will and mere wishes are not enough: 264
- St. Paul, as soon as he

knew he was in error changed way: 262

- second condition for –: good will: 262
- the – of St. Paul is the only one celebrated in the Church: 261
- the – of St. Paul was all-embracing: 236
- the – of St. Paul was extraordinary: 62
- the – of St. Paul was sudden: 63
- XIX centenary of the conversion of St. Paul: 220

Cooperators:

- St. Paul’s care for the formation of his –: 29

Correspondence to grace:

- characteristics of –: promptness, generosity, constancy: 79f
- is necessary: 79
- of St. Paul: 79ff
- thus must be our –: 79

Countermarks:

- two – exhibited in our bookstores: the book of the Gospel and the image of St. Paul: 221

Creation:

- St. Paul is a – of grace: 131f

Cross:

- supreme wisdom and power of God: 177

- three steps in the life of the priest (renounce yourself, take up your cross, follow me): 187f

Crucified:

- the – is our model: 181
- the – is the hope and comfort of the Priest: 184

Cult:

- of the Apostle Paul in the Church: 45
- propagate the – of St. Paul: 134ff

cf also Devotion and Liturgy

Daughters of St. Paul: 39i; 220f; 241ff

Death:

- conformed to his –: 177ff
- St. Paul was dead to all his past: 177

Debility:

- and sanctity: 226

Defects:

- fighting our – makes us rich in merits: 263

Detachment:

- fruit of hope: 54

Devotion:

- actuality of the – to the Divine Master: 25
- actuality of the – to the Queen of Apostles: 25
- in the – to the Divine Master according to the

spirit of St. Paul converge all devotions: 270

Devotion to St. Paul:

- a devotee of St. Paul makes him known, prayed to and loved: 134f
- a devotee of St. Paul reaches sanctity through the shortest way: 129
- actuality of the –: 25
- end of the month to St. Paul: 219f
- for those who need tender affection, recommended is –: 27
- from – love for Jesus and for one's neighbor: 20
- one of the best homages: work for the good press: 43
- suggestions for an intense –: 246f
- the – is God's mercy: 130
- the – is growing by the day: 46
- the – is not popular: 45
- the – leads us to base ourselves on the grace of God: 132
- the – should return to be popular: 134
- the – strengthens the spirit: 134
- the – transforms life: 134
- the main source of energy: 221f
- three reasons to disseminate – (God was the first to honor him, the Church

- invites us to honor him, we have a duty of gratitude): 135
- ways of propagating the –: 135

Diocese:

- the institution of –: one of the most useful organizations: 105

Discernment:

- purpose of the year to St. Paul: 229

Disciple/s:

- of St. Paul: Mark, Titus, Timothy, Luke, Thecla: 145; 214
- St. Paul, the – who knows the master: 270

Divine Master:

- actuality of the devotion to the –: 25
- in the devotion to the –, according to the spirit of St. Paul converge all devotions: 270
- may the – be your Way, Truth and Life: 34
- St. Paul is the main interpreter of the –: 273
- the church of St. Paul is the center of diffusion of the devotion to the –: 26

cf also Master (Divine)

Doctrine:

- know the – of St. Paul: 147

- St. Paul is a great teacher of –: 241
- the – of St. Paul is a great explanation of the Gospel: 241

Dogma:

- in preachings, let –, morals and liturgy enter: 168

Duty:

- it is our – to give glory to St. Paul: 141

Editions:

- form of apostolate: 160

Election:

- St. Paul “vessel of –”: 73; 156ff; 214

Emblem (Pauline):

- book and sword (description of the –): 237f

End/s:

- of our vocation (to better know, believe, serve and love God): 158
- of the centenary of the conversion of St. Paul (gratitude, knowledge, imitation, prayer to St. Paul): 220f
- of the centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul (know, love, imitate, pray to our Father, Protector and Teacher): 239
- of the year to St. Paul (gratitude, knowledge, imi-

- tation, intercession, love, discernment): 228f
- the various – converge in a common and general –: to give Jesus Christ to the world: 271

Esteem:

- humility stirs up the – of men: 71

Eternal:

- He has an eternal priesthood: 183ff

Eucharist:

- St. Paul's piety was a Eucharistic one: 246

Evangelization:

- zeal has stirred up many works in support of –: 104

Exaltation:

- humiliation and – of the priest: 181

Example:

- a form of apostolate: 160
- has great value: 95
- has many fields of application: 96
- Luke conquered by the – of St. Paul: 95
- of St. Paul (who used technical means, his letters, together with his word): 238
- often recommended by St. Paul: 95
- practiced by St. Paul: 95

- St. Paul cites as examples heroic priests and prophets: 182
- St. Paul, apostle through his example –: 95ff

Exemplar:

- a model to be imitated, an – to be followed: 75
- St. Paul preacher and – exemplar in obedience: 210
- St. Paul the Apostle is the Father, Teacher, –, and Protector: 225
- St. Paul, Father, Teacher, – and Founder of the Pauline Family: 267
- the Apostle, our Father, Teacher, – and Doctor: 220

Explanation:

- the doctrine of St. Paul is a very beautiful – of the Gospel: 241

Expressions:

- some encouraging – of St. Paul: 229f

Faith:

- always travel on the two rails of humility and –: 238
- from the degree of – depends the fervor of Christian life: 49
- grant, O Doctor of the Gentiles, that we live by –: 214

- hope is born of -: 52
- must engage in good works: 50
- of St. Paul: 49
- St. Paul had a very firm -: 145
- St. Paul was a model of -: 244
- St. Paul, man of deep -: 49
- spiritual weapon of the Christian struggle: 171
- the - of St. Paul was constant: 50
- the first and fundamental virtue: 49
- works miracles: 51

Family, Pauline:

- aspires to live integrally the Gospel in the spirit of St. Paul: 268
- born through St. Paul, was nourished and made to grow by him, from him has taken its spirit: 267
- has a large opening towards the world: 268
- must be St. Paul living today: 225; 226
- resolves to represent and live St. Paul today: 226
- St. Paul Father, Teacher, Exemplar, Founder of the -: 267
- St. Paul was father and mother for all his children and brought up the - that is his: 271

- spirit of the -: to live integrally the Gospel as interpreted by St. Paul: 271
- cf also* Institute

Father:

- St. Paul is our -, teacher, protector: 225f
- St. Paul was - and mother of all his children and brought up the Pauline Family that is his: 271
- St. Paul, -, Teacher, Exemplar, Founder of the Pauline Family: 267
- St. Paul, an affectionate soul like a mother and strong like a -: 240

Feel (to):

- the *Christ lives in me* means to follow and accompany the Church in her difficult journey: 147
- the *Christ lives in me* of the Apostle: 146

Following:

- fruit of hope: 54
- That you may follow in his steps: 180ff

Footsteps:

- on the - of our Father St. Paul: 221
- That we may follow his -: 180ff

Form:

- an example (*form*) to be imitated: 155

- St. Paul was made and made himself – for us, to reproduce Jesus Christ: 227
cf also Example and Imitation

