

Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd – Pastorelle

attachments

**of the Itinerary in preparation
to the 8th General Chapter**

Rome - June 2010

Attachments for study

To deepen the capitular theme we suggest excerpts of some talks at the Seminar on "pastoral care" which you will find in its entirety subsequently, including the footnotes removed for reason of space, in the Acts of the Seminar.



From "***The Biblical foundations of care of souls***"
by Fr. Giacomo Morandi

Vessel and not waterway

Care of souls is first of all the work of God. It is God who takes care of his children, even and **above all when** they get astray. The first covenant is a testimony of this *maternal compassion* of God. The prophetic ministry is a continuous memory of this unconditional fidelity of God to who He is: faithful and inexhaustible love. History always starts afresh with an action of grace that does not only restore the preceding condition but opens to horizons always with greater hope.

The *compassion* of God is Jesus Christ! Living with Him, the disciples learn what it means to take care: to hand over one's own life without conditions. One who accepts to offer oneself doesn't set condition and doesn't impose ties. Pastoral care is not, in fact, the place of one's own *realization* but *Paschal diakonia*. Being involved in the same compassion of Christ demands that the disciple maintains alive the grace of his call and that experience of salvation which he first experienced.

If this is the *foundational aspect* which in no way be re-dimensioned, the modalities of this service remain necessarily open, so as not to be victim of *one's project and one's competencies*. The Magisterium of Paul and the great evangelizer saints confirms in clear manner that on the modalities, it is necessary to leave to God the first and also the last word.

Care of souls is care of the whole person and not only a part of it. There has to be the awareness that Christian proposal is an integral way of growth: it is the transfiguration of the human.

Pastoral care demands that the evangelizer has *care of himself* and particularly of his relationship with Christ, for fear that, after having preached to others, he himself should be disqualified (1Cor 9:27). The fiery words, in this case, of St. Bernard represent a permanent warning:

"For this, if you are wise, you will manifest yourself a vessel and not a waterway. Almost instantly, the waterway receives and immediately pours away; instead the vessel waits until it is full and so it shares, without damage, what is superabundant. In truth, there are in the Church, today, many waterways and very few vessels. Those who pour on us heavenly stream have such great charity that they want to release before having received the infusion, more prepared to speak than to

listen, ready to teach what they have not learned, impatient to direct others, they who don't know how to govern themselves.”¹



From “**PETER AND PAUL: Apostles of Jesus Christ and Shepherds of His Church**”

by Sr. Elena Bosetti, sjbp

We look at Peter and Paul as witnesses and models of a passionate following of Jesus Christ which is actualized in “taking care” of his flock, of his people. They are living icons of a great and inseparable love for Christ and for the Church. And it is truly this way that I would like to start, with this prayer: *Holy Apostles Peter and Paul teach us the love of Christ and of his Church!*

There is no doubt that Peter and Paul have been the greatest persons in loved with Jesus, each one in a different way but both until martyrdom. Paul “seized” by Jesus Christ, cannot do otherwise but to “preach him”. He feels obliged to communicate the Gospel to all. For him *to live* is Christ (Phil. 1:21) and his “taking care” cannot be anything else other than this: that the Church (and each baptized) lives in Christ, lives of Christ, lives with and for Christ.

Not otherwise Peter, whom Jesus redeems in love entrusting to him the pastoral care of all of his Church, his sheep and his lambs. And it is beautiful to note that the last word of the Risen one to his disciple on the shores of the lake of Galilee is precisely “follow me!” The pastoral mandate is placed at the *center* in the structure of the passage, between the question of love and the imperative of following: **Do you love me?** - **pasture** (take care of yourself, of my lambs, my sheep) - **follow me** (Jn. 21:15-19). (...)

A. THE “TAKING CARE” OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

To acknowledge in Paul the statute of “shepherd” means to take account that the Apostle was not only concerned about the initial moment constituted by the *kerygma*, from the proclamation of the Gospel, but even of the succeeding phase which concerns the effects of such proclamation and which involves the growth and formation of the Christian community. James Dunn affirms courageously: “Paul has never spoken if not as a **shepherd**. His theology is an alive theology, a practical theology in all and for all.

1. Paul generates the Christian community “in weakness” (...)

Paul generates the community in full synthyony with the Gospel which he announces, in the logic of the Paschal mystery, in humility and weakness. His “taking care” traces the footsteps of Christ.

Let me share a *postscript*: the same thing happened at the beginning of our Congregation and many of our missionary openings, in humility and weakness humanly speaking. Fr. Alberione said that it is necessary to always start “from Bethlehem”, in other words in poverty and human weakness. This is so that the work is indeed of the Lord and it is based on His grace. But it is necessary that this “foundational” criterion continues to be at work... (...)

¹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, XVIII, 3, in *Opere di S. Bernardo (VI)*, Scriptorum Claravallense. Fondazione di studi cistercensi, Milano, 2006, p. 237.

