

# Spiritual Itinerary for the Jubilee Year of Foundation



## Stage III

November 21, 2022 – February 10, 2024



## Stage III

### **Jubilee: a time of renewed fidelity, trust and shared joy**

April 9, Easter Sunday – August 30, 2023

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*Disciples of Jesus, Master and Lord (cfr Lk 24:6-8)*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;  
because the Lord has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives  
to announce a year of favor from the Lord  
(cfr *Is* 61; *Lk* 4:18-19).

Through the action of the Holy Spirit,  
we receive “the grace of the apostolate”  
in Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life.

Like Mary, Mother of God,  
and the women of the Gospel ... (RV 9).

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We belong to the Master to remain with him but also to receive the mandate (cfr *Mk* 3:13-14): we are called to continue his mission, or better, to permit him to continue it in us that he may be the one who proclaims the joy of the Gospel that liberates and saves.

It is only when we have had the experience of his death, in surrender and annihilation, as a person and as community, that we can become credible witnesses of the fullness of life that he desires to offer to humanity.

## USEFUL TEXTS FOR DEEPENING AND PRAYER

### FROM THE CHARISMATIC TEXTS

#### *The Tree Seen from the Roots*<sup>1</sup>

A synthesis of her (Mother Scholastica's) spiritual maturity in the face of this trial can be gleaned from a letter dated May 7, 1946, from her place of "exile" in Villa S. Giuseppe<sup>2</sup>, and addressed to Fr. Timothy Giaccardo:<sup>3</sup>

Rome, S. Giuseppe, May 7, 1946

*Reverend Signor Maestro,*

*I received your letter from Chiavari<sup>4</sup>. May the Lord reward your charity; your advice is precious to me and welcome. Deo gratias (Thanks be to God).*

*"Deo gratias" also for your prayers, of which I am greatly in need. The moments are not lacking in which the spirit of adversity afflicts me with thoughts of rebellion or discouragement. But, with the Lord's help, I have always sought to reject them and entrust myself to the one who sees everything in the light of truth and knows how to use every occasion for his glory and for our merit.*

*When certain thoughts assail me, I thank Jesus for all that he has disposed since everything is for my greater good. I offer him everything in reparation for my sins and especially for my great pride. Then I tell him that I pardon the one who brought this punishment upon me, since what is written in that letter of Msgr. Pasetto: "that without a regular and legitimate mandate and without control, she does and undoes things at her pleasure within the group*

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<sup>1</sup> R. CESARATO – G. OBERTO, *L'Albero visto dalle radici 2*, PDDM, Roma 2000 *pro manuscripto*, pp.136-138 (English edition p. 145-147).

<sup>2</sup> Rome - Casa SSP, via Portuense 746. The letter also references the one sent by order of the Congregation for Religious from M. Nazarena and M. Ignazia.

<sup>3</sup> ASGeFP (Archivio Storico Generale Famiglia Paolina della Società San Paolo) – Other letters of M. Scholastica to Fr. Giaccardo and to M. Lucia Ricci are along the same line.

<sup>4</sup> There was an active FSP bookstore in Chiavari since 1940. The letter of Fr. Giaccardo to Sr. M. Scholastica has not yet been found.

*of the Pious Disciples”, is absolutely false. I never did any of this, and by voice and in writing, I always did everything under the direction of the Prima Maestra, asking and rendering an account to her of all that the Pious Disciples did. Also that which is written in the letter signed by M. Nazarena and M. Ignazia and sent to the houses: “that there existed a type of autonomous government, not without agitation and damage”, is also false, since that has not been proven to be the case among the Pious Disciples. To whom did the Disciples cause agitation and damage?*

*I am unable to fight for long and when I find that the good thoughts are insufficient to disperse the sad ones, I go to the Madonna who always comforts me and grants me great peace. She gives me such great courage and leaves me with such fortitude that I am the happiest person in the world. Then I have the Holy Tabernacle here, with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion daily; I have my good Mother Mary, I have the sweet hope of Paradise which soon awaits me, what more could I desire? I feel that this is more than enough, rather it satisfies the spirit so completely that I do not need anything else. I would rather have this than all the creatures and things of this earth. May it please the Divine Master to envelope me in bitterness with respect to all the goods here below and make me desire only the things of Heaven.*

*With this trial the Lord has marvelously heard my prayer that I have often repeated: Jesus, keep me in silence, keep me hidden, keep me humble, in simplicity, in littleness... Don't you think that he has heard my aspiration?*