Formands:

- Paul model of formators and –: 223f

Formation:

- St. Paul's concern for the – of his cooperators: 29
- tend to the imitation of St. Paul the Apostle: 223
- the ideal of Pauline –: "Christ lives in me": 235
- what is built during youth remains: 253

Formation of the young:

- actual main work of the Pious Society of St. Paul: 32

Formation, permanent:

- it is required of the priest: to avoid sterility in the ministry and tepidity, and due to his dignity, position and office: 195
- Pay attention to yourself: 195ff

Formators:

- Paul model of – and of formands: 223f

Forward:

- always straining –: 146; 147; 222; 236
- with confidence: 182

Founder:

- St. Paul Father, Teacher, Exemplar, – of the Pauline Family: 267
- St. Paul himself has created the Society of St. Paul of which he is the –: 227
- St. Paul is the true – of the Institution: 225

Fruits:

- of hope: serenity, detachment, constant work and prayer: 54
- the – of the zeal of St. Paul: 89ff

Gain:

- St. Paul renounced everything to – Christ: 178

Gentiles:

- St. Paul great preacher to the –: 238

Gift/s:

- similarity between Paul and the priest as to the riches of divine –: 156

Glory:

- the – of St. Paul in heaven is in proportion to the – that he has given to God among the gentiles on earth: 140
- the – of St. Paul: 140f
- the Church gives – to St. Paul through all centuries: 140

- the martyrdom and the – of St. Paul: 138ff
- the world will never glorify the Apostle enough: 141
- we too must give – to St. Paul: 141

God:

- apostolate is to give – to men and men to –: 159
- charity of St. Paul for –: 56ff
- I am a miracle of –: 164
- Living unto God in Christ Jesus: 189ff
- love for – and love for neighbor: two rays of the same flame: 56
- *the hand of – has been upon me*: 258
- the word of – is not bound: 223
- zeal is the flowering of love for – and for souls: 198

Good Press:

- graces granted more willingly by St. Paul: vocations for the –: 113
 - one of the best homages to St. Paul: work for the –: 43
 - St. Paul, protector of the –: 22; 43
 - the church of the –: 34ff
- cf also Press*

Gospel:

- give the –: 236
- St. Paul, the most faithful interpreter of the –: 143
- the doctrine of St. Paul is a very beautiful explanation of the –: 241
- the letters of St. Paul are a very precious commentary to the –: 240
- two countermarks exhibited in our bookstores: book of the – and image of St. Paul: 221

Grace/s:

- a great – of the Lord: having as Father, Teacher, Model, Friend and Protector St. Paul: 43
- a soul without – is a dead soul: 131
- a theme dear to St. Paul: 131
- charity is inseparable from the state of –: 56
- devotion to St. Paul leads us to base ourselves on the – of God: 132
- every priest is a miracle of –: 162
- granted more willingly by St. Paul:
- to work for the Good Press: 113
- vocations for the Good Press: 113
- zeal: 113

- Jesus Christ source of –: 25
- makes us Christians: 131
- My – is enough for you: 179
- St. Paul is a creation of –: 131f
- the remedy for our weakness is in the – of redemption: 226
- the value of –: 131ff
- the whole Institute is –: 209
- without –, no merit: 131

Gratitude:

- end of the year to St. Paul: 228
- to St. Paul: end of the centenary of the conversion of St. Paul: 220

Great:

- St. Paul – preacher to the Gentiles: 238

Greatness:

- secret of – is to model oneself on God, living in Christ: 269

Grow (to):

- in humility and love: 256

Hand:

- The – of God has been upon me: 258

Heart:

- in the – of Jesus is wisdom: the secret of all re-

ligion and revelation and love for us: 144

- one must be the spirit, the one contained in the – of St. Paul, “the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ”: 271
- the – of Paul is the – of Christ: 58; 144
- the – of St. Paul: 26

Heaven:

- St. Paul and his rapture into the third –: 133

Hope:

- defects opposed to it: presumption and despair: 52
- fruits of –: serenity detachment, constant work and prayer: 54
- is a theological virtue: 52
- is born of faith: 52
- motive of comfort: 53
- recommended by St. Paul: 52
- St. Paul had a sure –: 145
- the – of St. Paul: 52
- the Crucified is the – and comfort of the Priest: 184

House:

- In the – of God: 199ff
- Zeal for your –: 197ff

Humanity:

- the journal is the new pulpit of –: 20
- St. Paul even today speaks to –: 239

cf also World

Humiliation:

- and exaltation of the priest: 181
- for our lack of correspondence: 258

Humility:

- always move on the two rails: – and faith: 238
- and love are the two coefficients of sanctity: 259
- attracts the benevolence of God: 71
- foundation of the spiritual edifice: 71
- grow in – and in love: 256
- of St. Paul: 71ff
- one who is humble: 71
- St. Paul confesses often his –: 71
- stirs up the esteem of men: 71
- walk always in –: 258

Imitate:

- let us imitate St. Paul as he has imitated Christ: 34
- of the three objectives of the month to St. Paul: 45
- Paul to – Christ: 154
- St. Paul is our model and example in the way to – Jesus Christ: 147
- St. Paul made himself form so as to give himself as example to be –: 227
- St. Paul: end of the centenary of his martyrdom: 239

Imitation:

- always straining forward, like Christ propagandist and Paul the trekker of God: 222
- end of the year to St. Paul: 228f
- of St. Paul: end of the centenary of the conversion of St. Paul: 220f
- of St. Paul: end of the month to St. Paul: 219f

Imitators:

- be my –, as I am of Jesus Christ: 227
- children and active – of St. Paul: 222
- of God, like beloved children: 154
- of St. Paul: Timothy, Titus...: 145
- St. Paul has many who study him, but few –: 26

Individual:

- the new law perfects and elevates the – and society: 175

Initiatives:

- all can do something for the – of the PSSP: 33

Injustice:

- Instruments of – for sin: 186ff

Institute:

- St. Paul, protector of every

- member and of the whole –: 144
 - the– is all grace: 209
 - the spirit of the–: 271
- cf also* Congregation

Instruments:

- social communication today progresses more than the oral word because of the perfection of its –: 239

Intercession:

- end of the year to St. Paul: 229
- of St. Paul: 221

Interpreter:

- St. Paul is the most complete – of the Divine Master: 225
- St. Paul is the principal – of the Divine Master: 273
- St. Paul, the most faithful – of the Gospel: 143

Invocations:

- to the Divine Master: 167

January:

- or June: month to St. Paul: 44

Japan:

- Radio St. Paul: 222f

Jesus Christ:

- complete: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”: 271
- dies to sanctify the people: 193

