



FINAL MESSAGE

XXXV MEETING OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

EVANGELII GAUDIUM QUESTIONS THE PAULINE FAMILY THE CHALLENGES REGARDING THE FAMILY AND THE PROTECTION OF CREATION

Divine Master Retreat House
Ariccia, 8-10 January 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are writing to you from Ariccia, Italy at the end of the 35th Annual Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family. We thank the Lord that once again we had the chance to get together to reflect, question ourselves and encourage one another in order to better respond to our universal mandate to announce the Gospel of joy to the people of our time, following the same journey of the Church delineated in the magisterium of Pope Francis, and to respond to it according to the mission of communication we received as a heritage from our Founder, in keeping with the individual charism of each Congregation. We lived days of intense communion, which should always characterize our relationships within the Pauline Family so that it will be ever-more attractive and luminous, as Fr. Valdir José De Castro, Superior General of the Society of St. Paul, said in his opening address.

The first thing we did was to welcome the sisters of the new General Governments of the Pious Disciples and of the Pastorelle Sisters who, precisely in these months, are continuing to guide their Congregations toward the goals set by their respective General Chapters for the next six-years.

Sr. Regina Cesarato, PDDM, and Fr. Armando Matteo, in their talks about the family and the created world (available on the www.alberione.org website), underscored several decisive aspects that can help make what is human even more human: diversity as a positive element inscribed by God in creation and therefore in humanity; the need to come out of oneself so as to live love (both spousal and fraternal) to the full; the recovery of the “trade” dimension of how to “craft” a family (cf. AL 16) and how to develop educational relationships that lead one to live in a mature way in a wide variety of contexts (family, school, religious formation, etc.). This is even more necessary in the current circumstances, in which a great anthropological change is underway—what Pope Francis calls *rapidación* (LS n. 18), a neologism that indicates the rapid evolution of technology and of the human being’s vision of him/herself.

The video of a conference by Comboni missionary Fr. Alex Zanotelli (the link can be found on our international website) highlights how some major themes are profoundly interconnected and require a decisive response from everyone, especially the baptized and, among these, we consecrated persons. We refer in particular to inhumane finance, which at this point has spun out of control; to the superpower of banks and the consequent crisis of politics on the world level; to the flourishing arms trade; to the trafficking of toxic waste; to an unrestrained and voracious consumerism; to the poverty that engulfs vast areas of the globe; to countless wars; to the immense flow of migrants to Europe, and to the serious and accelerated degradation of the environment.

Taking these provocations and our subsequent work in small groups as a point of departure, we feel that it is urgent to make concrete commitments on our part both individually and on the circumscriptional and congregational levels. We list a few of these here so that you can share them with us:

- greater attention to creation by adopting more environmentally-friendly lifestyles that enable us to distinguish the necessary from the superfluous and that prompt us to be frugal in the use of electricity, food, fossil fuels and water (for example, using non-biodegradable material such as plastic as little as possible);
- greater attention to how the savings of our Congregations are invested on both the central and local levels; in particular, to ensure that our bank deposits are not invested in companies that have ethically reprehensible behavior (such as the production of weapons, toxic waste, life-threatening chemicals, etc.) or in investment funds and derivatives that feed an overblown and overbearing finance;
- to become more involved in public forums, both ecclesial and civil, where issues related to justice, peace and the safeguarding of creation are discussed;
- to be animators, through our specific apostolate, in how to give greater importance to the family, the primary place of the human being and for transmitting the Faith, and to the protection of creation, sensitizing our listeners to these decisive themes for the future of creation.

These points seem to be consistent with the five functions of Pauline poverty: *to renounce independent administration, to produce through diligent work, to preserve the things we use, to provide for the needs of the Institute, and to build up by correcting an avidity for goods.*

With regard to the formation course on the Charism of the Pauline Family, now in its 21st edition and a one-of-a-kind program on the worldwide level, we want to share with you our hope that more of our brothers and sisters will participate in this experience. We also hope that the course will become a place for research, deeper study and the comparison of ideas among professors who lecture in common thematic areas.

Let us also remember that this year will be full of events for the Pauline Family: the Interchapter Meeting of the Society of Saint Paul, the 5th General Chapter of the Apostoline Sisters, the International Congress of the Pauline Cooperators, the Centenary of the death of Maggiorino Vigolungo, and the 80th anniversary of foundation of the Pastorelle Sisters. We invite everyone to accompany each of these milestones with abundant prayer, so that they may be authentic events of the Spirit and open our communities to the dimension of prophecy.

Yet another important event of the universal Church will accompany us during these months: the Synod of Bishops on Young People. In regard to this we want to notify you in advance and with great enthusiasm that, in full harmony with this occasion and convinced of the beauty of the Pauline vocation, we have decided to hold a vocational year from 25 January 2019 to 25 January 2020.

Grateful to the Lord for all that he sowed in us in these days and with a sense of nostalgia for the absence of the lay component of the Pauline Family— which we hope to remedy in the future —we want to wish everyone, and in a special way our Cooperators scattered throughout the world, the capacity to live always more profoundly the extraordinary wealth of God's grace so as to ardently proclaim the Gospel of joy to every creature.

With affectionate greetings in Christ the Master,

Ariccia, 10 January 2018

**THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE XXXV MEETING
OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS
OF THE PAULINE FAMILY**