2. Three metaphors of the Church

We notice indeed the importance of the word "church" (ekklesia) present 62 times in the Pauline epistles (on a total of 114 times in the NT). This word, full of theological value in the Bible, says well the awareness which the Christian community has of itself: "she knows to be God's eschatological community, fulfilment of the old testamentaries and Judaic expectation."

In the address of the First letter to the Corinthians we find the formula *ekklesia tou Theou*, "Church of God" (1Cor. 1:2), a genitive that also appears in 1Cor 10:32; 11:16.22; 15:9; 2Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13, a genitive of *affiliation* and even before *causal dependence*, in the sense that Paul sees the "church" as event of the action of God in Christ Jesus.

On the other side, it is noted in Paul that the "church of God" is of **local and pluralistic** sign: "each Christian group that gathers in liturgical assembly has all the effects *ekklēsia tou Theou / tou Christou* (church of God / of Christ / in Christ).

Christ the Lord communicates his vitality to the Church. And in the measure in which such vitality is received, there is Christification of the community and an irradiation of the vitality of Christ to the outside, on others and on the cosmos (theme which is developed in Ephesians and Colossians). Paul has a very alive sense of the Church, it is one of the themes in which he is very passionate. (...)

1. Field of God (...)

The Christian community is creation of God, not of one or of the other (of Paul or of Apollo). The Apostle is auto-understood as "a servant" (2Cor will subsequently develop the theme of *diakonia*). But service implies a "master" who assigns and distributes the various tasks.

Paul and Apollo are neither masters nor lords but "God's collaborators" whom he has taken to his service for the good of the community. Both are *diakoni*, "servants" (although in different way). We observe the *reciprocity*: to the "we are" corresponds the "you are."

Therefore the Apostle sees the Church as the agricultural field of God, a field which exclusively belongs to God and is cultivated through the collaboration of various servants. But in conclusion it is only God who makes his farm grow.

On the background of this metaphor is a glimpse of biblical images which speak of Israel as property and vineyard of the Lord, a chosen little vineyard, particularly loved and well taken care of (cf. Is 5:1-7; Psalm 80:9-16). Paul takes back the image of the cultivated terrain leaving it open; he is not interested to specify the type of plantation, whether orchard vineyard or another, while instead he makes clear another decisive aspect for the Pauline ecclesiology: openness to persons. Field of the Lord is "God's church" which includes Israel and the people of equal title. (...)

2. Construction of God / Temple of Spirit

To the agricultural image, Paul immediately comes close to it with another unity with the same verb: *Theou oikodomē* "God's construction" (1Cor 3:9b).

It deals with a construction in active sense, a construction in progress, a sort of a "construction site". Therefore it is not a "house" already beautifully finished, but a building under construction. We notice the action verbs: to dig the foundation, to build over, to build with various materials (precious things and non precious things). (...)

The church of the origins has understood that the body of Christ (crucified-risen) is definitely the salvific place of the presence of God. She understood that the Lord's resurrection has been the raising up of his *body-temple* not made by the hand of man (Jn. 2:21; Mk. 14:58). The Risen one inaugurates a new humanity permeated by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:1-30). One who lives in Christ becomes temple of God, dwelling of the Spirit.

And here appears again the strong bond between **ecclesiology** and **pastoral**. Paul in fact is not making theological speculation, but is taking care of an ecclesial reality marked by sin, in clear

contrast with the baptismal, Christic and pneumatic life. He revives the awareness to be "God's temple" in order to remind ethical coherence.

Being in Christ means and implies to be inhabited by the living God, by his Holy Spirit. But this divine presence is disgraced by the immoral behavior of some baptized, by one who is personally stained by some crime of incest (disapproved by the same pagans) and by one who with such crime is conniving, by a promiscuous community that does not condemn such behavior (as what the Apostle does instead). Paul is a shepherd who takes care and his letter to the Corinthians reveals it in eminent way. It is necessary to live in a coherent way with baptism which has made us "new creatures" in Christ, God's dwelling place, his holy temple. And therefore it is truly **the body** which is at stake, our way of living in the world, in relationship with others. Sexuality is not a separate, accidental or indifferent thing. It is necessary to live it as baptized, in love and in holiness. In other words, the awareness of being "temple of God/of the Holy Spirit" demands holiness of life, honesty and purity of relationships. It is precisely at this level, on the existential level is at stake the life in the Spirit and the "pleasing sacrifice to God".

3. Body of Christ

The concept of the Church as "body of Christ", animated from a single and same Spirit and endowed with a lot of members with specific functions which contribute to the vitality and comfort of the whole organism is typically Pauline. Where do the roots sink? In the encounter with the Risen one on the road of Damascus, the Apostle already perceived that Jesus is inseparable from his Church. He told him in fact: "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4-5). Christ and his followers form one body as the bridegroom with his bride(cf. Eph 5:21-32).

Even Menenio Agrippa knew that society is "a body" and he speaks an eulogy in his famous apology. But the idea of Paul is not simply that the Church is a "body", but rather it is "body of Christ". His argumentation moves from a **premise** of Christological character: "As in fact the body is one but has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are only one body, so also is Christ" (1Cor 12:12). The Apostle - comments Vanhoye – "contemplates the person of Christ and sees in him the entire ecclesiology."