- dies to show us his love: 193
- every letter of St. Paul describes for us an aspect of the figure of the Master. The one to the Romans, the whole –: 242
- everything has been ordained to –: 128
- in the heart of – is Wisdom: the secret of all religion and revelation and of his love for us: 144
- is an exceptional dying person: 192
- it is the lens, the prism of St. Paul for seeing everything and for solving all problems: 144
- Living unto God in Christ Jesus: 189ff
- model of every virtue: 193
- motive of Paul’s being: 145
- Paul lives –: 128
- source of grace: 25
- the fixed idea, the only ideal and impassioned love of St. Paul: 144
- the heart of Paul is the heart of –: 58; 144
- the Spirit of –: 202ff
- the various ends converge in a common and general end: to give – to the world: 271
- to give – to the world, in a complete way: 271

- universal center: fundamental teaching of St. Paul: 127ff
- Way, Truth, Life: 175; 215; 221; 268; 271
- we too are invited to live of -: 128

cf also Christ

Jesus Master:

- Way, Truth and Life: 207; 238

Journal:

- new pulpit of humanity: 20
- no means of propaganda today can be more universal and effective: 23

Journalist:

- if St. Paul returned to the world, he would make himself a -: 19; 93

Journey:

- accompany the Church in her difficult -: 146
- to be always in a -: in spiritual work, in knowing the Lord, the Gospel, the doctrine of the Church, the Constitutions, in religious observance and in the apostolate: 147
- to feel the "Christ lives in me" means to follow and accompany the Church in her difficult -: 147
- to St. Paul, trekker (dedication): 235f

June:

- January or -: month to St. Paul: 44
- thirty thoughts for a month to St. Paul: 143ff

Know (to):

- God: the end of our vocation: 158
- St. Paul: his holy life, his apostolate, his doctrine, his power before God: 147
- St. Paul: one of the three objectives of the month to St. Paul: 45
- St. Paul: purpose of the centenary of his martyrdom: 239

Knowledge of St. Paul:

- favored by the letter to the Romans: 267
- purpose of the month to St. Paul: 219f
- purpose of the year to St. Paul: 228
- reason for the centenary of the conversion of St. Paul: 220
- recent studies have developed -: 22
- the celebration of his feasts is a good occasion to make known St. Paul: 21

Labor:

- constant - is the fruit of hope: 54
- it is the road to perfection: 269

- redemptive, apostolic –, exhausting –: 269
- St. Paul imposed it on himself: 269

Law:

- the old – has terminated its function; the new law perfects and elevates the individual and society: 175

Lens:

- Jesus Christ is the –, the prism of St. Paul for seeing everything and solving every problem: 144

Letter/s of St. Paul:

- every – describes to us an aspect of the figure of the Master. That *to the Romans* describes the whole Jesus Christ: 242
- if we do not understand his –, let us read them just the same: 243
- let them be read often during the Visit: 243
- model of pastoral loftiness: 220
- only the reading of the Pauline writings yield true Paulines: 242
- St. Paul still preaches with his immortal letters: 240
- St. Paul used a technical means: his letters together with his word: 238
- St. Paul will enlighten and

act such that we understand his letters: 242

- the – are a very precious commentary to the Gospel: 240
- XIX centenary of the – to the Romans (1958): 233f

Liberty:

- poverty gives – of spirit: 68

Life:

- a new – life is conferred by priestly ordination: 189
- know the – of St. Paul: 147
- let the new – of the priest be fed with Christ: 190
- Living unto God in Christ Jesus: 189ff
- one who comes close to St. Paul learns to live like him: 146
- one who gives himself to Pauline – must possess an interior – that is full and abundant: 147
- the new – of the priest is developed by constant care: 189
- the priest will become a true giver of – in proportion to his spiritual –: 190
- the priest will become a true giver of – wherever he will bring the spirit that has been his nourishment: 190

- to give the message of salvation was the – of St. Paul: 236

cf also Way, Truth and Life

Life (Apostolic):

- St. Paul, model of apostolic –: 149

Life (Interior):

- a form of apostolate: 160
- he who has a full and abundant interior – will do a great apostolate even if he is an ignorant person: 147

Liturgy:

- in preaching, let dogma, morals and – enter: 168

cf also Cult

Live again, Paul!

- (prayer to St. Paul): 213

Living:

- the Pauline Family must be St. Paul – today: 225; 226; 228

Living again:

- St. Paul: 19

Loftiness:

- pastoral of the letters of St. Paul: 220

Love:

- for the Church by the Pauline: 223
- grow in humility and –: 256

- humility and – are the two coefficients for sanctity: 259

- in the heart of Jesus – for us: 144

- purpose of the year to St. Paul: 229

- the power of St. Paul is great as his –: 148

- the profession of the religious is the profession of eternal and perfect – for Jesus Christ: 210

- zeal is the flowering of – for God and for souls: 198

Love (to):

- God: end of our vocation: 158

- one who approaches St. Paul becomes a lover of Christ: 146

- St. Paul loves us: 109ff

- St. Paul: end of the centenary of his martyrdom: 239

Maggiorino Vigolungo:

- he was animated by the spirit of the Apostle St. Paul, always straining forward: 236

Man/men:

- apostolate is to give God to men and men to God: 159

- Constituted for men: 165ff

- Man of God: 162ff

- the priest must not only appear but be a – of God: 178

Martyrdom:

- centenary of the – of the Apostles Peter and Paul (1967): 238ff
- the – and glory of St. Paul: 138ff

Mary: cf INDEX OF NAMES**Mass:**

- better if the – is presented to God through the hands of St. Paul: 121
- must occupy the first place in the day of the priest: 165
- participate in the – with the intentions of St. Paul: 122
- the – is dear to the heart of St. Paul: 121
- the – is the most fruitful devotion: 121

Masses:

- St. Paul aimed at the –: 174

Master (Divine):

- invocations to the –: 167
- St. Paul is the most comprehensive interpreter of the –: 225
- St. Paul knows the – in his totality and he lives him completely: 270

- the –, Way, Truth and Life: 215

cf also Divine Master

Master/teacher:

- St. Paul – of chastity: 273
- St. Paul – of obedience: 273
- St. Paul – of poverty: 272f
- St. Paul Father, –, Exemplar, Founder of the Pauline Family: 267
- St. Paul is a perfect – of sanctification: 237
- St. Paul is our father, –, protector: 225f
- St. Paul is the “– of the gentiles”: 143
- St. Paul our – and model: 241ff
- St. Paul, the disciple that knows the –: 270

Maturity:

- for St. Paul sanctity is the full – of man. It is the perfect man...: 226

Means:

- progress furnishes ever perfect and effective – that we must use: 223

Means, technical:

- St. Paul used technical means: his letters, together with his word: 238

Mediation:

- during Adoration put St.

