

**JAMES ALBERIONE:  
"A MARVEL OF OUR TIMES"**

**(PAUL VI)**



**JAMES ALBERIONE**  
“MARVEL OF OUR TIMES”  
-PAUL VI

by  
Rev. Stephen Lamera, S.S.P.

Translated by  
Daughters of St. Paul



**JAMES ALBERIONE**  
**“A Marvel of Our Times”**

*Nihil obstat*

REV. RICHARD V. LAWLOR, S.J.

**Censor Deputatus**

*Imprimatur*

**HUMBERTO MEDEIROS**

Lamera, Stephen,

JAMES ALBERIONE: A MARVEL OF OUR TIMES.

TRANSLATION OF DON GIACOMA ALBERIONE

1. Alberione, Giacomo Guisepe, 1884-1971
2. Catholic Church-Clergy-Biography
3. Clergy-Italy-Biography

Copyright © 1977 by

Daughters of St. Paul, USA

All rights reserved.

---

Published and distributed by

*Paulines* Publishing House

Daughters of St. Paul

2650 F.B. Harrison Street

1300 Pasay, Philippines

Email: [edpph@paulines.ph](mailto:edpph@paulines.ph)

Website: [www.paulines.ph](http://www.paulines.ph)



at the service of the Gospel and culture

# CONTENTS

Foreword . . . . .	6
Presentation . . . . .	7
<i>PART I</i>	
His Life . . . . .	13
<i>PART II</i>	
His Work . . . . .	63
<i>PART III</i>	
The Secret of the Man of God . . . . .	115
Reputation for Sanctity . . . . .	163
Thanksgiving for Favors Received . . . . .	175
Prayers . . . . .	179

## FOREWORD

*I commend to you this book on the life and work of Fr. James Alberione. His life and his work were inseparable. He was a man consumed with the desire to spread the Gospel, a modern day St. Paul, under whose protection he placed the religious congregations he founded to spread and continue his work.*

*Convinced of the power of the printed word to influence the minds and hearts of people, he dedicated himself to putting the technology of modern means of mass communication to work in behalf of the Gospel message. His success is attested to by the rapidity with which his foundations have spread throughout the world.*

*But Fr. Alberione was more than just a man of foresight and practicality. He was a man of deep spirituality, as this book so successfully shows. I am pleased that the Daughters of St. Paul are, through the publication of this English Edition, making the life, work and holiness of Fr. James Alberione more widely known and appreciated in the English speaking world.*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph L. Bernardin  
Archbishop of Cincinnati

## PRESENTATION

Many know the work of Father Alberione through the numerous apostolic initiatives to which his spiritual sons and daughters in the world consecrate themselves. But too few know the life of this servant of God, whom Pope Paul VI did not hesitate to call “one of the marvels of our century.”

This brief account of his life, with the presentation of his work and, above all, with some mention of the mystery of grace hidden in his soul, offers to those who desire it the possibility of better knowing this great apostle of our times.

I dedicate these pages to Mary most holy, who was for this most beloved son of hers Mother, Teacher and Queen.

Father Stephen Lamera



## FATHER ALBERIONE AS DESCRIBED BY PAUL VI

It seemed to us that the best way to introduce a profile of Father Alberione, whose cause for beautification and canonization is in process, is with the words of Pope Paul VI. On receiving the humble Founder, together with his Sons and Daughters, in the Clementine Hall, on June 28, 1969, the Holy Father said:

### **The Servant of God, Father Alberione**

“We owe to your Founder, here present, 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 watchful, always recollected with his thoughts which run from prayer to work in accordance with the traditional dictum: *Ora et labora* (pray and work), ever intent on scrutinizing ‘the signs of the times,’ that is to say, the most inspired means of reaching souls. Our Father Alberione has given the Church new ways of expressing herself, new means to invigorate and broaden her apostolate, new capacities and a new awareness of the validity and possibilities of her mission in the modern world and with modern means.

“Permit the Pope, dear Father Alberione, to rejoice at this long, faithful and unwearied efforts and the fruits it has produced for God’s glory and the good of the Church.

## **His work**

“Here before us we see the Pious Society of St. Paul, which originated in Alba, Piedmont, but whose General House is now established in Rome. We know well that it is no simple institution: it is a family, the ‘Pauline Family,’ composed of various religious institutes, which we are pleased to welcome here today and, as it were, pass in review.

“We see here the Pious Society of St. Paul, now fifty-five years old—years of fervent activity and wide and diversified expansion. And with it are the Daughters of St. Paul, the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Queen of Apostles Sisters and representatives of the three secular institutes—that of Jesus the Priest, that of St. Gabriel the Archangel for men, and that of Mary Most Holy of the Annunciation for women. A flourishing tree with one root and with eight branches! How happy we are to see you here today, to reflect upon your activities, and to be able to bless you all!

## **Worldwide expansion of his apostolate**

“We know about this work, every aspect of which is marked with apostolic spirit and apostolic aim. Yours is the apostolate of the editions, the principal one; yours is the apostolate of the liturgy, the apostolate in the parish, the apostolate of vocations and that of increasing the intensity of Christian life in various classes of people. And we well remember that it began by making modern

use of those prodigious means now used for social communications and which form one of the characteristic aspects of the Pauline Family. That is in your apostolate you see above all the printing press, then radio, motion pictures, and now records. And every one of those means is extending its service to diverse purposes, with books, periodicals, magazines, editions of Sacred Scripture, liturgical publications, catechisms, correspondence courses in religious instructions, and so forth. And besides this flowering of forms of propagation of Christian thought and the Christian word, there is the geographical expansions of your efforts. Your work is now being carried out in all continents and reaches many nations. It has taken on a missionary character and everywhere is blazing new trails for apostolic activity.

— Pope Paul VI



## PART ONE

### *His Life*

*“Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ.”*  
– *from the Liturgy*

*“Everything and only for the glory of God  
and the salvation of souls.”*  
– *Father Alberione*



## HIS BIRTH, HIS FAMILY, HIS EDUCATION

*“One by one, as we were born, Mother consecrated each of us to Mary, Queen of the Flowers.”*

Father Alberione wrote these words in 1959, more than seventy years after his birth on April 4, 1884, at San Lorenzo di Fossano (Cuneo, North Italy).

He was the fifth son of a peasant family and had a more delicate physical constitution than his brothers. Therefore his parents feared for his life. Being persons of great faith, and not wishing to be at fault before God, they had him baptized the day after his birth.

It is not a cliché to say that it was within his family that little James received his first education in honest and laborious living. There he acquired a well-defined and certain faith. His parents taught not by word alone, but with their daily example: by attendance at church and by their work.

It is not by chance that Father Alberione, as an educator and as one who knew how to stir up powers, always united words to examples. This coherence was precisely one of the qualities which most deeply impressed and attracted his spiritual children. He “did and taught” (Acts 1:1), after the example of Jesus Master.

## His mother

Due to his delicate health, James was brought up with great care and attention, but without any distinctions either in food or in work. For example, James dislike turnips. Yet, whenever he was home from the seminary, his mother would cook them every once in a while. Her children were not going to be spoiled.

His mother was small, fragile and loving, but decisive. She did not hesitate to threaten James with a broom when she saw him overly pensive and idle during a period of crisis in his sixteenth year. At the time he had left the Seminary of Bra and spent several months at home before entering the Seminary of Alba.

This woman of strong character had asked God to give one of her sons the grace of a priestly vocation. Therefore, she rejoiced at James' vocation and gave this son to the Lord with all her heart, without any trace of selfishness. She later told him, "Everytime you come home, I would like you to stay with me for two months. However, if your priestly duties permit you to stay for only fifteen minutes, then I, too, want you to stay only fifteen minutes and no more."

On his part, without harshness, but with a clearness of faith that was a tribute to this great mother and to her teaching, Father Alberione would write to his sons and daughters of the Pauline Family in order to remind them to understand well both love and detachment regarding one's family: "Who is my mother; who is my sister?... Blessed freedom of the children of God! She is my mother? Let her listen to the sermon like all the others and practice it." His attitude resembled that of Jesus, who rendered the greatest homage to his own mother—who was the first one to live perfectly the will of God—with his famous answer:

“He who does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

When Father Alberione’s mother died, it was written of her: “She was a farm woman of simple habits, who only knew how to do three things: to pray, to have patience and to take care of her children.” In its simplicity, this is a great praise for one who still knows how to appreciate the value of essential realities.

### **His school years**

There are only two particular incidents of his early school years that can shed some light on James and his mother. Father Alberione wrote this down years later.

When he was six years old, his teacher, Rosina Cardona, whom he greatly loved, asked her eighty pupils what they were going to do in the future. He alone, of all the students, thought for a few moments and answered to the amazement of his companions, “I am going to be a priest.”

He later recorded this incident: “ It was the first clear light. Before that I had felt some inclination in the depths of my soul, but obscurely and without any practical consequences. From that day on, my friends, and at times my brothers, began to call me by the name of “priest.” Sometimes it was to make fun of me, at other times to recall me to my duty.... That incident had positive consequences for me: my studies, prayer life, thoughts, behavior, and even my recreation periods were directed toward my goal.

“In my family, too, they began to give it thought and plan things for my future. The thought of the priesthood saved me from many dangers.

“From that day on, everything strengthened me in my decision.

"I attribute my vocation to the prayers of my mother, who always watched over me in a special way, and also to those of my teacher, who was very devout and always prayed that some of her pupils would become priests. I thank the Lord for this."

The second incident was tinged with simplicity and faith. "I was nine years old and on returning home from school, I happily said to my mother, "Look Mamma, I passed!" But then I didn't dare say what I had promised. I had promised to light a candle to the Madonna of the Flowers. Mother guessed and almost scolded me, 'Be slow to promise, but then be generous to carry out what you promise. Go, and don't light just a small candle.' And she gave me enough money to light the big candle."

## **In the seminary**

Even as a child, James showed a particular openness to the things of God. For this reason, contrary to the custom of the time, his pastor permitted him to make his first Holy Communion earlier than his companions. He was eight years old.

In the same year he became interested in the work of the Holy Childhood Association, which aids young children in the Orient. With other children he prayed for this Association; he collected money for it, and he avidly read the adventures of the missionaries. This fired him with a missionary zeal that remained with him for the rest of his life.

To support a son in the seminary was a sacrifice of no little account for his family with its small income. Nevertheless, on October 26, 1896, his good father took him to the seminary at Bra.

After a crisis four years later, he left the seminary in April, 1900, and remained away until October. Later

on, Father Alberione himself referred to this fact: "I know the harm certain books do.... The Blessed Mother saved me."

The crisis was caused by certain books passed to him under the desk by some of his classmates. But we think it right to say, that this was a providential trial, which would have a positive effect on the future apostle of the press and of the media of social communication.

He definitively re-entered the seminary—this time in Alba—in October, 1900. He was financially aided by his Uncle James, who was his godfather. He went to the seminary accompanied by his father, riding in an ox-driven cart. On his arrival, some of the seminarians teased him, saying, "Oh look, this one comes to study with an ox!" In a manner that he always retained of answering promptly and pointedly, without any embarrassment, James replied. "As long as the ox doesn't eat my books!"

At the seminary of Alba, James found a truly ideal spiritual director in Canon Francesco Chiesa, now Servant of God. He confided in him completely, taking inspiration from him as a model of the priestly life.

From the beginning, and for a long time after, Father Chiesa directed him wisely, forming his spirit and giving him the certainty that the work he was to undertake was the will of God.

From the time of his re-entrance into the seminary his path was sure and uninterrupted. He applied himself with constancy to his studies, revealing an intelligent openness to the problems of contemporary society. He was esteemed by his fellow-seminarians and superiors. On June 29, 1907, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Francesco Re of Alba.

## A decisive night

Some years before, even previous to his final consecration to the Lord, James had lived through an unforgettable night, destined to impress on him an indelible remembrance and to give orientation to his whole life. It was the night that divided two centuries, the nineteenth and the twentieth. That night he spent four hours in the Cathedral of Alba, in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament solemnly exposed.

Only a short time before, James had entered the Seminary of Alba. He was sixteen years old. Let us follow his account:

“The night which divided the last century from the present one was decisive for the specific mission and particular spirit in which the Pauline Family was to come into being and live. After the solemn midnight Mass in the cathedral of Alba, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for solemn, continual adoration. The seminarians in philosophy and theology were free to remain in church as long as they wished. Shortly before that, there had been a convention (the first I had attended), and I had understood well the calm, but profound and convincing talk given by Toniolo (a noted Catholic sociologist and thinker). I had also read Pope Leo XIII’s invitation to pray for the century that was about to begin.

“Both had stressed the needs of the Church, the new means of evil, the duty to oppose the press with the press and the organization with organization, the need to make the Gospel penetrate into the masses, also the social questions... A special light came from the Blessed Sacrament, a greater understanding of the invitation extended by Jesus: ‘Come to me all of you...’ I seemed to understand the heart of the great Pope (Leo XIII), the call sent out by the Church, the true mission of the priest.

It appeared clear to me what Toniolo had said regarding the duty of being apostles of the times, using the means exploited by adversaries. I felt deeply obliged to prepare myself to do something for God and the men of the new century in which I would live. I had a sufficiently clear awareness of my nothingness and at the same time I heard: 'I will be with you until the consummation of the world,' in the Eucharist; I felt that in Jesus Host I could find light, nourishment, comfort and victory over evil. As I thought about the future, it seemed to me that in the century generous souls would feel what I had felt; and that when organized, they would achieve what Toniolo strongly urged: 'Unite! If the enemy finds us alone, he will overcome us one by one!

"Some of my fellow seminarians had—already shared their thinking with me, and I with them all drawing from the tabernacle.

"My prayer lasted four hours after the solemn High Mass. I prayed that the new century might be born in the Eucharistic Christ; that new apostles would regenerate laws, schools, literature, the press, customs; that in the Church there would be a new missionary thrust; that the new means of apostolate would be used well; that society would accept the great teachings of Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals. The latter had been explained to the seminarians by Canon Chiesa (instructor and spiritual director), especially with regard to the social questions and the liberty of the Church.

"The Eucharist, the Gospel, the Pope, the new century... the need for a new army of apostles—these things were so deeply impressed on my mind and heart that later they would always dominate my thoughts, prayers, interior work and inspirations. I felt obliged to serve the Church and the men of the new century and

to work with others.... This idea, at first very confused, clarified itself. With the passing of the years, it even became concrete.”

## **The Preparation**

The fundamental orientation had already been given. That night was followed by fourteen years of preparation, lived in prayer. They were the prayers of young Alberione, by now signed with the grace of his mission, and the prayers of many whom he led to a pray in order to obtain light regarding the practical ways he should pursue in order to realize the mission he had glimpsed.

He united prayer to an unrelenting study to know the society in which he would have to work, a society influenced by the spread of masonry, marxist socialism and modernism. It was a commitment of continual work, to which he remained faithful for all his life. This had been sparked by an anonymous note which, as a young student of theology, he had found one day in his desk drawer: “What counts in sanctity is not enjoying the peace of victory. It is the continual battle that counts.” This was a sublime and comforting thought.

## **Love for the Word of God and the discovery of Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life**

An interior light revealed to him that few people read the Gospel and the Bible. This light remained like a nail fixed in the spirit of the future Founder of the Pious Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul. “The book of God, the book of humanity,” was

unknown to many Christians, not to say even to many religious and priests. And this, unfortunately, is still a reality. Many would be offended if they were told that they did not know the Gospel. And yet either they have not read it for some time, or they listen distractedly to its reading, because they believe they know it so well, while instead, they may repeat its words from habit yet be far from making them the continual yeast which would revolutionize their lives to the very depths.

Because of this, every effort of the Pauline apostolate is directed through the media—with different means of expression, according to the various levels of preparation to—the more educated and more intellectual, but especially to the masses, who are more open to accepting what they receive, but at the same time are most exposed to the contagion of error.

Like a “special light” this need struck the spirit of the twenty-two-year-old seminarian on the feast of St. Paul, June 30, 1906, the day after he had been ordained sub-deacon. This light became the basis of his spirituality and of all his work: to live Christ, who defined himself as “Way, Truth and Life,” and whom St. Paul lived in a total manner. We shall return to this subject later to illustrate its impact.

### **Intense activity**

If the life of the servant of God was committed and industrious from its earliest years, after his priestly ordination it became increasingly more so to an astounding degree.

A long treatise would be needed in order to trace a profile, even in summary fashion, of his successive and interwoven activities.

We will limit ourselves to the indispensable.

While studying for his doctorate in theology, which was conferred on him in 1908, and because of which he was commonly called "The Theologian," he also dedicated himself to intensive preaching. He was the Spiritual Director and a professor of the Seminary in Alba. Moreover, he was the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies, a professor of Church and civil history and a catechist. As of September 8, 1913 by appointment of Bishop Re, he was made director of the weekly diocesan paper, the Gazette of Alba.

Father Alberione writes: "This happened one evening, when the Bishop of the diocese, Bishop Francis Re, attended one of my sermons. It was on the name of Mary and was preached in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Moretta in Alba. I had invited the faithful to establish the maternal reign of the Madonna, whose mission is to bring and to give Christ to the world. After the sermon, the Bishop called me aside and said: 'In addition to your ordinary priestly ministry, I am going to assign and add now another demanding duty: the diocesan newspaper.' In this work, he directed and assisted me, with wisdom and firmness, for about twenty years. Everything else developed from this."

"Behold the main way: in Christ and in the Church."

These first years were marked by some important events. In 1908, he was associate pastor for some time at Narzole (Cuneo). There he met twelve-year-old Joseph Giaccardo. This boy impressed Father Alberione with his spirit of prayer and with his ardent desire to become a priest. Unfortunately, he did not have the financial means to do so. It was Father Alberione who arranged for his entrance into the Seminary of Alba and for his upkeep. Father Giaccardo was later to become the first priest of

the newly formed Pious Society of St. Paul, the teacher of the young candidates, the founder of the first house of the Society in Rome, and the Vicar of the Pauline Congregation. He consecrated his whole life—in great humility and obedience—to the Apostolate of the Editions. Father Alberione called him the “most faithful among the faithful.”

### **Interior clarifications**

Two years later, another important fact became a decisive interior beacon. In order to carry out the plan he had conceived on that famous night of 1900, he had at first thought of organizing a group of Catholic writers, technicians, booksellers, etc., enlivened by an apostolic spirit. Instead, by 1910 he felt that these writers, technicians, and propagators should be men and women religious. “A society of souls loving God with all their mind, strength, and heart, consecrated to work for the Church, happy to earn the divine salary.”

There was to be no other recompense: God is everything!

### **Beginning of his work**

During July, 1914, the Servant of God rented a building in Cherasca Square, Alba, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> of that same month he bought the first printing press and some furniture. On August 20<sup>th</sup> he opened the Little Worker Typographical School. It was the day that Pope Pius X died and the feast of St. Bernard. The First World War had just broken out. Truly it was the tiniest of seeds—the grain of mustard seed—that future Pious Society of St. Paul.

On the first day, Primo Maestro (First Teacher)—as he saw later to be called by all the members—was alone.

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> he welcomed the first boys, and on the 24<sup>th</sup>, after having blessed the establishment and the machine, he initiated his small typography with four persons.

## **The search for collaborators and their formation**

With wisdom and patience he began to lay the foundation by choosing his future collaborators. He chose them, not from among the learned and prepared, but from among the young. In fact, he chose them from among the very young as did his saintly compatriot, Don Bosco. But Father Alberione's intentions was a different one. He did not gather followers in order to direct them along their own path in life. Rather, he chose them in order to bind them to himself: for the purpose of Christianizing the masses, by using the same means—newspapers and books—which were de-Christianizing them.

Father Alberione understood that it was of utmost importance to find the first men who would respond to the basic exigencies of God's plan and to form them for that purpose—just as Jesus had chosen and formed His apostles. Father Alberione spent entire nights in prayer. He had need of others; whom should he invite to follow him? He needed persons who would pray, who would offer themselves to the point of giving their lives, who would collaborate with him in a practical way. The work was great—not in itself—but insofar as it was for the salvation of souls. For such an undertaking, the young men were gradually trained to "use their liberty well, for time and for eternity."

Father Alberione knew very well that hard work awaited them, work composed of "habitual sacrifice and generous dedication," and which would require daily,

minute mortification. He knew that men capable of such a life could not be improvised. Nature could not be forced. Patience, time and trust were needed, even in a human level.

## **Spiritual support**

He did not make use of human means alone. When he did use such means, they were sustained by the support and the nourishment which his faith held as indispensable: his own prayer and the prayer of others.

He often said: "Before undertaking new works, if you want them to be effective, assure yourself of a proportionate group of souls who will pray and, if necessary, immolate themselves for the works."

He also said: "Both the beginning and the continuation of the Pauline Family always moved ahead in a twofold obedience: to inspirations received at the feet of Jesus Host and confirmed by the spiritual director, and to the express will of ecclesiastical superiors." Everything must be willed by God, and for this reason alone it must be carried out. Those early times were difficult and hostile, yet Father Alberione already had in mind that his undertakings were to extend throughout the whole world!

"They were the years when only faith and love of God sustained those first sons of St. Paul."

## **The second historic date**

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1917, four of the young men who had entered the Typographical School consecrated themselves entirely to God through their religious profession made in the hands of Father Alberione. On that occasion the Founder said: "There are

only four present here, and a fifth, at this very hour, but alone, is consecrating himself to God in Novara, because he is still in the military service. But at the profession of the first Jesuits at Montmartre, those who professed their vows to St. Ignatius were also few. This day, therefore, is an historic one!"

Those few were to steadily increase in number and spread to all the continents.

However, it is not to be thought that everything went along smoothly. On the contrary...

### **Some difficulties**

At the beginning of the following year, Father Alberione had to report to the military draft board for a physical examination. At the time of the first draft interview he had been considered unfit but had been asked to report back again. If now they were to declare him in good health, what would happen to the newly founded Family? Even in this matter, he put faith and trust in God.

Dressed in ill-fitted secular clothes, borrowed from one of the boys, he went for the physical examination, was declared unfit, and returned home happy.

At the end of the same year, on the night of December 25-26, the Typographical School burned because of sparks from a firewood stove. First in line, Father Alberione exerted himself over and beyond his strength to fight the flames. He injured his knee and fainted twice.

For those modest beginnings the material damage was very serious, but to those who pointed this out to him, his astounding answer was: "It is less than a venial sin."

And to think that, humanly speaking, so much labor and so many means had been lost—a high price in sacrifice and self-denial! Everything can sink, but for the man of God the only true evil is sin! He very often

considers external adversities as a gift of which he isn't worthy, a gift because they increase in one who has faith his abandonment and trust in the Lord.

Father Alberione knew how to trust in God even when all was dark; he knew how to wait. "Not always was the time ripe, but God made things known, leaving to His servant the work and also the mistakes. Then he would intervene to remedy the mistakes and failings."

To Father Alberione, who used to call himself "half-blind" ... "a servant, now and in heaven," God would then give light and victory. The progress had to be from the "Miserere" to the "Gloria"... "Everything is from God; everything leads us to the Magnificat."

### **Father Alberione's evaluation of the beginnings**

The first steps were very hard and very poor.

Many years later, to one who confessed that he had overlooked the modest work and modest preparation of Father Alberione's first followers, the Founder himself answered: "You are used to considering the ten (that is the abundant fruits of the present). You forget instead the one, two, three and other numbers up to nine that have gone before. You must discover them all and take them all into consideration."

Admonitions of this type were for him also an act of gratitude and of trust. This man always "straining forward" never forgot the most humble beginning which he had placed in the hands of God.

In his personal diary, Father Giaccardo wrote that the Theologian was convinced of and consistently taught that: "The works of God are not begun with money, but with prayer and trust in God. One must place his trust in God and go ahead.... To begin with money is simple-

mindedness.” This is really the opposite of the present manner of reasoning.

He loved to say: “It is the rule that the Congregation must always have debts.” This witty saying used to circulate among the members of the Pauline Family: “When Father Alberione dies, we will put in his hands a rosary, a copy of the Gospel and an I.O.U.!”

When he learned of this, Father Alberione laughed wholeheartedly. He knew how to appreciate good humor, and he was pleased when someone came out with humorous expressions—as long as they expressed serenity and trust.

It is not to be thought, however, that he was imprudent: “I’ve never been a friend of promissory notes.... There can be moderate debts, but they are to be paid within three or five years at the most.”

Moreover, respectful of justice, he always paid his own debts, as he required that others pay theirs, but this always with respect for charity; if necessary, he sustained the damage himself.

## **The “promissory note”**

Such are the men of God: they know how to take the Gospel literally and at the same time they act as though everything depended on their own efforts.

In this regard one could tell stories endlessly. But the root of all these stories is that which holds true for all of them a document whose exact date is unknown. It expresses perfectly the spirit which animated Father Alberione throughout his long life.

This document is the so-called “promissory note,” a strikingly original piece of paper, yellowed with age, found only recently. Certainly at the time when it was written, The Pauline Family then in its beginnings, lacked

everything, one could say even what was indispensable for the most elementary needs. But Father Alberione, with the most faithful Father Giaccardo, the “perfect Pauline priest”—who at that time bore the heavy burden bursar—trusted in God.