It is not only a matter of good organizational operation, of "healthy corporation". Here is of a deep, transcendent and charismatic reality. The Church is "body of Christ" through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy of the Spirit that gives life to the ecclesial body; it is the Spirit who acts as active principle of the constitution of the baptized in only one body.

Spirit and body are seen by Paul in deep synergy: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1Cor 12:13). Therefore it is in virtue of the Spirit that the Church is "body" of Christ. It is the *creator Spiritus* that makes the baptized "only one body (*sōma*)", which makes of the many and diverse a single person in Christ.

The affinity of 1Cor 12:13 with Gal 3:27-28 is noted: " For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**"

The Spirit doesn't operate only at the external but in the depths of the heart: it is He who "satiates" the believers, it is He who attests the filial adoption shouting in us "Abbà, Father" (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). Vitalized by the Spirit of Christ the various members constitute that integral unity (unity in diversity/plurality) transcending the socio-organizational aspect and seeks suitable expression on the charismatic and ministerial levels.

The same Spirit presides over the distribution of charisms in function of the common good. There is a close connection between **charisms** and **ministries**. The *disagreement* in the perspective of Paul constitutes an attitude of injustice. No **charismatic pride**, but instead mutual **taking care**. And therefore: *from belonging to co-responsibility*.

- **Reciprocity of “taking care”**

Paul declares: “the parts may have **the same concern for one another**” (1Cor 12:25). We can see here how the whole argumentative itinerary is actualized definitely the evangelical commandment of mutual love (Jn 13:34). This aspect has been examined well by Borek in his doctoral thesis. The Apostle writes:

“If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it (*sympáschei*);
if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy (*syncháirei*)” (1Cor 12:26).

The verb *sym-paschō* indicates being involved in the pain, in the most concrete sense to suffer the damages provoked by it. Therefore if a member suffers all have to somehow *suffer-with*. In the letter to the Romans the attitude of compassion is outwardly expressed also through crying, underlining the value of the sentiment: “weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). There is also a reciprocity between weakness (infirmity) and health. The weak offer their need of care and support. They offer the opportunity to the healthy to exercise the various charisms. If the occasion for manifesting a particular charism is lacking, their beauty and greatness would never be discovered. If a disciple with his ignorance is lacking, the splendour of the charism of the teacher would not appear; if there were not the sick, the charism of the physician would not be revealed, or of one who has the gift of taking care and healing...

Don't *despise* the other but *to take care of each other*: here are the **two rules** that have become the style of life of Paul and he offers as solution to ecclesial problems.

- **New manner of thinking**

Even in the letter to the Romans, Paul reminds that “we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.” (Rom. 12:5). And this teaching is preceded by a formidable indication: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed (*metamorphousthe*) by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Rom 12:2).

It is necessary to allow ones self to be “trans-form” (the verb used is that of the transfiguration of Jesus). A “renewal” (*anakainōsis*) of the mind (*nous*) is needed, a new way of seeing and judging things, a different gaze on history and on the world. A new way of living the “relationships”: respect and valuing the differences with regards to the common good, living sense of communion (*koinonia*) and fraternity, capacity of *synergy*, valuing better the gift of each one. “Let love be sincere - writes the Apostle - hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor” (Rom 12:9-10).

B. THE “TAKING CARE” OF THE APOSTLE PETER (...)

1. In vital relationship with the Holy Trinity

The identity of the Christian community is specified above all by the unique relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. It would be said that 1 Peter doesn't know how to see the Christians if not in relationship with the Holy Trinity. Already in the prescript (addressee of the letter) the relationship with each of the three Divine Persons is explicit: “chosen” according to the “foreknowledge” (*pro-gnōsis*) which means according to the *project* of **God the Father**, “in the sanctification by the **Spirit**, for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of **Jesus Christ**” (1Pt 1:1-2)..

This *Trinitarian* address is theologically dense and original! We notice that the Spirit is named here in central position. The action of the Holy Spirit guides the Christological revelation of salvation and the whole work of evangelization. In the prophets the Spirit has *pre-testified* the Paschal mystery: the passion and the glory of the Christ (1:11), and the other side is “in the Holy Spirit” which the Gospel has preached to us (1:12).

We are immediately involved in a climate of praise and wonder "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a *living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an *inheritance* ... kept in heaven for you (1:3-4).

The awareness to be sharers of the very same life of the Risen One fills the believers with joy, even if they are tried by suffering. The verb "to exult", is said twice, the same verb with Magnificat. It is the joy of one who loves and believes in Jesus without having seen him, the joy of one who is walking toward the destination of the faith: "**the salvation of the souls**" (1:9).

Peter encourages to live in conformity with the baptismal life (1:13-25), as "obedient" children (=born from listening of the Word) and brothers who love each other with true heart. (...)