Paul before Jesus as mediator: 251

Meditate:

- the letters of Paul: 154
- the life of Paul and of Christ: 154

Meditation/s:

- charity is nourished in – and in the reading of holy things: 57
- course of – for every Monday of the week in the year to St. Paul (his life, doctrine, cult, devotion): 230ff
- on the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 208ff

Mercy:

- the devotion to St. Paul is a – of God: 130

Merit:

- fighting our defects enriches us with –: 263
- the power of a saint is in proportion to his –: 107

Message:

- to give the – of salvation was the life of St. Paul: 236

Miles Christi (soldier of Christ): 171ff

Ministry:

- the preparation of St. Paul for his great –: 256

Miracle/s:

- every priest is a – of grace: 162
- I am a – of God: 164
- reward of faith: 51

Mission:

- most noble is the – of saving souls: 77
- of St. Paul: 77ff
- pray so as to know your –: 77
- preaching and editorial work come from God: 219
- St. Paul has been a preacher and writer: 219
- the – of St. Paul: bring the gospel to the gentiles: 77
- the Pauline – must extend to all and everyone: 212
- to each person God entrusts a –: 77
- you must be the branch that is united to the vine in order to accomplish well your – in the Church: 148

Model:

- St. Paul – in the practice of the commandments: 252f
- St. Paul – of apostolic life: 149ff
- St. Paul – of every virtue, individual and social: 243f
- St. Paul – of formators and of formands: 223f
- St. Paul –, in content and form of every priest-writer-Pauline 234

- St. Paul is our – in the way of imitating Jesus Christ: 147
- St. Paul our Master and –: 241
- St. Paul proposed by the Holy Spirit as – of Virgins: 75
- St. Paul, great preacher and writer: – to be imitated: 239
- secret of greatness is to model oneself on God, living in Christ: 269
- the Crucified is our model: 181

Month to St. Paul: 45ff; 219f

- a – (meditations and readings): 37ff
- has three goals: knowledge, imitation and devotion to our Protector and Father: 219f
- three objectives: to know, imitate, and pray to St. Paul: 45
- three thoughts for a –: 143ff

Morals:

- in preaching, let dogma, – and liturgy enter: 168

Mortification:

- sin is fought with – and vigilance: 186

Mother:

- Mary –, Teacher and Queen of the Apostles: 24

- St. Paul, an affectionate soul like a – and strong like a father: 240
- St. Paul was father and – for all his children and he brought up the Pauline Family which is his own: 271

Motives:

- of union among religious members: 274

Nation:

- For one's own – (prayer): 216

Necessity:

- make Christ live, reproduce him in us: 154

Neighbor:

- do the greatest spiritual and material good for one's –: 276
- love for God and love for –: two rays of the same flame: 56
- St. Paul's love for –: 59

Obedience:

- docility to grace is shown in a particular way in –: 210
- four characteristics of our – (prompt, cheerful, blind, constant): 66
- in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 208
- Jesus lived a life of –: 65ff
- of St. Paul: 65ff

- St. Paul gave – to Peter and the Church: 255
- St. Paul insists on this virtue: 65
- St. Paul teacher of –: 273
- St. Paul was a model of –: 245
- the obedient person is blessed by the Lord: 65
- to Superiors we owe veneration, prayers, –, collaboration: 274

Ordination:

- from – a new man comes out: the priest: 189
- the priestly – is the solemn burial and act of death of a young man who has died to sin for some time: 177

Organization:

- not always its importance is understood: 105
- St. Paul, great organizer: 105
- the institution of the dioceses: one of the most useful organizations for the Church: 105
- today, – is the work of works: 105

Orient:

- Prayer to St. Paul for the –: 215

Pact:

- of success: 221f
- cf also Secret*

Past:

- St. Paul was dead to all his –: 177

Pastoral:

- loftiness of the letters of St. Paul: 220

Patience:

- ask for it by means of St. Paul: 124
- extensively exercised by St. Paul: 124
- it is a mark of charity: 123
- it is supremely necessary for us: for the apostolate and for our sanctification: 123
- it sustains us in the face of difficulties: 123
- often we are called to exercise it: 123
- Prayer to St. Paul to obtain –: 125; 213
- the – of St. Paul: 123ff

Pauline/s:

- a true – is on the frontline of love for the Church after the example of the Apostle Paul: 223
- by studying and imitating St. Paul we shall become in spirit and in heart true –: 46
- charity is the “code” that the – has received from St. Paul: 274
- St. Paul, model in content and form, of every priest-writer-Pauline: 234

Paulus Apostolus: 159ff**Perfection:**

- for St. Paul sanctity is the full maturity of man. It is the perfect man: 226
- poverty is on the first step of Christian –: 211

Personality:

- pedagogy and Pauline – personality: 235

Piety:

- have the right –: 253
- the – of St. Paul was Eucharistic: 246

Pious Disciples of the Divine Master: 248ff**Pious Society of St. Paul:**

- actual main work of the –: the formation of the young: 32
- all can do something for the initiatives of the –: 33
- one who directs students to the – is well-deserving of the Church: 32

cf also Society of St. Paul

Pontifex:

- Consider the –: 192ff

Potency:

- great esteem for the – of St. Paul: 108
- of St. Paul will never fail: 108
- of St. Paul: 107ff

- St. Paul is capable of granting any request: 108
- the – of a saint is in proportion to his merits: 107
- the – of St. Paul is great as his love: 148

Poverty:

- demands of the spirit of –: 69
- gives liberty of spirit: 68
- great virtue and great vow: 211
- in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 208
- is manifested also in love and zeal for the apostolate: 211
- is on the first step of Christian perfection: 211
- is one of the beatitudes: 68
- is recommended by St. Paul: 68
- Jesus has practiced it: 68
- of St. Paul: 68ff
- practiced with assiduity by St. Paul: 68
- St. Paul is model of –: 146
- St. Paul practiced – completely: 255
- St. Paul teacher of –: 272f
- St. Paul was poor: 244
- the spirit of – is applied in all parts of the day: 211

Power:

- know the – of St. Paul before God: 147

Pray (to):

- and act through Paul in Christ: 155
- how – to St. Paul: 118ff
- one of the three objectives of the month to St. Paul: 45
- one who approaches St. Paul learns – like him: 146
- to St. Paul: end of the centenary of his martyrdom: 239

Prayer:

- a form of apostolate: 160
- for one's nation: 216
- fruit of hope: 54
- have great love for – from a young age: 253
- prayers to St. Paul: 205ff
- St. Paul is a model of –: 146
- St. Paul loved –: 254
- St. Paul was a teacher of –: 245
- St. Paul, apostle by his –: 98ff
- spiritual weapon of the Christian struggle: 171
- to ask patience from St. Paul: 125
- to know one's mission: 77
- to St. Paul for the Orient: 215
- to St. Paul to obtain patience: 213
- to St. Paul: end of the centenary of the conversion of St. Paul: 221

- toward Superiors we owe: veneration, prayers, obedience, collaboration: 274
- we expect everything through the – of St. Paul: 214
- with request for protection from the Doctor of the Gentiles: 230

cf also Adoration

Preacher:

- like Paul – and writer: 219
- *Prædicator*: 168ff
- St. Paul was born a – and at the same time a writer: 239
- St. Paul, great – and writer: model to be imitated: 239
- St. Paul, great – to the Gentiles: 238

Preaching:

- always promoted by the Church: 101
- in it shone the zeal of St. Paul: 101
- instituted by Jesus 101
- is a tiring ministry: 169
- is necessary: 101
- let it include dogma, morals and liturgy: 168
- means used by Jesus and the apostles: 101
- quality of – (good, ours, modern): 168
- St. Paul still preaches with his immortal letters: 240

- St. Paul, model preacher: 168
- special duty of the priest: 168
- the zeal of St. Paul thought out many initiatives favoring –: 104

Preparation:

- the – of St. Paul for his great ministry: 256

Presence:

- St. Paul is present in the Church in a very strong and substantial way: 225

Press:

- had always great importance in history: 92
- it's today the best means for doing good: 93
- St. Paul apostle of the Good –: 92ff
- St. Paul commanded the destruction of the bad –: 23
- today it is the frontline power in the world: 92
- work with generosity for the Good –: 93

cf also Good Press

Priest:

- Christ understands the –: 185
- constituted in favor of men: 165
- deals with the things of God: 162

- defends the rights of God and leads men to God: 162
- he died to sin and to a purely natural life: 177
- he is the man of God: 162
- he must not only appear but must be a “man of God”: 178
- he shares the sufferings and glory of Jesus Christ: 180
- humiliation and exaltation of the –: 181
- is a miracle of grace: 162
- let him not search for well-being or human benevolence: 187
- man committed for the works of God: 163
- minister of the Church: 199
- moves men to praise God: 162
- our priestly being is to be united to Christ: 183
- St. Paul cites as examples heroic priests and prophets: 182
- St. Paul model, in content and form, of every priest-writer-Pauline: 234
- similarity between Paul and the – as to the riches of divine gifts: 156
- the – must destroy sin, even to its roots: 186
- the – must have the same sentiments of Jesus: 166

- the Crucified is the hope and comfort of the –: 184
- the first task of the –: the cult of God: 165
- the second task of the – is the care of souls: 165
- the sin of the – causes enormous damage to souls: 186
- the true religious and the – must love sacrifice and suffering: 276
- three steps in the life of the – (renounce yourself, take up your cross, follow me): 187f

Priesthood:

- His – is eternal: 183ff
- our – depends on the – of Christ: 183
- our – is the continuation of the – of Christ: 183
- the – of Christ is eternal: 183

Profession, religious:

- from – comes out a new man: the religious: 189
- is the profession of eternal and perfect love for Jesus Christ: 210
- the – is a more complete death: 177

Program:

- of the transmissions of the radio station St. Paul is the one mentioned in the letter

to the Philippians (the true, the honest, the just...): 223

Propaganda:

- no means of – today can be more universal and effective than the journal: 23
- propagate the cult of St. Paul: 134ff

Prophets:

- St. Paul cites as examples heroic priests and –: 182

Proposition:

- our –: to give glory to St. Paul: 141

Protector:

- protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles (prayer): 230
- reasons why St. Paul was chosen as – of the Congregation: 143
- St. Paul – of every member and of the whole Institute: 144
- St. Paul – of the Good Press: 22
- St. Paul is our father, teacher, –: 225f

Prudence:

- of St. Paul: 245

Pulpit:

- the journal is the new – of humanity: 20

Quality:

- of true zeal: 197

Queen of Apostles:

- actuality of the devotion to the –: 25
- Mary Mother, Teacher and –: 24
- the church of St. Paul is the center of diffusion of the devotion to the –: 26

Radio:

- St. Paul (in Japan): 222f

Rapture:

- St. Paul and his – to the third heaven: 133

Religious:

- the true – and the Priest must love sacrifice and suffering: 276

Remedy:

- the – to our weakness is in the grace of redemption: 226

Renounces:

- St. Paul – all to gain Christ: 178

Riches:

- similarity between Paul and the priest as to the – of divine gifts: 156

Romans:

- XIX centenary of the letter of St. Paul to the – (1958): 233

St. Paul:

- a favorite of Jesus: 209

- a great grace of the Lord: having for Father, Teacher, Model, Friend and Protector –: 43
- a great preacher and writer: a model to be imitated: 239
- a man of deep faith: 49; 50
- a month to – (meditations and readings): 37ff
- a year consecrated to – the Apostle (1957): 228ff
- accompanies us with every care: 109
- actuality of the devotion to –: 25
- all the life of – was an exercise in charity for neighbor: 59
- among the collaborators of – even many women: 31
- an affectionate soul like a mother and strong like a father: 240
- and God: 145
- and his disciples (St. Mark, St. Titus, St. Timothy, St. Luke, St. Thecla): 214
- and his rapture into the third heaven: 133
- apostle by his example: 95ff
- apostle by his prayer: 98ff
- apostle by his works: 104ff
- apostle of the Good Press: 92ff
- apostle of the word: 101ff

- centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul (1967): 238ff
- chaplet to -: 118ff; 207ff
- charity of - for God: 56ff
- chastity of -: 74ff
- cites as examples heroic priests and prophets: 182
- conversion of -: 21; 62ff
- correspondence to grace of -: 79ff
- course of meditations for every Monday of the week in the year to - (his life, his doctrine, his cult and his devotion): 230ff
- cult of - in the Church: 45
- entrusted to his helpers the continuation of his mission: 29
- enumerates the qualities of true love for neighbor: 60
- even today he speaks to humanity: 239
- exhorts us to love one another in peace: 60
- Father, Teacher, Exemplar, Founder of the Pauline Family: 267
- fervor of initiatives on the part of -: 24
- good father of his devotees: 44
- grant, O Doctor of the Gentiles, that we live of faith, save ourselves through hope, and that only charity reign in us: 214
- great preacher to the Gentiles: 238
- had a very firm faith, a sure hope and ardent charity: 145
- had all the qualities of an apostle: 77
- had true zeal: 86
- has a single point of reference: Jesus Christ: 144
- has many who study and admire him, but few imitators and lovers: 26
- he aimed at the masses: 174
- he caused the destruction of the bad press: 23
- he chose the most reputed cathedras to be heard: 19
- he chose well the terrain and the construction materials: 174
- he dedicated his life for the spread of the Gospel: 236
- he dedicated much care to the formation of his collaborators: 29
- he enjoys great power of intercession: 107
- he had a heart full of Jesus: 251
- he himself created the Society of St. Paul of which he is the founder... he elected us: 227
- he insists on the virtue of obedience: 65

