

GREETINGS OF THE VICAR GENERAL TO POPE FRANCIS

Vatican City, Paul VI Audience Hall, 27 November 2014

Holy Father,

In the name of the Society of Saint Paul and of the entire Pauline Family, I express to You my heartfelt gratitude for this Audience which gathers numerous members of the ten Institutions which make her up, that is:

- The five Congregations: the Society of Saint Paul, the Pious Society of the Daughters of Saint Paul, the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd, the Sisters of Mary Queen of Apostles for vocations;
- The four Pauline Institutes of Consecrated Secular Life, aggregated to the Society of Saint Paul: Jesus Priest, Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Mary of the Annunciation, Holy Family;
- The Association of Pauline Cooperators.

With us here, with Card. Salvatore De Giorgi, are some Bishops and numerous priest members of the just mentioned Institute of Jesus Priest with their faithful. We feel particularly honoured by the presence of Mons. Giacomo Lanzetti, Bishop of Alba, the Mother Church of our Religious Family.

Here are, moreover, a large number of lay collaborators, friends and sympathizers, recipients and beneficiaries of our apostolate.

Also some ailing brothers and sisters, with the offering of their suffering.

Among us here are from the five continents, represented by Pauline pilgrims, and those in communion with us spiritually, scattered throughout the world.

All of us greet You with filial devotion and assure You our prayers for Your mission as Shepherd of all the flock of Christ and, in particular, for Your imminent apostolic journey to Turkey.

We are here, *ad Petri Sedem*, on the occasion of the Centenary of foundation of the Pauline Family, founded on 20 August 1914 by the priest Fr. James Alberione which the Church has raised among its Blessed. And in the spirit of our blessed Founder, we intend to reconfirm to the Successor of Peter our will to remain solidly grafted *in Christo et in Ecclesia* in living the faith and in communicating it through the contents of our multimedia editorial work.

The ideal entrusted by Fr. Alberione to the Pauline Family is “to be Saint Paul living today.” As the apostle Paul has been invited to preach to the pagan peoples, we – by the will of the Founder and the explicit authoritative “mandate” of the Church – have received the charge to preach Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life to the immense parish of all those who make use of communication, be it of the media, multimedia or Internet kind. This is an apostolate which involves difficulties and risks that are even notable, similarly as the possibility to commit mistake.

Finally, I allow myself to say to You about an observable absence and of an invisible presence, today in this Hall: that of the Superior General of the Society of Saint Paul, Fr. Silvio Sassi, whose sudden death last September 14 You were immediately informed about and who You had met last March on the occasion of Your spiritual Exercises with the Roman Curia in the Divine Master House at Ariccia. Fr. Silvio did his best with alacrity to make this Audience happen and he awaited it with trepidation. We remember him with deep emotion and gratitude while – following his expressed desire – we give You a faithful reproduction of the marble group of the “Glory of Saint Paul,” which dominates the apse of the Church of Saint Paul in Alba and, mindful of the most genuine apostolic tradition faithfully observed by the Apostle Paul, we place in Your hands, Holy Father, the fruit of our charity for the poor. Together with this we also entrust some fruits of the apostolate of the Pauline Family: it is our way of “giving the charity of the truth” as our Blessed Founder has goaded us.

Holy Father, thank you for having received us, thank you for having reminded us of the ultimate and decisive reason of our specific mission when You have shown to the world, during the Sunday Angelus on October 5, the edition of the Bible that we intend to spread everywhere. A big thanks I feel to tell You, in the name of all here Present, for having declared Blessed Pope Paul VI who received the last breath here on earth of Fr. Alberione and who has never stopped to follow us with the authentic love of a Father.

We now await Your word and ask for Your blessing.

Fr. Celso Godilano, SSP
Vicar General