



The Holy See

MEETING WITH THE PAULINE FAMILY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Paul VI Audience Hall

Thursday, 27 November 2014

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Pauline Family!

I welcome you with joy on the occasion of your centenary. I greet the Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, consecrated men and women and faithful lay people. I thank the Vicar General for his words and I wholeheartedly join in mourning Superior General Fr Silvio Sassi, who is participating from heaven in this festive moment.

Your centenary offers you the opportunity to renew your commitment to living the faith and to spreading it, especially through publishing and multimedia tools, typical of your charism. Every man and woman living on this earth are beneficiaries of the Good News that God is love and, through Jesus Christ, this is spread to all people. Every person receives it, in the integrality of his/her person, of his/her history, of his/her culture.

Jesus says: “You received without pay, give without pay” (Mt 10:8). In these words lies the secret to evangelization, which is to spread the Gospel in the style of the Gospel, therefore without pay. Gratis, without business transactions. Freely given. The joy of the gift received through pure love is communicated with love. Gratuitousness and love. Only those who have experienced such joy can communicate this. Rather, they cannot but communicate it, for “goodness always tends to spread.... As it expands, goodness takes root and develops” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 9).

I encourage you to continue on the path that Fr Alberione began and that your Family has taken until now, keeping your gaze always fixed on vast horizons. We must never forget that

“evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of them are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone” (*ibid.*, n. 15). This impetus is towards “peoples” but also to the existential peripheries, a “Catholic” impetus. You all have this in your blood, in your DNA for the very reason that your Founder was inspired by the person and the mission of the Apostle Paul.

The Second Vatican Council presented the Church to us as a people who, on a path towards a goal, overcomes all things and fulfills all things in God and in his glory. This vision of the outward-moving Church expresses Christian hope. In fact, the ultimate purpose of the action of Christians on earth is to attain eternal life. Therefore, our being a Church on a path, while it roots us in our duty to announce Christ and his love for every creature, it prevents us from being prisoners of earthly and worldly things. It keeps the spirit open and empowers us with perspectives and desires which are fulfilled in the Beatitudes of the Lord.

Regarding this perspective of hope, consecrated people are special witnesses with their lifestyle imbued with joy. The presence of religious men and women is a sign of joy. Joy which springs from the intimate experience with God who fills our heart and makes us truly happy, so that we need not search elsewhere for our joy. Other important elements which nourish the joy of the religious are genuine fraternity lived in community and complete oblation in serving the Church and the brethren, especially the most needy.

And here, it is important to mention love of Church unity. All of your work, apostolic zeal, must be full of love of unity. Never foster conflict, never imitate the media outlets which seek only the spectacle of conflict and cause scandal in souls. Always foster Church unity, the unity which Jesus asked of the Father as a gift for his bride.

In proclaiming Jesus and the Gospel to the masses, Bl. Giacomo Alberione saw the most authentic and necessary love that one can offer to men and women thirsty for truth and justice. He was deeply touched by the words of St Paul: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16) and made them the ideal of his own life and mission. In following the footsteps of Jesus and imitating the Apostle of the Gentiles, he understood how to see the crowds as stray sheep, in need of sure directions for the journey of life. He thus spent his entire existence breaking the bread of the Word with them, using language suited to the times. In this way, you too are called to serve, with creativity and dynamic faithfulness to your charism, the people of today, whom the Spirit sends to you, identifying the most appropriate ways, in order that Jesus may be proclaimed. The vast horizons of evangelization and the urgent need to bear witness to the Gospel: don’t just speak the words. Bear witness to it with your life. This testimony to all is the field of your apostolate. Many are still waiting to meet Jesus Christ. The vision of charity knows no limits and knows how to open ever new avenues to bring the breath of the Gospel into cultures and to the

most diverse areas of society.

Such an urgent mission requires constant personal and community conversion. Only hearts which are totally open to the action of Grace are able to interpret the signs of the times and to hear the cries of humanity in need of hope and peace. In your *sequela Christi* and in your witness, the Year for Consecrated Life, which is about to begin in a few days, will certainly aid you.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Holy Virgin, Mother of the Church, protect you, aid you and be a sure guide on the path of the Pauline Family, in order that you may bring to fruition every initiative for good. With these wishes, I assure each one of you of my remembrance in prayer and I ask you in turn to please pray for me. And now I willingly invoke the Lord's blessing on you, on those you represent, on the readers of your magazine and on those whom you meet in your Apostolate everyday. Let us pray together to Our Lady: *Hail Mary*....