- he learned from experience the value of the apostolate of prayer: 98
- he made himself form to give himself as example to be imitated: 227
- he reaches Rome safe due to his firm hope in God: 55
- he sowed everywhere the word of God: 19
- he still preaches with his immortal letters: 240
- he used a technical means: his letters, together with his word: 238
- he worked intensely to better himself: 28
- how to pray to –: 118ff
- how was the zeal of –: 86ff
- humility of –: 71ff
- if – were living today...: 226
- if he returned to the world he would make himself a journalist: 19; 93
- imitate Paul in order to imitate Christ: 154
- in – zeal became as if personified: 22
- in Rome: 269
- in the spirit of –: 268
- invoked for the pagans who live in the Orient: 215
- is a born preacher and at the same time a writer: 239
- is a creation of grace: 131f
- is a great teacher of truth: 241
- is a heart burning with love for God and with tender affection for his own: 26
- is model of every virtue: 146
- is model of poverty: 146
- is model of prayer: 146
- is our father, teacher, protector: 225f
- is our model and example in the way to imitate Jesus Christ: 147
- is present in the Church in a very strong and substantial way: 225
- is the model Apostle, tireless, audacious for Jesus Christ: 146
- is the perfect Teacher of sanctification: 237
- is the principal interpreter of the Divine Master: 273
- Jesus Christ is the reason of the existence of –: 145
- knows the Divine Master in his fullness and lives him completely: 270
- let us imitate – as he has imitated Christ: 34
- light of truth: 44
- little remembered and prayed to: 20
- Live again, Paul! (prayer to St. Paul): 213

- living again: 19
- loved prayer: 254
- loves us because he is our father and patron: 109
- loves us because we want to share his mission: 109
- loves us: 109ff
- Luke conquered by the example of –: 95
- meditate the letters of –: 154
- meditation on the “Chaplet to –”: 208ff
- mission of –: 77ff
- model, in content and form, of every priest-writer-Pauline: 234
- model of apostolic life: 149ff
- model of every individual and social virtue: 243f
- model of formators and formands: 223f
- model of practice of the commandments: 252ff
- model of virtue: 44
- obedience of –: 65ff
- often confesses his humility: 71
- on the footsteps of our Father: 221
- one must be the spirit, the one contained in the heart of –, “the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ”: 271
- one of the best homages to –: work for the good press: 43
- our master and model: 241ff
- *Paulus apostolus*: 159ff
- poverty of –: 68ff
- power of –: 107ff
- practical example of Christian experimental psychology: 28
- pray and act through – in Christ: 155
- Pray to – for the Orient: 215
- prayer to – to ask for patience: 125
- Prayer to – to obtain patience: 213
- prayers to –: 205ff
- prays for us to the most holy Virgin: 144
- preacher and model of obedience: 210
- preacher and writer: 219
- propagate the cult of –: 134ff
- protector of the Good Press: 22; 43
- reasons why he was chosen as protector of the Congregation: 143
- recent studies have developed knowledge about –: 22
- renounces all to gain Christ: 178
- some encouraging expressions of –: 229f
- teacher of chastity: 273
- teacher of obedience: 273

- teacher of poverty: 272f
- Teacher of the Gentiles and the most faithful interpreter of the Gospel: 143
- teaches us with his examples: 109
- the blessing of -: 276f
- the care of – for the formation of his cooperators: 29
- the Church gives glory to – throughout the centuries: 140
- the church of – in Alba and its “thesis”: 33ff
- the church of – is the center of diffusion of the devotion to -: 26
- the “code” of – (charity): 274
- the conversion of -: 261ff
- the descriptions of the Acts of the Apostles edify: 24
- the devotion to – is the principal source of energy: 221f
- the disciple that knows the Master: 270
- the doctor of the lovely virtue: 74
- the faith of – was constant: 50
- the faith of -: 49
- the fruits of the zeal of -: 89ff
- the glory of -: 140f
- the heart of – is the heart of Jesus Christ: 58; 144
- the heart of -: 26
- the hope of -: 52
- the letters of – are a very precious commentary to the Gospel: 240
- the love of – for neighbor: 59
- the man who lives in Christ: 145
- the martyrdom and the glory of -: 138ff
- the mission of – in the Church is amazing: 209
- the month to -: 45ff; 219f
- the most complete interpreter of the Divine Master: 225
- the patience of -: 123ff
- the Pauline Family must be – living today: 225; 226
- the power of – is great as his love: 148
- the saint of universality: 267
- the spirit of – is to be apostle: 112
- the true Founder of the Pauline Family: 225
- the “welcome” of -: 270
- the zeal of -: 82ff
- thirty thoughts for a month to -: 143ff
- through devotion to – love for Jesus and for neighbor: 20

- through him the Pauline Family was born, by him it was nourished and brought up, from him it took its spirit: 267
 - To – the Apostle (prayer): 214
 - to all in need of tender affection, recommended is devotion to –: 27
 - to give the message of salvation was the life of –: 236
 - two countermarks exhibited in the bookstores: the book of the Gospel and the image of –: 221
 - vessel of election: 73; 156ff
 - was an obedient man: 65
 - was dead to all his past: 177
 - was father and mother for all his children and brought up the Pauline Family that is his: 271
 - was made and made himself form, in order to reproduce Jesus Christ: 227
 - was prepared by the Lord with wisdom and love for his great apostolate and ministry: 257
 - we expect everything through the prayer of –: 214
 - we only understand him close to souls: 143
 - will enlighten and do such that his letters may be understood: 242
 - worked with great wisdom in the apostolate: 174
 - XIX centenary of the conversion: 220
 - XIX centenary of the letter of – to the Romans (1958): 233f
- Sacrifice:**
- the true religious and the priest must love – and suffering: 276
- Salvation:**
- to give the message of – was the life of St. Paul: 236
- Sanctification:**
- conversion and –: 236f
 - St. Paul is the perfect Teacher of –: 237
- Sanctity:**
- consists in conformity to the will of God: 236
 - constantly sought by St. Paul: 115
 - for St. Paul, – is the full maturity of man. It's the perfect man...: 226
 - humility and love are the two coefficients of –: 259
 - is asked from St. Paul: 115ff
 - is necessary for us: 115
 - it is attained gradually: 115

- make us saints, our invocation: 116
- weakness and –: 226

Scandals:

- the apostolate repairs –: 161

Secret:

- of greatness is to model oneself on God, living in Christ: 269
- or pact of success: 221f
- the – of all is charity: 147

Servants:

- St. Paul teaches that we are children and humble – of the Church: 237

Serve:

- God: the purpose of our vocation: 158

Similarity:

- between Paul and the priest as to the riches of divine gifts: 156

Sin:

- the – of the priest brings enormous damage to souls: 186
- the priest must destroy sin even to its very roots: 186
- the weapons of iniquity unto sin: 186ff
- we fight – through mortification and vigilance: 186

Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd: 261ff**Society:**

- the new law perfects and elevates the individual and –: 175

Society of St. Paul:

- employs the fastest and most effective means of good for the apostolate, in the spirit of St. Paul: 222
- St. Paul himself has created the – of which he is the founder: 227

cf also Pious Society of St. Paul

Soldier of Christ: 171ff**Soul:**

- one who has no zeal for his own –, has no zeal for his neighbor's: 212

Souls:

- all the – that delighted in reading St. Paul, became robust –: 242
- in waiting: 222
- St. Paul, we understand him only near to –: 143
- the divine Word will transform into life, way and truth for –: 34
- the sin of the priest causes great damage to –: 186
- zeal, is the flowering of love for God and for –: 198

Spirit:

