

## **“ENTERING THE CITY” WITH THE CREATIVITY OF THE SPIRIT**

*Concluding Address  
of Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato  
Superior General*

Dearest sisters, like St. Paul we can truly say that we “got to our feet” at the voice of the Lord, whom we met here in Manila (our “Damascus”) and, led by the creativity of the Spirit, we “entered the city.” Our partial and limited knowledge of Asia and Oceania was expanded thanks to our frequent sharing sessions and the excellent input of our guest speakers, among whom I cannot fail to mention Srs. Maria, Ida, Grace and Yolanda.

The abundant light we received helped to shape our redesigning itinerary, created a stronger sense of solidarity among us, and filled us with great love for these lands so beloved by Primo Maestro and Prima Maestra, who penned unforgettable words about the urgent need to proclaim Jesus Christ in “vast Asia” and “promising Oceania.” In these days, we too were profoundly moved by the same yearning. And while we carried out our communal discernment as to how to respond to the plan of God first of all by revitalizing and giving a new Gospel quality to our life and mission, at the same time we felt the Spirit of Jesus urging us on to “new beginnings.”

This came about as a result of the various hypotheses sketched out for redesigning our presences on the local level. As an assembly, we were pleasantly surprised to see how profoundly concordant our diverse circumscriptions were regarding the “beacons of light” that should support and characterize the journey of our provinces, delegations and communities, namely: the Word of God; study and formation; communications; a more intensive use of the Internet, including for pastoral work for vocations; the sharing of our charism with the laity....

The same thing happened with regard to our Continental Project where, with great animity, our assembly pinpointed courageous and concrete priorities to be implemented in well-defined stages and aimed at short and medium-term goals. Above all, we confirmed the “trajectories” on which the Project is founded: the *Word of God* and *Communications*. Faithful to the premises set forth in the objective of the redesigning process (*Founded on the Word, in a spirit of faith and solidarity among ourselves, we decisively implement the redesigning process, creating the conditions favorable for revitalizing the Pauline life and mission and for responding to the challenges of today’s world*), we felt a profound communion among ourselves and a great desire to be guided by the Word of God, our “traveling companion,” the source of our inspiration and the wisdom behind our choices. With vigilant hearts, we sought to identify the worries of the portion of humanity that those of you here represent and to also move ahead toward establishing new presences (in China and Indonesia, perhaps Sri Lanka and Dubai), and to even give a new juridical configuration to this part of the world (the East

Asia Delegation), establishing English as its common language, so as to integrate and share our resources and find ways to evangelize with the new media.

What an abundance of grace we received in these days, sisters, beginning with the Word that was sown in our hearts. By a special gift of divine Providence, the Apostle Paul was present in the first reading of our daily Liturgies, as well as in the prayers that initiated our work sessions. Who better than he could help us enter into the logic of God's innovations so as to contemplate the paths being sketched out for us by his wise and fatherly hand?

Attentive to the teachings of Paul, we sought to cultivate an attitude of mercy, goodness, humility, gentleness and patience. We "bore each other's burdens" lovingly and we willingly forgave one another (cf. Col. 3:12-13) if something was said or done to cloud our relationships. Above all, we experienced the great gift of giving and receiving love, in keeping with the example of the Lord Jesus, who gave himself out of love. All of this was possible, St. Paul tells us, because the Word dwells within us abundantly, enabling us to express our wholehearted gratitude to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has judged us worthy of trust by calling us to the delicate ministry of proclaiming the Gospel in the world of communications (cf. 1 Tm. 1:12).

At the conclusion of our meeting, we welcome with vigilant and docile hearts what Paul said to Timothy, his faithful collaborator in the mission of evangelization, listening to his words as if they were addressed to us: "Do not neglect the gift of the Spirit that is in you.... Dedicate yourself completely to your mission so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching, and persevere in this" (cf. 1 Tm. 4:14-16).

