

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE PIOUS SOCIETY OF SAINT PAUL
AND TO THE PAULINE FAMILY**

Saturday, 28 June 1969

We are aware that you all have been waiting thank you for your patience. And now we are pleased to meet you with all our hearts.

Venerable Brothers and Dearest Sons!

Behold before us the Pious Society of St. Paul, of Alba (*Piedmont*), and now established with its Generalate here in Rome. We know well, it is not a simple institution, but a Family, the “Pauline Family”, composed of various religious institutes, which today we like to welcome with us. Here are: the Pious Society of St. Paul, which now has fifty-five years of life, since it began its fervent activity and its wide and varied expansion because here are also the Sisters of the Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul and with them the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, the Pastorelle Sisters, the Apostoline Sisters, and representatives of the other aggregated institutes: that of Jesus the High Priest, that of St. Gabriel for the Young and that of Our Lady of the Annunciation for the Young. So a flourishing tree with a single root and eight branches. How glad we are to have you present today, to reflect on your activities, and to be able to bless you.

Continuity and capillarity

We know these activities, which are all characterized by spirit and apostolic purpose: yours is the apostolate of the editions, the main one; yours is the liturgical apostolate, the parish apostolate, the vocational apostolate, and the one for the intensity of Christian life in various categories of people. And we remember how your apostolate began with the modern use of those extraordinary instruments that serve the so-called social communications and form one of the characteristic data of the Pauline Family: that is, they serve for you in the apostolate: the press above all, then the radio, the cinema, and now they tell us that there are also records. And each of these means extends its service to different purposes: books, periodicals, magazines, editions of Sacred Scripture, liturgical publications, catechisms, courses in religious culture by correspondence, and so on. And this flowering of diffusive forms of Christian thought and the word is matched by the geographical spread of your initiatives: your work now reaches every continent, many nations; it takes on a missionary character and new ways of apostolic penetration are opened up everywhere. If Our observation is correct, two practical virtues distinguish and give effectiveness to your expansive method: that is, continuity, constancy, perseverance, nothing amateur or sudden, and this seems to be one of the characteristics of your Founder: the continuity of the various initiatives. And the second practical virtue is the capillarity of their diffusion...

There are these good Sisters of yours, going everywhere. We said in an audience that they make us think of ants that go everywhere... We could, according to the comparisons offered to us by nature, think of the bees, which make the hive and carry the honey, and go around here and there, and then return to their central, really creating in the animal world, these exceptional insects, the sense of community and society among the living.

The capillarity, we were saying, of their diffusion, what allows us to glimpse as other virtues - moral and spiritual, these, since those practices are not enough - support this work: and it is the virtues to which we gladly give praise that we always recommend you to cultivate and that is: the administrative wisdom (do the math! the Gospel tells us: *prius computans sumptus*), the watchful eye (also here it seems a simple thing) on the needs of our time, the anxiety to bring food and comfort to the people of today, the spirit of fidelity and sacrifice to give the technical instrument its effectiveness, charity in truth.

How many people live in their own time without seeing anything! One might say that he is short-sighted or blind: but don't you see that here there are souls who need it! but don't you see that here there is the possibility of doing good! don't you see that here there is an urgent need to intervene! don't you see that here there is an appeal of charity! don't you see that here there is a need for someone to sacrifice and serve?

Now, it is this vigilance that the Gospel recommends so much to us: and it was the virtue of your Institution.

And then, and then... We remember some details of our pastoral period in Milan: we often had the opportunity to intervene in the inauguration of very beautiful buildings, schools or other, and we always remembered this consideration: modern civilization creates magnificent instruments, as if one were creating a beautiful piano, but does not create who plays this piano; it creates schools, but does not create teachers, or teachers such as to do good to pupils, souls, teachers who need their lives, their salvation. We are better at creating instruments than creating true spiritual movements. Christianity, on the other hand, is often stripped of instruments, but it has this virtue and this dignity that is the prince of word and grace.

And you have been able to unite these two things: the instrument with the end, the purpose, the content that the instrument must have.

And we look with complacency and admiration at the rapid and great growth of your work: people and initiatives have multiplied, great, consoling and unusual results have been achieved, techniques and contents have been perfected. The Pious Society of St. Paul, with its various branches and with the volume of its production and the ability of its irradiation, has become so great and vital as to constitute a remarkable fact in the life of the Church in this century.

The Society of St. Paul is truly inscribed in the history and life of the Church. And we are pleased to be aware of this consoling fact, and to bear witness to it, praising the Lord.