- of St. Paul, always straining forward: 236
- of the apostolate: 112ff
- of the Pauline Family: to live integrally the Gospel, as interpreted by St. Paul: 271
- only one must be the –, the one contained in the heart of St. Paul, “the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ”: 271
- the – of Jesus Christ: 202ff
- the – of St. Paul is to be apostle: 112
- the – of the Apostle: 271
- the – of the Institute: 271
- the Pauline Family aspires to live integrally the Gospel in the – of St. Paul: 268
- the priest will become a true giver of life wherever he will bring the – that has nourished him: 190

Spirit, Holy

- guides the soul to sanctity: 203
- is the uncreated gift that produces the created gifts: 202
- makes adopted children of God: 202
- the apostolate if the fruit of the –: 203

Spirituality: cf Piety

Steps:

- three – in the life of the priest (renounce himself, take up his cross, and follow me): 187f

Stone:

- the first – of the Church of St. Paul: 35f

Straining:

- always – forward: 146; 147; 222; 236
- to be always on the go: in your spiritual work, in knowing the Lord, the Gospel, the doctrine of the Church, the Constitutions, in religious observance, in the apostolate: 147

Struggle:

- his weapons are spiritual (faith, prayer, charity): 171
- is part of the Christian life: 171
- let the Christian fighter always keep himself in the truth, in justice and in faith: 172

Students:

- St. Paul has many –, but few imitators: 26

Studies:

- recent – have increased knowledge about St. Paul: 22

Suffering:

- a form of apostolate: 160
- is not lacking in the life of the priest: 180
- purifies us and makes grow love for God: 181
- the priest shares the – and glory of Christ: 180
- the true religious and the priest must love sacrifice and –: 276

Superiors:

- toward – we owe veneration, prayers, obedience, collaboration: 274

Sword:

- book and – (description of the Pauline emblem): 237f

Teacher:

- Mary Mother, – and Queen of the Apostles: 24

Thesis:

- of the church of St. Paul in Alba: gather from the lips of the Divine Master the divine Word that will become way, truth and life for souls: 34

Thoughts:

- thirty – for a month to St. Paul: 143ff

Title:

- apostle is the – that St. Paul attributes to himself and which he values most: 143

Today:

- If St. Paul were living –...: 226ff
- the Pauline Family must be St. Paul living –: 225; 226

Truth:

- St. Paul is a great teacher of –: 241
- cf also* Way, Truth and Life

Unity:

- reasons for – among the religious members: 274

Universal center:

- Jesus Christ –: 127ff
- Jesus Christ –: fundamental teaching of St. Paul: 127

Universality:

- of St. Paul: 234
- St. Paul, the saint of –: 267

Value:

- the – of grace: 131ff

Veneration:

- toward the Superiors we owe: –, prayers, obedience, collaboration: 274

Vigilance:

- sin is fought with mortification and –: 186

Vine:

- you must be the branch that stays united to the –

(Christ, the Pope, the Church) to accomplish well your mission in the Church: 148

Virginity:

– in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 207

Virtue:

- of poverty: 211
- of the apostle: zeal: 275f
- St. Paul is the model of every –: 146
- St. Paul, model of every –, individual and social: 243f

Visit:

– let the Letters of St. Paul be often read during the –: 243

Vocation/s:

- all the – of the apostle were formed, developed and launched in the apostolate: 145
- end of our – (to better know, believe, serve and love God): 158
- our – is similar to that of Paul (bring the name of Jesus): 156f
- vessel of election: 73; 156ff

Vow:

– of poverty: 211

Way: cf Way, Truth and Life

Way, Truth and Life:

- Christ, the way, the truth and the life: 216
- Jesus –: 175; 221
- Jesus Christ –: 215; 268; 271
- Jesus Master, –: 207; 238
- may the Divine Master be your –: 34
- the divine Master, –: 215
- the divine Word will become – for souls: 34
- the integral Christ: 270
- the integral Jesus Christ: 271

Welcome:

– the – of St. Paul: 270f

Will:

- good –: 264
- second condition for conversion: good –: 262

Wisdom:

- A wise architect: 174ff
- in the heart of Jesus is –: 144
- what a great – this is, if we live in humility and love: 260

Word:

- God blesses the preachers: 102
- St. Paul apostle of the –: 101ff
- St. Paul sowed everywhere the – of God: 19

- St. Paul used technical means: his letters, together with his -: 238
- the - of God is not bound: 223
- the divine - will transform itself into life, way and truth for souls: 34

Works:

- form of apostolate: 160
- St. Paul apostle by his -: 104

World:

- bring the name of Jesus Christ to the whole -: 50
- converting the - is something that belongs to one who is truly of God: 163
- diffusion of the Gospel to all the -: 104
- even the - is waiting from us the spread of the devotion to St. Paul: 136
- for Paul, the - and peoples to be converted are not numerous enough: 102
- go to the whole -, preach the Gospel to all creatures: 212
- let your light shine before the -: 96
- may his light shine before the -: 216
- may the warm breath of true charity pass through the -: 214

- O holy Apostle, you have taught the whole -: 214
- Peter and Paul enlighten the whole -: 141
- St. Paul called to preach to all the -: 156
- St. Paul has drawn the admiration of the -: 45
- St. Paul has enlightened the - through the splendor of his doctrine and examples: 43
- St. Paul has filled the - with his word and miracles: 71
- St. Paul traveled the -: 146
- the - glorifies St. Paul: 140
- the Apostle Paul has traveled the then known -: 22
- the apostles gave themselves to evangelize the -: 101
- the big - accepted the Gospel: 160
- the good done by St. Paul to the -: 20
- the gospel was announced to all the -: 89
- the Pauline Family has a large opening to the whole -: 268
- through your holy cross and death you have redeemed the -: 180

- to give Jesus Christ to the –, in a complete way: 271
- to make known the Savior Jesus to the last confines of the –: 213
- to order the – in the spirit of St. Paul: 136

Writer:

- like Paul the preacher and –: 219
- St. Paul was born a preacher and at the same time a –: 239
- St. Paul, great preacher and –: model to be imitated: 239
- St. Paul, model in content and in form, of every priest-writer-Pauline: 234

Year to St. Paul:

- a – consecrated to St. Paul the Apostle (1957): 228ff
- course of meditations every Monday of the week during the – (life, doctrine, cult and devotion): 230ff
- ends of the – (gratitude, knowledge, imitation, intercession, love, discernment): 228f

Young:

- actual main work of the Pious Society of St. Paul: the formation of the –: 32
- have a great love for prayer when you are –: 253

Youth:

- is the foundation of manhood and of old age: 253

Zeal:

- apostolic – in the “Chaplet to St. Paul”: 208
- false and true –: 197
- has given rise to many works in support of evangelization: 104
- he who does not have – for his own soul, does not have it for his neighbor: 212
- how to acquire true –: 83
- how true – is recognized: 197
- how was St. Paul’s –: 86ff
- in St. Paul – became as it were personified: 22
- is the flowering of love for God and souls: 198
- marks of true –: 197
- not always do we obtain fruit from our works of –: 90
- of St. Paul: 82ff; 245
- thanks to the – of St. Paul, many disciples became saints: 89
- the – of St. Paul devised many initiatives for the advantage of preaching: 104
- the fruits of the – of St. Paul 89ff
- the greatest glory of St. Paul: 82
- the marks of –: ardent, prudent, tireless: 82