With delightful simplicity, equal only to the greatness of an unshakable faith founded on the Word of God, Father Alberione wrote at the top of the sheet: Promissory Note and beneath it the words: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice.” Then both of them signed: Father James Alberione—Father Timothy Giaccardo.

Beneath the names, because it was the promise of Jesus, Father Alberione completed the Gospel phrase: “All else will be given you besides.”

Then he signed it again, but this time with the name of the Most Blessed Trinity as Guarantor: Jesus Christ—the Father—the Holy Spirit.

Humanly speaking, it was folly or nonsense. But on the level of faith, one barely finds the words for such an act of limitless trust which someone has defined as the “Pact of Alliance between God and the Community.”

God never failed the trust of His servant. It could be said that all the most daring and most vital initiatives of this man of faith came into being during the moments of greatest difficulty. Divine Providence kept faith with the pact.

When the need for money was most urgent, when a son of Father Alberione was ill and it was useful that he recover in order to carry out his duties, when during the Second World War, Father Alberione prayed that all his spiritual sons and daughters be saved, always—without exception—this trust was never betrayed.

The Lord is faithful; one must know how to trust Him and not offend His love with the greatest offense: lack of trust.

## Work and the worker

However, Father Alberione was not one to stand by doing nothing. A tireless worker, he taught and practiced that the best way to rest was to alternate one work with another.

In one of his more forceful writings, Father Alberione penned an enthusiastic hymn to work. In a kind of moving crescendo he defines work as a way of perfection which places all of one's energies, even the physical, in the active service of God: as an expression of religious poverty, as a means of support, as a social obligation, as a source of humility and of health, as a defense against laziness and temptation, as a means of merit and of imitation of Christ.

He believed that there was only one obstacle that could hinder work or render its fruits useless: sin.

In the *Bulletin for Cooperators*, he wrote: "For the apostolate of the press many works are possible.... One can almost say that every aptitude and profession can find its development and application for God's glory and man's peace. One can be a farmer, a mechanic, a carpenter, a brick-layer, a shoemaker, a baker, a chauffeur, a paper manufacturer, a tinsmith, an electrician, a nurse, a builder, a wood sculptor, a cook, a type-setter, a stereotypist, a monotypist, a linotypist, a hand compositor, a pressman, a book binder, a writer, a librarian, etc., etc.

"But what, then, must not be done? Sin!

"So vast is this apostolate of the press today as envisioned by the Pious Society of St. Paul, that more or less directly all good things enter into it."

One who lived with him testifies that Father Alberione's life was consistent with his directives. When something went wrong in the Community, the Founder would send everyone to confession. He would feel sick

and not be able to eat. It was as though the evil committed gripped his stomach. In this regard he was so sensitive that just a single act of disobedience was enough to make him physically sick.

Only sin disturbed him, certainly not work. He was the first to work. He aroused his collaborators to work in all fields, from writing, to printing, to diffusing. Yet he had such delicate health. When he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis a short time after he began his work - between 1923 and 1924 - the doctors gave him only about a year and a half to live. They told the Bishop: "You won't save him, because TB is carrying him off."

Miraculously cured - saying that he was indebted to St. Paul - he resumed his work as though nothing had happened. "St. Paul cured me!" It was an exultation of gratitude and renewed effort: he was cured that he might spend himself entirely. And he knew how correspond.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that he never lost an hour of his time, and he always demonstrated a great resistance in the face of hardship, physical pain, and penance.

This was true even in regard to penances in the strictest sense of the word, from the use of a hairshirt to self-flagellation. The sister who tidied his room used to find his instruments of penance and she would hide them on top of the furniture. But regularly, each morning, she would find them under his pillow.

Other penance were long hours of prayer spent on his knees without moving (despite the fact that he suffered from arthritis of spine), and long periods of fasting.

At least once a week, after celebrating Mass, he would withdraw to his room and remain there the entire day. Sometimes he did this for several consecutive days. Then he would return to his regular way of life, without

the least sign of fatigue or loss of weight, but rather, refreshed, with new energies and initiatives.

### **Father Alberione's day**

His day began at 3:30 A.M and ended it about 9:00 P.M "Early to bed and early to rise" was his motto. He taught this and he was the first to practice it. The entire first part of the day, all the best hours, were spent in prayer. He celebrated Mass at 4:30 A.M. Then his prayer continued until 7:00 A.M.

After this, he took care of his correspondence, received visitors and attended to all the duties which his position required – these became increasingly heavier.

He did all of this without showing any exterior sign of fatigue or impatience, neither when facing circumstances often of an adverse nature, nor when treating with others, his sons or visitors, whether in person or by phone. He was perhaps a man of few words when necessary; quick, yes, but always patient and understanding: a consoler, an incomparable guide and father.

Even if his duty was necessarily that of directing and guiding others, in case of necessity – above all, at the beginning - he was capable of assuming any of the activities of the house with perfect availability and perfect humility. During the first difficult years, he was at times the cook for his community of boys, perhaps burning himself due to lack of experience, and limiting himself to preparing the "historic" soup of rice or noodles with potatoes and turnips, and a second course of beans, cheese and chestnuts. The then-seminarian, Giaccardo, testifies that at mealtime, the "dear father" was "always the last one to help himself to the soup, and the fruit; first the others and then himself, if any remained." Although he took care to provide the proper food for whoever could not digest the

common meal, he never permitted any preferences to be made for himself.

During those first years, whenever the women in charge had to hurry off to other duties, Father Alberione would also wash and dry the pots and pans.

They were very humble beginnings for the Founder of a great religious family, which today spreads over all the continents.

Subsequently, the direction of this great family ideas, realizations, trips — while keeping all the reins in hand, certainly kept him uninterruptedly occupied: in programming, in preaching (many hours a day); in receiving his sons and outsiders (listening to all with more than fatherly calmness, as though he had nothing else to do); in correspondence (he answered everything from letter for the most pressing and important affair down to the last note of greetings with a dedication and a constancy that smacks of the heroic).

## **The secret of success**

All of this was done with the greatest humility and purity of intention: for the glory of God and the salvation of souls through his specific apostolate, that of the Editions, never for personal ambition! He wrote: "I have never seen an ambitious person ever become a fervent religious; never, never."

He never acted through the pure instinct of activism in itself and for itself: all and only for the glory of God.

For work to bear its fruits, the first secret for him was sanctity. "I have no greater desire in regard to my brethren than that of having saints among them."

Let us listen to the ardent words he spoke on the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, January, 1919, as they were recorded by the faithful Father Giaccardo in his

personal notes. They can be useful to all of us under many aspects, since we are all Christians.

“Along the way of sanctity one can progress by one, by five or even by ten, as when pedaling a bike by a complete turn of the pedal one can go forward one yard or even up to ten yards. I have taught you how to multiply the time of study; now you must learn to multiply the speed on the road to sanctity.

“You must accomplish this ‘multiplication’ by making an effort. You must earn the tenfold by making one examination of conscience; check the fruit, make the progress in sanctity that you would make with ten examinations, the progress in one Communion that you would make in ten Communions.

“But be very attentive to what I say. Open your ears well and do not sleep with your heart. Stay awake. In every effort, you must progress tenfold. And why this? Because the Lord calls you to a very high sanctity, which you cannot attain solely through your own efforts and with ordinary graces.... You must surpass in holiness the priests and brothers who live in monasteries.

“But the Theologian is mad! I am not mad. When Alberione the priest speaks he could be mad, but when your Father speaks, as I am now, I tell you I am not mad. You must be holier... because God has placed within you a priceless treasure, a treasure which the angels envy: the vocation to the apostolate of the good press.

“You are at the foot of a great mountain; ascend it, contemplate your horizon: it is the whole world. When a ball is very smooth and round, and rests on a well-polished marble plane, it touches it at only one point and all the other parts of the ball weigh upon that point. A million, three million, ten million souls... weigh upon your consciences. This is why you must be very saintly.

“It’s a matter of saving many souls, of saving ten million or of saving only one million.

“But the Theologian is mad to speak to us tonight about ten million souls. And I tell you that a good journalist saves even more. Lift up your eyes, look on high at the great tree whose top you cannot see: that is our Pauline House which is truly a great tree. You are only at the root of it. Our present House is nothing but the roots of this very great tree. Oh, if only you understood the treasure which is in you, what the Lord is calling you to. You would all be full of life. You would not leave me in peace any more; that is, you would not leave the Lord in peace. You would always be around Him begging: ‘But I still need this; I still need that. Grant me this grace, too...’

“But, you will say, where does the Theologian want to lead us tonight? I want to lead you up on the mount of perfection. Do you understand how saintly you must be? You must have the spirit of St. Paul. I tell you, that you are to be holy, as God is Holy. It must be that way. This is why in every effort you must earn tenfold. In one day you must progress as you would in ten days, and in ten years you must become as holy as you would in one hundred years.

“But how is this to be done? In what does this multiplication consist? We are full of defects and miseries. We must humble ourselves and recognize that we are full of misery.

“If we were to see our soul just once, we would faint away. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, who was already a mystic and had received many apparitions from the Sacred Heart, fainted when God let her see her soul once! Let us humiliate ourselves, because on our own we cannot make progress. A good, energetic, resolute and generous will is needed to become saints, great saints. To become

the saints God wants us to be, as I told you, we need a proven will, resolute in making every effort and every sacrifice.

“This is the first means.

“The second means is that we do not confide in ourselves and in our own efforts, but rather that we pray, placing all our trust in God.

“We must believe that God can free us from our defects; believe that God wants us to be very holy; believe my words, that God wants to give you this grace; believe that each of your efforts will produce fruit tenfold; believe that for each act of piety on your part, God will grant you the graces He would grant for ten acts.

“This is true; God wants it. Believe it.

“He who believes will run on the road to sanctity, up the mount of perfection. One who trusts only in his own efforts will advance slowly, and only with much effort. He will take one step forward and trip. He will attain a victory, then he will fall. He will rise again and fall again, going ahead with great fatigue.

“We must count more on God, count on Him for health, for work, for learning quickly and well, only for the glory of God. Count on God for study, in order to learn fast and four times as much. Count on God especially for piety.

“The faith of some extends only to believing that God will not let us lack bread; but this is foolishness. The Lord is not pleased with this and He will reprove us. Does the reign of God perhaps consist only in eating and drinking? It is necessary that we have more faith in our sanctification. We are still very far from having such faith. Not one of you already has the real faith that is needed.... It is the faith that moves mountains. God...calls you to a very high sanctity but He wants to act Himself, because our House lives on Providence.

“The greatest offense that God receives from our House is lack of trust in Him. He shows that it is He who does all things; we are stupid not to trust Him.... Jesus is the resurrection; He raises us from the tomb of our defects. He is the life which sustains us on the path of spiritual progress. He said ‘Truly I say to you whatever you ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you.’ Twice Jesus solemnly promised that His Father will give us anything we ask because of His merits. Now God wants to give us sanctity and He wants us to ask Him for it. We must go before the Tabernacle, before Jesus, and tell Him not to fail in His promises, ask Him to give us... pray and pray.... You say: I have many defects; I still have this and that vice. What does it matter? I will pray well to Jesus and Jesus will deliver me. I am lacking these and those virtues. What does it matter? I will pray well and Jesus will give them to me.

“One who embraces such faith, will find himself totally changed in one year. You will be amazed. How was I able to overcome that defect, to acquire the virtue? Yes, but ‘not only I, but the grace of God with me.’ Courage, therefore, aim for where God calls you. Good will, no faith in ourselves but total faith in God and in prayer.... One who does this will see himself a changed person in a year’s time. Jesus changed St. Paul in a moment. This must be our conversion on this feast.”

## **The educator**

From the preceding passage, which we refused to shorten in order that it might retain its unforgettable fascination, we have had a sample of Father Alberione’s power of persuasion. He was a great educator.

The young boys who gathered around him at the beginning of the Foundation found themselves in

the particular situation of having to work and study at the same time. On this point, too, it is always Father Giaccardo who gives us the living words of the Founder: "With four hours of study, we have to profit more than other students do in eight hours. Therefore, with great simplicity, we have to make clear pacts with the Lord: Lord I must learn many things and I have little time to study. I also have to set type and print, so I will set type and I will print as long as You want and whatever You want. Give me knowledge."

"Clear pacts and trust.... The apostles were ignorant, but once they received the Holy Spirit, they amazed the world, confounded the learned, and enlightened all men."

"The Holy Spirit will not descend upon us in the form of tongues of fire. He will use this way: He will make us learn and apply ourselves better in our study in such wise that what others learn in three hours and do not easily remember, or do not live up to, we will learn in an hour, and will remember and will apply.

"Have this faith and you will experience this truth. This faith is essential to the spirit of the House; as the spirit is new, so it possesses new means.... He who does not have this faith is out of step and causes others to deride him. St. Paul worked for God and told God that he had a right to have his food provided.... The same is true for us. We must work for God and we have the need to know many things. So we work and the Lord takes care of providing our food, food not only for the body, but also for the mind and the heart.... To whoever remarks about the small amount of study, we reply: 'It is we and the grace of God does two.'

"Besides study, there is another means of learning, a loftier and more fruitful means: prayer. Faith and prayer."

Father Giaccardo also recorded: " Last night the dear Father invited us all to make a pact with the Lord. The pact that he had made: to study one and to learn four.... His words were afire and full of conviction and persuasion....

"The importance of the pact: it is necessary to make it seriously; otherwise one loses respect for it, and it would be just like using gold to make nails for shoes. It is so: God never fails.... On our part let us never fail in any condition...otherwise the pact becomes void."

It is clear that only in an atmosphere of ardent faith can one understand and live an invitation of this kind without misunderstanding it.

### **The formula of the "Pact"**

A few years later, this "Pact" or "Secret of Success" was summed up in the following form and inserted among the Pauline prayers:

"Jesus Lord, accept the pact that we present to You through the hands of St. Paul and of Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

"We must attain to a very high degree of perfection, higher than that attained by religious of the contemplative life, yet our practices are fewer in number. We must have a broader knowledge than any other profession requires, and yet our hours of study will be fewer. We must succeed in our work for the editions more than any other publisher, yet we work less than the others and with imperfect teachers. We must be well supplied materially as concerns food, clothing, etc., yet we have almost no resources.

"Therefore, convinced that You want all this from us, we make a pact with You which springs from the confidence we have in these Your words: 'Whatsoever you shall ask in my name, you will receive it.'

“On our part, we promise and oblige ourselves:

- “1) to do our best in study, prayer, work, and in the practice of poverty;
- “2) to do everything only and always for Your glory;
- “3) to work all day long in the Apostolate of the Editions.

“We beg You to give us the knowledge we need, the sanctity You expect of us, the ability we need to do our work, and all that is required for our natural needs—in this manner: by making us learn four for one, by giving us sanctity ten for one, working ability five for one, and material goods six for one.

“Certain that You will accept this pact—also because of the proof You have given us in the past—we ask Your pardon for our little faith and our infidelity, and beg You to bless us and make us faithful and constant until death. Amen.”

## **The use of time**

A program of this kind requires tried faith on the supernatural plane, and on the human level an exceptional ability to control the use of one’s time.

On this subject, Father Alberione wrote: “Time is the great gift of God. It is like a golden box which man can fill with jewels, that is, good works, or with rottenness, that is, sins. Time can be lost: by doing nothing, by doing useless things, by acting rashly. Instead, time is redeemed by doing good, first by doing one’s duty, by always doing something useful.”

## **Self-control and perseverance**

The use of time presupposes self-control. In this too, Father Alberione, who personally lived this truth profoundly, was a teacher to his young men.

In the Seminary of Alba, because of certain spirited reactions, he had been nicknamed “spit-fire.” But he was gradually able to dominate the vivacity of his temperament without weakening it. Rather, he strengthened it by dominating his impulses, and by persevering in the efforts of work and in bearing physical sufferings. He was not born a saint; he willed to be a *saint* and he courageously fought the hard battle against his fiery, imperious and stubborn temperament, which could have been a two-edged sword by which he always willed and knew how to direct towards good.

Perseverance enters into self-control.

He wrote that man must persevere “because the secret of great hearts, of those who did weighty deeds and who are honored, lies in the word persevering. The man who perseveres is esteemed and honored; his future is sure; his happiness certain.”

He gave proof of this maturity from his youngest years. But Father Alberione, who aspired tenaciously to great things, was always a man of extreme modesty. He was always more aware of his limitations and his miseries than of his greatness. For him good came only from God. The insufficiencies were all his fault, a consequence of his sins!... He looked upon himself as a “poor carcass” which had fulfilled “only a part of the divine will” and which “must vanish from the scene and from memory.”

## The sense of duty

A fighter of exceptional caliber from the time of his childhood, he had been used to enduring everything for the sake of duty.

“James hold up the lamp.” his mother would tell him during the late evenings of certain harsh autumns when the men were hoeing and covering the sown grain,

and tiny, sleepy-eyed James—bored and weary—had to hold the kerosene lamp in order to throw some light on the field where they were working.

When he was certain of doing God's will, the greater the difficulties, the more Father Alberione faced his duty with forceful energies.

When at the age of eighteen he was criticized for a duty he had carried out, he wrote:

“Are you doing your duty?

Too bad for whoever doesn't realize it.

Every duty shirked leaves a void in the soul and an opening is given to the devil.

It is weakening of energies and of light.

It is a beginning of disorder and of hatred and, therefore, of unhappiness.

Duty is our most precious homage to God.

It must be done in that hour, in that manner, with all the perfection one is capable of in that moment, and in such a way as to forget everything else, as though it were the only thing I had to do.

One must bear duty, fatigue and pain. If done with good will and with love of duty, these will be meritorious, esteemed and sweet, because seasoned with love; otherwise they will be blamed, despised and hated, because it is seasoned with hate.

The present duty is the present will of God.

To refuse to do it, is to refuse to do God's will at this moment.

Examination on this point every night.

I believe that it belongs to the genesis of Love.”

The last statement reveals profound insight: love fulfills God's will and is born and strengthened in this fulfillment. Otherwise it is an empty word. He who wrote this was only eighteen years old.

## The spell he exerted on youth

A personality of this kind held a particular attraction for youth, an attraction not limited to the sentimental sphere. He acted upon the will with persuasion and trust, in the first place by example: he lived what he taught.

He knew young people and how to discover their needs and best possibilities. First of all he helped them to discover the “center” of their life, the goal to which to vow themselves.

Father Alberione—professor of history—looked at the past and taught others to look at it with eyes focused on the present and the future. Thus, he stimulated them to apply themselves and aroused their energies.

He himself told the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master that one day in 1908, he had pointed out to the seminarians that more than half the people on earth do not know Christ, that many are schismatics or heretics, and that even those who call themselves Catholics are not so in reality. He asked: “In Italy—what is happening to this Catholic nation? In the last administrative elections the enemies of the Church were victorious.” At this the boys stood up and asked “What, then, should we do to obtain the salvation of so many souls?”

## With “his” boys

When he had “his” boys around him, while he enthused them about the apostolate of the press, he was at the same time a patient and firm educator—permitting no weakness, dismissing from the congregation anyone who did not correspond—but at the same time showing much paternal affection, patience and understanding.

In this way he formed them to become men who would be free, well-balanced and mature and thus might

enter into ever more intimate union with God and with their brethren, at their service, but above all, in order that they might be saints: “To be saints it is necessary to be strong.”

He could ask for sacrifices, and youthful nature, which, when healthy, is more capable than any other of enthusiasm and sacrifices, responded with joyful generosity.

He could say to them: “I want to give you a gift.” The gift was nothing other than to ask them to get up at 4:30 in the morning, instead of at 5:00! And the youthful followers were grateful to him for this.

They revered him and they loved him.

They jokingly used to say that the position of his glasses on his nose was a sign. If they rested toward the point, there would be unsettled weather. Therefore, if they had to ask him something, they would question anyone coming out of his office: “What position are his glasses in?”

But then when they knew that “the Theologian wants...” or “The Theologian does not want...” they did not question—they obeyed. The more mature members were certain of giving thereby a proof of their moral freedom.

Educated in this manner, the boys also grew in number, slowly, slowly but without let up.

## **In joy**

Someone might be tempted to think that such a demanding life must have been hard and sad. Just the opposite! They were not only exceptional young men who flocked to the newly born or fully developed foundation, but also common, everyday young men. In his personal notes, Father Alberione wrote: “Encourage much...make them happy in the life of God.”

This joy, consisting of peace and enthusiasm, filled the Founder's soul and from him overflowed to his boys, to those all who lived and worked and suffered with him, to all who approached him, even for some brief moments, to hear a few words.

It was the joy that comes from being in the will of God, vowed to His glory, which is synonymous with saying, vowed to the full realization of self and to a happiness that is unique and complete.

Let him who can understand, understand....

### **The doer—his moral gifts**

Physically speaking, Father Alberione was not a handsome man. He was small, thin, and fragile. His beauty was something totally spiritual. Morally he was a giant, with the character of a doer such as few others have had, and the foundations born from his heart and from his hard work witness to this in the light of the sun. But in as much as it depended on him, he effaced himself as much as possible. Because of these contrasts, without doubt, one could repeat with the words of the Magnificat that he was the humble one who was exalted and that is humility was the root of his greatness.

Precisely because he was humble, he was also great in another virtue: detachment from everything to the very end of his life. He was detached from money, from self, and, in a certain sense, even from his work. He recognized it as the work of God and feared to hinder it and to harm it with his insufficiencies, his lack of correspondence and his faults.

Before engaging in action, he placed prayer at the foundation of everything. Then followed the forward thrusts, the most firm decisions which though appearing to be unexpected were backed by long hours of silence,

of solitude, and of colloquy with Jesus Host. Right after these would come his pressing exhortation: "Immediately, immediately... realize it concretely!"

## The doer—his practical gifts

To have an idea of his concrete way of working, it will be enough to cite one example from among the many: to quote a letter, written in 1931, when the Pauline priests were organizing the publication of diocesan weeklies. The letter is addressed to Father Fenoglio, who was in charge of this work.

"Dear Father Fenoglio:

"The Daughters (Daughters of St. Paul) wrote from Agrigento that when they presented themselves to the Bishop... to ask for the title of the newspaper, he answered them: 'You are in too much of a hurry. There is time. I have to think about whether it is to be done or not, etc.' Therefore, it would be held up. Instead, it is necessary that the newspaper come out, as soon as possible, according to the agreement made with you. How will you do this? Before retuning to Alba, see that the matter is settled, and make sure that the first issue for Agrigento, Catanzaro, Campobasso, Ancona, etc., is published.

"To just talk about things and propose projects is one of our weaknesses. It is necessary, and it is also the will of God, that we bring things to a conclusion. Therefore:

"a) Publish the paper,

"b) with profit,

"c) and have it copyrighted, under the responsibility of the Society of St. Paul.

"Let us be on guard against things in the planning stage! They are like projects to become saints. Many are never realized because of a thousand excuses, all of which will avail us nothing at the tribunal of God.

“Write me the precise details, please. I bless every step and every sacrifice.”

As can be seen, this will which impelled to realization also demanded clarity. “I love those who tell me things to my face.”

He prayed and made others pray. He consulted others and obeyed. Then he would act and make others act. From the time he was a child—studying history—he had always loved persons who were leaders with strong temperaments, such as he would be.

His style was always this: to be sure what was God’s will. Then he would put a stop to all delays. “Come to a conclusion...quickly... and bring everyone to action...” “Hurry...soon!”

It is not to be thought that this speedy action was due to a lack of prudence. Just the contrary! Before passing to the action stage, he was slow to decide, not only according to the requirements of natural prudence, but also and above all according to those of supernatural prudence.

He wrote: “The prudent man reflects, prays and asks advice of God and of men...and directs all towards eternity.... He examines the good to be done and undertakes it calmly. Prudence gives the spirit a tone of calmness and serenity which enables one to make much progress in a short time.”

Therefore, his quickness had nothing to do with rashness, impulsiveness, nor anxiety.

## **Without human respect**

When he was sure that God wanted it, he knew neither hesitation nor human respect, and when a contrary opinion was expressed, he would say with serene calm: “It’s a matter of a different viewpoint.”

Another example suffices. On June 24, 1921, Father Alberione wrote with firmness to the Mayor of Alba. He had requested the installation of a pipe to supply drinking water, and the city council had decided to require him to contribute to the expenses. He wrote to the Mayor: "... I am surprised at the decision of the Honorable Council.... To the new industrial plant for chemical bricks which is to be established in Alba, free land was given, along with abatement of taxes, etc., etc. We praise this foresighted decision. And yet, the new company will not bring to the city the economic, spiritual, intellectual and moral advantages of the Typographical School of Alba.... It will not gratuitously accept poor boys and it will not have the goals of charity and beneficence, of education and formation which the Typographical School of Alba has.

"I am surprised that an administration of the people does not take these things into account."

It is unnecessary to point out the firmness, the veiled irony and at the same time the open reaction to an injustice which is detrimental to the poorest. They are clear, outspoken words, which are all the more noticeable in one who was so respectful of authority.