Enlightened by the words of Paul and also by the beautiful words of our Founder, Blessed James Alberione, and Maestra Thecla, with which we began our work each day, we offered one another the gift of what the Spirit was suggesting to us. We learned to listen to one another with respect and gratitude. We encouraged one another to embrace the universal dimension of the Pauline charism by reflecting on our local territories from a worldwide perspective. We felt united by a common compassion for the sufferings of our peoples and a common anger toward the injustices, violence, abuses and lack of freedom they are forced to bear. We take all this as our starting point, convinced that God expects great things of us, above all selfless and generous love for everyone, even those who try to destroy his image, engraved on the faces of our many brothers and sisters. Once again, our compassion must be transformed into action through the different forms of our apostolate and through our prayers begging God for his love and mercy.



Thank you, sisters, for your presence here and for your wonderful witness of communion and a sisterly spirit in these days. Thank you also for everything you will do to pass on the fruits of this meeting to your circumscriptions and communities by sharing with your sisters what you experienced here, especially the certitude that our apostolic vocation has a vibrant future.

Sincere and profound thanks in the name of our entire assembly to Sr. Yolanda and her government, and to the sisters of the Divine Master, Queen of Apostles and Fr. Alberione communities, for their sisterly welcome, generous service and for the countless ways in which they strove to meet our needs. Your hospitality was truly exquisite, down to the smallest details.

Heartfelt thanks to Sr. Battistina who, with professional skill, determination, amicability and great interest for the growth of the Congregation in Asia and Oceania, wisely helped us adhere to our itinerary, stage by stage, so as to fulfill God's plan for the Daughters of St. Paul who work in this vast geographical region.

I also want to thank the sisters of the General Government: Anna and Francesca, who coordinated the various moments of the assembly with tireless dedication; as well as Luz Helena, Samuela, Inocencia and Gabriella, who provided us with unflagging and generous support “behind the scenes.”

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My thanks to Sr. Avelina and her collaborators for the wonderful refreshments they provided.

My thanks to all the sisters who labored for us in the kitchen, dining room and laundry room.

My thanks to all those who contributed to our evening entertainments.

My thanks to all those who collaborated in the many small, practical duties of daily life...

Special thanks to Fr. Ruben C. Areno, provincial superior of the SSP, and to the Pauline brothers who, each day, celebrated with us and for us the Eucharist, offering us in their homily nourishment and encouragement for the journey.

Sincere thanks to the members of the Commission that prepared this meeting: Srs. Natalia Maccari, Ana Maria Killing and Annamaria Gasser. My thanks to the sisters of SICOM, above all Sr. Teresita Park, for posting daily updates of our encounter on our website. And my thanks also to our translators back at the Generalate.



Sisters, we began our work trusting in the presence of the Lord and our Founders to help us swiftly respond to this latest call of the Spirit to *get to our feet and enter the city*. Our hope has become a reality.

Guided by the energy of the risen Lord, we reached the objectives of this Continental Meeting.

If the proposals for redesigning our presences on the local level are seriously and responsibly assumed by every Daughter of St. Paul, they will surely kindle in us a fresh and vigorous enthusiasm for our Pauline vocation, infusing us with a spiritual and apostolic dynamism that will help us joyfully witness to the fact that we belong to Christ and follow in his footsteps. This witness is necessary more than ever today to win over many young women to him through our “admirable apostolate.”

Our proposals regarding what should be done on the continental level will invigorate our communal journey and missionary passion, strengthen our communion and fill us with the enthusiasm characteristic of our beginnings.

We realize that this has been a time of great grace for us. God truly “visited us.”

Now the time has come to concretize our proposals. Let us once again allow the Lord to lead us, paving the way for him by “watering” with abundant prayer the seeds we planted. Fr. Alberione always said that great works can only be accomplished by men and women who belong to God. I myself have said on many occasions that we must cultivate a great love for the Word of God, read it assiduously, preserve it in our hearts and meditate on it. If we persevere in this, it will bear great fruit. May our love for the Word transform us into “sisters of the Word”—effective communicators who use the language of God to proclaim the Good News in the most suitable ways to the people to whom we have been sent.

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Superior General

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