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – through his – St. Paul converted an immense number of souls: 89 – true – dedicates itself to a mission legitimately conferred: 86 – true – is born of a heart in love with God: 86 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – true – must have great ardor for one's piety and virtue: 87 – true – works for the Church: 86 – virtue of the apostle: 275f – Zeal for your house: 197ff <p><i>cf also</i> Apostolate</p> |
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GENERAL INDEX

Summary	5
Initials and abbreviations	6
Preface.....	9
Introduction.....	13
I. IN THE “PAULINE SPRINGTIME”	
From <i>Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa</i> (1918-1927)	17
<i>Premise</i>	19
St. Paul living again	19
Devotion to St. Paul	20
The Conversion of St. Paul	21
St. Paul protector of the Good Press	22
New times and ancient and new devotions	23
The heart of Saint Paul.....	26
The care of Saint Paul in the formation of his cooperators	29
The church of St. Paul in Alba and its “thesis”	33
The church of the Good Press	34
II. A MONTH TO SAINT PAUL	
<i>Meditations and readings</i> (1918-1925).....	37
<i>Premise</i>	39
A month to Saint Paul. <i>Meditations and readings</i>	42
Introduction.....	43
1. The month to Saint Paul.....	45
2. The faith of Saint Paul	49
3. The hope of Saint Paul.....	52
4. Charity of St. Paul for God.....	56
5. The charity of St. Paul for neighbor	59
6. Conversion of Saint Paul.....	62
7. Obedience of St. Paul.....	65
8. Poverty of St. Paul.....	68

9. Humility of St. Paul.....	71
10. Chastity of St. Paul.....	74
11. The mission of Saint Paul.....	77
12. Correspondence of Saint Paul	79
13. The zeal of Saint Paul.....	82
14. How St. Paul's zeal was	86
15. The fruits of the zeal of St. Paul.....	89
16. Saint Paul apostle of the Good Press.....	92
17. Saint Paul apostle by his example	95
18. Saint Paul apostle through his prayers	98
19. Saint Paul apostle through his word	101
20. Saint Paul apostle through his works	104
21. Power of Saint Paul	107
22. Saint Paul loves us.....	109
23. The spirit of the apostolate	112
24. Sanctity.....	115
25. How to pray to Saint Paul - I.....	118
26. How to pray to Saint Paul - II.....	121
27. The patience of Saint Paul.....	123
28. Jesus Christ, universal center	127
29. The value of grace	131
30. Propagate the cult of Saint Paul	134
31. The martyrdom and the glory of Saint Paul	138

Appendix:

Thirty thoughts for a month to Saint Paul	143
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III. SAINT PAUL MODEL OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

<i>Premise</i>	151
Spiritual Exercises (<i>Albano, 26 April - 5 May 1947</i>)	153
1. " <i>Imitatores Dei sicut filii carissimi</i> " (Ef 5:1)	154
2. " <i>Vas electionis</i> "	156
3. " <i>Paulus Apostolus</i> "	159
4. " <i>Homo Dei</i> "	162
5. " <i>Pro hominibus constitutus</i> "	165
6. " <i>Prædicator</i> "	168

7. “*Miles Christi*” 171
 8. “*Sapiens architectus*” 174
 9. “*Configuratus morti ejus*” 177
 10. “*Ut sequamini vestigia ejus*” 180
 11. “*Sempiternum habet sacerdotium*” 183
 12. “*Arma iniquitatis peccato*” 186
 13. “*Viventes Deo in Christo Jesu*” 189
 14. “*Considerate pontificem*” 192
 15. “*Sollicite cura teipsum*” 195
 16. “*Zelus domus tuæ*” 197
 17. “*In domo Dei*” 199
 18. The spirit of Jesus Christ..... 202

IV. PRAYERS TO SAINT PAUL 205

CHAPLET TO SAINT PAUL 207
 The Chaplet to St. Paul (*Meditation*) 208
 Prayer to St. Paul to obtain patience 213
 Live again, Paul! 213
 To Saint Paul the Apostle..... 214
 Prayer for the Orient..... 215
 For one’s own nation..... 216

V. ARTICLES AND INTERVENTIONS OF MATURITY 217

Premise..... 219

FROM THE BULLETIN “SAN PAOLO”

Like Paul the preacher and writer 219
 The month to St. Paul..... 219
 Pastoral loftiness 220
 Centenary of his conversion..... 220
 Brothers in Saint Paul..... 221
 Two countermarks..... 221
 The pact and intercession 221
 Souls in waiting..... 222
 Sons and active imitators..... 222
 Radio St. Paul..... 222

The Word is not bound.....	223
Love for the Church	223
Paul model of formators and formands	223
The true founder	225
Father, teacher, protector.....	225
Weakness and sanctity.....	226
“If Paul were living today...”	226
A year to Saint Paul the Apostle (from 25-1-1957 to 25-1-1958)	228
Course of meditations for every Monday of the week in the year of Saint Paul.....	230
XIX centenary of the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (58-1958).....	233
To Saint Paul the trekker	235
Pauline pedagogy and personality	235
Give the Gospel.....	236
Always straining forward	236
Conversion and sanctification	236
Book and sword (<i>Description of the Pauline emblem</i>) ...	237
Great	238
1967: Centenary of the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul.....	238

B. FROM TAPE-RECORDED MEDITATIONS

Saint Paul our teacher and model (From <i>Esercizi e ritiri</i> , August 1935, of the P. M. in Alba).....	241
In adoration with Saint Paul (<i>To the Pious Disciples Sisters, Rome, feast of St. Scholastica, 10 February 1947</i>)	248
Saint Paul, model in the practice of the commandments (<i>Meditation given in Rome on 2 June 1956</i>).....	252
The preparation of Saint Paul for his great ministry: <i>Grow in humility and love</i>	256
The conversion of Saint Paul (<i>To the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, Albano Laziale, 23 January 1961</i>)	261

VI. TESTAMENTARY DIRECTIVES	265
<i>Premise</i>	267
Saint Paul Father, Teacher, Exemplar, Founder.....	267
The Saint of universality	267
In the spirit of Saint Paul.....	268
Paul in Rome	269
Work.....	269
Paul, the Disciple who knows the Master	270
The “Welcome” of Saint Paul	270
The spirit of the Apostle.....	271
The spirit of the Institute	271
Paul teacher of poverty.....	272
Teacher of obedience	273
Teacher of obedience	273
Interpreter of the Divine Master.....	273
The “code” of Saint Paul.....	274
Virtue of the apostle: zeal	275
The blessing of Saint Paul.....	276
Postface	
<i>The Pauline Family, “Saint Paul living today”</i>	279
INDEXES.....	291
Index of biblical citations.....	293
Index of places	299
Index of names of persons.....	301
Analytical index	305
General index	345

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