## **Practical resources**

This man of high ideals was also a man of practical spirit, capable of having recourse to a thousand undertakings for the good of the great Pauline Family.

The great houses of Alba were being built, not out of a "mania for bricks"—as someone insinuated—but out of dire necessity, because the Pauline Family was growing with amazing speed.

Since conditions were economically difficult and complex, a series of expedients solved various practical problems to the advantage of the community:

- bricks were no longer bought, but were made in their own furnace, which functioned so well that it was even possible to sell bricks to others;
- they had their own paper mill
- they had an intensely cultivated garden;
- they had their own flour mill and bakery, run by the sisters;
- they had cows and pigs fed with their home grown hay and with refuse from the kitchen.

Whoever had thought that Father Alberione was a dreamer, now had to think differently!

## Unafraid

What, humanly speaking, could frighten Father Alberione? Nothing. While he was building the house of Alba, he had not paid a debt of 10,000 lire for bricks (now equivalent to about 6,000,000 lire). Summoned to appear in court, he acknowledged the debt, but asked for time to pay, as well as another supply of bricks on credit. At this, Mr. Sorba, the creditor, exploded into invectives and demanded that the debtor be put in prison. But Father Alberione unperturbedly said: " Mr. Judge, Mr. Sorba: At present I could offer you some of my boys or even all of them to come and work for you without pay until the debt is paid off. Otherwise I agree to go to prison. In this way I can rest a little bit, because I am, in fact, very tired and can hardly stand up. As for my poor boys, divine Providence will take care of them."

Everything ended with the charges being dropped and the debt being entirely cancelled by Mr. Sorba, who was a good man at heart. Father Alberione promised to pay it just the same, even at the cost of having to fast. On hearing this, Mr. Sorba said: " But no Father Theologian,

don't do that! You're already skin and bones. Your suit hangs from your shoulders as though they were a clothes hanger. Let's forget about it. Let's not talk about it anymore."

Did everything end there? By no means! Father Alberione put up a brick kiln. It was a very primitive one, but his boys worked at producing bricks with such enthusiasm that they ended up in competition with Mr. Sorba. At first, Mr. Sorba was angry, but then, invited to reflect on the fact that Father Alberione worked and had others work in order to feed his boys, Mr. Sorba let things go; he would gain some merit too. The conclusion was this: "Go and get tangled up with Father Alberione! He doesn't pay, he doesn't go to prison and he competes with you! And now the lawyer tells me that I have to thank him!... However, Father Alberione certainly is daring!"

Yes, Father Alberione was an idealist, but that ideal was never separated from the sense of the practical: beautiful works, practical works.

This is how he was: simple and daring, practical and decisive on the human level; heroic in his hope and trust on the level of faith.

## **From stage to stage**

From 1914, and from the first settlements, almost fortuitous ones, in poor, uncomfortable rented quarters, we pass on to the foundation of the House of Alba in 1920, enlarged soon enough so that it might house the many young boys who streamed there.

Always, everything was born and grew in the midst of unbelievable difficulties. Father Alberione himself tells this: "At times the needs were urgent and serious, and all human resources and hopes were blocked. We would pray and seek to remove sin and every fault against

poverty.... And then unthought-of solutions came. Money arrived through short term loans or from new benefactors. Other things happened which I would never know how to explain. Years passed; the bankruptcy predicted by many, the accusations of insanity vanished and everything came to a peaceful conclusion, even if with much effort. None of the creditors lost a cent, and the suppliers, builders and companies all continued to trust us. There were many benefactors whose charity bore fruit three times over! Numerous also were the contrary facts. Father Giaccardo used to say: ' I feel sorry for certain people who oppose us, even though they are in good faith. I know some who have already been punished.'"

Father Alberione, however, used to answer: 'I know many more who were blessed for having sent vocations to St. Paul and for having helped us.'"

What was the secret of this happy outcome? It was faith alone.

## **Proof of God's help**

God never failed to send an answer and a guide when fears arose. Father Alberione dared and at the same time feared: " I fear that I am being gravely imprudent in gathering persons for a mission with the grave risk of abandoning them midway."

But he no longer hesitated after his spiritual director told him: "The Lord will take care and provide better than you; go ahead with faith."

In answer to his prayer, he heard "within" himself the words: " You can make a mistake, but I do not err. The vocations come only from Me, not from you. This is the external sign that I am with the Pauline Family."

Father Alberione trusted, even when a pulmonary form a tuberculosis threatened to snatch him away from

everything. Even then he had only humility and trust. The work was God's not his. Why fear? His faith was unshakable.

## **An assurance and a program**

It was precisely during the hard trial of his illness, during the first years of his undertaking, when his presence was most needed, that the Divine Master—all luminous appeared to him in a mysterious dream and reassured him: "Do not fear: I am with you. From here (the Tabernacle) I will cast light. Be sorry for sin."

When he related the dream to his spiritual director, he answered: "Be serene. Dream or otherwise, what was said is holy. Make it a practical program of life and of light for yourself and for all the members."

These words, this Eucharistic "center," constitute the foundation of the Pauline Family, the "font" from which everything originates.

In all Pauline chapels these words are found near the Tabernacle. Eucharistic adoration is the root of Pauline prayer-life and of the apostolate in all its forms: "From here."

The projects progressed one after the other, like a burning flame, and always in the moments that seemed the most difficult. Even the very life of the Founder was threatened because of the specific work that he was carrying out (this happened in Turin in 1921). But the very difficulties seemed to give life to the initiatives. Father Alberione and his sons knew that everything is a gift and the work of Jeus-Host. He taught always how to distinguish the elements in the vocation which come from God and those which are human. "To God all the honor; to us scorn." On the foundation of this humility the work took root and developed far beyond anything that was envisioned.

## **Expansion of the Congregation— The house of Rome— From Rome to all the world**

From the time that Father Alberione “had gone to Rome to represent the diocese for the Congress of the Popular Union, and had been able to stop to pray at the Tomb of St. Paul,” the desire to move to Rome had been “fixed in his heart.”

On January 14, 1926, he sent to Rome Father Timothy Giaccardo with fourteen students in the second year of high school. The small band took up quarters at 75-E Via Ostiense, and a few days later, a first group of Daughters of St. Paul also took up residence in Rome. The Society’s place of residence was transferred from one temporary location to another, then to a farmhouse in Via Grottaperfetta (1928-29) and finally to the new house whose construction had begun in 1928 on the same property.

Father Alberione transferred to Rome in 1936, and established the Generalate there.

He wrote: “The determining factors are clear: we are in Rome in order to be more aware that the Pauline Family is at the service of the Holy See; to draw doctrine, spirit and apostolic activity more directly from the font, the Papacy.”

“From Alba,” he wrote later on, “we aimed at all of Italy; from Rome in a special way at all other nations.”

“Considering the small Pauline Family, one could compare it with a river which as it flows along grows because of the rains, the melting of glaciers, and the merging of small streams. The waters, thus gathered, are then divided and channeled for the irrigation of fertile plains and for the production of power, light and heat. He (Father Alberione) had followed the will of God almost

immediately, without hastening the convergence and gathering of the waters in the valleys. He also followed the will of God in the channelling of the waters into various nations for the benefit of many, awaiting the time the canals would again reunite to enter into the sea of a happy eternity in God."

The work branched out in all the continents with a vitality that has something of the marvelous about it: the voice of the new St. Paul reaches to the farthest boundaries of the earth, through his children. Not only that, but the Founder himself in person, indefatigable and sleepless, visits them in every part of the world. It is a great adventure that will be illustrated better later on, together with the world-wide expansion of the Pauline Family.

## **Superior General for life**

There is a wonder greater than all the others: Father Alberione, although most certain that the mission was wanted by God, became increasingly more humble. He wrote: "I am not worthy of staying on earth any longer. Let another come to take my place. I will pray for him that God will fill him with graces, enlighten him and grant him abundant consolations."

Moved by this lowly opinion of himself, as far back as 1935 Father Alberione wrote a letter to the Sacred Congregation of Religious. In it he proposed to holding a kind of General Chapter for a revision of life and for the election of the Superior General and General Council. Considering the few years of existence of the Pauline enterprise, the Sacred Congregation thought this suggestion inopportune and advised against it.

Father Alberione returned to the subject a second time on the feast of the Epiphany, 1946. But only in 1957, at Albano Laziale, was it possible to convene the first

Chapter of the Pious Society of St. Paul. Father Alberione himself directed all the tasks.

On April 11, 1957, the votes were cast for the election of the Superior General: Father Alberione was unanimously elected.

At his remonstrations because of "his age and all his defects," Cardinal Larraona, who was present, responded by proclaiming the formula of election.

On April 24, 1969, in the "House of Divine Master," which Father Alberione had built at Ariccia (outside of Rome) for the Spiritual exercises and retreats of the members of the Pauline Family, and where in July, 1959, he had preached the first course of Spiritual Exercises, Father Alberione presided at the opening of the second General Chapter.

On the day of voting, August 5, 1969, the capitulars proclaimed Father Alberione, who was present, Superior General emeritus for life, and then they proceeded, in two successive votings, to the election of the new Government of the Congregation.

The second session of the Chapter was held at Ariccia in 1971. Father Alberione returned to Arricia, but it was to be the last time: he wanted to say goodbye to the capitulars, who had finished their work and would then leave Rome for their respective countries. It was July 2, 1971.

## **Participation in the Second Vatican Council**

The esteem and veneration with which for some time many members of the Church's hierarchy and even the Holy Father himself pronounced the name of Father Alberione, caused him to be listed among the Superiors General who were summoned to take part in Vatican II as Conciliar Fathers.

The servant of God was grateful to the Pope for this exceptional gesture of affection and esteem, and from October 11, 1962, to December 8, 1965, he participated most faithfully and most punctually at all the meetings of the Council.

He used to arrive when the Tribune of the Fathers General was still semi-deserted. Climbing to his seat in the right-hand corner of the tribune beneath the loud-speaker, always humble, almost anxious to vanish in the midst of the others, he would take his surplice out of his bag, put it on and sit down. Then, recollecting himself, he would start to say the Rosary. Then he would devoutly participate in the Holy Mass. While the discussions took place, he would listen silently, taking notes from time to time. During the breaks, some of the Bishops, mostly those from the third world, would climb up from the nave of the tribune and chat with one or another of the Superiors General, but very few of them noticed Father Alberione.

When the discussion opened on the “Decree on the Media of Social Communication,” a topic he had voted for during the great pre-conciliar consultation of Pope John XXIII, Father Alberione, who had fifty years of worldwide experience behind him regarding the apostolate of the press, motion pictures, radio, television, and records, always listened in silence and in prayer. No one would have had more right than he to take the floor, but he humbly remained silent. The content of the Decree was fine for him, for it only confirmed what—for more than half a century—he had been carrying out in the Church. For him the Decree was very important, because in that document he saw the Church’s official approval of his mission—but in his view it was, above all, a decree to be put into practice.

His presence at the Council consisted of prayer and silence, of humility and hiddenness. This was the expression of his love for the Church, for her Magisterium and for souls.

The day after the signing of the "Decree on the Media of Social Communication," he wrote:

"The apostolate of the 'edition,' our apostolate, has been approved, praised and established as a duty for the whole Church according to the different ranks: the Holy See, the Episcopate, the religious and diocesan clergy, the laity and all the faithful, with all the quickest and most modern means: press, radio, movies, records, television and similar means. Blessed be the Holy Spirit who guided the Ecumenical Council to this conclusion; and may he grant that all may follow the disposition imparted with such solemnity."

## His last years

At seventy years of age, Father Alberione had an energy and a dynamism which left one astounded. His day was still impressively active. In the heavy burden of governing the great Family, he handled even the smallest details. Although he was tormented by violent pains of spinal arthritis, he would pray on his knees, remaining motionless for hours. He never leaned or rested on anything, whether on his office or at table or when travelling by car. In his last years he sometimes had to ask the driver to stop the car, so that he could get out and work for long stretches of the road in order to be able to continue the trip. Then, after his eightieth birthday, began the slow but inexorable decline, following nature's law.

For him, a man born for action, this was certainly very hard to accept. Yet Father Alberione was great and heroic even in this. He knew how to make the necessary

renunciation of so many activities with extreme reserve, with noble and humble dignity without acts of impatience or rebellion.

However, one activity remained, and he multiplied it a hundredfold: prayer. He used to term it: "working with one's knees." He had always placed it beside work; moreover, he reserved the first place for it. In his last years, this man of prayer practiced it in every manner up to twenty hours a day, in the suffering of his totally-offered being.

After the first painful deprivation (when he said to the doctor: "But I have to work!"), there followed acceptance without any reservations: "But I pray!"

He was still useful, more useful than ever.

From the Mass (still celebrated, as long as he was able, according to his old habit, at 4:30 a.m.), to the end of day, his only lucid and vibrant preoccupation, his only desire, his only invitation was: "Prayers... pray.... Oh, let us pray." especially when he heard some sad news or his suffering was greater. "I pray for you and you pray for me."

When his isolation became almost total, he considered it still another grace. He used to say: "When people stay away, one enjoys greater liberty in being united with God." He rejoiced in his solitude, but he always retained the ability of welcoming people with a joyful openness, even at the cost of great sacrifice, because it was difficult for him to just give a blessing or pronounce a word that was always of encouragement: "Forward...in joy!"

When he was no longer able to read, the Rosary remained for him his last continued prayer, sweet comfort for him who had for Mary a most tender and strong devotion.

## **Towards heaven**

Father Alberione's true and proper sickness lasted only three days, from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, 1971: bronchial-pneumonia and kidney blockage.

Only two thoughts: Heaven ("I am dying; Paradise") and the others ("I pray for everyone"). With extreme effort, he blessed all his childre—a Father to the very end — and he edified everyone by the example given in his painful agony and most holy death.

He had received the Sacrament of the Sick and was already in a coma when Pope Paul VI, who had kept himself informed about the course of the illness, spontaneously paid a visit to the dying Founder. The Pope had already greatly exalted the person of the Founder and of his work to the benefit of the Church, and wanted to personally give this last and highest recognition.

"Oh, Father Alberione, "exclaimed the Pope. Father Alberione was still alive, almost miraculously in the opinion of medical science, as if as a final grace he had to receive the paternal blessing of the Pope in person. But he did not have the possibility of seeing the Holy Father, nor of rejoicing in his blessing.

"We'll give him absolution again," said Pope Paul. And he recollected himself in prayer. Then, deeply moved, the Holy Father signed his name in the register lying open on the very old and plain writing desk which for many decades had seen the tireless work of the Founder.

By the time the Pontiff returned to the Vatican, the news had already arrived that Father Alberione had died about a half-hour after the Pope's departure from the General House of the Society of St. Paul. The hands of the clock hanging on the wall of Father Alberione's room marked the time: 6:25 p.m., November 26, 1971.

Father Alberione had entered the House of the Father.

## **In expectation of the resurrection**

Today, surrounded by the veneration of his spiritual children, Father Alberione's body rests in a tomb in the sub-crypt of the Sanctuary of the Queen of Apostles, on Via Alessandro Severo, Rome.

The fame of his sanctity—so widespread—brings countless visitors, while from every continent letters arrive addressed to the Generalate and to the Postulator General, telling of graces, including exceptional ones, received by the faithful who have sought his intercession.

Father Alberione remained faithful to his resolution: "I want to be a good Pauline, at least in heaven. Up there I will be a brother to my brothers."

An expression of exceptional humility!

## PART TWO

### *His Work*

*“Woe to me if I do not announce the Gospel.”*  
(1 Cor. 9:16)

*“Decide before the Lord; carry out without delay.”*  
(Father Alberione)



## THE PROPHETIC FOUNDATION

The development of Father Alberione's work proved that the Bishop of Alba, His Excellency Francis Re, was right, for from the very beginning he had seen the finger of God in the aspirations of the young priest.

The first striking characteristic is its truly prophetic origin. It is true that, for His saints, the light of God makes them see, even in the distant future, situations and needs in a perspective of anticipation and of grace.

More than fifty years after Father Alberione had set forth his clear plan, *Inter Mirifica*, the Conciliar Decree on the means of social communication, affirmed: "The Catholic Church considers it one of her duties to announce the Good News of salvation also with the help of the media of social communication, such as the press, movies, radio, television and the like, to reach and influence, not only individuals, but the very masses and the whole of human society" (cf. 1 and 3).

It is the program that Father Alberione had been seeking to realize from as far back as 1914—new means for the ancient and perennial mission—"Preach the Gospel to all peoples." Fidelity to the mandate and newness of means suited to the times: one would not know how to think of a greater fidelity nor of anything more up-to-date or modern.

Father Alberione and his work respond today not only to still vital needs, but to needs that are always more vital, essential and urgent.

## **The diffusion of the Gospel**

The Gospel—the book that Father Alberione loved most, always carried with him and wished to be always exposed in all the Pauline houses, chapels, parlors, and book centers—had to be diffused through the press and through all the new means of social communication, throughout the whole world, to open men to God and to their fellowmen in God, for the coming of the kingdom.

No one better than St. Paul—whom he regarded as the apostle par excellence—could have been chosen as the protector and model, given the universal horizons of his apostolic mission: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.” “...Your thoughts should be wholly directed to all that is true, all that deserves respect, all that is honest, pure, admirable, decent, virtuous, or worthy of praise” ... “so that Christ may be formed in all of us and God may be all in everyone.”

In the difficult times that followed the First World War, when even the most flourishing newspapers were in crisis, Father Alberione already dreamed of reaching the whole world with the same means.

## **In the will of God**

In such a difficult undertaking, Father Alberione—who had such a strong personality and very original ideas—did not act on his own. He was able to say in 1960: “I took every step guided by obedience: the beginning, the development, the spirit, the expansion, the apostolate. In a thing of such great responsibility, three elements were necessary:

- divine inspiration, well ascertained;
- the advice of the spiritual director;
- dependence upon the legitimate superiors.”

The approval of the Church, obtained from Pius XI with the diocesan approbation of the Congregation, rendered “the will of God indisputable and most certain. Into this spirit, obedience to the directives of the Pontiff inserts itself perfectly. “Our joy is that of living attached to you, Holy Father, of obeying in everything, of being wholeheartedly yours, until the last breath.”

## **The apostle of the Word of God**

Father Alberione had understood the importance of the Word of God from the time of his seminary years, at the “school” of St. Paul the Apostle, who was “set apart” for the Gospel and sent to announce it to all peoples.

He wrote: “There was time when I received in the adorations a clearer light concerning the great treasure which the Lord wanted to grant to the Pauline Family: the diffusion of the Gospel.”

In the light he understood three things:

- a) that the Gospel combined with the catechism had to enter every Family;
- b) that the Gospel would have to be interpreted according to the mind of the Church—therefore, with complete catechetical footnotes: dogma, morality and cult;
- c) that the Gospel had to receive a special devotion, that it had to be kept with reverence, and that preaching—much more than was being done—had to give the Word of God and be modeled on the Gospel.

Above all, the Gospel is to be lived in mind, heart and deeds.

Sorrowfully observing that the Gospel was so seldom read at that time, and that the Bible, the "Book of God, the Book of mankind," was unknown, not only to Christians, but also to many religious and clergy, he began the work of diffusing the Bible and the Gospel, aided by the students of the Seminary.

Every year, on the feast of St. Cecilia, he stopped to meditate on the words of the Liturgy: "The virgin Cecilia always carried the Gospel of Christ on her heart...." He too carried the Gospel over his heart throughout his life. This vital program bore copious fruits for all of his sons and daughters, to whom he wrote: "The diffusion of Sacred Scripture must be the first and most important object of all of our apostolic activity."

"We were born from the Word, for the Word and in the Word. Therefore, we must see to it that all of our books, films, transmissions, records, etc., will be always and only an extension, an echo, a follow-up, a radiation of the Divine Book, but especially of the Gospel."

St. Paul was the guide on this point.

## **The charism of St. Paul**

The prophetic and apostolic charism of St. Paul was revived on the person and work of Father Alberione: two men without striking appearance; two giants of the spirit.

Father Alberione discovered in St. Paul the "disciple who knows the Divine Master in His fullness; who lives Him entirely, who sounds the profound mysteries of the doctrine, the heart, the sanctity, the humanity, the divinity of the Divine Master; who sees Him as doctor, host, priest. He presents the whole Christ to us, as He had already defined Himself: Way Truth and Life."

Father Alberione, in a certain sense, is the St. Paul of today. St. Paul's zeal for all peoples is incarnated in this modern apostle: "Listen to the only Master, Jesus.... The Gospel to all the peoples.... through all the 'most modern and rapid means' furnished by technology, all 'consecrated' (note the importance of the word!) to the evangelization of the world in order to 'always walk in step with the pace of the times,' at the service of true liberty and of true human progress."

## **Eternal doctrine, new means**

For the proclamation of the Gospel, Father Alberione decided to make use, not only of the press, (the "king of all times," whose importance in today's world—with prophetic intuition—he saw broaden and deepen always more), but also of the motion pictures, radio, television, records, etc. He understood that if these means were not used, the world would be lost, and therefore each of them, none excluded, was to be immediately taken, grasped, and consecrated....

It can be said that the first radio in Italy was that used to send a transmission addressed to the Pauline Houses, in order to reach and embrace them all, directly with the live voice....

Thus every "technology" was "elevated to apostolate," and Father Alberione did not content himself with amateur means, because he understood perfectly today's needs under all aspects. It is necessary to be perfect apostles and perfect professionals; "to work to do good" and "to do well," in order to reach all, precisely there, where they can be reached—no longer only in the churches, but in the family, at work, in the streets, in places of entertainment, everywhere—with the film, radio, television, the book, the newspaper, the record, the music-

cassette, the comic-strip, and any other means offered by progress in mass communications. The masses are exposed to a hammering onslaught of de-Christianization. The printing press and all the new means must be the new pulpit, capable of making the voice of Christ the Master heard in every environment.

Along this line he gave himself totally in all, spending himself to the point of “self annihilation” (“the work always first, we second”).

Firm and meek at the same time, he organized means capable of competing with all those used for profane and deconsecrating purposes. He always exhorted his followers to “aim high” regarding quality and expansion, even though they were starting from the beginnings which were often the humblest, because such are characteristic of the work of God.

## **The “editor” in the Pauline sense of the word**

Father Alberione gave a most original interpretation to the word editor. From the Latin *edere*, which means “to bring forth,” he passed on to the expression used for the Mother of the Lord who *edidit*—that is “brought forth”—the Savior. From that he derived the meaning “to bring forth” the evangelical message making it penetrate all life and culture. Therefore, for him, the term “edition” defined all Pauline activity: press, films, records, radio, television, art in all its aspects.

In this way, our great apostle responded fully to the needs of history and of modern man. He knew very well that “ideas are the levers of the universe,” that ideas prepare revolutions (“where an idea has passed, twenty years later the canons pass”), which cause life to ferment in all its manifestations. “If someone uses these means for evil...we shall use them for the good,” for spreading the

only great message of civilization and of imperishable hope. This alone is what the world thirsts for and needs as nourishment, strength and comfort, in order that life may have a meaning that is real, over and beyond what is unwholesome and fleeting.

Therefore, this alone is truly necessary: "Give in the first place, the doctrine that saves. Penetrate all thought and human wisdom with the Gospel. Do not speak only of religion, but speak of everything in a Christian way...of sociology, of pedagogy, of geology, of statistics, of art, of hygiene, of geography, of history, of all human progress.... According to reason directed by faith."

All of this is necessary if one wants to live the mandate of Jesus in the spirit of the Gospel. As regards the world, "You are the salt... you are the light...you are the city placed on the mountain."

This "is the thought of the Divine Master." Therefore it is obligatory that "all problems and events be judged in the light of the Gospel" and that "we make the presence of the Church felt in every problem." The great answer to all our questions comes only from the Gospel.

## **The answer to our confusion**

Father Alberione discerned man's startling disorientations in every area: science, technology, philosophy, all of which run the risk of separating themselves (or have already separated themselves) from God, the source of all truth.

"Each and all—sciences, inventions, discoveries—are chapters of the great book of creation. Each one is aware of the creative work of God; each one must serve as a means for man to go to God, as must the eye, the tongue, the will.... (but) as so often happens in some men, who do not ask themselves: Where do I come from? Where am I

going? Why do I live? So, too, (it happens) with knowledge and the sciences (inventions and discoveries), (men) taking pleasure only in knowing them (in possessing them), do not ask themselves: "Who made them? Why did He give them to me? Of what use are they?" Today, too often it has been forgotten that "when we study the sciences deeply, they lead to Jesus Christ, who is the way to God. They prepare one to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ..."

"Everything must serve to prepare man to see God, if he has used his reason well, if he has accepted and believed revelation."

The apostle must cast light on this path. He must direct himself to the intellectuals, to uplift them "from reason to revelation, from human wisdom to divine wisdom." He must find the way of the intellect and then the way of the heart for the more simple, who so often are unknowingly misled, and yet are so capable of opening themselves up, as were the children of the Gospel, to truth and to love.