2. The style of Peter: encourages while witnessing

The "witness to the sufferings of Christ" (5:1) doesn't talk from above to below, he doesn't make use of reasons of authority, but rather encourages hope reviving the awareness of grace, of the received gift, of the baptismal life. He encourages not to emigrate from the difficult situation, he encourages to "remain" in the situation to live and to be with the sentiments of Christ.

From this letter a very different Peter shines through from what is expressed in the Gospel, who opposed resistance to the way of the Cross (Mk. 8:31-33; Jn. 18:10-11). The Peter of whom this letter gathers testimony is a *converted* man, who has learned how to welcome the encouragement of the Risen one and his witnessing (Jn 21:15-19). Consequently, he exhorts his brothers to oppose the violence of evil with the persuasive strength of the good, with meekness and love on the example of He who "was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten " (1Pt 2:23). It is necessary to draw strength from the example of Jesus to continue in the footsteps of the good, always and wherever.



From "***Theology and pastoral action: an integral vision***"
by P. Marko Ivan Rupnik, s.j.

To speak of pastoral theology as organic vision, we ask first of all: what is Theology? Theology re-enters in the discourse of the knowledge of God. To know God, to be able to think with God or even as God. But the question of the knowledge of God is not an abstract or philosophical matter, it deals with the knowledge of a tripersonal God. After all, it deals with the knowledge of God the Father. And when I say God the Father, it is clear that it deals with knowing a person, a person is not known if he is absent. A person must be present in order to know him, therefore if one wants to know God, God has to be present in our life; and if one wants to learn to think with God, it is necessary to have somehow, an access on his way of thinking and acting. For this however a Greek contemplation is not enough, done from afar, it is necessary to enter within. Because a person can be present, but if he doesn't communicate we won't know him; therefore when it is said that God has to be present to know him, it is not enough to think having a statue of God beside us or an idea, it has to be precisely God.

But temptations are so many: it is easier to say that one thinks to know God instead of knowing him seriously. It is easier that we manage God, because one seems to have fear, after sin as narrated in the third chapter of Genesis, to admit that God is truly free and is not subject to our elaborations. It is sufficiently difficult to admit that God is God, that God is free. Just a few days

ago a German priest told me that he doesn't understand how come today, there is an insistence that Theology teachers have to be believers. Well, by itself, it is not necessary: if God is not Father but some other thing, I can theoretically know him as I would also know water and tree, but I cannot know God as Father.

And it is for this reason that for many centuries we have been dispersed because we have known how to say a lot of things on God, but God the Father has disappeared from our horizon: and when one does not have a Father, he is lost. The father is the foundational relationship, he is the point of reference, he is essential. If I know the nature of the table, I know all the tables of the world, if I know that the table means a surface and a trunk sufficiently big on which I lean on the surface I know that this is the table, a table doesn't exist that is out from this, therefore when I know the nature of the table, I know all the tables of the world. But if I know John, I don't know all the Johns of the world, because John is a person. In order to know God, it is necessary to know truly this God and not another; precisely the person of God the Father. This is a threshold so strong that very few transcend it. The great mass of the so-called believers is satisfied with some pale idea, of some generic divinities, but this is not faith in the God of Jesus Christ. In order to be true believer, it is necessary to know this God the Father and not other so generic entities.

For Theology, it is fundamental to have a true, strong, essential, relationship with God the Father. As Plato said, which p. Spidlik always quoted "one who doesn't have this relationship, doesn't do Theology but meteorology, he speaks of things and not of persons. And since we have done meteorology for a long time in lieu of Theology, therefore we said: since things up there are not well known, it is better that we concentrate on these things down here, and so we have concentrated on these things down here. And now we are practically equal to everything in the world around us. You have to take the magnifying lens to find a small difference between a presumed believer and a pagan, because both are confined in this world down here and both try to organize more or less a heaven on earth, with some small difference, but in the end both are the same. And so a great competition was born between the Church and the world, because the Church tries to run after the world and to do even better in the things of this world, but will lose the battle one hundred percent, because there is totally nothing new.

(...)

Now we compete with the world to see who is more philanthropist, who is more just, who is more free, who succeeds in making a best scholastic system, who succeeds in doing this or that other. Then in the night someone comes, as that time when persons went to Phillip saying: "We want to see Jesus!" (cf Jn 12:21) And we won't be able to answer like Phillip but we will say more or less: "We would also like to know him"! And people will tell us: "But we thought that you had already seen him". "No, we have only heard him speak". But the worst thing is when someone comes and says to us: "We want to know the Father". And we are lost, because we are too committed in holding the enormous organizational horizontal machine that we have invented, and we don't have any spiritual knowledge! Once we open our mouth, those around us feel that we are speaking of a thing we don't know. As Macario the Great says: It's ridicule to listen to one who wants to explain the sweetness of the honey, and it is clear that he has never eaten it. One who has a father, whoever he may be, when he starts speaking of him, is known immediately if what he's saying is true or not, whether he is speaking of what he heard or because he loves the person. (...)