*With regard to the Pious Disciples, I have no doubt that the Divine Master wants them in his Church like many other religious families, for this I pray and offer my poor pain and suffering. I do not care that others are in charge, rather I am content and certain that whoever it is, will do better, much better than I. In this I am pleased, as long as we all love the Lord and give him the glory...*

*I give thanks to the Lord that with this trial I can offer myself more fully as a victim and host and I live this in total abandonment to Jesus my sweet Savior and Crucified Spouse, leaving him at complete*

*liberty to do with me as he wishes. Thank Jesus also for me, for his love for me. I willingly listen to your advice: I will strive to remain humble, confident, and learn prudence and docility.*

*Please greet all of the sisters in Alba for me. Tell them that I remember them with fraternal affection and, since I can do nothing else, I pray for them incessantly. Deo gratias to you for your care for the Pious Disciples and all our concerns. May the Lord grant you great merits. On my part, although unworthily, I always pray the Divine Master to reward you for everything.*

*Please bless me. Your poorest daughter, Sr. Scholastica*

The tempest which struck M. M. Scholastica did not lead her to despair, but revealed her certainty of the “gift” she had received from the beginning. Her “calvary”, as she defined it, is the journey of the entire Congregation toward the light of the Resurrection.

### *Homilies to the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master*

I have always been struck by the words: «Truly, you are a hidden God!» (Is 45:15). He dwells in the Eucharist. Who knows him? Who loves him? Many years ago, when I stopped to reflect on this, I ended up saying: “Lord, grant me the grace to obtain that there may be a religious family in the Church, who does not only know you, but who may love you with dedication and complete devotion, honor you in your sacrament of love, lead innumerable souls to your Tabernacle!” ... This day is very important for you because it marks your birthday, it recalls the anniversary of your birth. By divine will, on this date many years ago, those who were to dedicate themselves to your special apostolate were set apart. The sowing took place a long time before that but, externally, it was on February 10, 1923 (1924) that the formation of your little community was realized. ... May there always be very delicate relationships between you and the priests. Let there always be due separation, due regard for one another, mutual respect, as the Mother of God had towards

her Jesus. In the commemoration of St. Scholastica, call to mind the liturgical function that the Benedictine monks and nuns had and still have in the Church. Therefore, let there be great esteem for everything that refers to the sacred liturgy. You ought to do even more; do not stop at whatever is external, but enter into the inner sense of the Liturgy, do something more, different from that which everyone else is doing and arrive at the true apostolate: to lead souls to the Eucharist! I pray the Divine Master to grant you the necessary graces in your mission and I give you my blessing. You must fulfill a liturgical apostolate and this apostolate can be considered under various aspects. To participate intimately in the sacred rites, to perceive, know and enter into the spirit of the Church in the sacred liturgy. Therefore, acquire a true knowledge of liturgical life. Besides the catechism, you must esteem and possess the knowledge of liturgy which, in the Church, is like the book of the Holy Spirit. This knowledge puts before you:

- the truth to be known;
- the virtue to be practiced;
- the grace to be implored.

In the churches of the Pious Disciples the rites must be celebrated with precision and all possible attention, following the liturgical rules properly. The sacred ceremonies in your chapels should be beautiful, devout and edifying. The Masses are to be well participated, the songs are to be performed with care, the rites are to manifest a devout dignity, in a way that your soul may be well nourished and drawn closer to God and the faithful who participate in the rites may feel stimulated to true piety. People who frequent your churches must feel God's presence; they must experience the need to get down on their knees, to adore God and to pray. Spread the knowledge, the practice, and especially the spirit of liturgical piety. However, take note that the liturgical apostolate, like the apostolate of the press, includes three parts.

1. *To create.* What is required here, therefore, is study and a special theological, liturgical study ... There are many wonderful and effective ways in which you can represent the mysteries of our

holy religion, as well as reach out to everyone, including the unbelievers, those who do not know our religion. For example, think of the 470 million Chinese. A high percentage of them do not know how to read, but you could produce a completely illustrated Catechism that could speak to their souls. ...

2. *To produce.* It is the technical part: painting, sculpture, embroidery, making various articles, vestments, etc. How many churches are in need of the care and the charity of the faithful! Think of all the chapels scattered over the countryside, in the mountains, in mission lands. Oh, what squalor and disorder in so many abodes of the God-with-us! This undertaking would be sufficient to take up the whole life's work of a large Institute! ... Make much use of music – music that is beautiful, well-chosen and in conformity with the norms laid down by the Church. Sacred music is a great means to attract people and especially to lead youth to God. Songs which are carefully prepared and well sung lift up the senses and direct them to God.