Everything—every science, every truth, every flame of charity—is found in the Divine Master. His Gospel is divine...it responds to the needs of each and everyone, and it is capable of satisfying all the demands of the men of all ages.

For this reason, it is necessary, urgent and indispensable to give Christ to the world: Christ Way, Truth, and Life.

## **The Pious Society of St. Paul**

This is why Father Alberione willed to have a family greatly articulate, capable of embracing all the multiple demands of the new times, and why he placed it under the protection of St. Paul, the apostle of all peoples. "A flourishing tree...one sole root and many branches."—thus

has Pope Paul VI defined the Pauline Family. "Behold it spreading itself before our gaze and our admiration, like a great tree outlined against the sky."

The Pauline priests are the first Congregation of the great Family which Father Alberione considers to be St. Paul's work, not his own: "From St. Paul it was born, by him it was nourished and raised; from him the Congregation took its spirit."

The seed sown in Alba, in August, 1914, as the "little Workers Typographical School," grew marvelously, and the time came to buy an extensive piece of property on which to build the first House of the Congregation, so as to accommodate the many boys who had already entered.

On October 5, 1921, the Bishop of Alba, His excellency, Francis Re, blessed the various rooms of the House. Father Alberione, together with thirteen Pauline priests, pronounced their perpetual vows of religious profession in the hands of the Bishop. Fifteen other young men made their temporary vows.

Furthermore, the profession had a simple, private character because the Congregation still lacked canonical approbation, but this did not keep Father Alberione from having printed on the remembrance holy card, together with the names of the professed, the words: "*Institution of the Pious Society of St. Paul* and religious profession." Thus came into existence the first-born Congregation of the great Family.

From Alba, the foundation, composed of priests and lay brothers called "Disciples of the Divine Master," then extended itself to Rome in January, 1926. Ten years later, the Founder himself went to Rome, establishing there the General House.

"Rome, the teacher of the world, holds he doors open to humanity. From Rome go forth those who are 'sent' in every direction...." This is in accord with the

motto of St. Paul: "The Word of God is not bound," but must "run and diffuse itself."

The first duty of a Pauline priest is to be an apostle, a writer. With what spirit we hear this from Father Alberione himself: "O priest-writers, let us write after celebrating Holy Mass. Let us make ourselves channels through which the Blood of Jesus, flowing from His Heart, fills ours and, due to an overabundance, spills over into the hearts of the readers...."

"O priest-writer, the effectiveness of your work depends more on your knees than on your pen! It depends more on your Mass than on your technique, more on your examination of conscience than on your knowledge.

"The lay writer is a reflector of light. You must also indicate the way and communicate life. Cry out, do not cease, as St. John the Baptist, as St. Paul! Call back from sin, point out virtue to everyone, communicate the power of example and of the Holy Spirit."

The mission of the Pauline priest is so clearly expressed in these words that any addition or comment would be superfluous.

The Disciples of the Divine Master are associated with the priest. They are religious brothers who fully share the religious ideal with the priests. They assume in a particular way the technical and distribution stages the apostolate of the editions.

Born in the thought of the Founder from the earliest years, the brothers, Disciples of the Divine Master, were constituted in 1928. "Why... not associate them with the apostolate?... Why not give the lay brother an intimate share in the mission and zeal of the priest?" "They are dearest to us, because although constituted last, they were the very first in the intention...." "The priest writes; the technical work is done by the brother, who becomes a multiplier and diffuser: these are the Disciples."

They are further entrusted with the particular mission of making reparation for the sins committed through the evil press and through the other means of social communication. This is accomplished through their mortified and holy life, with the practice of the hidden virtues, and through the dedication of their energies in the field of the apostolate of the editions.

To achieve an ever more fundamental relationship between ideals and works produced, in passing to the practical problems of diffusion with admirable coherence, Father Alberione used to recommend: "Do not do business, but carry on spiritual transactions—no industry but industriousness for the salvation of souls...not for money, but for eternal treasures."

This was one of the major preoccupations: not commerce, but apostolate. Father Alberione knew that criticism was not lacking and never would be lacking, even because the means chosen could easily give rise to apprehensions or misunderstandings.

"We do not want to work for personal satisfaction, nor for the sake of honor, nor for gain, nor do we want the press for its own sake. Rather, we seek God by means of the press...."

"In addition to the orally preached word, the word preached with technical means is also needed. We are in the Church to give the written word. Our apostolate is the continuation of the apostolate of the Divine Master: 'Go and preach the Gospel to every creature.'" Nothing else.

For this reason, the Founder suffered when at times his sons were considered businessmen or even more, when one of them acted in such a way as to give the impression of doing business, of undertaking any ordinary occupation.

"Our book centers are centers of apostolate; not of business affairs, but of the Gospel; they are not for money, but for souls."

This is why he was open to every new need of all peoples, but always with absolute fidelity to the mandate transmitted by the Church.

Openness, therefore, to what is new, but with wisdom. He loved to hear the truths of faith explained in a way adapted to the times, with dynamic originality but with due moderation.

In 1950 he wrote against a certain “modern... frank... advanced” tendency: “Some say: Today we need another form of education, another way of living, another form of discipline.’

“I answer: sanctity consists and always will consist in living Jesus Christ as He is presented in the Gospel: ‘Way, Truth and Life....’ Conscientiousness is not rigorism, and laxism is not modernity, but worldliness of heart.”

Upon these bases he taught—always a tireless teacher—that “an apostle is one who carries God in his heart and radiates Him to those around himself. An apostle is a saint who stores up treasures and communicates the surplus to mankind.”

## **The Daughters of St. Paul**

Here we have another step along the “way of God.” The work expands, and the expansion is always born according to the divine mandate: “Go into the whole world, and proclaim the good news to all creation.” St. Paul is the great walker. We are at the second stage: the first feminine Congregation.

As far back as 1908, Father Alberione had written his first draft of a book entitled: “The Woman Associated with Priestly Zeal,” and he prayed and meditated on how to recognize the value of woman.

With time, aspirations matured in his mind concerning the apostolic contribution of women in the

Church. These aspirations were the guidelines he followed in the foundations of various feminine Congregations born of his fatherly heart—though at different times and for different specific apostolate but all centered in the Divine Eucharistic Master.

Thus it was that in June, 1915, he set up in Alba a small workshop to teach the art of sewing, to form good catechists and to diffuse the printed matter of the Typographical School. This was the beginning of the Daughters of St. Paul.

Little by little the young women also opened a small book center under the direction of Maria Teresa Merlo, the future first Superior General of the Daughters of St. Paul.

It was the beginning of hundreds of centers of diffusion of the Word of God which the Daughters of St. Paul were to open throughout the world. The Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, granted diocesan approbation to this first feminine Congregation, and Bishop Re signed the decree of canonical erection on March 15, 1929.

Their specific apostolate was to diffuse what the Pauline priests wrote (they were called the “postmistresses of God”), but later on this apostolate was expanded not only with the diffusion of all the good press, but also with writing and printing by the sisters themselves.

It was a modern idea, and in the beginning it was almost an obstacle to the entrance of the Daughters of St. Paul into many ecclesiastical environments—which even outside of Italy could not yet understand an activity of this kind—beginning with the United States, where initially their work was judged to be almost eccentric. But the idea was so valid that, after the first difficulties, the generous Daughters of St. Paul were soon regarded as very necessary apostles from Italy to the two Americas and even to the extreme Orient: sister writers and printers committed to an extent that was incredible.

In joyful sacrifice they increased in number on all the continents. They penetrated and penetrate everywhere—parishes, homes, factories, and offices—these “bearers of Christ.”

The Holy Father said of them: “These... good sisters go everywhere... they make us think of ants which go all over.... We could, keeping to the comparisons offered by nature, think of the bees, who build hives and bring honey and who go about here and there, and then return to their central station, creating truly... the meaning of community and of society.”

This full appreciation of woman is the great revolution effected by Father Alberione in a prophetic anticipation of more than half a century.

At the beginning of the year 1900, he had written with great daring: “Man is in a state of incompleteness without woman.... If a doubt should rise in our minds, let us look at history: at the side of the great benefactors of humanity and of the great saints, we always will find the figure of a woman who almost completes his work. At the side of St. Benedict, there is his sister, St. Scholastica; at the side of St. Francis de Sales, there is St. Jane Frances de Chantal; at the side of St. John Bosco, there is St. Mary Mazzarello.”

For the times in which Father Alberione was writing, these ideas could have appeared utopian or foolish: Not the sister in the cloister, not even the sister who solicits alms, but the sister on the highways and byways, as a true apostle of Christ, in the totally new field of the technical means of the mass media, in the era of the “civilization of images.”

It was truly “a revolution,” and criticism was not lacking: this was audacity, intrusiveness, inopportuneness, eccentricity. But Father Alberione did not yield. His communicative trust gave these generous women the

certainty of being in the right. Autonomous and at the same time deeply rooted in the vast Pauline Family, they were sustained by the confidence that the Founder placed in them. He had said: "Woman is on the march. And it is an admirable thing, truly a gift of God..."

For Father Alberione, woman is on an equal footing with man in the apostolic mission, in a vocation of the greatest social importance, for the diffusion of truth in a world where woman is offended and debased by selfish interests and powers.

## **The Pious Disciples of the Divine Master**

But nourishment had to be assured to the great growing tree. Another Congregation had to be in a certain sense the root through which to absorb the vital sap of grace.

Dominated by the conviction that the apostolate draws its nourishment and its fecundity from prayer, Father Alberione gave rise to another feminine Congregation after the Daughters of St. Paul. This was the Congregation of the Sisters, Disciples of the Divine Master. Of them he wrote:

"The Sisters Disciples have a threefold apostolate which springs from one sole love. Their eucharistic apostolate is born from love for the Divine Master present in the Eucharist. The liturgical apostolate is born from love for Jesus living in the Church, His Mystical Body. The apostolate of priestly service is born from love for Jesus Christ living in the priest. The action of Jesus in them corresponds to their love for Him, and manifests itself in religious observance and in the increase of number of persons and of works."

First comes prayer. The adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament is the heart of vocation of the Sister Disciples. They pray for all the initiatives and needs of the

Pauline Family and of the Church. Their “fundamental and vital” mission is hidden but life giving, with a purpose of “reparation and petition as regards the means of social communication.” They pray in order that “there may be many vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life, that priests may be supported during life in the fulfillment of their ministry and that they may be given suffrages after their death.”

“Mothers of the priesthood, silent and hidden as Mary, Mother of the eternal Priest, Jesus. Jesus Priest and Mary His Mother are always united in the economy of the redemption....” “The priest is like Jesus; the Sister Disciple is like Mary. Jesus and Mary were companions in life, in work and in sacrifice; so must it be for the priest and for the Sister Disciple.”

From what has been said, the breadth of the vocation of this Congregation is already apparent—ranging from pure contemplation in the hours spent adoring Jesus Host, to action. Not by chance did Father Alberione call them “Disciples.” He named the first Superior Mother Scholastica. This was the name of St. Benedict’s sister, which means precisely “disciple” and he reminded the Disciples of the Benedictine motto: “Pray and work.” It is an evangelical ideal: the perfect integration of prayer and action found in the lives of Jesus and Mary, the first and perfect models.

“The Sister Disciple rests her day upon Christ; she spends it with the Eucharistic Jesus, in the Eucharistic Jesus, for the Eucharistic Jesus.”

True “living and operative members in the Church,” as Father Alberione defined them, the Sister Disciples pass, in the spirit of a unique mission, from the perennial praise of adoration, from the humblest works, to the most skilled works, remaining, furthermore, committed to all the activities connected with their liturgical apostolate.

The Servant of God, Father Giaccardo, was convinced of their irreplaceable and indispensable mission. For the recognition of the Congregation as distinct from the Daughters of St. Paul, into which at first the Sister Disciples had been inserted, he offered his own life so that “they might have life.” And his offering was accepted by God. The Congregation was recognized as one of pontifical right on January 12, 1948—the day Father Giaccardo celebrated his last Mass. He died twelve days later.

## **The liturgical apostolate**

In the liturgical field, also, Father Alberione had great foresight. Baptism has sown in us a divine seed which must develop through an ever more profound participation in the mystery of Christ, which reaches its culmination in the Sacrifice of the Mass, in the Eucharist.

Vatican II has insisted that the people of God live the liturgy “with full, conscious and active participation.” For Father Alberione, the liturgical apostolate is service rendered to the Church and to souls: “The Liturgy is the book of the Holy Spirit... by means of visible things we come to know God, who is invisible.”

The liturgical field is reserved to the Sister Disciples in a special way. To them is entrusted all that belongs to worship, that it be beautiful, a sign and symbol of the divine. “Art for life, for truth, for good.”

This is why Father Alberione willed that the preparation of the Sister Disciples should be carefully planned even in the fields of theology and art. Thus, every sacred vessel and object of devotion should respond with due dignity and beauty to the purpose it must serve. His desire was that among them there would be painters and sculptors, engineers and architects. It was an almost

futuristic assignment that the Founder entrusted to the newly-born Congregation.

Even this is a living and operative reality today. And at their side, even more directly immersed in the daily life of the people of God, the great tree was to put forth another branch: the Good Shepherd or Pastorelle Sisters.

### **The Sisters of the Good Shepherd**

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd are the third feminine Congregation, already envisioned working in pastoral ministry in the parishes as far back as 1908. However, Father Alberione knew how to await God's hour: "The hand of God is not to be forced... awaits His hour in peace."

They, too, were born under the standard of poverty. On the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, 1938, Sister Nives Negri was entrusted with opening the first House, at Genzano of Rome. She asked how she could do it without any money, and Father Alberione replied: "It is easy to do things with money (and he laughed as though 'amused'). The nice thing is to let the Lord do things; He never begins with money. However, take this." And he handed her 100 lire. After showing trust, he also knew how to be practical.

This is the mission he entrusted to them: "The Sister of Jesus the Good Shepherd loves, and in the word 'love' she finds her whole program. The love of the Sister for the souls entrusted to her care reaches across the boundaries of eternity.... A big heart to love, to show compassion, to comfort...."

In the penetrating intuition of Father Alberione, the Pastorelle Sister is not simply a sister belonging to a certain congregation whose spirit she lives and whose

works she carries out in the parish, in the particular sector proper to her; but like the pastor, she “marries the parish” and has no other specific field of activity except the parish with all of its works and problems.

The pastor is the father of the parish; she is the mother of the parish. “The priest without woman would lose his influence on society. Woman without the priest would lose everything. Just as between God and man there is the priest, so too between the priest and man there is a woman, the connecting link.”

This is a very new dimension. In the family of the children of God, there are Christ and Mary. In the parish, there are the pastor and the Pastorelle Sister: father and mother for everyone, from the children yet to be born, to the youth, to families, to the sick, to the dying, so that they may be prepared for their meeting with God, comforted in time with the Sacrament of the Sick and finally accompanied to the cemetery. All this constitutes an undertaking of catechetical instruction, of assistance, of comfort, of genuine apostolate in a thousand spheres of action.

Father Alberione wrote: “The spiritual meaning of your vocation is for the souls whom you will find along the way of life. Be like Mary who was chosen to be Mother of Jesus for souls.”

The Pastorelle Sisters (from the start this was their most popular name) have been and are of precious help to pastors. Today they are widely spread out (their first house outside of Italy was in Brazil), and according to their Constitutions they work preferably in rural areas and in suburbs of the great cities where missionary activities are needed, especially in Latin America and Australia. It is unnecessary to emphasize how important and urgent such a choice is, today more than ever.

The basis is always the evangelical command: "Go, preach, teach, and baptize." But if vocations are lacking, how can one answer the call of the Lord? There will be a Pauline Family consecrated precisely to this perennial petition: the Apostolines.

### **The Sisters of Mary Queen of the Apostles**

Called "the Apostolines," they were founded in 1957 to fulfill a request of the Holy See. It is important to emphasize that Father Alberione began all of his works to carry out the will of God, revealed to him either intimately or through the explicit request of the authority of the Church.

Their specific apostolate is the search for, care of and direction of priestly and religious vocations in the Church. Their motto is: "All vocations for all apostolates."

We know so well how present and pressing is the vocation problem in the old and new continents, and how great are the needs among the peoples of the third world.

The Apostolines work in a special way with young people who show signs of having a vocation in order to direct them to the Institutes for which they are better suited.

Inseparably fused in this case, too, are interior life, nourished by the Eucharist, and an intensely apostolic activity carried out through all the most advanced techniques of diffusion—exhibits, conventions, vocation days, triduums, weeks and retreats for vocations, the printed word, films, radio-television programs, etc.

The Founder said: "You will be the most loved Institute." And with reason, for the problem of vocations is a fundamental one, which can be called a matter of

life or death for the Church. According to St. Pius X, vocational work is the “work of works,” because of the absolute necessity of workers for the harvest. And the harvest is everywhere, in every field of the great Family of the Church; the workers must render every field fruitful.

From here, from his apostolic heart, blossoms the vast design of the Secular Institutes.

## The Secular Institutes

In the last years of his life, Father Alberione wrote a very singular note: “O Mary, I, your unworthy son, wholeheartedly accept the will of your Jesus: to complete the Pauline Family, to begin the three Institutes: ‘Jesus Priest,’ ‘St. Gabriel the Archangel,’ ‘Mary Most Holy of the Annunciation.’ They will be composed of souls burning with love of God, who translate their lives into apostolate.”

These words addressed to the Madonna from her son, James, express a precise will of Jesus.

In fact, in his writing, Father Alberione humbly admits his unworthiness to give life to such a great and marvelous desire, and asks three great graces to carry it out: proportionate faith, good vocations, and the right intention for himself and for his cooperators.

The Secular Institute aggregated to the Pious Society of St. Paul have already come into existence. They are:

1 – *The Institute of Jesus the Priest*: for Bishops and priests of the diocesan clergy, with the aim of assisting them on the spiritual plane and in the ministry entrusted to them, to give them a greater efficacy through the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and through the media of social communication.

The institute offers to its members human, spiritual and supernatural assistance for their own sanctification and for a pastoral ministry always more open and updated according to the directives of the Church "Pastors should fulfill their duty to...make effective use of the media of social communication in various apostolic endeavors, as circumstances and conditions demand" (Decree on Social Communication, 13).

Father Alberione thus summed up the very particular fruits which the Institute offers to its members:

- a special, personal sanctification;
- a richer ministry for souls;
- and more generous service in the individual dioceses."

The Institute carries out the exhortation of the Popes: "The cleric is not obliged by Divine law to observe the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. But it would be an enormous mistake to believe that the secular priest is called to a lesser perfection than the religious.... The practice of the evangelical counsels... is the royal road of Christian sanctification."

A member of the Institute, therefore, reaches evangelical perfection by joining to the life of ministry the life of consecration.

*2 – The Institute of St. Gabriel the Archangel* (the Gabrielites), for young and middle-aged men who, while remaining in their families and in their own fields of work, aim for personal sanctification and work for the Pauline apostolate.

It concerns laymen. From the very start, the attention and care of Father Alberione had been directed to the laity, as a valid and indispensable support of the Pious Society of St. Paul. Precisely for this reason the Union of Pauline Cooperators was started. Many

members of that Union have joined this Secular Institute. They were inspired by the principles of the Apostolic Constitution "Provvinda Mater," which opens to the laity the possibility of remaining in the world, in their families, and at their work, which is offered as leaven hidden in the mass to foster its Christian transformation.

Upheld and guided in the observance of the evangelical counsels, according to their personal abilities and in freer situations, they can more effectively develop the seeds planted in them with baptism and their special vocation and cooperate in the consecration of the world to Christ.

3 – *The Institute of Mary Most Holy of the Annunciation*, (the Annunciacionists). This is an institute for girls and young women, to help them serve and cooperate with the Church in giving Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, to humanity, through the diffusion of Christian thought and of the means which elevate personal and social life, particularly in modern forms.

Responding to the same needs as the Institute of St. Gabriel, the young lay women who remain in the world, in their families and in their work, also consecrate themselves totally to apostolic service, in a manner so hidden that at times their consecration is veiled even from the eyes of their own relatives.

To the Annunciacionists, as to the Gabrielites, who live in the secular world in secular dress, there open up surroundings often inaccessible to the priest, which can be leavened by their very presence, by their spiritual desire for perfection, by their example of Christian witness lived in all places, hour by hour.

To these three Institutes was added a fourth: "The Institute of the Holy Family," for Christian couples

open to apostolic needs of the Pauline spirit, for the sanctification of families—the “domestic churches.”

Today the family is threatened on all sides, undermined at its base. Absolutely incalculable is the social and apostolic wealth of witness offered by a union lived in its sacredness and indissolubility, with total and faithful dedication in any situation whatsoever, as service in Christ and in the Church.

These four Institutes were approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious as a Pauline Work on April 8, 1960.

## **The family of Cooperators**

From the very beginning, Father Alberione had understood that no valid power should remain inactive. At the side of one who consecrates himself entirely, should be everyone else; and—without exception—all the faithful of good will could collaborate.

The family of Cooperators came into existence in 1918. Father Alberione had often prayed to the Lord for this. He had asked that the parents of the Paulines and all those lay persons who would pledge themselves on behalf of the good press with their prayers, work, diffusion, writings, and offerings, might be part of the Family of St. Paul. The newly drawn-up rule was recommended to God and submitted to Bishop Re, who not only fully approved it, but also wanted to be the first enrolled member.

On October 25, 1918, the bulletin “Union of Cooperators” was published. It was the official organ of collaboration between the Cooperators and the Pauline Family. At present, this family has greatly multiplied, and numerous are the cooperators who devote themselves with every means to help the various branches of the Pauline Family. The founder brought the spirit of the

Cooperators into focus with words from which transpire the love, hope, and trust he placed in this “kind of third order.” “The Cooperators are regarded as persons who understand the Pauline Family and who form with it a union of spirit and intentions: in the manner possible to them, they embrace its principal aims and give whatever contribution is possible to them.... There is a true bond of friendship, which consists in the exchange of benefits. The Cooperators want to imitate the Pauline religious life: poverty, with detachment from earthly goods in the evangelical sense; chastity by observing purity of morals according to their state in life; obedience by dependence upon their ecclesiastical, civic and domestic leaders; the preaching of Christian doctrine with the diffusion of the editions, favoring the quickest and best means used by the Pious Society of St. Paul; cooperation with prayers, works and offerings. The Pauline Family confides its projects to the Cooperators. It gives directives for the works to be carried out, makes the Cooperators participants in sorrows and in joys, and indicates the means of sanctification through the periodical “The Pauline Cooperator.” Furthermore, the Pauline Family prays for the Cooperators; it celebrates for them and applies to them—living or deceased—2,400 Masses every year.

## **Common characteristics**

All of this Congregations and Institutes were born from the Tabernacle. They have one spirit: to live Jesus and to serve the Church. “Some represent all before the Tabernacle; some diffuse, as from on high, the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and some approach individual souls.”

In the Pauline Family there is a separation of administration. But there also exists an intimate bond of charity more noble than that of blood. There is a continual

exchange of prayers and helps in a thousand ways. The activity is separate, but there is continual, sole participation in joys and sorrows, which certainly will be taken into account for the eternal reward.

## **The associations of the Pauline Family**

To the various Institutes mentioned above are united other associations.

In order to reach everyone, to find new means for furthering Christian life and for diffusing the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church, four of these Associations were elevated to the rank of "Primary Union" during the pontificate of Pope John XXIII.

These Associations operate in Italy and in various nations.

1 – *The Pious Union for Sudden Deaths*. Its aim is to obtain from the Lord the grace that all who pass from this life to eternity "suddenly and tragically" may die in the grace of God. For this purpose, the Pious Union organizes, through its members, a spiritual treasury of prayers and good works to implore from the mercy of the Lord the grace of eternal salvation. To sanctify tragic or sudden deaths, whose percentage is greatly on the increase because of modern technology, signifies offering to God, in Christ crucified, a great number of sacrifices, whose value of reparation and of propitiation for mankind is inestimable. The Association was approved on February 10, 1960.

2 – *The International Biblical Association*. This was approved with a Pontifical Brief on October 14, 1960. It is inspired by the devotion to Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life. Its aim is the study, the production, the diffusion and the meditation of the Holy Bible, especially

the Gospel, to nourish faith, morals and Christian piety: that the Word of God, written in the Bible, may reach all men, according to the teachings of the Church.

3 – *The Association: “Ut Unum Sint.”* This has the aim of promoting the unity of all Christians in the one Church of Christ, in the spirit of the priestly prayer of the Divine Master. It was approved by Pope John XXIII on December 16, 1960.

4 – *The Pious Union of Prayers, Suffering and Charity for All Vocations.* Its goal is to assure the Church, through a permanent contribution of prayers, mortification and acts of charity, an ever greater number of vocations for all apostolates, and an appropriate preparation of the “called” for their ministry. Finally, it is to implore through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of Apostles, that all those consecrated to God may be faithful to their vocation until they reach heaven, and that they may sanctify themselves in their ministries by employing all their talents for the salvation of souls. It was approved on February 19, 1963.

Later, the *Pious Union of Christian Families* was added. It was erected by Cardinal Tisserant on April 22, 1963.