Remember chapter 17 of John: "This is eternal life: to know you and he whom you sent: Jesus Christ" (cf v. 3). This knowledge is eternal life because we participate in this life of God and we don't have any other life anymore, we have only that of Christ, because even this life of ours inherited from parents, is bound to death, this blood of the parents will perish, while we receive a life bound to the blood of Christ. A totally different life.

Theology, therefore, has to be familiar with these things, and if Theology will be so, so too will automatically be the pastoral, ipso facto, because the pastoral is justified only if it is

revelation, if it reveals anything, otherwise it is cultural violence. So much is true that today, one fears to speak of evangelization because as a matter of fact, it resembles always more as a cultural violence. In certain continents, in some dangerous part like Asia, evangelization is not spoken of anymore but "presence" is spoken of. For instance in India, in the Moslem countries, it is said we are a presence, while evangelization is another thing, it is a revelation, as Christ. The purpose of the life of Christ is to reveal the Father, and so also is the purpose of our life. Contemplation of God means to share the life of God, to participate in His love, in the manner of Christ, to live him in the manner of Christ, to actualize it in the manner of Christ and this is not possible without the Holy Spirit, it seems that nobody has ever succeeded.



From "*The pastoral as care of the flock. Theological pastoral references*"
by Fr. Giovanni Villata

To mature a different pastoral mentality

How to narrate therefore the story of Jesus of Nazareth in a way that it may always be more operative for today's globalized, secularized, dis-idealized man?

I propose to your critical reflection the following considerations to verify together if they are effectively useful to better serve the flock entrusted to our care.

Above all it is necessary to activate in each one of us a change of mentality and not only to put ourselves in the repairing area, who know "a new patch in an old clothes". Every change in any area which has to be actualized demands a "renewal of mind" (Rom 12:2). Always and with greater reason, in a time dominated as Spinoza called as "sad passions"² (not a sadness of tears, but an epoch of impotency and disintegration) it is necessary somehow to have a "dream", a passion, a utopia, the certainty– and it is not taken for granted - that this sadness can be overcome ... certainty to proceed with feet well rooted on the ground (without passive pessimism and optimistic imagination). The configuration of the future depends much on what we are capable to do in the present.

It deals with reaching a style of thought and action – a style in the narration of Jesus – different, marked by the priority given to the Word that has been heard, celebrated and lived, from definitely transcending individualism and pastoral perfectionism.

Change of mentality is not a simplified process because it asks new motivations which are new energies that push to act in the new direction.

Today many search for new ways, but no one thinks of it as all convincing. Nevertheless we are already projected, willingly and reluctantly within this change which is already happening.

We must not chase this situation of pastoral "movement" because we are already in itself.

It is a beautiful moment because it pushes to creativity, invites to entrust more to the Spirit, puts in the state of research, helps to overcome the temptation of power but it is also a problematic moment. One knows well the thing that is to be set aside (the Tridentine model, the autocratic and self-sufficient parish, the figure of a minister rather sacred, a sure formation toward the associative model, which for many years unique and the most diffused - the Catholic Action ...), but one does not succeed in identifying what is to be put in action.

² Cf. M.BENAASAYAG- G. SCHIMIT, *l'epoca delle passioni tristi*, Milano. Feltrinelli, 2004.

One knows also that there is no need to be contented with changes. But at the same time, it is perceived in others resistances which are not indifferent.

What is to be done?

Valuing the more significant experiences in action and following the reflections more open to praxis, I believe it is possible to advance the necessity to actualize some necessary *passages* of mentality which would lead to a different way of acting and more faithful to the references indicated above.

I propose them with much humility, with the intention of stimulating the reflection and more adequate choices for a pastoral that permits to narrate more effectively the story of Jesus today:

- The first passage suggested by the conciliar ecclesiology is *from the individualistic isolation to a positive relationship as style of life and pastoral. (...)*

- The second passage is *from an autoreferential pastoral, pragmatic and repetitive to a counter distinctive by communal discernment and creativity. (...)*

- The third passage consists in the movement from a *pastoral that creates initiatives to that which creates belonging. (...)*

- The fourth passage demands the movement *from a pastoral founded on efficiency to the one founded on "the life in Christ" or on Christian spirituality. (...)*

- The fifth passage – is almost the result foretold by the preceding passages – *from the abandonment of the concept of the Church marked by "visibility" to a Church present among the people, free, humble and poor in narrating the story of her Lord together with her own story. (...)*



From "***The triple work***"

by sr Suzimara Barbosa de Almeida, sjbp

To talk about the *Triple Work* in Fr. Alberione the basic premise is we could never detach the "doing" of our pastoral from our "being". Our Founder never separated our being from our action. In fact already in the first program which he gave to the Institute, it could be pointed out how these two dimensions are intertwined. In presenting the finality of the new Institute he wrote: "Primary scope – The glory of God and one's sanctification **living of Jesus Good Shepherd**. Second scope. – To cooperate and serve to the zeal of the Shepherds of souls, with a **triple action**"³.

The Founder always put the care of self as essential condition in taking care of the people entrusted to us. His reflections are abundant on this theme in his preaching to the Institute. (...)