In the life of the Church you have "*ante et post litteram*" realized many proposals of the Ecumenical Council in the field of social communications. We gladly give you recognition, praise and encouragement.

The question arises spontaneously: How did the Pious Society of St. Paul succeed in such a conspicuous way and in such a relatively short time?

New means of apostolate

The answer seems easy to us, even if it still remains full of secrets, the secrets of the works of the kingdom of God. Two factors, it seems to us, have contributed to obtaining this magnificent result, which others promise: two wills, that of a man and that of God, that of a humble and faithful servant and the paternal and prodigal servant of the Lord, who has certainly blessed to a singular extent the great enterprise of the Pious Society of Saint Paul. And then you understand Us: we owe to your Founder here present, to the dear and

venerated father James Alberione, the construction of your monumental Institute. In the name of Christ, we thank him and bless him. Here he is: humble, silent, tireless, always vigilant, always gathered in his thoughts, running from prayer to work (according to the traditional formula: "*ora et labora*"), always intent on scrutinizing the "signs of the times", that is, the most ingenious ways of reaching souls, our Father Alberione has given the Church new tools to express herself, new means to give strength and breadth to her apostolate, new capacity and new awareness of the validity and possibility of her mission in the modern world and with the modern means.

Let us, dear Fr Alberione, let the Pope enjoy this long, faithful and untiring effort and the fruits produced by it to the glory of God and to the good of the Church; let your children enjoy with Us and that today they express their affection and their promise to persevere in the work undertaken as never before.

Therefore, as a sign of Our benevolence and Our gratitude, to the comfort of the whole Pauline Family and to the encouragement of those who dedicate themselves to the cause of the Catholic apostolate through the generous promotion and right use of the means of social communication. Today we want to confer on the venerated and venerating Father James Alberione *the Cross "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice"*!

Revision of the Constitutions

And allow Us, dearest Children, to corroborate with your vows, your courageous apostolic commitment. We know that the various Institutes headed by the Pious Society of St. Paul have begun, or are about to begin, their special General Chapter for the adaptation of their Constitutions to the norms of the recent Council. This is an excellent opportunity for all of you to become more aware of your belonging to the Holy Church not as mere devout children, but as passive ones, as well as hard-working children consecrated to your interior sanctification, to your spiritual and social consistency, to your ever new and dynamic diffusion, for your own good and for the good of the whole contemporary world. Always having a clear conscience of one's vocation is very important. In this way you must renew your intentions and your plans; you must restore your hearts with that adherence to Christ the Lord, of whom Saint Paul, your and our inspirer and protector, was and still is a teacher and an example.

Professional and ecclesial loyalty

You have embraced a great cause. And every great cause, while it is a source of spiritual energy and demands love, dedication and sacrifice, involves great responsibilities, great duties, and therefore also risks and dangers. Yes, think of your responsibility: whoever proposes the apostolate as the goal of his life, the powerful apostolate of the means of social communication, must always have this responsibility before his own conscience, that is to say to exert an influence on the minds of others, on the lives of men, who are, near or far, our neighbour; that neighbour whom we must love and serve as Christ loved and saved us. This sense of responsibility and this Christian love will always guide the directive and selective criteria of what we want to communicate to others.

You certainly know what the Council has taught in this regard, both on information and on freedom of the press and communication. Yes, we must use the right to research and provide information; but we must never forget the duties inherent in this. "The right exercise - says the Council - of this right requires that communication, in its content, always respond

to the truth, and that it be integral in respect of justice and charity; moreover, as far as the way is concerned, it be honest and appropriate, strictly respecting moral laws, legitimate rights and human dignity, both in the search for news and in its dissemination" and also, always respecting "the primacy of the objective moral order" (Decree *Inter mirifica*", nos. 5 and 6), as always paying attention "to the formation and manifestation of right public opinions" (*ibid*, n. 8).

You, who have publications which have achieved such a wide and popular circulation, you will always want to be vigilant in this regard; you will have to evaluate, not only the interest that a news can raise, but you will have to consider the good or harmful effects that its dissemination can produce, especially to those Catholics, to whose wellbeing you have dedicated yourselves; and adherence to the directive guidelines of the responsible ecclesiastical authority will confer not only greater credit on your work, but also greater merit. Neither particular opinions that differ from professional and ecclesial loyalty, nor interests extraneous to the cause of the apostolate, nor reasons of prestige, or otherwise, should ever prevail over the righteousness of your apostolic service!

In this trust, dearest Children, with this vow that each of you may repeat for yourselves the word of Saint Paul: "I do everything for the cause of the Gospel! (*1 Cor 9:23*), with all our hearts we bless you all.