As can be seen, Father Alberione aimed for the whole, with a great-heartedness that embraced all fields. “Action and prayer, directed toward a social and Christian work, which tends to heal governments, schools, laws, families, relation among classes and international relationships. This is so Christ, Way, Truth and Life, may reign in the world.” Through what practical means? Through all the instruments of communication without distinction.

## **Newspapers, periodicals, books, films, radio, television, records**

Everything served to quench the apostolic thirst of Father Alberione: newspapers (as early as 1913, he had resolved, “a Catholic newspaper in every home”), magazines, books (written by members of the Pauline Family and others) that were chiefly of a popular type, as well as the other media used for social communication—motion pictures, the theater, radio, television, records....

In the first place, editions of the Bible, liturgical publications, catechisms, and correspondence courses of religious education have always had a very wide diffusion.

Here we limit ourselves to recall:

- the magazine *Famiglia Cristiana* which came into being in 1931, is translated into different languages, and has the largest circulation of any Catholic weekly in the world.
- “Giornalino,” a weekly distributed among young children.
- “La Domenica” a bulletin for Sunday and Holy Day Masses, welcomed by many parishes.

While in the typography the printing machines were rapidly printing the work already in process, Father Alberione himself would write tirelessly, for the glory of God.

### **Apostle of the pen**

Notwithstanding his many preoccupations concerning the setting up and governing of the Pauline Congregations, Father Alberione understood the need to precede his sons and daughters with example, and he dedicated himself with a true apostolic spirit to the ministry of writing.

In the spirit of St. Paul, Father Alberione sought to become through his writings all things to all men. He wrote for priest, for men and women religious, for intellectuals, for educators, for mothers and families, for the common people.

His books were the fruit not only of his continued study, but also of his meditations and daily prolonged eucharistic adorations.

The motto *contemplata aliis tradere*—share with others what has been acquired in meditation and in prayer—found in the Servant of God its full realization. His books, printed and reprinted in many editions and diffused by thousands of copies, did much good. Some of these titles are still being reprinted.

One does not find a splendid form nor an elegant style in the writings of the Servant of God. But one does find a clear, ordered, precise explanation of the truth, which flood the soul, convinces it, nourishes it, and leads it to live the Word of God and the teachings of the Church.

In his writings, the Servant of God was eminently pastoral. His main concern was to make God live in souls and souls in God through Jesus Christ, considered in the light of “Master,” Way, Truth and Life.

## **Apostolic activity with all means**

God “has certainly blessed in a singular way” (Paul VI) the work of His faithful servant, which can be summed up in the following figures:

“At the age of thirty (1914), Father Alberione founded the first religious Congregation. When he died, he left behind five religious Congregations, plus four Aggregated Institutes—in all, some 9,000 members in 35 nations, with 510 houses and almost

the same number of chapels, and 12 Churches, among them four imposing ones. He left behind almost 100 typographies, with the output of 18,000 different titles, over 150 million copies, 50 million of which are Bibles and Gospels—diffused through some 200 book centers; the most widely circulated Catholic weekly in the world: *Famiglia Cristiana*; 12 full-length films; 64 documentaries; 1,500 film titles reduced to 16mm; 400 different record titles; 6 transmitting radio stations in Brazil; 43 liturgical centers; and 73 nursery schools.”

In 1939, he established the *Romana Editrice Film*, now called, “*St. Paul Film*,” located at 746 Via Portuense.

On December 25, 1948, Father Alberione read his first radio message at the microphone of Radio St. Paul.

On August 7, 1950, he assisted at the first takes of the film “*Maeter Dei*,” which had been prompted, revised and aided by him.

In 1951 he was spiritually present at the dedication of the so-called “*Saint Paul Radio Center*” in Japan.

On August 20, 1955, a date dear to Father Alberione because it reminded him of the birth of his Institute, he dedicated the new St. Paul film establishment in Via Portuense, Rome.

On August 6, 1962, following the suggestion and urging of Father Alberione, St. Paul film began (in Sardinia) the production of short, full-color catechetical films with a biblical theme.

On October 12, 1963, Father Alberione assisted at the premiere showing of the film “*The Patriarchs*,” produced by St. Paul Film.

On December 5, 1964, he visited the central telephone office of Vatican City, staffed by his Pauline sons.

On May 6, 1965, he was present at Cinecitta, Rome, to observe the shooting of the biblical film, “*Saul and David*.”

On December 8, 1965, he blessed the new film equipment, entrusting it to the protection of the Immaculate Virgin.

On February 10, 1966, he blessed the *Auditorium Paulino*, for recording purposes, located at Albano Laziale, where he had gathered adult vocations to start them off in the Pauline apostolate.

He was always attentive, always present for everything—spiritually or in person—and always recollected. Never did any activity of this type or of this pace ever distract him, neither from the principal intent to which everything was connected, nor from the individual problems. In logical sequence and with a marvelous fecundity of grace, everything developed branch by branch into a stupendous organization, unified and articulate to the highest degree, with human and divine wisdom. First of all, as the foundation of all, stands unceasing union with God in prayer. From this flows the vital importance of the church, house of God, heart of every Pauline citadel.

## **The great Pauline churches**

In all that concerned worship, Father Alberione, generally so prudent in other expenses, knew no economizing: nothing is too expensive when it is for the homage of God. The decorum and beauty of the Pauline churches testify to this. His work was based on three main devotions: Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life; Mary, Queen of the Apostles; and St. Paul the Apostle. All the most important practices of piety had to begin and end with the three invocations. To better sensitize and foster this devotion, he planned to build three large churches.

The first church, dedicated to St. Paul, was built in Alba, at the central point of the buildings which make

up the motherhouse of the Pious Society of St. Paul. It was consecrated on October 28, 1928. As the cornerstone of its foundation is a brick from the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome.

The second (sanctuary), dedicated to the Madonna, Queen of the Apostles, was consecrated on November 30, 1954. It is located in the center of the complex of buildings of the Society of St. Paul and of the Daughters of St. Paul on Via Alessandro Severo, in Rome. It was built in fulfillment of a vow to thank the Virgin for having kept all the members of the Pauline Family safe from death during the Second World War.

The third (temple), dedicated to the Divine Master, is next to the House of the Sister Disciples on Via Portuense, Rome. "In the list of petitions which I presented to the Lord every morning for at least six years, was one for the construction of the Church of the Divine Master.... There will come a time when Jesus will have a church in His honor right in the heart of Rome. In it prayers will be offered incessantly to ask light for the world."

"Behold the Tabernacle of God in the midst of men.... The Church is faithful to its task of bringing around the Tabernacle—which is royal splendor, light, life and joy—that which is most beautiful and holy."

He was the man for all men, at all times: with fidelity to the mandate, with openness to the "signs of the times," with the balance proper to true wisdom.

### **Live his time, but with the Church**

Following in the footsteps of the Apostle St. Paul, Father Alberione always kept himself open to all the needs of people—so much so that in many things he anticipated the Second Vatican Council. But with a firm

and sometimes even strong hand, he never permitted anyone to go off the main road marked by the Church.

Everything had to be inspired by the Gospel, by the doctrine and teaching of the Church. For this reason, when necessary, he energetically intervened, even at the cost of serious economic losses. One day he ordered the Superior of the House of Rome to recall and destroy an entire edition (2,500 copies) of a large, bound volume on vocations, because the author did not hold to the teaching of St. Thomas and the other Doctors of the Church.

“The evil always lies in detaching oneself from the Gospel, from Jesus Christ, from the examples of the saints, from theology.

“Religious life is always that which Jesus Christ taught, which the Church proposes, which saintly religious lived, which is set forth in the Constitutions.”

In February of the same year, 1950, he almost foresaw with clarity the intellectual and moral chaos into which many religious and clergy would fall, seduced solely by the ambition of wanting to be called “modern,” or “open” or “progressive.” He wrote: “The gravest evil is that today some think that to be modern or progressive is to be without scruples—as they say—or better, to have a different, independent or unbiased conscience, or to place oneself in near, or at least unnecessary occasions of sin; or to neglect the examination of conscience or the visit to the most Blessed Sacrament; or as regards poverty to use money independently; or to maintain dangerous relationships, seeking comforts and satisfactions; or to brag about a spirit of independence. These are all terrible snares of the devil, a domination by the law of the flesh, and a real worldly spirit entering among religious.”

But once these observations have been made, all good means must be loudspeakers of the Word of the

Lord, in order to remain faithful to the command of Jesus: "You are Peter...he who hears you, hears me."

## **Fidelity and devotion to the Pope**

Among the outstanding traits of Father Alberione, that of adherence to the directives of the Church and of the Pope can be placed on an equal footing with his apostolic zeal and his devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

On May 1, 1923, in writing to the Pope, he said: "Our most humble prayer is this: to be corrected, guided, approved; our joy is to live attached to you, O Holy Father, to obey you in everything, to be intimately yours until the last breath."

And in 1953, he wrote: "Always, only and in everything let there be loyalty to the Church of Rome...! Outside of it there is no salvation.... The Pope is the great beacon lit by Jesus for the men of every century. The first members used to make a fourth vow: 'obedience to the Pope, as regards the apostolate,' placed at the service of the Vicar of Jesus Christ."

Several times, Father Alberione experienced the joy of audiences with the Popes.

On May 10, 1941, having obtained the Decree of Praise from the Holy See—that is, pontifical approval—he wrote: "If the Church has accepted and approved us, we will have a special love for her and for the Pope. With our apostolate, we will foster everything that promotes the exaltation and liberty of the Church."

On July 12, 1941, Father Alberione and his Vicar General, Father Timothy Giaccardo, went to thank Pope Pius XII.

He had another audience on April 16, 1957, together with the Capitular Fathers of the First General Chapter. Still another took place on June 28, 1969, during the

Second Chapter. On that occasion Pope Paul VI conferred on Father Alberione the cross "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice."

On June 20, 1957, for the occasion of Father Alberione's Golden Jubilee of priestly ordination, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, sent him a letter in Latin which began with the words: "Ea considerans."

On October 19, 1961, Father Alberione received an Apostolic letter from Pope John XXIII. With it the Pope recalled the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transferral of the International Catholic Biblical Society from Alba to Rome.

On February 19, 1963, the same Pope John sent Father Alberione a brief with which he elevated to the status of a Primary Union, the Pious Union of "Prayers, Suffering and Charity for all Vocations."

On April 19, 1964, the Founder was received in a private audience by Pope Paul VI.

Father Alberione's devotion and fidelity to the Church and to the Pope are attested to by himself in something he wrote during the last years of his life: "I feel responsible before God and men for the Mission entrusted to me by the Lord, who, if He could have found a more unworthy and incapable person, would have preferred him. However, this is for me and for everyone a guarantee that the Lord willed and accomplished things Himself... We are founded on the Church and the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and this conviction inspires certainty, joy, courage."

Setting out from this "rock" about which Christ promised that "the powers of evil shall not prevail," the St. Paul of modern times hurled himself into the work of world evangelization: from a tiny seed to a large tree! From the most humble beginnings of a "manger," to the widest diffusion of the Good News, as it came from Bethlehem.

## The mangers

“Always begin from a manger”; and these “mangers” were the Pauline communities that were born outside of Italy, year after year. They were very well named: there was poverty in everything, as at Bethlehem.

The evangelical simplicity of the Founder can leave one quite perplexed: “I believe that you could go to found a house in Argentina.” He always did it that way, simply, either personally or with one of his usual short notes. That was all!

“A leap in the dark,” said a Pauline priest on his voyage to begin a foundation in North America. But it was the darkness of faith, an act of obedience and of trust. And the houses flourished—from the poorest beginnings—with amazing vitality.

On August 20, 1931, exactly seventeen years after the foundation of Father Alberione’s work, two Pauline priests arrived in San Paolo, Brazil, where a letter reached them from the Founder.

It merits re-reading, because it contains a program which was valid for all the foundations:

“Dearest I come to bless you and to give you the program for America. ‘Glory to God! Peace to men!’—that of the Divine Master, sung by the angels.

“You will go to diffuse the divine Word with the press. Give it with the same heart that Jesus Master had in preaching, with the ardor that animated St. Paul in spreading it, with the grace and humility through which the Madonna became the Mother of the Word Incarnate.

“Do not be businessmen but do spiritual business... not industry, but infinite industriousness for the salvation of souls; not money, but eternal treasures. In the care of souls, consider yourselves dependent on (I speak in the meaning of Canon law), and at the side of the bishops and of the clergy. Cooperate in their work with humility.

“Let your editions be most pastoral, those which St. Paul would have produced if he were living now. May your spiritual and material way of doing things be always the most pastoral. Let your way of diffusion also be pastoral. Thus were you sent me.... ““As the Father has sent me....”

## **Worldwide foundations**

The development of the various congregations did not limit itself to different regions of Italy, but extended itself to the whole world.

### **Brazil—Argentina**

In August, 1931, Father Alberione cast the first seed abroad—in Brazil with Father Benedict Boano, in Argentina with Father Sebastian Trossi, and—later—with Father Torquatus Armani.

### **United States**

In October, 1931, he sent to the United States Father Francis Xavier Borrano, then Father Stanislaus Crovella and Subdeacon Mario Gandolfi.

### **France**

On October 22, 1932, he sent Father Marcellino Gilli to Paris.

### **Spain**

In June, 1934, it was Spain’s turn: Father Desiderio Costa went to Madrid, and from there—with Father Augustine Brossa—he went to Bilbao and later to Zalla.

## **The Far East**

In 1934, Father Alberione confided: "It seems to me that in these days the Holy Spirit inspires in a very special way and, being pleased with our House, He wants the Pauline spirit to be carried to other lands—far away lands, where the holy name of God is not known or loved."

## **China—Japan**

In November, 1934, the new goal was, in fact, the Far East: China and Japan. According to the Pauline "style," Father Alberione wrote to two of his young priests: "*I send you as Jesus sent the apostles...imagine that going to Shanghai is as though you were going to Mussotto d'Alba.*" Delightful simplicity and power of faith!

The following priests set sail from Brindisi on November 9: Fathers Pius Bertino and Emil Fassino for China, and Fathers Paul Marcellino and Lawrence Bertero for Japan.

## **Philippine Island**

Fathers Clement Canavero, Matthew Borgogno and Cajetan Grossi arrived in the Philippine Islands on July 7, 1935.

## **India**

In that same year, he sent Fathers Michael Ambrose and Guy Paganini to India. They were followed in 1937 by Father Alphonse Ferrero and Brother Bernardine Ruffoli.

## **Poland**

Toward the middle of 1934, Fathers Caesar Robaldo and Dominic Ravina were assigned to Poland.

## Portugal

On October 18, 1943, Father Alberione entrusted Father Xavier Boano with starting a Pauline foundation in Lisbon, Portugal.

### In the following years...

In 1946, he sent Pauline priests to open houses in Ireland, Mexico, Chile and Switzerland.

in 1947: in England and Colombia,

in 1951: in Venezuela,

in 1952: in Australia,

in 1953: in Cuba

in 1954: in Germany

in 1957: in the Congo (today known as Zaire),

in 1961: in Korea.

To the first priests who had left for Brazil, Father Alberione had written: "First establish well the masculine House of the Society; then later, that of the Daughters of St. Paul, at least five minutes' walking distance from yours. To both houses you will associate the work and the prayers of the Brother Disciples and of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master."

Gradually, this was done. Sacrifices and acts of self-denial were many, along with hostilities, suspicions, persecutions, condemnations, confiscations of goods, adaptations, and difficulties of every kind from country to country, because of the mentalities and problems that varied from continent to continent. But the Lord accompanied them. He defended and comforted the apostles and rendered their efforts fruitful, responding with divine fidelity to the unceasing prayer of the Founder, to his "spending of himself" without reserve, with all the energies he possessed, which faith and generosity multiplied a hundredfold to an incredible degree.

## His journeys

Father Alberione did not simply make his priests depart. With fatherly solicitude, through his letters or in person, he kept in touch with everyone throughout the world; a tremendous task, which he faced with tireless generosity. The word heroism is by no means an exaggeration of a rhetorical expression.

How was he able to withstand this? There is no human answer. His strength came entirely from the spirit, from an authentic evangelical spirit.

Like Jesus, he went from city to city (cf. Lk. 4:43), with generosity, weariness and suffering. Like the beloved St. Paul, he went from land to land, from sea to sea, from ocean to ocean. One who re-reads the dramatic story of the journeys of the Apostle of the Gentiles (2Cor. 11: 26ff.), can, at the same time, re-live the spirit, the anxieties, the risks and the unswerving dedication of St. Paul and of his modern spiritual son.

Father Alberione once said: "I know the sacrifice of traveling." It was a very moderate but at the same time very eloquent admission from him, who was so reticent in showing his own fatigue and suffering. In reality, his voyages constitute a drama of epic proportions—to give Christ to all men and to give the Church new possibilities of reaching all peoples.

He journeyed throughout Italy, from city to city, then traveled from continent to continent, circling the globe several times, showing an openness towards everyone and everything—person and problems—which was truly worthy of one who had chosen St. Paul as a model and protector. He had an unexpected and exceptional physical resistance as to loss of sleep, changes of hours, trips from one place to another, differences in climate or differences in time due to the quick changes in longitude. These last,

above all, through the increase in air travel, cause, even nowadays, crises in persons of far more robust constitution than the delicate and fragile one of Father Alberione.

But he appeared to be “insensible” to stress and strain. There he was, at brief intervals, setting out from Rome—to which he always returned so that he could personally follow the needs of his great Family—headed for one or another of the five continents: from Europe to North America, from Africa to the Far East, from Latin America to Australia.

He made use of all means of transportation: trains, automobiles, ocean liners, planes (the last above all to save time). In going to the airport for the first time, he admitted with delightful candor which revealed both wonder and gratitude: “And to think that when I was a boy I could only travel by cart, and not one drawn by a horse, but rather by an ox!” On his first school outing—he said it to himself—he had gotten so excited that he felt sick and his companions made fun of him by calling him a wet chick.

He traveled tranquilly by air, at a time when the use of that means of transportation by religious was still very rare. He was tranquil because his flights were entrusted to the Lord and made for love of Him, with much sacrifice and always with recollection. Except for brief periods of rest, those trips constituted a long, devout and endless prayer.

The small amount of time which always—during voyages—he did not dedicate to prayer, was still directed to his specific apostolate. He wanted to know, to know: how many inhabitants and how many Catholics were there in the countries to which he was going? And how many in those nations they were flying over? How could one penetrate those lands, with how many persons—priest and religious—and with what means? And he calculated, planned, organized....

He never traveled for his own pleasure, never! If duty did not require it, he refused to leave Rome, even for a few days in the hottest summer: "My place is here."

Wherever he went, he never permitted himself any extra stay, nor the attention given to a tourist: he was concerned only with the needs of the Houses to be visited, the persons he was to speak with—prominent or humble people, especially the emigrants—and always and only insofar as this was linked to the welfare of the Pauline Family.

He listened, preached (even ten times a day!), encouraged, and counseled in days which for him must have been killing under every aspect. The fire that consumed him was stronger than any weariness.

Then he would leave immediately, via the fastest means, to return to his work post in Rome. Although so frail, once back, he would never complain of being tired nor take any extra rest, not even when he returned from India ill. To a Superior of the Daughters of St. Paul, who had made it her duty to go and visit him, he said—almost chasing her away rudely, as though to avoid any attention that might slow down his usual rhythm of activity—that she could return to her work, as he had to attend to his own.

### **His paternal visitations**

Now that we have sought to penetrate his spirit and to emphasize the discomforts, let us retrace these trips with him. It will no longer be a dull list, because we will discover in it the throb of his fraternal love to sustain and encourage his sons and daughters; the anxieties of an apostolic heart capable of embracing the whole world so as to sow in it the seeds of the Word of God.

In Italy, he often traveled back and forth between Alba and Rome; he would go to Milan, Turin, Vicenza, Modena, Pescara, Catania and wherever houses of the Society of St. Paul are located.

Several times he visited all the continents to enlighten, spur on, and sanctify. Here are only the main journeys:

- In December, 1945, he visited the Pauline houses in the Americas. On his return, he stopped off at Paris, and having reached Rome, he set off almost immediately for Spain and Portugal.
- In May, 1949, he went to the Orient, from which he wrote to his children long, apostolic reflections which were printed in the internal circular "St. Paul." From the Orient he went on to the United States and to Mexico.
- In June, 1955, he returned to the Orient. He visited India, Japan and China. Then he went on to Australia. In a monastery of the Capuchin Fathers, he recorded a discourse which was then broadcast by radio for the Italian immigrants.

He wrote: "In the Orient, it is necessary that Jesus be carried and found in the arms of Mary. This is the divine style, which does not change. Our religious in Japan, Australia, the Philippines and India, have taken this way, which is the divine way."

- In October and November, 1955, Father Alberione visited the Pauline houses in Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil.
- In 1963, he visited all the houses of the five continents. He wrote: "Asia and Africa impressed me the most. The more man detaches himself from self, the more

profoundly and deeply he feels the needs of the poor who do not possess the heavenly gifts brought from heaven to mankind through Jesus Christ. And this feeling is more lively when one enters into intimacy with the Lord."

In January, 1964, he went to the Congo (Zaire). Still in 1964 he visited the community in Germany. He made more frequent visits to the houses in Spain, Portugal, France and England.

With St. Paul, he could truly repeat that he knew the hardships and the dangers of travel. Even a summary review like this is enough to leave one breathless. It makes one feel small indeed, overwhelmed by admiration and amazement.

### **The Holy Father's recognition**

The definition which Paul VI has given of Father Alberione, "one of the marvels of our century," is the greatest recognition of the validity of his work. Now that we have attempted to review his work, at least by main stages, let us enjoy the admirable synthesis of the Pontiff's own words, which need no comment, being so clear and precise. It is another part of the discourse given in the Clementine Hall on June 28, 1969, in the presence of Father Alberione and of all the Pauline Families, numerous represented there....

"If our observation is exact, two practical virtues distinguish and give efficacy to your expansive method, and they are:

#### *Continuity and Capillarity*

"Continuity, constancy and perseverance, with no delight and nothing unplanned: this really seems to

be one of the characteristics of your founder: continuity of the various initiatives. The second practical virtue is the capillarity of their diffusion.... These let us glimpse other virtues—moral and spiritual ones... which sustain this work. These are virtues which we willingly praised and which we recommend that you cultivate always: that is, administrative wisdom (let us check our account! The Gospel tells us to)... a vigilant eye (even this seems a simple thing) upon the needs of our times, anxiety to bring nourishment and comfort to the men of today, a spirit of fidelity and of sacrifice to give to the technical instrument its efficacy, and charity in giving the truth.

“How many people live in their own time without seeing anything! One would say that they are near-sighted or blind: but don’t you see that here there are souls in need? But don’t you see that here there is an urgent need of intervening? Don’t you see that here there is an appeal for charity? Don’t you see that here there is need for someone who will sacrifice himself, and who will serve?”

“Now, it is the vigilance which the Gospel so greatly recommends to us; and it has been the virtue of your Institution.

### *Instruments and Mentalities*

“And then.... We remember a few particulars of our pastoral period in Milan. We often had the occasion of officiating at the dedication of very beautiful buildings, schools, etc., and this consideration often came to our mind: modern civilization creates magnificent instruments, as though one were creating a most beautiful piano, but it does not create the pianist. It creates schools, but does not create the teachers—teachers who do good to the students need for life and salvation. We are more capable of creating real spiritual movements.

Christianity, instead, may often be devoid of instruments, but it has this virtue and this princely dignity of word and grace.

“And you have known how to unite these two things: the instruments with the end, the goal, the content which the instrument must have.

### *The Great Growth*

“With pleasure and admiration we watch the rapid and great growth of your work. Persons and undertakings 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 radiation—has become so great and vital as to constitute a remarkable fact in the life of the Church in our century.

### *In the Life of the Church*

“The Society of St. Paul truly inscribes itself in the history and life of the Church. And we are happy to recognize this consoling fact, and give testimony to you, praising the Lord.

“In the life of the Church you have realized ‘ante et post litteram’ (before and after publication) many of the postulates of the Ecumenical Council in the field of social communication. We willingly extend you our recognition, praise and encouragement.

“The question spontaneously comes to mind: How did the Pious Society of St. Paul manage to call attention to itself in so conspicuous a way, and in such a relatively short time?

“The answer seems easy to us, even though the fact remains still full of secrets, the secrets of the works of the

reign of God. We think that two factors have contributed to the attainment of this magnificent result, which promises further successes: two wills—that of a man and that of God, that of a humble and faithful servant, and the fatherly and lavish will of the Lord, who has certainly blessed the great undertaking of the Pious Society of St. Paul in the singular way.

“...Today, therefore, we desire to confer our cross ‘*Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*’ upon the venerated and venerable Father James Alberione, as a sign of our benevolence and our gratitude, to be a comfort to the whole Pauline Family, a stimulus to all who dedicate themselves to the cause of the Catholic apostolate through the generous promotion and the right use of the media of social communication.”

With this, which is without doubt the most august and most desired recognition, there have been many others, from various sources, all highly significant.