Triple pastoral office – Alberione to the Pastorelle

In enumerating the activities which the SJPB must carry out, Fr. Alberione uses always the ternary scheme and names it: three species, three orders of work, three instruments, three parts, three points. For each part, since the "first program", he uses names already consecrated: **Christian instruction, Christian formation, Christian sanctification**. It is the same terminology that appears in the Constitution of the Congregation given in 1947. In the "third work", in which there are a variety of names, nevertheless all are connected with the dimension of sanctification: worship, prayer, piety, liturgy, practices of sacred worship. Then within every part Fr. Alberione

³ Primo Programma delle Pastorelle, in Circolare interna – *Eco di Casa Madre* – delle Figlie di San Paolo, aprile 1937, [p. 1]; cf. *50 anni di una presenza pastorale...*, 185).

adds from time to time new activities and leaves out the others, but the ternary scheme always remains the same.

In founding this ternary division, Fr. Alberione turns to the trinomial Christ Way, Truth and Life and in the few times he referred to Christ prophet-priest-king, he connects it to the trinomial as described above saying that this has always been the mission of the Church, and for this he also mentions the trinomial dogma-moral-worship. Other foundation for the triple division of the work is connected with the text of Mt 28:19.

It is also perceived that the division: instruction-formation-sanctification was used by Fr. Alberione in designing the office of the priest as well as those of the sisters. "Priest and sisters must do three things: instruction, formation, sanctification". What is changed are one's own activities and now it is up to one or the other to decide, but even so, they are still profoundly correlated⁴.

The ternary scheme serves to our Founder as a kind of frame inside which he puts all the works that are important in the mission of the Pastorella; for this little by little he left aside the list of the present works in the first documents considering that in the instruction-formation-sanctification, all the activities demanded in the pastoral mission are present.⁵

We know that many pastoral activities are difficult to be delimited to understand to which part they belong; it exists, in fact, a strong interrelation among the three aspects. Catechesis, for example, even if it is situated in the Christian instruction, also demands Christian formation which has to be necessarily conducted to Christian sanctification, leading in the practice "to live" the sacraments. For this the ternary scheme is a form of thinking, a model to enclose everything and Fr. Alberione has drawn the indication well; for such reason subsequently he sets aside the list of the works but preserves the ternary division without never renouncing it.

The clear example we have it in 1959. The Founder was not at all pleased that the ternary division has been removed from the constitutional text and he continued on using it ignoring the corrections of the text. It seemed it is not only a whim or fruit of the study of the manuals of his epoch, the tripartite model is something essential in the mission in as much as it refers to the same mission entrusted to the Church and in which the Pastorelle, by nature of their vocation, are called to carry out in collaboration with the pastors and the laity.

With this same motivation, even Fr. Alberione is not fixated in one activity or the other, the list of the work in order to reach the "totality" is not closed, but open to the different situations and places. He himself admits the possibility to add always new activities because "the Pastorelle must be flexible"⁶, they should know how to adapt in every epoch choosing the activities which facilitate more the taking care of the persons and of the communities.

In synthesis, the *triple work* delimits the mission of "care of souls" in the Church in which the proclamation, the guide of souls and sanctification predominate.⁷

One aspect still remains to be clarified: where does the social, charitable dimension, a term commonly used in the actual nomenclature of the Church, enter in the ternary scheme? Looking at the teaching of the Founder we can affirm that he initiated the Pastorelle even in this sector as "care" for the most needy in the parish, always excluding the stable institutes. The strong insistence in this sense was especially in the 50's, but we have already an indication in the first program⁸, as well as in the texts in the Constitutions⁹ on the part of "Christian formation"

⁴ PrP V 1950, p. 69. Cf. Doc. 81.

⁵ AAP 1959, 147.

⁶ Cf. PrP III, pp. 231-232. Cf. doc. 50.

⁷ AAP 1964, 305-306. cf. doc. n. 214.

⁸ «sviluppare le opere caritative» . cf. doc. n. 1.2.

⁹ «assistenza a famiglie povere». cf. doc. n. 28.

asking the Pastorelle to be attentive in this aspect. Meanwhile in the later years it seems that there was more insistence on the work of Christian instruction¹⁰.

Thus, everything that is inherent to the salvific mission of the Church belongs insofar to the charism of the Pastorelle. We can verify that Fr. Alberione, along all his teaching to the SJBP, pedagogically will go expanding the list of the activities in a way that all that he conceived as "care of souls" in the Church be carried out by the Pastorelle. From here was born his insistence in reminding the Pastorelle that they do not go to the parishes for this or that activity, but for the entire pastoral. For Fr. Alberione this 'all' was born in consideration to the total Christ (Truth, Way and Life) which should be proclaimed to the total human being: body, soul, spirit. Christ has taken care of all the dimensions of the people to whom He was sent, the Pastorella does the same¹¹. But never lose the eschatological horizon of life. We are born from God, to God we shall return. When Fr. Alberione sustains that we must take care of the 'spiritual' life of the person, it does not exclude the body, because he said to take care also of this¹², but it means that we should not only do philanthropy, we must do the good. Material charity is necessary because the person is integral, nevertheless Christian life does not stop here, it goes further toward the fullness of life, eternal to which we should take the people who are entrusted to us as Jesus the Good Shepherd has done.¹³.

