



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

Saturday, 1 October 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, you represent the entire Pauline Family who have come to see the Successor of Peter. I am very pleased to welcome you and thank you for this kind visit.

I greet the Superior General of the Society of St Paul and express my deep gratitude to him for his courteous words that have presented the spirit of the evangelizing activities you seek to carry out together. I greet the General Councillors and the other Superiors and your many confreres and collaborators, and extend my cordial thoughts to your entire Institution with its various male and female branches.

I express to each and every one of you my appreciation for your service in spreading the Gospel through the modern means of social communications, following the example and teachings of your Founder, Bl. Giacomo Alberione.

It is particularly those who work in the Italian environment who have come here today: I am thinking in the first place of the periodical, *Famiglia Cristiana*, and the other magazines, I am thinking of the San Paolo Publications and of your well-known bookshops scattered throughout Italy, as well as the audio-visual sector and the most modern means of communication.

Yours is an avant-garde apostolate in a vast and complex field that offers a multitude of opportunities and at the same time a range of problems; it is a many-faceted activity that demands specific training and skills with constant updating if you want to respond effectively to the challenges of the world today, perceived more and more as a "global village".

Dear friends, Gospel proclamation through the modern media - this is what the magazine *Famiglia Cristiana* aims to do, entering the homes of so many Italians, here and abroad - primarily requires, in addition to the necessary and proper professional training, a firm attachment to the divine Teacher.

Ever aware of the importance of this ascetical and spiritual requirement, it was your Founder who, for this very reason, placed the Eucharist, with listening to the Word and a deeply prayerful spirit, at the very heart of every institution and house of your Institute. In love with God as he was, Fr Alberione asked his disciples, priests and lay people, to cultivate a vigorous inner life, rich in balance and discernment.

He pointed out to all of them as their model the Apostle Paul, who in the Areopagus of Athens, prompted by the Holy Spirit, was able to adapt his proclamation to the cultural context in which he found himself, but at the same time did not fail to present with courageous honesty the absolute newness that is Christ (cf. Acts 17: 22-32).

The recent General Chapter of the Society of St Paul presented anew as a programmatic guideline to all its members Fr Alberione's exhortation "to be St Paul today".

May each one of you make your own the spirit and style that distinguished the Apostle to the Gentiles, actualizing missionary work also in our post-modern epoch. Do so, sharing with the Successor of Peter and the Pastors of the particular Churches the ceaseless longing to bring the saving message of the Redeemer to the hearts of so many of our contemporaries.

My venerable Predecessors did not fail on various occasions to express their esteem and affection for the praiseworthy Pauline Family, encouraging it and spurring it to walk in fidelity to the charisma that marks it, which is a treasure for the entire Ecclesial Community.

To their words, I gladly join my own, hoping that your Religious Family may be able to carry out better and better its mission: to live and to bring Christ, the Teacher, the Way, the Truth and the Life, to the contemporary world in the forms and "languages" of present-day communications.

Knowledge of the value and great usefulness of the media for disseminating the Gospel and forming consciences has grown since the Second Vatican Council. I therefore urge you to renew your own specific commitment to be an educational presence at the service of the Christian community, so that in its various parts it will be able to develop ever better communications skills in the image of the Lord Jesus, in whom the communication between God and humanity reached its perfection (cf. Apostolic Letter on Social Communications, *Rapid Development*, n. 5).

Thank you again for your visit. I assure each one of you of my affection and pray to the Lord that you may continue faithfully the work started by Bl. Alberione with his protection and that of the

other Blesseds of the Pauline Family.

Above all, may you be guided by Mary Most Holy, the model of how to accept the divine Word in order to give it to the world in its integrity.

With these heartfelt sentiments, I bless all of you present here, your families, all the readers of *Famiglia Cristiana* and those who are influenced by your numerous social and pastoral activities.

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