## Other recognitions

Father Alberione had always kept in mind all sectors of society, and in his great love of God and of neighbor he embraced every class of people, with the desire of making the light of the Gospel penetrate everywhere. He confided: “Action and prayer directed me toward a social, Christian work which tends to heal governments, schools, laws, the family, and relations among classes and nations, in order that Christ Way, Truth and Life may reign in the world.... The Pauline Family has a great duty and responsibility.”

And government and society wished to offer him their gratitude. On June 26, 1957, the Honorable G. Gronchi, President of the Italian Republic, conferred on Father Alberione the “Diploma of First Class,” as a great benefactor of the school, of culture and of art, with the faculty of wearing the gold medal which was officially

presented to him by Professor Nazareno Padellaro on January 2, 1958.

Even "Sister Radio" showed her gratitude to Father Alberione by conferring on him, on May 10, 1964, the "Gold Star" reserved to one who distinguishes himself for good works.

He was also made an honorary citizen of Alba.

## **Greatness and hiddenness**

In the midst of all these developments, Father Alberione, especially on days of special events or feasts, always sought to pass unnoticed even when, necessarily, he was the center of attention. He himself confessed that he feared sins of vanity. Only after 1953 did he say that "it is time that the Pious Society of St. Paul come out of the catacombs." And without further fears, he gave everything renewed impetus: in the final analysis nothing came from him; everything came from God.

The essential thing for him was only to correspond to the divine impulse. His continual preoccupation was to foster the spirit of apostolic witness in his children.

## **Living witness of God**

It is the duty of the apostle. "The apostle is a temple of the Most Holy Trinity, who in him is supremely operative. As one writer says, he transpires God from every pore: with words, works, prayers, actions, and attitudes, in public and in private, with his whole being. Live God! Give God!"

This, always, with thought and with deeds, even in the most unimportant circumstances. Yes, because this is to be emphasized: if it is true that of his life, exceptional facts are remembered, it is at the same time true that he

was first of all a saint in fulfilling his daily work and the common duties bound up with his particular mission:

- making himself all to all, a father, a brother, a friend, reassuring, encouraging, consoling;
- speaking simply and frankly, rendering accessible to everyone the things of God;
- working intensely as he did, but also always with a marvelous calm, without haste, without anxieties, without the attitude of "one who doesn't have time," who seeks to be admired or compassionated for all the work he does.

Even in this, he can be a teacher for all of us, whatever our state in life.



## PART THREE

### *The Secret of the Man of God*

*“I sanctify myself that they too may be sanctified.”*  
(Jn. 17:19)

*“In regard to my brothers, I have no greater desire  
than that there be saints among them.”*  
(Father Alberione)



## ALWAYS MORE INTIMATELY

As we try to penetrate the secret of this holy soul, we will be guided by him and by his writings.

Father Alberione wanted to be a saint and he guided his sons and daughters along the way of sanctity. He strove to attain holiness with all his strength.

He told his first young followers: "I have only two concerns: that I'm not yet good enough, and that you're not yet holy enough. These two things are my only 'worries.' I have no others; all the rest is nothing and comes of itself."

Daily he prayed the words of Jesus: "I sanctify myself for them that they may be sanctified in truth." "The first concern of the Pauline Family will be holiness of life, and the second will be holiness of doctrine."

His incessant prayer was heard, and he was given the grace of initiating five causes of beautification.

- for Father Timothy Giaccardo, the first priest of the Congregation and his first Vicar General, the "most faithful among the faithful," "the perfect Pauline";
- for Maggiorino Vigolungo, one of the first students, who at the age of fourteen offered his life for the apostolate of the editions;
- for Brother Andrew Borello, Disciple of the Divine Master, who died at the age of thirty-two, after fifteen years of Pauline life;

- for Sister Thecla Merlo, Co-Foundress and first Superior General of the Daughters of St. Paul;
- for Canon Francis Chiesa, his teacher and spiritual director, whose guidance had been of decisive importance for him.

For Father Alberione, too, the cause of beautification and sanctification was opened just recently.

His motto was: “In holiness, in Christ, in the Church.”

And also: “Religious life, in the first place, is for sanctification. But let us make happy saints!”

This is a very enlightening exclamation, above all for anyone who, especially nowadays, confuses sanctity with an austere and withdrawn sadness.

No one has joy within himself and spreads it about himself as does the saint. His is the very joy of God.

### **Prayer, the way to sanctity**

“Prayer is the first duty and the first contribution which I must make to the Congregation... Let it be done at the best time and in the best place,” out of respect for the majesty of God.

Father Alberione followed literally the command of Jesus: “Pray always.” For him prayer did not remain something abstract; it was realized every moment of his long life.

It was typical of his spirituality—in practice, in teaching and as he had learned from Canon Chiesa—to transform everything into an object of meditation and prayer before the Divine Master, to adore, thank and petition.

His whole existence was prayer in the most diverse forms. There was in him a perfect agreement between faith and life; and he wanted this spirit in the life of all the Pauline Families.

The directive for himself and for others was: "Prayer first of all, prayer above all, prayer the life of all." It is a program that touches and reproves all of us, often infected by activism and always more inclined to give prayer the last place in our day, rather than the first.

If he was a man of action (and who could deny it?), he was also—and first of all—a man of prayer. Prayer was the source of all his activity.

For his own works, for the benefactors, for the needs of all men, the prayer of Father Alberione was incessant, according to St. Paul's exhortation: "Let prayers be offered to the Lord for all men."

Mass, breviary, Rosary, ejaculations, in church, in the house, when traveling—always prayer!

The ideal of St. Paul, too, was a life hidden with Christ in God—the source of every apostolate. He lived by the teaching of Jesus: "Without me, you can do nothing."

For Father Alberione, a good priest must pray at least four hours a day. He personally dedicated from five to six hours a day to prayer. When his physical strength for external activity began to fail, prayer invaded and ruled the entire day.

During a course of Spiritual Exercises, to someone who pointed out that there might be urgent matters in the correspondence left on his desk, he replied: "What could be more urgent than my soul?"

When asked what means would best provide for one's soul, he answered with certainty: "That of praying more."

Father Alberione also prayed together with his visitors. Whoever had the grace of seeing him pray and of praying with him remained deeply moved in an unforgettable way.

A woman—a Pauline Cooperator—tells how, as soon as she had been received into his study on his

name day, the great bell of the Sanctuary of the Queen of Apostles rang out the noonday Angelus. Father Alberione immediately started to pray, but his voice was barely audible, because he was immersed in such great recollection. The visitor never forgot the pealing of the bell that day, which together with the prayer of Father Alberione penetrated to the depths of her heart.

The same person also preserves the indelible memory of a Mass Father Alberione celebrated, as was his custom, at 4:30 a.m. When the time for the Gospel came, he began to read slowly, so as to grasp all the words. When he had finished the passage, he spent a few moments in silent recollection and personal meditation.

Then he took the Missal again and re-read the same passage giving more stress to some points with his own words, but re-reading it all with a more fervent and more penetrating emphasis than previously. Again, he remained silent for a few moments.

Finally, he read the same Gospel passage a third time, but with an increasing expression of love which reach the innermost recesses of the soul who listened to him.

One clearly sensed that God was in him and that he gave God to others. This spontaneously induced others to praise the Lord, so good and wonderful even in permitting His word to reach us through the saints who lived on this earth. Heard from their mouths, the Gospel penetrates souls, drop by drop, like the most refreshing water, capable of quenching the thirsty.

## **Detachment**

Having viewed the essential and non-essential in the light of God, Father Alberione learned the need of detachment from whatever is worthless or constitutes an obstacle on the path leading to the Lord.

This detachment was practiced in a thousand ways, one of which was detachment from money. "When I was a diocesan priest," he wrote, "I had a wallet and a coin purse. When I entered here, since there was need to spend much for this small family, I gave away the wallet and the coin purse and said to the Lord: 'send whatever is necessary.'"

Dante would have said, as he had for St. Francis, in praise of poverty: "O unknown wealth, O fruitful good!" This, not only on the practical level, but also and above all on the level of spiritual benefits, to which detachment from earthly goods opens wide the door.

Along this line, Father Alberione said: "Either the spirit of poverty, or the renunciation of sanctity."

When he lacked something, he rejoiced. He spent very little on himself, getting new foot gear and new clothing only in extreme necessity. As if it were vanity, he eliminated all correspondence which smacked of tourism (he who traveled throughout the world). He used very poor furnitures and ate-as long as the doctors permitted him—the food served to the rest of the community. No one could ever tell what he preferred. Once he was served coffee containing salt instead of sugar. When the driver of the car pointed this out to him, he answered unruffled: "Oh, really?" When he received gifts, he immediately passed them on to whoever in the community had a greater need, even if they were things that would have also been very useful to him.

But this detachment was not limited to exterior things or to circumstances that were, in reality, very common. It embraced his whole being and his whole life without any exception.

With deep feeling, one reads this truly heroic act of total abandonment:

“I pray the Lord to remove from me all self-will, satisfaction and preference, so that he may do as much as and whatever He wants with me, in everything that concerns me in time and in eternity.

“I desire that the Lord may freely do with me and use me as He wills. If He so wishes, let Him reduce me to nothing as regards health, esteem, position, occupation, and the more interior things as well as the exterior.

“Everything only for the glory of God, for the eternal exaltation of His mercy, and in reparation for my sins.”

It is a passage which is not read without a chill. But since it is born of love, it divests him of every fear, to re clothe him with security, freedom, and superhuman peace.

## **In obedience**

For him one form of detachment was obedience. He considered it the most certain sign of being in the will of God: “...the secret which makes saints... the surest way to an uncommon sanctity.

His was perfect obedience, and not only in the material execution, so to speak, of whatever he was asked to do. It was obedience which comprised total adhesion of mind, heart and will in everything, great or small. For him there was no difference: it was the will of the Lord, always. One cannot say for which he deserved more admiration: obedience in small and humble things or in greater and more important matters.

He obeyed first of all in detachment from his own undertakings—clearly, not with lack of interest but with complete availability to the designs of Providence. Project after project blossomed from his mind and heart, but he never remained adamant in their realization except when

he was certain—through obedience—that they were inspired and wanted by God.

The example of a truly heroic obedience was given by Father Alberione, together with Father Giaccardo, when the Sacred Congregation for Religious believed it well to merge the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master with the Daughters of St. Paul, while in the plan of the Founder they were to have remained two distinct congregations.

In communicating the Decree of the Holy See to the Sister Disciples, he concluded his admirable letter in this manner: "To us nothing is sweeter, surer and more meritorious than obedience: This time it concerns a great act of obedience! And I have the pleasure to let you know that the Mother General and I are the first to make it. As soon as you receive this letter, say three 'Glory Be's...and 'second' the desire of the Sacred Congregation, so as to foster a great increase in the apostolic works."

And yet Father Alberione was very certain about God's will concerning the mission of the Sister Disciples! However, even though the disposition of the Church was unfavorable, he chose—without hesitation—the surest path: obedience. In today's climate it is certainly difficult to understand fully the importance and fruitfulness of such a manner of acting. Yet he made the only right choice and the fruits were not lacking.

After the trial, Father Alberione later had the great joy of seeing the plan that was so dear to him realized in full. Thus, his humility was also rewarded.

## **In humility**

This is the channel through which God's revelation passes: a person's humility removes the obstacle of self and makes room for God, for his greatness: "God works

as He wills. Ask great things, because the humble and greater requests do Him honor."

Father Alberione's humility was based on the convinced awareness of his being nothing before God, an awareness that manifested itself in the most ordinary circumstances. It was an attitude which was the more striking in one who had the office and the authority of superior.

In January, 1926, Father Giaccardo, his first and dearest spiritual son, set out to open the first House of Rome. At the touching moment of farewell Father Alberione was the first to kneel on the snow-covered ground: "Now we will kneel down and Signor Maestro (as Father Giaccardo was called) will bless us."

Despite his protests and hesitancy, his pleading: "You bless us!"—Father Giaccardo had to give in.

Father Alberione was profoundly humble during the last years of his illness, with a spontaneity that was as natural to him as breathing. The conviction of his weakness and his nothingness was deeply rooted in his being.

"I feel, before God and men, the gravity of the mission entrusted to me by the Lord who, had He found a more unworthy and incapable person, would have preferred him."

He did not consider himself the founder of the great work: "Everyone must consider only St. Paul the Apostle as father, teacher, model and founder. As, in fact, he is. Through him the Pauline Family was born, by him it was nourished and brought up, from him it took its spirit."

"... With regard to my poor person, even in this the Lord followed His style, the divine style: 'God chose... the world's lowborn and despised, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who were something; so that mankind can do no boasting before God.'"

For this reason, while he had a high concept of the dignity of the priesthood, he considered it a gift of which he was unworthy and an honor to which he had no personal claim. For him, after the Mass—the sublimest act of the priestly ministry—is over, the priest removes the vestments and remains, in all his insignificance, what he is before God.

“The Lord makes my nothingness known to me in a very clear light: as man, as Christian, as priest and as member of the Pious Society of St. Paul. I am satisfied with my miserable condition because for all eternity the Redeemer will be glorified and the Co-redemptrix will be exalted.”

“... How many imperfections and sins! I accept the whole weight of them in expiation, for the glory of God, for souls, and for the Pauline Family.... The good is all and only from God.”

“... I am happy that death will come to put an end to my sins.”

We find Father Alberione always reasoning along the same lines: acknowledgment of the greatness of the gifts received and supreme humility in esteem of self.

This is also why he accepted corrections and criticisms, even inopportune ones, with joy, without apology or offense: “Let us have the humility of believing that things can go well even without us....”

“I rejoice when my children surpass me. Become taller than I, all of you; but remain “little,” even if you become taller. Humility prepares the place for faith, hope and charity.”

## **Faith**

Father Alberione was heroic in the practice of the theological virtues.

See in his words a definition of faith:

“Faith is the root of all sanctification, of every apostolate, of all stability

“...See everything in God: persons, events, circumstances.”

“Meditate and live the Creed. Recite well the act of faith.”

“Do even the smallest actions with faith, in God’s presence.”

“Faith that is lived”

Especially on this essential point of a “living faith,” all of us have much to examine ourselves on, to reflect upon and to learn.

The testimonies in this regard are countless, and all of them agree. The graver the difficulties, the more Father Alberione believed and trusted; this trust had to be the concrete proof of faith.

“It is necessary that we live of faith! But even this is a gift of God. The greatest wrong which God receives from our house is the lack of trust!”

The Lord responded in the most unusual ways to this faith so full of trust. Just one example: The House of Alba had to be enlarged, and 15,000 lire was urgently needed, the amount demanded by the contractor for the part already built. But there was no prospect at all of finding the money, and that amount was considerable in the 1920’s when this took place. Father Alberione prayed and had the Daughters of St. Paul pray—as always in the name and through the merits of Jesus Master—for three days.

Later on, to one of them who has more daring than the others and asked him whether the grace (and what a grace) had been obtained, he related that on one of those three days of prayer he was approached by a plainly-dressed woman, to whom he was about to give

some alms. But she, in silence, placed a small bundle in his hand. It contained the exact amount of money that was needed. Further, he never knew who she was or where she came from.

## Hope

In Father Alberione faith nourished hope. This, too, was heroic, total and bold, certain in its ardent simplicity. His whole work was born of hope: "By myself I can do nothing; with God I can do all things."

For this reason he dared to ask the maximum: "You said: 'Whatever you ask the Father in my name will be given to you.' Therefore, I ask this mercy: to be among the first saints and apostles, so that in *laudem gloriae gratiae* there will rise up an infinite, eternal, and extraordinary glory: 'the greatest sinner and the greatest grace.'"

"...Divine works are different from human works: the first are founded on God; the second are founded on earth."

To his sons: "I rejoice in knowing that you are always obliged to trust only in God. God always gives enough, while, in the wallet instead, you always find less than what is needed, even if you are rich. No one in the world is in a more privileged position than you. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord."

Father Alberione's hope always caused him to look above and beyond the earth, even when difficulties of every kind could have weakened his trust. The effect was always a positive one. Difficulties strengthened his hope.

"Always look toward heaven. Of what importance are earthly events? Let us reap merit from everything and from every occasion, difficulty, temptation.... Everything is disposed or permitted by the Lord for our sanctification."

Therefore: "Eyes toward heaven, knees on earth, and heart aflame."

He never forgot that Christian hope has its origin and its fulfillment in God: "The first objective of hope is heaven... with the heart fixed on eternal happiness. The second objective is to obtain the graces needed to reach heaven."

"Hope consoles amid the tribulations and crosses of life. It prevents discouragement in the Father who awaits us."

"True Hope leads us to count on God, not on ourselves."

"It is steadfast trust in the merits of Jesus."

"Hope is detachment from earthly goods. And to think that we, while hoping, are preoccupied over these first of all!"

"Hope illumines life and helps us sanctify the present moment. Hope infuses courage, fortitude and even enthusiasm in trials. It utilizes everything with calmness and moderation."

As one can see, hope is like a marvelous ring. It starts from God and leads back to God, through all human conditions and the hardest trials, with unfailing certainty.

For Father Alberione, affirmations such as those quoted above were not just words. As usual, they were lived, moment by moment.

What harder trial could have come than the Second World War? It exposed the Pauline Communities on all the continents to perils of every kind. Certainly, difficulties could not be lacking. But Father Alberione was never disturbed by the fear that a human event could ruin the work of God. Rather, he trusted and hoped all the more. During a wartime Christmas he wrote to the Pauline Cooperators: "The most beautiful works were born and developed in the most difficult periods of history. This is

a proven experience and answers the question of those bewildered in the face of the present sorrowful moment: who will be able to produce in times of such misery?"

And help did not fail to come. It came in a thousand forms: from economic aid to the continued well being of the members of the Pauline Family—protection from fires, bombing, exile, concentration camps and the hazards of the roads that ran across a blazing Europe. The sons and daughters of Father Alberione came through safely. Sufficient are a few examples from among many: the terrible bombardment of the convent of the Daughters of St. Paul in Cagliari and the trips of courageous sisters, during which the trucks which gave the sisters a ride always remained unharmed, while those around them were being struck by bombs and sharpnel.

From exceptional circumstances to the more common, the prayer and presence of Father Alberione infused light, comfort and hope.

Someone who lived through the following experience testifies that, before Father Alberione, one could feel worried about how to go about presenting oneself. While waiting, the minutes could seem longer than hours. But when the door finally opened and he paternally came towards the visitor, the uneasiness vanished immediately, as though one found himself in the presence of the dearest member of the family. Then, the heart opened itself simply, as though one had known him for many years. Father Alberione gave the impression that he was in continual communion with God. He gave the certainty of being in the will of God, as though Jesus had spoken. Having joyfully overcome every obstacle of our human dullness, one entered into contact with God Himself, through the saint who had offered himself totally to God.

Thus one enters into the mysterious reality of perfect love—of charity toward God and toward neighbor—which was heroic in Father Alberione.

### Charity-love of God

Father Alberione presents the nature and characteristics of charity in this way: "Love of God—that God occupy my whole being, that my whole being tend only and always and in all things toward God....

"To love God is to cling to Him:

"– with the whole mind, adhering to all the truths of faith: have supernatural thoughts!

"– with the whole will: take pleasure in whatever reveals Him to us; desire and work to increase His extrinsic glory and to bring Him souls!

"– with the whole heart preserve union with Him; increase Eucharistic devotion, centering everything there: the Eucharist is the true nourishment of charity.

"– reach perfect abandonment.

"– to love God means giving up what is opposed to Him—to battle against every sin—it means carrying out the apostolate in order to give the truth through the modern means which multiply the good, if used for the good."

He had perfect charity in deeds as well as in intentions: "Do everything, only and always for the glory of God and for the good of souls. Any sacrifice whatsoever... any immolation whatsoever... any detachment whatsoever rather than lose God."

## Charity-love of neighbor

In the love of God, the love of neighbor (which is inseparable from the first, confirming and proving it) had its certain and fruitful root.

“In a word, live the twofold commandment of the one charity: toward God and toward neighbor.... God is love, so his minister must practice charity everywhere, and first of all in the community, where relationships are continual, difficulties greater, and perseverance more binding.

“Charity toward one’s neighbor requires practice of the works of mercy, both spiritual and corporal. First: to counsel in doubt, to console in sorrows, to comfort in pain, to encourage in the practice of virtue, to make the duties of prayer and work loved; to understand and treat with patience, making the beauty of virtue understood, explaining duties and encouraging with charity.

“Second: exclude useless conversations. Give of self. Is someone in trouble? Help according to the possibilities. Stand by one another. Pray for the sanctification of relatives, of the members of the community. And, above all, pray for the Church, for the Pope and for the whole world.

“Charity also means knowing how to accept corrections and how to give them. Begin always with a word of encouragement. Everyone has a good side. Start from that side before giving a correction. There are many ways which win over, correct and direct without harshness!

“Religious life is difficult. The duties are burdensome. Let us know how to make them lovable, and let us lighten the burden by seeking to act as God acts with us.”

As can be seen, this man who was so austere and so severe with himself practiced the most exquisite

charity toward others. Yes, when necessary, he had a firm hand without weaknesses, but with admirable balance he united exigency with understanding. He demanded the fruit of the talents received, but he was always respectful of differences of character, gifts, health and background.

Always decisive in leadership, he was consistent with what he had already pronounced, but always attentive to what he was gradually told. He remained humble in his great expressions of advice.

After visiting with him, one would leave as from a wonderful experience, feeling relieved, consoled and comforted because of the great good received.

From testimonies and letters, we can draw countless examples of exquisite charity, open to all needs with the finest sensitivity.

“Each of one of your sufferings is more mine than yours...”

“I also know that you suffer, that you have sorrows which you do not write about. But I am aware of them and I pray for you, that you will use them for your sanctification...”

During the war, he wrote to his priests: “Also give some wood to the ‘godmother.’ so that she will not suffer from the cold....”

“If the good health of the members demands heat, then turn it on. If someone needs medicine and special treatments, provide them in all charity....”

“My dear son, I love you very much, always. Therefore... try to love, very much, even one who is not pleasing to you. I pray with you and for you.”

He had great concern for the sick members. For them he sought the realization of two hospitals, one for the priests and religious brothers, and the other for the religious sisters.

Then, he always rose from bodily needs to those of the spirit: to the heroism of total self-donation.

“Whoever leads should offer himself as a victim for the sins of those entrusted to him. Moreover, he must be convinced that he is the cause of those sin. But above all we must make reparation for our own sins: if we don’t start at this point, then pride will feed itself even on this.”

Even here the roots submerge themselves in humility and anchor themselves in that fullest expression of charity—forgiveness—in which he was noble and generous.

## Fortitude

All this is also fortitude. “To become saints, we must be strong! Daily, perfect, prompt and willing observance, done with a happy heart, is great virtue: it is fortitude!”

One cannot help but emphasize two points: a happy heart is a rebuke to our sad impatience and intolerance, which acts as though searching for God in love of Him and our brothers is not the happiest undertaking of life.

Daily observance calls one to value what is daily and customary, that which fills our days moment by moment. All too often we consider those things insignificant or tedious, for we are blinded by habit and wearied by our lack of generosity.

The man of God, instead, knows the heroism of accepting daily life, hour by hour, not with passive resignation, but as an exultant conquest and a ransom of life as a whole—breath by breath. Every instant is made new with the inexhaustible newness of love, in the praise and the glory of God.

An admirable adventure, yes! And no other is more capable of attracting young and generous hearts, of comforting the wearied, of giving “wings” to everyone,

in the joy of being identified with Christ, Way, Truth and Life, font of all wealth.

### **Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life**

Every Pauline activity begins with the invocation: "Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life." This devotion was the most fundamental for Father Alberione, and he lived and taught it with particular insistence.

The apostle must live the truth and diffuse it. For this purpose, human means alone do not suffice. Christ is the truth; He alone can teach it. He is the sole way to the Father; life comes only from grace, and grace comes only from Christ, the font of life.

With penetrating clarity, Father Alberione wrote that the Divine Master is:

- "The Truth which we must know,
- "The Way which we must follow to reach God,
- "The Life that we must live, to be eternally happy."
- "Religion, dogma, morals, worship are found in this devotion. In this vision... is the whole Jesus Christ. Through this devotion man is totally taken up and conquered by Jesus Christ. Piety is complete; thus religious and priests, as well as all Christians, grow in wisdom (study and heavenly knowledge), age (strength of purpose and virtue) and grace (sanctity), reaching toward the fullness and perfect age of Jesus Christ: to the point that Christ: substitutes and for the men and women: "It is now no longer I that live but it is Christ who lives in me." All the devotions to the person of Jesus Christ, man-God, converge on devotion.

Through it we see Christ, “as the babe in the manger, as the worker at Nazareth, as the teacher in His public life, as the victim crucified for our Redemption, as the Eucharist in the Tabernacle, as a loving Heart through the gifts bestowed on mankind.” Moreover, this devotion serves to nourish oneself and others.

“Thus we will become expert teachers of souls, because first we have been humble and diligent disciples of Christ... thus we will graft ourselves and others “like wild branches into the vital olive, Christ.”