In Fr. Alberione as we have said from the beginning, there is no division between remaining with God and remaining with the people. To give help for the body and that for the soul. Care of self and care of the people. If we look at the ternary scheme as unity of the salvific mission of Christ which is expressed in the plurality of the dimensions (instruction-formation-sanctification), we will see that it always deals with not losing the global vision in an activity: to give the total Christ to the total person and also allow oneself to be led by Jesus Good Shepherd in order to lead his people, nourish oneself of Him in order to nourish those who are entrusted to us. We should not lose that unity which was already expressed by Fr. Alberione in his first program: to live Jesus Good Shepherd and give Him through the triple work.

In reality, activities are not anything more than transporting from the deep relationship with Jesus Good Shepherd.



From "***Pastoral in the Pauline Family***"
by Fr. Silvio Sassi, ssp

2. The pastoral of the Pauline Family after Fr. Alberione

Fr. Alberione had participated in the Vatican Council II (1962-1965) sending suggestions for his preparation, was present at the different meetings and interpreting the fruits of the Council in reference to the Pauline charism. "In the Vatican Ecumenical Council II, the word that sounded most at the Basilica of St. Peter was this: "pastoral, pastoral", and that is: to reach the souls, to save souls and to invent new means" (Vademecum 1202).

Do not marvel, therefore, that he finds in the Vatican II the supreme approval of everything of his foundational commitment, above all the publishing apostolate which has a

¹⁰ AAP 1965, 46,47. cf. doc. n. 219.

¹¹ AAP 1960, 660-664.

¹² PrP V 1951, p. 173.

¹³ PrP VII 1955, p. 297-299.

pastoral character: "The Pauline activity is declared apostolate beside the oral preaching, declared of high esteem before the Church and the world" (St. Paul, December 1963) and he will repeat the same conviction in 1968 (cf St. Paul, March 1968).

It still remains to be explored how the single Institutions and the entire Pauline Family has assimilated, in convictions and in practice, the wealth of Vatican II. Exemplary initiatives were not lacking (for the Society St. Paul, the special General Chapter 1969/1971), but the conviction transmitted by the Primo Maestro and shared by the majority of the Paulines of the time, that the Church had finally arrived there where the Pauline pioneering enterprise had arrived for a long time, instilled the certainty that there was not much necessity of "updating". For decades, it seems to me, many Paulines have lived "on the laurel" of the recognition of the Church and they did not notice that the ecclesial community of the post council had taken again its road. The risk has been to transform ourselves backward.

2.3. To live creative fidelity also in the pastoral, we Paulines, have to **know** well the inheritance received and to **actualize**, in ideas and in practice, the necessary changes required by the pastoral **objective** established for us by the Founder "to give God to men and to give men to God, in Jesus Christ" (Vademecum 1205), but "today's men, are not those of two centuries ago" (cfr. Vademecum 382).

2.3.1. Fr. Alberione, son of the Church and the world of his time, sets as base of the pastoral of his Institutions an **ecclesiology** of a **theoretical** type (shepherd-flock, centered on the zeal for the care of souls) and a more ample **practical** actualization (shepherd who goes looking for the sheep that are out, with the help of collaborators, anxious for the salvation of the totality of the person).

We can ask, basing on the developments of ideas and ecclesiological initiatives happened since Vatican II until today, how the pastoral of the Pauline Family has elaborated a **new ecclesiological reflection** that would evolve, deepen and improve that which was received by the Founder. It doesn't treat certainly of terminological changes only, but of an afterthought or rethinking of theological convictions.

The pastoral of Don Alberione leans on a certain idea of the "ministerial priesthood" to which he associates the "quasi-priesthood" of the Pauline disciples, of the Pauline sisters, of the consecrated lay women and men in the secular and the collaborators. Have we known how to re-consider and re-express these certainties with abundance of reflections to which we prepare today on the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood? How did we make evolve a pastoral centered on the protagonism of the priest to a pastoral entrusted to the community? How did we pass from a hierarchical ecclesiology to an ecclesiology of communion in the Pauline Family?

To answer the question of if and how the Pauline Family made to evolve the theoretical and practical concept of ecclesiology in Don Alberione, we have to observe all the events where a **thought is elaborated** (General Chapters, Magisterium of the Superior General, Provincial Chapters and Regional assemblies, International seminars, Courses of formation, re-elaboration of the norms, etc). This analysis must be completed by the observation of our **concrete** apostolic activities: at times they complete or make up for the thought, other times they confirm or contradict it.

Being part of the Church with a specific charism, it is also important to know how the **ecclesial community** appraises our thought and our works at the ecclesiological level. The original contribution given by the Pauline charism to the ecclesial communities in which we live, finds its synthesis in ecclesiology since in it the spirituality and the specific mission are integrated.

