
*On-Going Formation for
Pauline Cooperators*

“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me!” (Gal. 2:20)

Group Study Program - (Total time: two hours)

Session Theme: “To Become Christ: Goal of Pauline Spirituality”

Points to Cover:

- What is Pauline Spirituality?
- Key element of Integrality
- Life Lived as a Response

You will need:

- A Bible
- Music (instrumental or vocal)

Introduction:

Pauline Spirituality has as its very task, its very goal to become Christ; to make Him present and active in our lives for the sake of our brothers and sisters. This is the gift that Paul offered to the Galatians when he said to them, “it is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me.” And it is this same reality that he communicates to us his sons and daughters, members of the Pauline Family, and which we are called to live and to make present in the Church today.

Vatican II affirmed this thought when it recognized that Religious Institutes offer to the Church a variety of gifts.¹ And it is precisely by developing and living these same gifts to the full² that the Church, the Body of Christ is built up. These gifts are the “spirit” or the particular spirituality that these institutes have received from their Founders.

Our Founder Blessed Alberione said, “Each Congregation has a spirit, a particular gift: this spirit is the soul and the principle of fruitfulness, and also their reason for being approved by the Holy See.”³ This spirit, this “reason for being” that we the Pauline Family have received through the person of Fr. Alberione (and St. Paul), and for which we have been approved by the Church is the Pauline Spirit. This is what we are called to live and make known in the Church and world today, this is the particular “gift” that we have to offer to the Mystical Body. And the Mystical Body would be poorer if we do not render the Pauline Spirit present and active in all its’ splendor. She would be deprived and would lack a particular facet of her physiognomy. Thus we want to understand ever more fully and deeply what this gift is- what precisely is this Pauline Spirit with which we have been so generously entrusted.

The opening invocation

Leader: Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life,
Response: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Mary, Queen of Apostles,
Response: Pray for us.
Leader: St. Paul the Apostle,
Response: Pray for us.

An appropriate hymn is sung or played...

Invite the participants to silent prayer and reflection, placing themselves in the presence of God, and if the Blessed Sacrament is present, the following may be prayed....

¹ Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1965), #1.

² *Ibid*, #2 and Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1964), #45.

³ James Alberione, *Ut Perfectus Sit Homo Dei* (Rome: SSP Generalate, 1998), IV, 125.

I believe my God that I am in your presence, that you are looking at me and listening to my prayers. You are so great and so holy. I adore You. You have given me all. I thank You. You have been so offended by me. I ask Your pardon with all my heart. You are so merciful and I ask you for all the graces which You know are beneficial to me...

Honoring Jesus Truth

(Time allotted: 25 min)

We honor Jesus Truth by making available to him our minds, asking Him for the gift of faith.

The following can be read aloud with silent reflection after each piece, or read silently and reflected upon.

What is the Pauline Spirituality?

First of all, the term spirituality itself indicates life according to the Spirit. This life in the Spirit is the life of every Christian that has been established by the Gospel: our salvation in and through Jesus Christ. It is the life of “adopted sons” – and daughters- in the only Son of God who took on our human condition, was crucified, died and was buried (cf Gal 4:1-7). It is a life of dignity and freedom: we are no longer slaves but free!

This “life according to the Spirit” touches our persons on every level, physical, psychological and spiritual, and renders us new creatures, creatures that think, act and love in a way conformed to the image of the Son of God⁴ For we are no longer our own but are temples of this Spirit who dwells within! (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17)

And so the term Spirituality is rather ample for it comprises an entire mode of living and acting. For us Paulines this particular “way’ of living and acting, of responding to the Lord who’s Spirit dwells within us, comprises the Pauline Spirit. And the measure with which we possess it, will be the measure of the validity of our action among men.” It is therefore essential for us to know well this Pauline Spirit...⁵

⁴ Don Guido Gondolfo, *Appunti per Una Riflessione: La Dimensione Biblica, Teologica ed Ecclesiale della Spiritualita’ Paolina*, (Roma, 2009), 1.

⁵ Roatta, p.1.