“Thus, we shall have the whole man in Christ for a total love of God: intelligence, will, heart, physical energies. Everything—nature and grace and vocation—for the apostolate. It is like a car which moves on four wheels:—sanctity, study, apostolate, poverty.”

These convictions grounded themselves in him always more profoundly, becoming the life of his deepest life.

“Every day I am confirmed more in the devotion to Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life. Upon those who will practice it, will come an abundance of graces and of consolations, facility in becoming saints, and effectiveness in the apostolate.”

Father Alberione invoked the Divine Master incessantly:

“O Divine Master, give me your light: to know You and to know myself.

“Your wisdom is infinite. You gave light to my eyes. You gave me the light of reason. You gave me the light of faith. Give me also the light of glory: so that I may contemplate you eternally in heaven.

“Therefore, I beseech You to give me the grace of using well my eyes, my power to reason, and the gift of faith....”

- "Divine Master, I should be You.  
"Divine Master, You alone must be visible in me.  
"Divine Master, every good is Yours.  
"Divine Master, I am a useless servant.  
"Divine Master, I am a harmful servant.  
"Divine Master, to You alone the honor.  
"Divine Master, to me all the scorn.  
"Divine Master, grant me time to the penance.  
"Divine Master, multiply contempt for me.  
"Divine Master, associate me with your Passion.  
"Divine Master, may I suffer sufficiently for my sins.  
"Divine Master may I suffer as much as is necessary  
for the sins committed on account of me.  
"Divine Master, may I suffer what I ought so that  
the seed scattered may grow.  
"Divine Master, by suffering and praying may I  
help all my spiritual children.  
"Divine Master, may I, being nothing, obtain  
everything through the Mass."

## **The gifts of God**

Father Alberione, who for all his life had St. Paul the Apostle not only as a protector and teacher, but also as a model, was favored as Paul was with unique gifts from God.

Like St. Paul, who only once alluded to these gifts when he wrote, almost excusing himself for having been take up to the third heaven, so too, Father Alberione timidly wrote "of having been almost forced by God to accept some unusual gifts."

As St. Paul saw the Lord and spoke with Him, So Father Alberione never made a mystery of this happening in his life. He saw the Divine Master and spoke with Him.

“I saw the Lord”

Also, to sustain His servant in the countless trials which he would have to endure for the love of the Church and peoples, Christ spoke words of light and comfort: “From here I will cast light.”

So too, he saw and spoke with the Blessed Virgin Mary. He related the dream of his entrance into heaven. After the Council, he said expressly: “The Madonna told me: ‘Now make me known as the Mother of grace, the universal mediatrix of grace.’”

Father Alberione shied away from anything that could have betrayed these gifts. He used them with his children in a very limited way, so that they themselves could only guess rather than be certain. He told them only what he believed was indispensable for confirming them in their vocation and assuring them that God was with them in the person of the one He had chosen to be their guide.

As through St. Paul God performed many and extraordinary miracles—as we read in the Acts of the Apostles—so also, throughout Father Alberione’s life, God performed extraordinary marvels. However, Father Alberione always wanted these to be kept hidden, as though they were most ordinary.

One of his brother disciples at Genoa once said:

“But, Primo Maestro, do you know that I’m beginning to wonder, because everything that you told me—and not only me, but all of us—has taken place, has really happened?”

Father Alberione replied: “I’ve never told you anything on my own. Nothing was my own.” This he repeatedly confirmed in writing: “Keep in mind that even the smallest things—the way of doing what I have entrusted and assigned to you—is not the will of a man, but the divine will.”

When it will be possible to finally gather all the testimonies of the sons and Daughters of Father Alberione in this regard, we will have the chapter of his life which no one could imagine, splendid as a mosaic of a thousand hues, ranging from the most extraordinary to the most commonplace, but no less astonishing.

Many eyewitness of these exceptional events are still living, and from them abundant information can be gleaned.

While Father Alberione was a young priest carrying out his ministry by helping the pastor at Narzole, a dying woman whom he had visited during her illness passed away, calling for him, while he was out of the rectory. Upon his return Father Alberione presented himself before her corpse and asked: "What do you want? Why were you calling for me?"

The dead woman opened her eyes and spoke to him. After those present in the room had withdrawn, Father Alberione remained to listen to her. Then he asked: "Now do you wish to return to eternity or to stay here?" She replied: "I wish to stay in eternity." She serenely recomposed herself in death.

This fact is told by someone who was living in Narzole at the time. When it became known, someone who can still attest to it personally, asked Father Alberione if such a thing had happened and what was the truth about it. He simply answered in precise words, which were immediately written down in his presence: "Certainly, in that circumstance God intervened in an extraordinary manner." He said nothing further, but anyone who knew Father Alberione, knew he had said even too much.

In 1922, they were unable to close the coffin of a young Daughter of St. Paul because the hands of the dead

sister were positioned too high. No one had succeeded in lowering them. Father Alberione was called, and he said in the presence of all there: "Antoinette, you always obeyed while you were alive; obey once again. Lower your hands." And at the light touch of his hand, the hands of the deceased sister lowered themselves.

Twice (in 1929 and 1947), from two ciboria which contained a limited number of consecrated Hosts, he gave Communion to a great number of the faithful. This, to the amazement of those who had called his attention to the fact that the number of Hosts was insufficient. But he insisted, made them recite the Confiteor and gave Communion to everyone. There were Hosts left over!

Father Alberione also obtained the recovery of his sick children.

In 1926, a Sister Disciple put her foot into a pot of boiling water. For a few days, her condition worsened. However, due to the impossibility of finding someone to substitute for her in the kitchen, she was invited by Father Alberione—through obedience—to take up her work again. The next morning the sister got up from bed and went about her work as usual. By the afternoon her foot was completely healed.

To another sister, cured in an extraordinary way, Father Alberione had this to say: "During this time, I was thinking of you and was praying for you every night. Together, let us thank the Lord, who cured you."

Father Alberione entrusted the direction of the House of Rome to a Pauline priest whose health was in perilous condition. When appointed, the priest jokingly said to the Founder: "But are you mad?" And Father

Alberione answered: "I may be mad, but you are to obey." In agreement they both celebrated Mass: Father Alberione so that the other would accept, and the other so that—if possible—Father Alberione would change his mind. Father Alberione's definitive answer was: "The Queen of Apostles will take care of it." And this duty was discharged by him with the fullness of physical energies. Many, astonished, kept asking the Founder about their confrere's surprising physical resistance. "But how does he do it?" Father Alberione used to answer: "Ask him." And he knew very well!...

The same Pauline priest became ill at a time when he was to have gone to Albano to preach a course of spiritual exercises to priests. He sent a fellow priest to inform the Founder, so that he might provide a substitute retreat master. "He is in bed with a fever of 101.3; what should he do?" The Founder's directive was: "Tell him to go peacefully, and when he reaches Lake Albano, he is to stop and throw his fever into the lake and not get it back again." And this is how it turned out, The priest—without a fever—was able to carry out the important duty which had been assigned to him.

Another episode: bronchitis and a fever seriously embarrassed a Pauline priest who, in that condition, had just finished preaching a course of spiritual exercises and then was to set out to give a retreat to the priests of Ventimiglia. He asked the Founder, "What should I do? I lost my voice...."

The Founder told him: "Come with me to the sisters' kitchen, to drink a cup of hot milk." This invitation was extended to a person who for twenty years had not been able to drink milk, at the risk of irresistible upset. Faced with the understandable embarrassment of the speaker,

Father Aberione himself accompanied the priest to the kitchen. After he had drunk one cup of milk, the Founder made him drink a second cup, then he said to him: "Leave now and go to Ventimiglia." The priest went and carried out his duty without any physical disturbance at all.

But the marvel of it is that, believing he had overcome his allergy to milk, he repeatedly tried to drink it, but had to discontinue.

A Sister Disciple, ill for some time with an intestinal disturbance and a high fever, received a visit from Primo Maestro. She expressed her disappointment at not being able to attend Mass and sing on the feast of the Blessed Mother the following day (she was gifted with a beautiful voice).

"Would you like that?" the Founder asked her. Imagine if she would have liked it! "We shall see then, tomorrow, if you feel well...."

The next day, the sick sister had no fever. She got up out of bed and, without fatigue or other impediment, took part in the Eucharistic Celebration and sang happily with the others. She even did a solo.

In the afternoon, the fever returned. She made known her disappointment to the Founder, who replied in all simplicity: "I hadn't promised you complete recovery, but only that you would be able to sing for the feast." And that was all!

He received exceptional financial assistance in completely exceptional ways. One day he sent a sister in an urgent search for money. "Where should I go?" she asked him. Leave, and before you reach Turin, you will find it." She found it at Trofarello.

Another day, several good people to whom another sister had been sent—again in search of money—gave

her, although they did not know her—34,000 lire which they had kept hidden beneath the floor boards. With this amount he was able to pay off a loan which was due at the Bank of Asti.

It is to be noted that the financial assistance given to Father Alberione was often accompanied by circumstances like the following: because of an urgent need, a good farmer withdrew all his savings from a bank and gave them to Father Alberione. Two days later, the bank failed.

The influence that Father Alberione exerted on persons outside the Pauline Family was shown in various ways, some practical, others interior.

The founder of the great Ferrero Confectionery Company was insistently asking for the restitution of a large loan, but after a talk with Father Alberione every exaction had disappeared to the point that Mr. Ferrero had to confess that he gave him more money. Then he added: "If I had a salesman like Father Alberione, I'd conquer all of Europe."

Even regarding the most common necessities the Pauline Families can relate uncommon events.

In the first House of St. Paul, two of the three links involved in working a large lever which had to lift up a huge pot, broke.

The Sister Disciples—who in every necessity had recourse to Father Alberione as to a father—called him. The order he gave was to pull the lever, now held up by the one remaining link. This link—as was foreseeable—also broke. However, the big pot, filled with about 66 gallons of liquid, fell in an upright position, even though it was narrow at the base and very wide at the top. Not even a drop of soup was lost and no one was scalded.

This is an episode with a completely Franciscan quality to it. One day Father Alberione asked a sister in charge of the chicken coop: "Were your hens good today? How many eggs did they lay?"

They had been few; it was cold, autumn, a very unfavorable season. Then he said to her: "Listen, gather all your hens and tell them that this is not good. We have not decreased in number; rather we have increased; therefore, the eggs must also increase, not decrease. Will you do it?"

The sister said yes, and... the next morning while she was feeding them, she gave the hens a little sermon. In somewhat authoritative terms, she even threatened that they would end up in the pot if they didn't obey the Theologian!

In the evening she filled a large wicker basket with eggs. Pleased with the abundant collection, she immediately went to show them to Father Alberione. The Founder told her, "There's enough for everyone. Now go and thank the Lord and don't complain."

One can smile, but if we ridicule such simple faith, worthy of the charming Franciscan floweret of the sermon to the birds, it is certainly not a completely positive sign on our part.

One could make a bouquet of all Father Alberione's "travel adventures."

A Pauline priest relates: "On the return trip from Alba to Rome, we were overtaken by a tremendous downpour. The deserted road was a sea of mud. The water had risen to the engine of the car. How could we go on? I looked at a small tree, planning to help the Founder climb up among the branches and then to climb up myself, while waiting for the water to subside.

"Turning to the Founder, I asked: 'What shall we do?'

“He recollected himself for an instant. Then, making a large sign of the cross, he said firmly: ‘let us continue on our way.’

“To my own amazement and that of everyone else, we reached Rome.”

Father Alberione always concealed everything of this kind, so it was entirely unusual that one day he confided to Mother Thecla Merlo, Superior of the Daughters of St. Paul, something exceptional which concerned him personally.

He had determined the placement of the stained glass windows in the Church of St. Paul in Alba. The contractor, instead, had thought it best to rearrange them and place them in a different position.

Late at night, when there was no one around, the Founder climbed up alone on the scaffold and replaced the two windows according to his plan. But after having finished this, he took a false step and fell more than sixty-five feet to the ground below. He was unharmed. “I had called upon the Blessed Mother,” he said, as though it were something ordinary. “No one ever noticed it, and I never said anything.”

He was always shy and reserved, but every now and then something regarding his exceptional gifts would slip out in his speech. This would happen even though he spoke in a way not altogether jokingly, but in a certain sense “lightly,” as though of normal events.

One day he said to Mother Thecla, “If I knew only what they tell me, I wouldn’t know much!”

Thus, he had the gifts of discernment of spirits and the foreknowledge of events.

To a priest who was troubled by the sudden death of his father yet had not confided to anyone his worries

concerning his father's eternal destiny, the Founder said: "Be at peace; your father is saved." Certainly Father Alberione was not a man to make such an affirmation lightly.

A man in apparent good health had gone to confer with him. Father Alberione advised him to be prepared, for the Lord was about to call him. That very evening the man died at the house of spiritual exercises in Ariccia, where he was staying and where the above-mentioned conversation had taken place.

Those who sometimes did not think they should heed his counsel and warnings, later had to admit that they were wrong and that circumstances had always proved Father Alberione right. Facts are facts...

The particular form of "foreknowledge" of the death-imminent or otherwise-of persons close to him, was a frequent phenomenon. And yet, always with what fruits of peace and grace!

To a priest who had once been a soldier, he said: "The General is calling you!"... And so it was: a call to heaven. But he never frightened, not even when he came out with exclamation such as: "Prepare yourself to die!" He would say it with the open frankness and fatherly love so characteristic of him. Nor after he had sated this did he like others to try changing the subject. For him this was an act of duty and charity which bore marvelous fruits of grace in the spirit of the listener.

He was startlingly precise.

"Dear\_\_\_\_," he told one of his young priests, "Return to the House of Alba and prepare yourself for heaven." The priest remained well for a year. Then, after having recovered from a bout with influenza, he believed

himself safe.... However, he was stricken by typhoid fever, which brought him to the grave at the age of thirty-three. But death itself used to be transfigured: "The Lord is awaiting you."

All these happenings and many others were lived by him with great simplicity. In God, they were normal. In the Lord, to whom everything is known and all is possible, holy souls live through the extraordinary with an incomparable spontaneity. They remain all the more humble, because they know that nothing comes from them.

In his humility, Father Alberione left behind this written affirmation: "Sometimes the Lord paternally forced me to accept gifts for which I felt an instinctive repugnance."

Only in his personal notes did he leave more open admissions of some exceptional gifts, always referring to them with delightful simplicity:

"When we had to buy this property (in Alba, for the construction of the Mother House), the boys came here to play. I was looking up and down at this garden and field, wondering whether it was God's will that I take on such expenses, due to our 'infancy.' I seemed to fall asleep for a moment. The sun shone brightly while the houses were being built; but then it was darkened, and I saw that the greatest sorrow was caused by those who, although called by God, would later abandon their vocation...."

"In the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Madrid, I sensibly and clearly saw Jesus as the principal and true Offerer of the Mass. I saw the way the Father accepts the offering from Him. I also saw how the priest

carries out the external ministry, presenting himself to Jesus as an instrument, with his voice, his hands and his sacred actions. I saw how Jesus is the perpetual Victim, who continues to offer Himself on the altar for the world. I saw the Mass as the font of the entire spiritual life and of all graces....”

In December, 1946, the Lord deigned to console me greatly and to orientate my soul. I entered heaven, where the angels and saints seemed to refuse to admit me into their company. They fled from me, seeing that I was so miserable and stained with sins.... Then Mary, the Mother of all mercies, intervened. She let them know how many graces she had poured into my soul and how great was her love for me. Then she invited them to accept me with joy, because, notwithstanding my sins, I was her very dear son and a marvel of her maternal mercy, a soul to whom her blessed Jesus had applied His blood of redemption a thousand times over.”

Mary says: “If anyone works willingly for me, I will pledge myself generously for him: apostolate, spirit, study, poverty.”

## **Choosing flower from flower**

Father Giacardo used to write that often we approach the saints as if they were historic monuments: “And yet they live in Jesus Christ.” Reading a saint’s writings is like penetrating intimately into a living person, grasping something of the marvels wrought in that soul by the Holy Spirit, and coming to know unthought of aspects of that person’s life.

Father Leon de Grandmaison wrote: “At times, God permits that this interior religion be revealed only

after the death of those who practiced it.... Thus, those who were closest to them and more intimately united to them become aware that they themselves have not known nor understood all."

Let us, therefore—with trepidation—approach the very elect and very open spirit of this man who had not wanted to be an elegant writer but who in his simplicity was a greater one than many others. He was what one would call a writer totally solid and practical, who wrote no useless words. He was concise and powerful in his writing, which was often telegraphic and disjointed in form, very original, skeletal and vibrant, penetrating the attentive and non-superficial reader to the very depths.

### **Simplicity and clarity of commitment**

So that we may not believe that the saints are distant from us and therefore almost dehumanized, let us savor the freshness of these notations which were written on the inside of an envelope he must have happened to have at hand; that tell what was going on within his soul:

- “1. Jesus, what do you want us to do for the linotypes?
2. Jesus, what do you want for the bookcenter?
3. Jesus, what do you want for the first floor?
4. Jesus, what do you want for the floor of the Brother Disciples?
5. Jesus, what preparations do you want?”

We are in the presence of an enchanting familiarity with the Lord, in which everything clothes itself with the supernatural. He thought of his undertaking and he prayed. He would ask for light, so as to be sure that everything, even down to the details, was God's will, not the will of a human being, which might perhaps have been led astray by ambition or selfishness.

“Is this necessary? Do I have the right intention? Would we do it if we were at the point of death?” Control of this kind was not a restriction, but a “wing.”

He wrote: “I can’t remain on the defensive with regard to faults: I must make progress in faith, in virtue, in piety.... I must utilize and direct everything to the goal. At every moment I must gain the maximum.”

It was a control without depression or impoverishment; rather, it was a most fruitful means of freedom, victory, peace, and joy. These were the fruits of his self-examination.

## Self-examination

Father Alberione continually examined himself before God, in regard to all that he had received from Him.

“I thank You for having brought me—from heaven—the Gospel and Your Doctrine, thus revealing to us the mystery of the redemption willed by the Father. I bless You for having led me to the apostolate in order to evangelize and to make Your marvelous riches known to everyone. But how sad I am, almost overwhelmed and frightened, because of the immense good I have not done.... To whom shall I turn, if not to Your heart? And to Your Mother and mine, Mary? I have only You.... I hope only in You.... If only I had studied more and had felt the faith as Paul, Alphonsus and Francis did! More faith in Your help.

“If only I had more zeal for the glory of God and for souls! The rights of God and the eternal salvation of the brethren are immense.... And I? What coldness!

“If only I had been more humble and had never sought self.... more diligent in preparing my sermons....

more fervent in praying before giving them, more attentive regarding the editions!..”

Still more: “My ministry was too active, lacking in prayer. I trusted in myself; did not fear the dangers. Very often it was I who needed to be corrected, rather than the others. I was often weak; often, too, violent. More simplicity, less astuteness. More the persons than the organization.

“Given this office for all men, I did not always keep all the means in mind, especially humility.

“I am certain of my vocation, but I did not correspond as I should have. I did not always have Your Heart, O Jesus.

“... I must consider my particular duties, because I represented You badly among Your children, O Lord.

“Did I pay in full the debt of prayer?

“Did I pay in full the debt of good example?

“Did I pay in the full debt of instruction?

“Did I pay in full the debt of care?

“Did I pay in full the debt of correction?

“Did I pay in full the debt of suffering?”

Touching is the humanity of this man of prayer, who makes of charity—concretely practiced—an obligation of the first order, serious and sweet at one and the same time.

His examinations of conscience penetrated to the very depths of his whole being: “Transform nature, replacing it with the super-nature, the new man.”

“Let us question intentions: Why undertake this? Why go out? Why carry on this conversation? Why do you prefer that person? To please God more? Or to please yourself?

“Let us question conversations and judgments: Why do you judge your colleague, your brother, an undertaking or a sermon? Why do you support or obstruct? Because

this is a way of honoring God? Or because of your own interests, honor and inclinations?

“Let us question interior dispositions: Why am I sad? Because the criticism, the failure, the difficulty interferes with God’s glory? Or because self-love is wounded? Why are you happy today? Because you are humanly satisfied? Or because the glory of God has increased?

“Am I dead? Or do I live more than ever, even beneath the chasuble or the stole?

“Therefore, I must correct intentions, dispositions and judgments: nothing purely human, everything supernaturalized.

“Christ lives in me!”

He examined himself continually and even when, with the refined sensitiveness of the saints, he recognized weaknesses and failings, he did not become discouraged. Rather, his confidence was strengthened.

## **The thought of death—heaven**

He looked upon death with this same confidence in the mercy of God, entrusting himself to the Heart of Christ, through Mary, St. Joseph and St. Paul.

“Last days, holy days!” It is almost a sigh of desire, a hymn of joy, above and beyond the harsh reality of death which was present to him.

“I offer You the dissolution of my being through death. Holy Mary, pray for me, a sinner, now so that I may prepare myself and in the hour of my death, in reparation, in love, in trust.”

Heaven lay beyond.

He prepared himself for it with absolute certainty: “Preparation for heaven of mind, heart, will and body....”

“Foresee the activities of heaven! From this very moment I ask that from there I may help all those who will

use the fastest and most effective means for doing good, especially motion pictures, press, radio and television."

Like St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Father Alberione already saw that his heaven was to be a continuation of the apostolic mission entrusted to him on earth.

"We will always be with the Lord." To be so, we must "enter into the novitiate of heaven" while in life, by serving and loving: "Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ: I do not seek my own glory."

He aimed at reaching this perfection through the Mass, the perfect sacrifice. The sacrifice of Jesus reopened heaven; the Mass renews it all over the earth at every instant:

"O Most Holy Trinity, I offer You the glory which heaven, purgatory, the Church and creation give You. I offer you my Masses, as many as I will celebrate. I offer as many Masses as will be celebrated until the end of the world: in adoration, in thanksgiving, in reparation and in petition."

From his intense interior life, all the rest blossomed with admirable fecundity, nourished by the loving attention he addressed first of all to the will of God, which he sought in prayer and also through others in humility.

"I am always more and more taken up by the will of God..."

"Help me to understand what the Lords wants...."

At the age of eighty, Father Alberione said this about his work: "God has done what He wanted to be done, notwithstanding the fact that instead of being a builder, I have been a useless servant."

Such remarks could seem exaggerations, but he lived in an attitude of this sort with profound conviction, which was the secret of his greatness. He also felt this greatness, but in the spirit of the Magnificat: as a gift of God made to his littleness. And this used to dilate his soul

in gazing towards heaven, where he would eternally sing a hymn of thanksgiving and praise in perfect love.

## **The stages of his interior ascent**

Here on earth, it was still the appropriate time for self-conquest and purification. His heart opened to the highest aspirations, but with an indispensable foundation of humility: he was small; God's gift was great.

The interior progress of this exceptional soul moved between these two poles:

"Humility in every aspirations," and at the same time: "I am a miracle of God."

"Your infinite mercies led me to the priesthood: 'By God's grace I am what I am.' Ordination transformed the Twelve; ordination made me a new being: God on earth."

And again, in another very significant passage: "Lord, You have seeded my life with wonders of mercy. Your glory lies more in pardoning one who humbles himself and who trusts in Your goodness. Through the new multiplication of graces may there be established a balance between the graces and gifts received and Your glory, my holiness and the good of souls..."

Change the greatest sinner into one of the greatest of saints and apostles.

## **The perception of sin—reparation**

This acknowledgment of his own culpable insufficiencies stemmed from his deeply rooted perception of sin as connected with human nature.

"Detest sin as the Lord detests it... may sin never come to stain these walls."

He wanted all Pauline communitarian prayer to begin and end with the invocation: "From all sin, deliver us, O Lord."

The need for reparation is a consequence of sin. Even the acceptance of suffering is penance and reparation, according to the program of: "Keep silent, hide it... and offer it to the Father, with Jesus, in gratitude."

"... Make reparation, remedy, regain... so that the son may not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father be responsible for and bear the sins of the son."

Reparation is also the acceptance of pain and of death, and it presupposes perfect abandonment in God. Father Alberione used to practice this abandonment, and he prayed to practice it always more perfectly.

## Prayers

Prayers held a great place in his writings, for he was faithful to the resolution already mentioned: "to transform everything into prayer" with total purity, according to the teaching of Canon Chiesa, his unforgettable spiritual director.

"Repeat always: Lord, teach us how to pray...."

"Pray with the mind, with the heart, with the will, with words, with works."

Will we know how to pray as Jesus did?

"Lord, Jesus, if I have not always said what pleased You, destroy my words and make reparation. I am not aware of having erred; but You see all and You are the Repairer...."

"I am here before Your tabernacle to give an account of my life, of my priesthood, of my particular mission."

"Infinite Goodness—as in a stubborn contest in regard to my obstinate malice and daily, unceasing in correspondence and deafness—You have defeated me! As you defeated Saul. I surrender. All, only, always You, and in You and for You."

“Forgive me, O Master! Do not remain silent. I feel that you have led me into this solitude to speak to me... to enlighten me.