3. *To diffuse.* Advertise what you produce. This propaganda is to be widespread and extensive like that for the press, although in a different way, in a more reserved but always effective way. Your Family is under the action of the Holy Spirit who enlightens, rules, sustains and guides it. You will find the ways and means to fulfill all of your mandate under his guidance. Acknowledge that you are good for nothing and present yourselves to Jesus as incapable in everything, but ever trusting in his help. The love of Jesus shall make you intelligent, active, capable of gaining many merits and of leading many souls to God.<sup>5</sup>

If we follow that which is often said, we would believe that apostolate is almost solely the exterior activity. Instead, it is necessary to understand the apostolates in their order before God. For 30 years, Jesus lived a private life, in hiddenness, in silence, in prayer. Did he do the apostolate in these 30 years? Or was he an apostle only

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<sup>5</sup> APD 1946-47,133.140.142-144.146 ss.



in the 3 years of public life? Jesus was an apostle during the 33 years and he taught the need to appreciate the interior life. In the private life, he performed the apostolates which he wanted to precede all others, to which he gave great importance and to which he calls everyone.

Five principal forms of apostolate:

- *Apostolate of interior life*
- *Apostolate of holy desires*
- *Apostolate of good example*
- *Apostolate of prayer*
- *Apostolate of suffering*

Aside from these, there is the apostolate of works which is numerous and can be called:

- *Missionary apostolate*
- *Apostolate of charity*
- *Apostolate of preaching*
- *Apostolate of the press, etc.*

*What does apostolate mean?* It is our action to give glory to God and peace to men.

Apostolate of interior life.

Many fall into the error of giving greater importance to exterior activity than to interior life. You must avoid and fight this error. ... The first apostolate is the apostolate of our sanctification. No one is dispensed from it. There are even persons called only to this apostolate; no other apostolate, however, is effective without this. If you have three zeros you have nothing, but if you place a unit before them, you will have a thousand and if you add again another zero retaining the unit, the value shall always increase. Always and in the first place is the precious unit formed by the apostolate of interior life. Let us try to understand it well ...

Remember Martha and Mary. The latter was seated at Jesus' feet, humbling herself, asking pardon for sins<sup>6</sup>, asking the Divine Master for advice and is uplifted with the marvelous things he tells

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<sup>6</sup> Fr. Alberione uses the exegesis of the time which identified Mary of Bethany with the sinful woman in Lk 7.

her. Martha arrived and, upon seeing this, she felt a bit envious. She was annoyed and had no less than the courage to reproach Jesus: «Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve you? Tell her to help me». But the Lord responded: «Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion and it shall not be taken away from her» (Cf Lk 10:38-42). Think a bit if sometimes you do not also deserve Jesus' reproach to Martha. He purposely went to Bethany with the Apostles to rest, to refresh himself, but Martha forgot that which is the first duty of hospitality: to keep the guest company. Perhaps she was doing the things more for social convention, rather than for a deep-seated love and Jesus reprimanded and enlightened her. He did not rebuke Martha's work, but her forgetfulness of her main duty and her worrying. In the morning, you should spend the first two hours for Jesus. If you start the day devoting yourselves to the better part, all the rest will be blessed. Have more care of the interior life, so as to sustain effectively the external work. ...

Much of the divine word is spread in the world, but most of it is dispersed on the path, on gravelly ground, among thorns, because there is nobody to nourish it and make it bear fruit. The person who is filled with God, imperceptibly, invisibly, but with the same certainty, attracts grace and does good. The most Holy Virgin, more than any other human creature, caused much grace to flow. Mothers of families do the same to sanctify the whole family.

If the Pious Disciples are persons of true interior life, how much grace would flow into our communities, into Christianity; so much would flow as to reach the infidels, pagans, schismatics; so much as to multiply vocations and to sanctify the priests. The grace is there, what is needed is to obtain it for souls and whoever is filled will obtain it. You may not notice the humble action of the person of interior life, but you will become aware of it at God's judgment and then you will marvel at the many souls saved through it.

There are persons who work all their life, they come, they go, sweat, walk, toil, and end up with nothing because they lack the

interior life. They are zeros without a unit, empty plants who exteriorly may look good, but they do not bear fruit.