Our Founder James Alberione has defined the Pauline Spirit in this way: “the Pauline Spirit is... to live in Jesus Christ as was presented to us by St Paul. Only when we are able to say: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me,” have we reached Christian perfection.”⁶

And also in 1957 at the First General Chapter of the Society of St. Paul, Fr. Alberione said: “The Pauline Congregation would like to live and give in his entirety, Jesus Christ as interpreted, lived and proclaimed to the world as St Paul the Apostle; and all under the protection and imitation of Mary Queen of the Apostles and of apostolates, having given to the world Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life.”⁷

The Pauline Family has only one spirituality: to live completely the Gospel; to live of the Divine Master in how he defines himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life: live Him as he was understood by St. Paul: “It is no longer I who live: it is Christ who lives in me”: the mind of Jesus, the heart of Jesus, the will of Jesus. To be living members operating/ working in the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.”⁸

Silent Reflection

The Pauline Spirit: Integrality

Integrality or wholeness is a constitutive element of the Pauline Spirit; it is of its very essence. The Pauline Spirit, when it is lived to the full, embraces all of our life and person- mind, will and heart, thoughts, actions and sentiments. It is a font of interior unity (cf. Const #11) affecting our entire existence. Nothing is left out or remains untouched, unaffected.

For in the beginning man (and woman) were created as a unity. There was an integrality, a wholeness among our faculties of mind, will and heart. Our reason knew the good and governed over our hearts; our hearts helped reason to shine with the light of love. And our will, freed from all obstacles of passion and strengthened by reason, accomplished the good...this was the original unity that we possessed. Yet sin entered in and this unity was lost, (cf. Gal 5:16,

⁶ *Ibid*, 19.

⁷ Giacomo Alberione, *Carissimi in San Paolo*, 1971, 159.

⁸ Alberione, UPS, III, p187-188.

19-24; Rm. 8:2-13). Now our minds, wills and hearts are drawn in opposite directions; there is chaos and conflict. (cf. Rm. 7:15-19) Yet this original unity, our original unity, has been restored in and through Jesus Christ.⁹ He who is our Way, Truth and Life brings us this integration that we so much need.

Integrality, our need for wholeness and integration, is central in the thought of Blessed Alberione. He writes in *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae* when describing his experience on the December 31, 1900, the “Night of Light”: “His overriding thought was that in view of one’s own salvation and in view of a more fruitful apostolate, one needs to develop the whole human personality: mind, will and heart.”¹⁰ And so we strive to develop our whole person, with all of our faculties so as to give ourselves more completely to Christ and in view of the apostolate—the salvation of others. And it is precisely through the Pauline Spirit, by which we are inserted more completely into Christ, that we find our integration, our completion.

This integrality, this wholeness is also seen in the sense that the entire life of Christ, the complete Gospel is lived out in us: his infancy, private and public life, passion, death and resurrection. For it is Christ himself who lives, suffers, dies and rises in us— all of his mysteries! These mysteries will be lived out in different degrees and at different points in our lives: in our infancy and childhood, it will be that of Christ’s childhood, during our youth and adolescence, that of Christ’s youth, during our adulthood, his public life, during our times of sickness and poor health, his passion, death and ultimately resurrection, and during our old age, the same. Of course this can vary somewhat but ultimately Christ lives his life in and through us, and this is all in virtue of our being members of his Mystical Body.

The Pauline Spirit is also a point or a source of mediation for the members of the Pauline Family as a whole. It forms of the Congregation only one body, a mystical body in which operates the will of God and the sanctification of its members. And it thus brings forth fruitfulness in the

⁹ Giacomo Alberione, *Anima e Corpo per il Vangelo* (Milano:Edizioni San Paolo, 2005), 12.

¹⁰ Giacomo Alberione, *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae* (Rome: SSP Generalate, 1998), 22.

apostolate.¹¹ Thus this spirit contributes not only to the integration of individual members but to the entire Pauline Family.

Silent Reflection

The Pauline Spirit: Life Lived as a Response to Christ who is Way, Truth and Life

The spirituality of the Pauline Family is centered on the Person of Jesus Master Way, Truth and Life so as to know him in his entirety, to imitate him and to give him to the people of today.¹² From this we see that the Pauline Spirit has at its center a contemplative gaze on the very Person and life of Jesus our Master and Teacher, for he is our Model: “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done, so you must do.” (Jn. 13:15)¹³