2.3.2. For always, but in special way since Vatican II and onward, the entire pastoral activity is the expression of the identity and the only mission of the whole Church; **to evangelize**. The Church "exists for evangelizing" (EN 14), affirms Paul VI; John Paul II reinforces saying: "The Church is either missionary or she is no longer evangelical" (13.05.1986) and it is necessary "to re-found on missionary foundation our pastoral in the modern industrial society" (01.06.1989).

Fr. Alberione writes: "The world needs a new, long and deep evangelization" (UCBS, 1926). John Paul II, on March 9, 1983 at Port-au-Prince (Haiti), uses for the first time this expression saying: "A new evangelization, new in its ardour, in its methods and in its expression".

We can ask if the pastoral of the Pauline Family has considered, meditated and applied to herself the indication for a **new evangelization**, in ardour, in methods and in expression.

To have instruments of response to this question, we can observe the quality of our **personal faith** and the **faith of our communities**: is it an intense faith that almost automatically becomes missionary? Do we cultivate a missionary spirituality? Which space does missionary anxiety occupy in our prayer, in our Spiritual Exercises, in retreats, in the Programmations of continuous formation?

Besides, we can observe the contents and the methods of all of our formative stages and ask ourselves if integral formation has as objective to form the apostle and or in the best of cases, a "generic" religious man or woman.

Even the manner of thinking and living the community life is a mirror of a faith, confined on itself or open to mission: "Also for us, common life was born from the apostolate and it is in view of the apostolate" (UPS I, 285). Our religious vows has to be thought, presented and lived in missionary perspective with our charism.

Evangelization is not only the objective of the Programmation of apostolic activity, but it has to give the "color" to all the aspects of our Pauline religious life. Missionary importance grows in the moment in which the Church programs a "new evangelization" at a universal radius.

2.3.3. Before the progressive de-Christianization of the masses, Fr. Alberione already writes in 1915: "The Catholic Church is indefectible and the word of the Gospel would not let even the tip fall: but the Church and the Gospel possess as well the marvelous ease of adapting themselves to the times and to peoples" (From 318-319). Giving start to the Vatican II, Blessed John XXIII affirms: "Other is the substance or rather the truth of the ancient doctrine of the depositum fidei and other – with the exception of the doctrinal meaning - is the formulation of its covering (11.10.1962).

We can ask in what way the pastoral of the Pauline Family has thought and effected, in view of a new evangelization, the process of **inculturation**, not only of faith, but also of the very same Pauline charism.

To find elements of response we can observe how the universal Magisterium's affirmation on inculturation and above all, the orientations and the projects of the **Continental Churches** and the single **Local Churches** were integrated in our convictions and in our operational choices.

As portion of the Church that belong to the various levels of the ecclesial communities, we cannot but consider ourselves as an island with an independent life, but we are called to integrate all the dimensions of our charism in the Church.

2.3.4. The pastoral of the Pauline Family is developed by a mother cell, the **publishing apostolate**, which will celebrate one hundred years of existence in the Church in 2014. By the will of the Founder, **all** the Institutions of the Pauline Family are involved, on different title, in the "preaching media": with prayer of reparation, offering of sufferings and life, with the vocational search, with collaboration or a full time commitment in the various aspects of evangelization in communication, which constitutes a true novelty of religious life in the Church.

Taking as starting point the approval of the Conciliar decree *Inter Mirifica* (04.12.1963), the annual celebration of the World day of social communications (01.05.1967) and the publication of *Communio et Progressio* (23.05.1971), the whole ecclesial community has progressively taken an awareness of the necessity to evangelize in the communication with communication, whether with documents of the Universal Magisterium or with pastoral initiatives of great interest in the Continental Churches.

The mother cell of the Pauline charism, developed in the totality of the pastoral of the Pauline Family, continues to offer a contribution of thought and pastoral action to the Church with the constant appeal to the **recipients**.

In the process of evangelization with communication, it is necessary that there are **contents** to be communicated, **authors** of communication, **instruments** which allow expressing in the various **languages**, but the indispensable remains the **public** which determines **the model of communication** to be used adequately. The communicative process of the Pauline pastoral is motivated by the experience of Christ, but to be missionary, everything is founded of its project upon the recipients, not understood as passive "receptors" of a message, but as "interlocutories" who participate at a dialogue.

The pastoral of the Pauline Family must be interested in today's communication not only because since its origin is already inserted on the originality of the "written preaching beside the oral preaching", neither only because the whole ecclesial community today is mobilized in this field, but, above all, for the fact that today, communication, above all digital, is an **environment of life, a way of existence, a style of remaining in the world** that permeates everything and everybody.

All our great spirituality, our meticulous formative, community and apostolic projects will be truly sterile and useless if they don't keep in mind those persons to whom we want to offer our witness in comprehensible form. Pentecost is not a miracle for the ears of the listeners, but for the capacity to speak the languages of the apostles: "With the cultural pluralism of the present, there must be coherence between the message itself and the conditions of its reception." (Pontifical Council of Culture, *Toward a pastoral approach to culture*, 23.05.1999, n. 25).