“Forgive me, O Master! Have also for me the heart that You had for Peter, Magdalene, Matthew, and Thomas...

“Deign to receive this prodigal son, this unworthy priest, this person unfaithful to Your every plan and desire.

“He squandered all benefits: mind, heart, time, energies, relations, helps, health and merits. Everything has to be rebuilt: because I have no virtue. I do not have the faith sufficient piety; I do not have zeal for God and for souls.

“Rebuild Yourself in me... I want to leave You free to do what You wish... work in me... ‘until Jesus Christ be formed in you’ from these fragments and ruins....

“I trust in You, Sacred Heart of the Master!

“I trust in You, Sacred Heart of His Mother.”

Here lies the essence and summit of Christian life: to live Christ with the help of the Mother who gave Him to the world.

## **“It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.”**

This is the foundation of the spirituality of St. Paul. The way to follow passes from imitation of Christ to configuration with Him.

“Imitation of Jesus Christ: by holding to what is the poorest, the most despised, the most mortified, insofar as this depends upon me.”

“Do everything for God’s glory by and through Jesus Christ, offered to the Father, as is done in the prayer: ‘Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ.’ Jesus Christ in me is: Adorer, Repairer, Sanctifier...”

“I have identified myself with Christ: His interests are mine; His intentions are mine; I speak his words; my doctrine is His; my life is the life of Christ. I do the works of Christ; or better, it is Christ who does them in me.”

And after this boldness, always in his humility: “Heavenly Father, do not look at me—who hide myself behind Your Son the Redeemer—instead, look only at Him!”

At Christ, living in the Host, who spoke to him.

### **The Eucharistic Jesus**

This was the source and center of Father Alberione’s apostolate. Herein lies the only explanation of the luxuriant blossoming of his work. Without the Eucharist, the apostolate cannot be fruitful.

“You were born from the Host.”

With his simple and strong words, Father Alberione himself has related the dream he had had “in a moment of particular difficulty.” Jesus Master told him: “Do not fear. I am with you. From here I want to cast light. Be sorry for sin.”

“The words from here came forth from the tabernacle, so forcefully as to make me understand that all light is to be received from the Master.”

For this reason Father Alberione did not want Jesus to remain alone in Pauline churches. This is why all the members of the Pauline Family adore the most Blessed Sacrament at length, according to the rules of the various Congregations. For this reason Sister Disciples in particular have a rule that they must make two hours of Adoration daily. No Pauline must be so absorbed in work as to forget the essential. Father Alberione heeded the warning of the Psalm: “If the Lord does not build the house, they labor in vain who build it.”

He himself was a master of adoration and of Eucharistic life, faithful daily to two hours of adoration before the Tabernacle: "The Pauline Family was born from the Tabernacle. You were born from the Host and from the Chalice.... As long as you remain faithful to this Source from which you were born, you will have grace and life."

## Mary, Mother and Queen

At the side of Divine Master, Father Alberione always found His Mother, the "Coredemptrix," and "Apostle," the Teacher and Queen of the Apostles.

Her maternal assistance could not and must not be lacking. From Mary we received Christ; through her we must go to Christ and live His life.

Mary received a twofold announcement: from the Angel Gabriel who announced to her the divine maternity of Christ, and from Jesus Crucified, who bestowed on her universal Motherhood with respect to His Mystical Body, which is the Church.

No greater wealth could be given to this poor and proud world than Jesus Christ.

Mary gave the world grace in Jesus Christ; she continues to offer Him throughout the centuries. She is the universal mediatrix of grace, and in this role she is our mother.

The world needs Jesus Christ Way, Truth and Life. Mary gives him through the apostles and the various apostolates. He raises them up, forms them, assists them, and crowns their labors with fruits and with glory in heaven.

The devotion to the Virgin, which he had learned from his mother, accompanied Father Alberione in each stage of his interior and apostolic journey: "Without

the rosary I felt I was incapable of even giving an exhortation."

"Whoever loves Mary will be saved. Whoever loves her much will be a saint."

He promoted and spread devotion to Mary through every means. The beautiful Marian Magazine, *La Madre di Dio*" (The Mother of God), was and still is one the of my means of Marian apostolate.

Continuous invocation of Mary was more than familiar to Father Alberione. His trips, were one continuous Rosary: "Always, everything was built more with the Rosary than with other means" (human economic). The Rosary was his uninterrupted prayer during his last years of forced inactivity.

Father Alberione awaited everything from the motherly protection of the Virgin. "In all important things, begin with Mary. Her charity comes through like that of a mother of a family.

"I entrust everything to Mary: for the redemption of the past, for the sanctification of life, for correspondence to the vocation, for the governing of the Congregation.

"The Lord chose Mary to be treasurer, administrator and dispensatrix.... She distributes the graces of God, the virtues of Jesus Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to whom she wills, as she wills, when she wills and in the measure that she wills."

"Behold the 'gifts' of Mary:

- Mary will love in a particular way her devotees, whom she treats as little ones.
- Mary will provide for the needs of body and soul.
- Mary will guide souls with a firm hand on the path of sanctity.
- Mary will defend and protect them from dangers and enemies.

- Mary will intercede continually with her Son.
- Mary assures perseverance in virtue.
- Mary is a guarantee of eternal happiness.

“I trust that I will save myself because of Divine Mercy, through the most holy Mother, Mary, my hope.”

After the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption, in one of his dreams he asked Mary what homage the Pauline Family could now render her, and what homage she expected from Christendom in that historic moment.

Mary showed herself enveloped in a gold and white light, as the one full of grace.

He heard these words: “I am the Mother of divine grace.”

This corresponds to the present need of poor mankind, and it is helpful in making better known Mary’s present role in heaven: “Universal mediatrix of grace.”

The Founder composed the most beautiful prayers in her honor. Through her, the Immaculate Mother, he sustained the virtue of purity which he cared for and treasured both in himself and in others.

## Purity

Father Alberione was heroic in the virtue of chastity that shone from his face and his whole being. Because of this, he exercised a completely singular attraction that drew many vocations to embrace virginity.

Simplicity, naturalness and custody of all of the senses were admirably fused in his exceptional personality and nourished by continual union with God.

To safeguard these virtues, he recommended and practiced: “Watch and pray. One without the other is ineffective.” It is like saying: all the effort on the part of man, all the grace from God.

“Purity in all discretion.” Purity invested him in every aspect of life—from his thoughts to his words, which were never frivolous or rude, from his deeds to his heart to his will.

“Whatever is human, only earthly, only sensible, only of the senses, is to be immolated as a holocaust. Let the affections and feelings be supernatural, coming from God and returning to Him.”

He was convinced of this: that only thus, far from mutilating himself, man fully realizes himself and is enriched with all the wealth of God. The vision of God is promised to the pure of heart.

“Intimate communications, incomprehensible to others, take place between God and the pure soul. The Lord makes use of these souls for the glory of His Father and the accomplishment of His most marvelous works....”

“All the other virtues are bound up with chastity, but those who conserve their lily intact are the humble.”

## **For the glory of God**

In everything—then—Father Alberione aimed for sanctity. But for what purpose?

Not just for the sake of sanctity, but as the means to a higher goal.

“The perfect love of God means seeking His glory in everything, as the first and absolute end. The only real sanctity is incorporation in Christ. It means directing all—with the greatest purity and intensity—to the greater glory of God.”

And in a still more monumental way:

“Sanctity is the means: the glory of God is the necessary, absolute, final end. One enters into the intentions, into the goals, into the thoughts of God, always, only, completely for His glory.”

Because of his great purity of intention, whoever approached him felt God. It was just as he himself had written so descriptively of the person who is truly all of God:

“Everyone feels the need to learn from a man of God. That sort of divine quality which shines out from his person, (his reasoning, his simple, devout, recollected life), makes an impression. In him others glimpse ‘something’ of the divine; they sense that they are in the presence of a superior being. It is a risen man, elevated above every earthly thing.”

Father Alberione gave this impression to the fullest. And nothing more sublime can be said of a person than that God shines forth from him.



## REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY

The saints, to whom the Lord entrusts a mission of light and guidance, seem at death to be eclipsed; but after a while they reappear transfigured in the light of God to shine on the highway of our earthly pilgrimage as both reminder and guide.

In fact, “while we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the City that is to come and at the same time we are shown a most safe path by which, among the vicissitudes of this world, in keeping with the state in life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at the perfect union with Christ, that is, perfect holiness” (LG, 50).

The mission begun imperfectly by them on earth is completed and perfected in death. Beyond the restricted human horizon there opens out, in all its fullness, the divine horizon which they had encompassed and lived in faith.

Just a few years after his death, the figure of the man of God, Father James Alberione, towers ever higher, and his person and his mission in the Church appear as great gifts of God. Truly, “in the lives of those who, ... sharing in our humanity, are however more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ, God vividly manifests His

presence and His face to men. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom" (LG, 50).

Letters from various parts of the world reach the Postulator General of the Pauline Family. They come from Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and people of importance in the world of social communication. They ask that the Cause for the Beatification of this humble and great servant of God be opened.

We have gathered some of these testimonies, together with those of supreme value given by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, and expressions of gratitude from persons who have received graces through the intercession of Father Alberione.

It is a chorus of admiration and of praise which unanimously rises up from all parts of the world.

"Father Alberione came to visit me! I seemed to see humility personified. Yes, Father Alberione is a great  
— Pope John XXIII

"I remember the very edifying and truly spiritual meeting we had when he came alone to an audience. He remained on his knees (before us), and refused to stand up, so full was he of deep and lived humility. He is a man, I would say, who ranks as one of the marvels of our century."  
— Pope Paul VI

"Above all, always more brightly shines the light of his uncommon virtues, of his sublime spirituality which has opened a new way, through which tens and hundreds of souls spur themselves on towards perfection in the religious life and carry on the works he has left as a heritage in the Church of God. During his earthly pilgrimage, he gave such a luminous example of continuous intimacy with God. His original institutions in the spheres of

pastoral activity and religious life... have much to say to our world of today.

— Pietro Cardinal Palazzini

“Everyone knows how much good he performed for more than fifty years, to the benefit of the Church and of society, giving the shining example of a truly exemplary priestly and religious life and of an amazing apostolic activity, so multiform and original.

“Whenever, in the judgment of the Church, the virtues of this most worthy priest will be held up for the imitation of the clergy, of consecrated souls, and of the people of God, they will not fail to teach and to effectively stimulate them to walk the main road of an ever more generous witness of faith and charity.”

— Hugo Cardinal Poletti, Vicar of Rome

“A great figure, an apostolic pioneer of social communications, and an exemplary son of the Church.”

— Most Rev. Antonio Mauro, Vatican City

“All of us bow reverently before the mortal remains of this venerated man of God, who lived the Gospel integrally and practiced it with a complete and edifying dedication. It remains to us to thank God for having given to His Church this apostle formed according to His heart, who made his talents bear fruit a hundredfold.”

— Hildebrand Cardinal Antoniutti,  
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious

“He will remain as one of the great apostolic figures raised up by God for our times.”

— Most Rev. Joseph Fennocchio,  
Bishop of Pontremoli

“There is a great need for such ministers of God in the Church! What a multiplicity of works owe themselves to his zeal; what a wealth of examples have come from his most upright life, vowed as it was to the holy cause of the Gospel, in continual, recollected, most devout union with God!”

— Carlo Cardinal Confalonieri,  
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Bishops

“He is one of the most noteworthy men who have illumined the Church of our century. The light of his uncommon virtues and of his great spirituality shines always more brightly.”

— Luigi Cardinal Raimondi,  
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Saints

“During his earthly life, Father James Alberione... showed signs of extraordinary personal sanctity and worked to foster a fuller understanding of the faith, through the diffusion of the Catholic truths, above all by editing and publishing books.

“Therefore, I humbly ask that the cause of beautification of this priest be introduced by the Sacred Congregation of the Saints. So that, if the Lord will allow proving signs, another exemplar of sanctity and activity will be proposed to the world for the cause of Christ and His Church.”

— John Cardinal Krol,  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

“It is my distinct privilege to add my name to the many names of bishops throughout the world prompting the cause to sainthood of this most memorable founder. Although I never had the honor to meet Father Alberione personally, I have come to know him through his books of

prayer and spiritual direction and most especially through his sisters, the Daughters of St. Paul, whose provincial mother house is here in the Archdiocese of Boston.”

— Humberto Cardinal Medeiros,  
Archbishop of Boston

“He was indeed a noble soul whose works will continue to shine in the Church for long years into the future.”

— Hubert M. Durel, Bishop of Cheyenne

“I pray that the heroic example of this devoted priest will be considered; so many works for the welfare of the Church were set in motion by his planning and so much example of dedicated priestly devotion was given us by himself.”

— Most Rev. James A. Hickey,  
Bishop of Cleveland

“I am profoundly impressed by the heroic virtue and tireless zeal of this holy priest.”

— Most Rev. Richard H. Ackerman,  
Bishop of Covington

“Having had the good fortune of knowing Father James Alberione personally, I can testify that he was one of the most beautiful figures of these last years and that his initiatives have been a concrete response to the spiritual needs of our age.”

— Sergio Cardinal Pignedoli

“His mission has been one of the greatest in the twentieth century. The secret of his success was his personal holiness.”

— Most Rev. S.M. Metzger, Bishop of El Paso

“This holy priest, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, found the source of his missionary zeal and of his personal sanctification in his intimate union with the Eucharistic Jesus.

“In considering the heroic example of this holy priest, true missionary of the Church, it would be very helpful to show him to the world as an example and intercessor for the present-day needs of the Church.”

— Most Rev. William Brasseur,  
Apostolic Vicar of Mountain Province, Philippines

“His apostolic fervor, his extraordinary virtue, and his exemplary life were, with the grace of God, harmonized in him, in the urgency of bringing the ‘Good News’ of Christ and of His Church to millions of people in the modern world.”

— Most Rev. John F. Whealon,  
Archbishop of Hartford

“Under many aspects, Father Alberione’s spirituality anticipated the spirit of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

“He was a priest of an intense and wakeful apostolate, because he drew all his strength and ardor from his eucharistic piety.”

— Most Rev. Victor Ottaviani,  
Bishop of Avezzano

“His great love for the Church and for Christ’s Vicar are well known, as are his impressive writings. The intensity of his interior life is amply attested to by the abundance of vocations he fostered throughout his holy life for the greater glory of God and the edification of the Church.”

— Most Rev. Philip M. Hannan,  
Archbishop of New Orleans

“The expansion of the apostolate of the written word, inspired by the Servant of God, seems to provide clear evidence of his personal dedication and holiness.”

— Most Rev. Joseph T. McGucken,  
Archbishop of San Francisco

“Father Alberione’s life and work have a special importance in today’s world. His Beatification could stress to each of us the importance of commitment to the Truth of Christ as it is made manifest in and by the Holy Catholic Church and to the necessity of proclaiming that Truth to all men by means of the modern media of social communication. The public recognition could inspire many, especially the young, to hear more clearly and respond more generously to the mandate of the Lord: ‘Go forth and teach all nations....’”

— Most Rev. Thomas J. Welsh,  
Bishop of Arlington

“The writings of Father Alberione have led me to know him more and to become greatly impressed by his character and his holiness. The fact of almost constant physical pain endured in his later years especially, without complaint and with continued unremitting work for God and souls until the very end of his life, serve to increase my conviction of his saintly life of heroic virtue.”

— Most Rev. Louis Abel Caillonet,  
Former Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

“It has been my great joy and inspiration to know the late Father James Alberione. I met him on several occasions in Rome, especially during the Second Vatican Council. He was a man of great humility and of deep prayer life. His work to spread the Word of God

throughout the world has brought much good to the Church.”

— Most Rev. Joseph M. Pernicone,  
Auxiliary Bishop of New York

“For several years I have read the works of Father Alberione. They have been a source of rich spiritual profit to me—and to many others of my acquaintance, particularly priests and religious. It requires little discernment to gleam from these writings that the author has to be a man who possessed and practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, in an extraordinary degree.

“To have founded the Congregations of the Pauline Family, with what their consecrated lives of witness and service mean to the Church, is to speak, I believe, of a towering monument and tribute to his memory. But more specifically I entertain the view that the People Of God should see in Father Alberione a model instrument raised up to confront a pressing need to seize a golden opportunity. Having in mind the Conciliar emphasis on social communication and the Synodal focus on evangelization, one wonders if in Father Alberione the Church does not find an incomparable example of what can be accomplished when practical wisdom and indefatigable energy combine to employ modern means at hand to advance the mission of Holy Mother Church.”

— Most Rev. James J. Hogan,  
Bishop of Altoona Johnstown

“At a time when orthodoxy of doctrine is of the highest importance, we find in Father Alberione a most valid defender of the faith and a model of fidelity to the Vicar of Christ.”

— Most Rev. Charles H. Helmsing,  
Bishop of Kansas City

“Father Alberione is a saint of our century. In our times he brought “forth fruit with patience” (Lk. 8:15).

— Most Rev. John J. McEleney, SJ.,  
former Archbishop of Kingston, Jamaica

“The sanctity of his life and his complete sacrifice of self made him a most effective instrument for God to use for the benefit of immortal souls in these critical times.”

— Most Rev. Albert L. Fletcher,  
former Bishop of Little Rock

“I believe that he was a truly saintly man.”

— Most Rev. David E. Cunningham,  
Bishop of Syracuse

“One remains dumbfounded in thinking of how Father Alberione was able to create so many institutions, especially adapted to the needs of our days.... Only a profound interior life and an intense love for Christ, in imitation of St. Paul, can explain such an impressive activity: *Digitus Dei est hic* (the finger of God is here).”

— Most Rev. Guiseppe Battaglia,  
Bishop of Faenza

“Father Alberione has highly honored the Catholic priesthood with a most intense apostolic life, nourished by a great spirit of prayer and sacrifice, showing in himself and in his teaching how in an era of great evolution and also of great crises, the priest must and can maintain intact his ideal as a minister of Christ.”

— Most Rev. Luigi Carli,  
Archbishop of Gaeta

“In my opinion, the priest James Alberione enters into the sphere of those Christians and priests who have

responded heroically to the call of the Lord and have totally dedicated their lives to the service of God and neighbor.

“Of an intense interior life, cultivated lovingly from his seminary days, Father Alberione was a man profoundly inserted in his time....

After his death, the memory of Father Alberione remained luminous and there is becoming widespread in the Christian people the desire to see him glorified by holy Mother Church.”

— Most Rev. Girolamo Bortignon,  
Bishop of Padova

“The life of Father Alberione is adorned with outstanding Christian and priestly virtues, which distinguish him and single him out for the public veneration of the clergy and laity in all sectors of life.

“The works he accomplished and the Institutions he founded testify to the splendor of the theological virtues which he lived interiorly and transfused into the vitality of an apostolate truly ‘Pauline.’”

— Most Rev. Giovanni Rizzo,  
Archbishop of Rossano

“I knew Father Alberione personally; above all, I admired his fidelity to the Church, his spirit of profound humility, his absolute dedication to the service of the priesthood, his untiring audacity in arousing and multiplying initiatives for the diffusion of the Word of God! A truly charismatic soul!”

— Most Rev. Pietro Santoro,  
Bishop of Larino and Termoli

“The extraordinary virtue of Father James Alberione is testified to by all who knew him, and it is testified also at Vicenza. Here, personally, with an act of the deepest

humility and submission, such as to inspire and fill one with admiration, he succeeded in resolving with unhelped for results a difficult and troublesome controversy.”

— Most Rev. Arnoldo Onisto,  
Bishop of Vicenza

“Fr. Alberione is the prophet of the communication age. God raised him in our times to inspire the faithful to recognize the responsibility to use the communication media to extend the kingdom of Christ to the farthest reaches of the globe. My hope is that bishops, priests, religious and the laity will capture his spirit and use the media in the interest of the Truth. Father Alberione will be remembered as the St. Paul of our day!

— Rev. John A. Hardon, SJ.,  
Theologian



## THANKSGIVING FOR FAVORS RECEIVED

Eloquent testimony to Father Alberione's valid intercession before the Divine Master is to be found in the many accounts of graces received through him.

Here are few:

"On April 23, 1972, from the 'Regina Apostolorum Hospital' (of Albano Laziale outside Rome) conducted by the Daughters of St. Paul, I was transported by ambulance to the 'Queen of Apostles' Sanctuary in Rome, to participate at a Mass celebrated for vocations to the priesthood.

"I had been confined to bed for fifteen months because of paralysis of the legs, which was due to a carcinoma and various bone lesions.

"I had consented to participate in the Mass only because for some time I had a great desire to go to the tomb of Father Alberione and to talk to him as a daughter.

"After the Mass, I was taken on a stretcher to the crypt, where this prayer poured forth spontaneously from my heart: 'Dear Father Alberione, you who were the Great Friend of Jesus, intercede before Him to give me back the use of my legs.

"I don't ask you to cure me of my illness, because I think it is good for my soul, but you can see how much trouble and how much work I give to the good and virtuous sister-nurses because of my complete immobility. Help

me to be self-sufficient; if you don't want to do it for me, grant it to me for the sake of your Daughters.'

"I awaited the answer with confidence, and it came after a few days. Gradually, I began first to move my toes, then my feet, then to stand up. Finally towards the beginning of the month of June, I was able to take the first steps, to the amazement of the doctors and the nurses.

"Now I walk quickly, with the aid of a cane. I could do without it, but the doctor fears that, because of my illness, I could lose my balance, and a fall would be ruinous to me.

"From that time on, every time that I have some difficulty or pain, I turn to my powerful protector and I feel him near me, ready to sustain and encourage me. Until now, neither my requests nor my confidence have been in vain.

Albano, May 25, 1974  
Sister Maria Letizia Ippoliti,  
Oblate of the Child Jesus

"For many years I had been suffering from stomach ailments, but reminding myself of Father Alberione, who used to say that 'sufferings keep us company,' I took care of myself as best I could. Finally, because my pains increased, I was told I had to have an operation. I put all my medical examination reports in my library and was waiting for a final examination by a specialist. When I went to take these reports, I found an envelope on top of them. It contained some holy pictures of Father Alberione. How had that envelope gotten there? I did not remember putting it there, and no one else could have done it.

"This fact gave me immense comfort because I immediately thought that Father Alberione would help me and guide everything to turn out well. But my wife, too, was not well, and when examined by the specialist,

she was judged to be even more seriously ill than I, and her operation even more urgent.

“Taking each other by the hand, we entrusted ourselves completely to the care of God and of Father Alberione and went to be operated on. Both of us underwent surgery and everything turned out well.

“After the operation I suffered intense pain whenever I moved a leg; therefore, I turned again to Father Alberione. From that evening to the next morning the pain vanished.

“God loved us and Father Alberione interceded for us. May God and Father Alberione always be blessed.”

Rome, June 9, 1976

Pierfrancesco Bussetti

“I am a woman from Mar del Plata, and I know well the Congregation of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master. Very frequently I go to their chapel to adore the Blessed Sacrament, assist at Mass and received Holy Communion.

“This is my great comfort, because I am alone, and for many years I have had leg trouble so that I can barely walk, even with a cane.

“Through these good sisters I have been able to know the life and holiness of their dear Founder, who I feel is already a great protector for me.

“In fact, in January of this year, I had a great fear that my legs were becoming paralyzed again, and I was afraid of a relapse, which meant that I would no longer be able to go to Mass and Communion, as was my custom.

“It was then that (together with the dear sisters) I began to make a novena to Father James Alberione. On the third day of the novena, the pain had disappeared.... I continued to pray, asking strength for the future and at

the same time thanking him.... Thus, until today, I can continue with my daily obligation of doing good.

“And now more than ever I feel that I have a true and great support in James Alberione. How comforting this is in life, even though it be painful!

“With respectful greetings, I am,

Mar del Plata, March 14, 1973

Ilda de Jornet

“In Australia and in the Philippines we remember and pray to Father Alberione, and he makes his presence and intercession felt.”

Marica, December 16, 1976

Sr. Maria Lucia Ricci

Superior General of the

Pious Disciples of the Divine Master

## PRAYERS

Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank You with all the Church in Christ our Master, Way, Truth and Life, for the treasure of holiness, light and grace abundantly given Your faithful servant. Father James Alberione. He, through the example of the Apostle Paul, preached the Gospel in all the world through the instruments of social communication.

Help me to follow his example in complete fidelity to his spirit, and deign to glorify him even on earth as a guide and protector of those who work for the coming of Christ with the same means.

Through his intercession, grant me the grace that I pray for at this time...

Mary, Mother and Queen of Apostles, confirm my supplication with your maternal intercession.

*Glory to the Father...*



Lord glorify in Your Church  
the priest Father James Alberione.  
May he be for all of us light, guidance and support  
in the work of sanctification and in the apostolate.  
Through his intercession, hasten the triumph  
of Christ the Master, Way, Truth and Life,  
in the world, through Mary, Mother and Queen of the Apostles,  
and grant me the graces that I pray for at this time...

*With Ecclesiastical approval*

Those who obtain graces and favors are asked to inform the SUPERIOR GENERAL PIOUS SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL, Via Alessandro Severo, 58, Rome, Italy, 00145