Do you truly believe in this need? Are you persuaded? Do not let the foundation be lacking. How many lives die away after having lived uselessly! How many works are empty! Remember what Jesus said of St. John: «He was a ardent and illuminating lamp». First you must be on fire in order to enlighten others. Activity will not save the world, but grace; nor shall those who work only exteriorly, but the Saints!<sup>7</sup>

Look at the beautiful vocation you have: in Christ, your life. Pious Disciples of the Divine Master. If you have always more light, your life would pass in joy: I have been extraordinarily blessed by God, blessed by God. The Lord loves me. He had this love for us from the beginning, Jesus still wants us today, rather he loves us even more as we come to love him, as we live the true religious life, that is, we live the profession, our gift to God: «I offer, give and consecrate myself completely». How many *Magnificats* would then be heard from the mouths of religious, but especially from you who belong to the Divine Master. He is the way.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> APD 1946-47, 268-284.

<sup>8</sup> APD 1957, 146.

## FROM THE RULE OF LIFE

### 5.

The founding event of our Congregation develops within the Church through episodes that bear the seal of the Cross.

Fr. James Alberione establishes the Disciples of the Divine Master as “distinct and separate” from the Daughters of St. Paul. However, due to various canonical procedures they are joined under a single decree of approval.

The intervention of the Founder, of Mother Scholastica, and the life offering of Fr. Timothy Giaccardo (1896-1948), all contribute to the ecclesial and institutional recognition of our Congregation.

On Holy Thursday, April 3, 1947, the decree of diocesan approval is promulgated.

The universal nature and apostolic effectiveness of our charism is more decisively expressed through the Pontifical Approval granted on January 12, 1948, and definitively ratified on August 30, 1960. The ecclesial discernment expressed through the beatification of Fr. James Alberione confirms us in the vocation we have received.

### 13.

Drawn by the love of Jesus Christ, we cling to him freely and personally.

We enter into the new and living Way which leads us to the Father, to the Truth which sets us free and to the Life which fills us with joy.

We walk a new path of life which stretches toward our complete conformation to Christ in his Paschal Mystery: “I have been crucified with Christ, and I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.

The life that I now live in this body, I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me”.

## SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR GRATEFUL MEMORY

**April 13, 1946:** The Sacred Congregation for Religious, through a letter, notified Mother Scholastica that she was dismissed from her mandate over the Pious Disciples because it was considered abusive.<sup>9</sup>

**April 27, 2003:** Fr. James Alberione is proclaimed Blessed.

**May 8, 1963:** Mother Scholastic returned to Italy from Argentina definitively.

**June 3–29, 2023:** 10th General Chapter. *“I have seen the Lord! The beauty of the encounter, the joy of the mandate”*.

**July 12, 1897:** birth of Orsola Rivata in Guarene: the project of God came to the light through her.

**July 20, 1946:** Mother Scholastica travels from Rome to Paris, departing from Italy.<sup>10</sup>

**July 29, 1922:** Orsola is accompanied “to San Paolo” by her father, Antonio.<sup>11</sup>

**August 6, 1941:** Mother Scholastica offers her life for the Congregation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... pp. 131 ss. (English edition p. 140 ff).

<sup>10</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... pp. 142 ss. (English edition p. 152 ff).

<sup>11</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... p. 32. (English edition p. 34).

<sup>12</sup> On the feast of the Transfiguration in 1941, the day in which we contemplate Jesus directed toward his Hour, she (Mother Scholastica) writes: «Today, August 6, Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus, I offered my life for the Congregation of the Pious Disciples. I will accept everything the Lord wishes to send me for this purpose, in reparation for all my shortcomings and to obtain the grace to die in a perfect act of love for God. All of this with the assistance of Jesus and Mary», in: G. OBERTO, *Madre Scolastica Rivata, La gioia al servizio di Dio*, ed. Velar, Gorle (Bg) 2008, p. 28.

**August 15, 1924:** the Eucharistic Adoration becomes perpetual, day and night.<sup>13</sup>

**August 24, 1946:** the Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Religious rejects «*the juridical separation of a group of sisters called the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master from the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Paul*»<sup>14</sup> and on **August 26:** Fr. Alberione wrote: «Obedience to what has been decided is “*most secure and sweet*».<sup>15</sup>

**August 30, 1960:** we receive the definitive Pontifical Approval.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... p. 51. (English edition p. 54)

<sup>14</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... pp. 146 ss. (English edition p. 156 ff)

<sup>15</sup> Cfr *L'albero* ... p. 149. (English edition p. 160)

<sup>16</sup> *Circular* of Mother M. Lucia Ricci, (from Rome) dated October 22, 1960, General Archives PDDM.



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