



XL MEETING OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE PAULINE FAMILY

FINAL MESSAGE

TO LIVE AND PROCLAIM JESUS MASTER, LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT AND WALKING WITH THE CHURCH AS THE PAULINE FAMILY

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

With joy we share with you the Final Message of our Meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family, which, during this encounter in January 2023, has reached its 40th anniversary. This communal journey, characterized by progressive growth in knowledge, is reaping a variety of fruits and perspectives for our future as a *Family*.

We feel it is *an essential task in the present age of epochal change to be a Church that is outward-looking and free of all worldliness, even as we live in this world, share people's lives and journey with them in attentive listening and acceptance,*"¹ as Pope Francis recommends.

To accomplish this goal we need to ask ourselves: Who do we listen to? Those "inside" our circle or those "outside" it, even if they are very distant from the experience of faith? How do we listen? According to what criteria? What language do we use? All this is important so as to have well-qualified information (including statistical data to analyze the situation) at our disposal, look to the future and discern what to do concretely.

We feel the need to rediscover the relevance and urgency of the Pauline mission in the world and Church of today, and also witness to the richness of our life as a *Family*, as well as the profound connection between *synodality* and *communication*.² In its original composition of ten different realities, it is a "*synodal phenomenon*"³ that deserves to be deepened in concrete experience, even before that of theory, as a mirror of an ecclesial form that takes advantage of charisms and ministries to communicate Christ Way Truth and Life to the world.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter "*Everything Pertains to Love*," n. 26.

² Thought of Bishop Valdir José De Castro, ssp.

³ An expression used by theologian Severino Dianich in his talk "*The Prophetic-Ecclesial Dimension of the Synodal Path*."

Blessed James Alberione's intuition was to found a Family, *not isolated congregations or institutes*.⁴ A diversity of charisms, a unity of gifts and complementarity in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel—this is the centrality and essence of our life as a Family. At the origin, then, is the synodal option—a term that transcends the very concept of words and is expressed in daily practice. Indeed, there are many initiatives and achievements, guided by the concept of family, that bear witness to the blossoming of a dream that is attainable, even if our limitations and the road ahead still pose challenges.

This 40th meeting of the General Governments of the Pauline Family reminds us that we are part of an even larger family, namely the Church, the Body of Christ, and that we walk in step with her. Attentive and ready to listen to the Spirit, we feel the urge to live and reinvigorate our proclamation of Jesus, Master and Shepherd.

In this perspective, we feel the importance of treasuring more and more the members of the Pauline Institutes of Consecrated Secular Life and the Pauline Cooperators, recognizing their particular vocations, gifts and ministries. Some of them present at this Meeting expressed to us their joy of belonging to the Pauline Family, of not being alone but in the company of many other brothers and sisters from all parts of the world. In particular, the couple from the Holy Family Institute likened this communal experience to “*a garden in which there is not just one tree, but many flowers very different from each other, but which collectively disseminate a single fragrance—that of holiness.*”⁵

It is our hope that all of us, as members of the Pauline Family, will contribute in our respective ways to the journey of the entire Church, bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel that flows from the communion of the Trinity, the perfect icon of synodality.

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*Participants in the XL Meeting
of the General Governments of the Pauline Family*

⁴ These reflections were prompted by the talk of Fr. Antonio Da Silva, ssp.

⁵ Words of thanks from Michele and Irene Gianmario, who coordinate the ISF in Apulia, Italy.