

Triduum of Preparation for the Feast of BLESSED JAMES ALBERIONE
on the 50th Anniversary of his “dies natalis”

LEGACY OF A FOUNDER
FIRST DAY - 23 NOVEMBER 2021

THE PROPHECY OF COMMUNICATION

Blessed James Alberione left us and the Church a legacy of incalculable value. We are preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his passage into eternity, with a Triduum in which we will consider three important aspects of this legacy: 1. the apostolic heritage; 2. the spiritual patrimony; 3. the testimony of holiness. Today we consider the great apostolic heritage. This dimension was accepted in the Church with the Second Vatican Council; St. Paul VI recognized this in 1969: “Father Alberione gave the Church new means to express herself, new means to give vigor and breadth to her apostolate, new capacity and new awareness of the validity and possibilities of her mission in the modern world and with modern means”.

TRUTH

■ Listening to the Word of the Apostle Paul

Starting from the “greater understanding” of Jesus’ invitation “Venite ad me omnes”, on the holy night of the illumination at the end of the century, the young Alberione embarked on a journey of total commitment to give an adequate response to Jesus’ thirst for souls. The sentiments of St. Paul addressed to the Corinthians are the sentiments of Father Alberione: to do everything to everyone to save everyone. These should also be the sentiments of his sons and daughters.

From the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (9:16-23)

Brothers, if I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews. [...] To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

■■ Listening to the Word of the Pope

One of the most notable characteristics of Father James Alberione was his unwavering devotion to the Pope. Since Leo XIII, all the Popes have received his sincere devotion and total obedience. In turn, they had the opportunity to appreciate and support the work of our Founder. We all remember the moving words of St. Paul VI to the Pauline Family at the audience in 1969: almost a “canonization in life” of Primo Maestro. Pope Francis too expressed recognition of Blessed Alberione’s apostolic anxiety and life witness.

From the Address of the Holy Father Francis:

Blessed James Alberione saw in the proclamation of Christ and the Gospel to the popular masses the most authentic and most necessary charity that could be offered to men and women thirsting for truth and justice. He was deeply touched by the words of St. Paul: "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16) and he made it the ideal of his life and mission. Following in the footsteps of Jesus and in imitation of the Apostle of the Gentiles, he was able to see the crowds as scattered sheep and in need of sure guidelines on the journey of life. Therefore, he spent his entire life breaking the bread of the Word for them with languages appropriate to the times. Thus, you too are called to spend yourselves at the service of the people of today to whom the Spirit sends you, with creativity and dynamic fidelity to your charism, identifying the most suitable ways for Jesus to be announced. The vast horizons of evangelization and the urgent need to bear witness to the Gospel message. Do not just say it. Witness it with your own life. And this witness to all constitutes the field of your apostolate. Many are still waiting to know Jesus Christ. The fantasy of charity knows no bounds and knows how to open ever-new ways to bring the breath of the Gospel to cultures and to the most diverse social spheres (*Address of the Holy Father Francis to the Pauline Family*, 29 November 2014).

■■■ Listening to the Word of the Founder

Father Alberione considered himself unworthy of the abundance of gifts received from the Lord, but he was very convinced that he had received them from God to pass them on to his sons and daughters, who had to carry on the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the whole world and by all means, with the spirit of St. Paul. When he described the personality of the ideal apostle in 1960, he was unintentionally describing his own apostolic personality.

From the Writings of Blessed Alberione

The Apostle is one who carries God in his soul and radiates him around himself. The Apostle is a saint who accumulated treasures; and he communicates the surplus on others. The Apostle has a love-filled heart for God and for men; and he cannot restrain and hold back what he feels and thinks. The Apostle is a vessel of election that overflows, and souls rush to quench their thirst. The Apostle is a temple of the Holy Trinity, which is supremely operative in him. He, according to a writer, exudes God from his pores with his words, his works, his prayers, his gestures, his attitudes, in public and in private, from his whole being. Living in God and giving God! (*UPS IV*, 277-278).

WAY

For Blessed James Alberione, the second part of the Eucharistic Visit consists first of all in becoming aware of the immense goodness of the Father, always faithful to love and forgiveness, in the light of the Holy Spirit who guides to the whole truth, and in the confrontation with the person of Jesus Christ, to discover what in itself coincides with the will of God and what deviates from it. "The important thing is that the chords of my heart are tuned to the melody we want to play, that is, the song: Glory to God and peace to men. Now the examination of conscience has the essential purpose of showing whether these chords sound well this aria. The chords of my heart are my internal dispositions. These, therefore, must be made to vibrate to know what sound they give: do they sing the glory of God? Or do they sing my self-love? Go to discover our 'I'" (CISP, p. 1431).

LIFE

The apostolic spirit of Blessed James Alberione was expressed in all the manifestations of his life: he was not “doing an apostolate”, he was an “apostle”; this spirit of his appears strongly in the prayers proposed to the Pauline Family. Let us pray together what he called: “For those who thirst for souls like Jesus”.

For those who thirst for souls like Jesus (Pauline Offertory)

Lord, I offer you, in union with the priests who today celebrate the Holy Mass, Jesus-Host and myself, as a small victim:

- In reparation for the errors and scandals that are spread around the world with the means of social communication.
- To invoke your mercy on those who, deceived and seduced by these powerful means, turn away from your love as a Father.
- For the conversion of those who, in the use of these means, disregard the magisterium of Christ and of the Church, thus diverting the mind, heart and activities of men.
- So that everyone can follow only the one whom you, Father, in the immensity of your love, have sent into the world, proclaiming: “This is my beloved son, listen to him”.
- To know and make known that only Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the perfect Master, a sure way that leads to knowledge of the Father and to participate in his life.
- So that priests, men and women religious, and laity may multiply in the Church who, consecrated to the apostolate with the means of social communication, make the message of salvation resound throughout the world.
- So that writers, technicians and propagandists may be wise, animated by an evangelical spirit, and give witness to Christian life in the context of social communication.
- That Catholic initiatives in the social communications sector may be ever more numerous and effectively promote true human and Christian values.
- So that all of us, knowing our ignorance and misery, feel the need to approach, with humility and trust, the source of life and nourish ourselves with your Word, O Father, and with the Body of Christ, invoking light, love and mercy for all men.