We place ourselves in his “school” and in and through this “gaze”, we obtain light and insight for our minds, example and precept for our wills, and grace to strengthen us on life’s journey. Alberione writes in *Donec Formetur* in the “Way of Illumination: Glory to the Son”- “Master, your life traces out for me the way; your doctrine confirms and sheds light for my steps; your grace sustains and supports me in the journey to heaven. You are the perfect Master: who gives example, teaches, and comforts the disciple to follow you.”¹⁴

This life of discipleship began at our Baptism when we were inserted into the very Body of Christ and became members of his Church. Yet the Pauline Spirit that we received and now possess by virtue of our Religious Profession augments this insertion.¹⁵ Now living more fully in Christ, as did Paul, we allow Christ to live and act through us. The more complete our self-donation, the more freely he is able to live and act in us. Alberione speaks of this reality in a sermon:

¹¹ Roatta, p.5.

¹² Gondolfo, *Appunti per Una Reflessione*, p.2.

¹³ James Alberione, *Donec Formetur* (Roma: Edizioni San Paolo, 2001), 48.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

¹⁵ Roatta, p. 4.

“Our mind is his, that is, He with his mind, dominates, guides and illumines our mind...the thought that guides our actions is that of Jesus Christ, the interior movements, that is the movements of love is that of Jesus Christ and the will...is that of Christ... He is the head that commands the movement of the hand, of the foot to do this action, to go, to come, to hear to speak... it is He who acts in us.”¹⁶

And in order to live this devotion in all its fullness more than prayer is required, for it is meant to touch all aspects of our daily life, “It is not a beautiful expression, nor a counsel, but it is the substance of the Congregation; it is to be or not be Pauline.”¹⁷ This statement by Fr. Alberione is strong but essential.

Silent Reflection

Honoring Jesus Way

(Time Allotted: 15 min.)

*We take some time to confront our lives with the life of Jesus Master who goes before...
We express our sorrow for our failings, our shortcomings, and pray together:*

Psalm 150- Have Mercy on Me O God

Have mercy on me, O God in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.
For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me always;
Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight.
That you may be justified in your sentence, vindicated when you condemn.
Indeed, in guilt I was born, and in sin my mother conceived me.
Behold, you are pleased with sincerity of heart,
And in my inmost being you teach me wisdom.
Cleanse me of my sin with hyssop, that I may be purified;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness;
The bones you have crushed shall rejoice;
Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my guilt.
A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me.

¹⁶ Giacomo Alberione, *UPS Voce, Registrazione*, 44.

¹⁷ Giacomo Alberione, *Pedicazione Divin Maestro*, 72-73, as quoted in Roatta, *Punti di Riferimento-Spirito Paolino*, Ariccia, 1973.

Cast me not out from your presence, And your holy spirit take not from me.
Give me back the joy of your salvation; and a willing spirit sustain within me....
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

Honoring Jesus Life

(Allotted time: 20 min.)

We turn to the Lord with open hearts.... We ask Jesus to help us to live our Pauline Spirituality in all its beauty and depth, so that Jesus Master might truly live and shine forth in us....

Silent Adoration

Pray Together the words of Bl. Alberione:

Jesus Master, sanctify my mind and increase my faith.
Jesus, teaching in the Church, draw everyone to Yourself.
Jesus Master, deliver me from error, empty thoughts and eternal blindness.
Jesus Way between the Father and us, I offer everything to You and await everything from You.
Jesus Way of sanctity, help me imitate You faithfully.
Jesus Way, may I respond wholeheartedly to the Father's call to holiness.
Jesus Life, live in me so that I may live in You.
Jesus Life, do not ever permit anything to separate me from You.
Jesus Life, grant that I may live eternally in the joy of Your love.
Jesus Truth, may You shine in the world through me.
Jesus Way, may I be a faithful mirror of Your example for others.
Jesus Life, may I be a channel of Your grace and consolation to others.

Close with music and the invocation, "Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, have mercy on us..."

(15 minute break followed by gathering in separate space.)

During this time, approximately 40 min., the group can share on the following questions that relate to the previous readings and reflections...

Reflection Questions for Group Sharing:

- 1) How would you describe the Pauline Spirit?
- 2) Integrality, our need for wholeness and integration is central to the thought of Bl. Alberione. Why was this so important to him?
- 3) The Pauline Spirit has at its center a contemplative gaze on the person and life of Jesus, our Master and Teacher. And from this “gaze” we are called to respond. How might I respond concretely to the Master’s “gaze”?