



CONCLUSION

Sr. Anna Caiazza, Superior General

We are at the end of our 11th General Chapter, a powerful time of the Spirit, who has guided our every step, giving us light and strength, inspiring us with wisdom and “self-consignment,” especially in the most difficult moments.

We lived an intense and extraordinarily rich month. Day after day, communion increased among us, in the desire and commitment to feeling that we were “a single body,” despite our differences of origin, age, culture and mentality, aware of our responsibility to discern together what the Lord wants for us and from us.

We began our Chapter experience in “the garden of the resurrection,” where with Mary Magdalene we heard our name spoken by the Master and listened once again to his invitation to go forth and witness to the resurrection, to be collaborators of the Spirit in the *mission of God*.

In the garden of the resurrection, we made our spiritual exercises in the company of Ruth, a woman who “knew how to love.” Then, in the Easter climate of remembering, we contemplated our reality, in which we glimpsed through lights and shadows “the thread of God’s love running through the whole of our life.”¹

The speakers who followed one after the other helped us perceive the beauty and timeliness of our charism in the Church—a charism that always returns us to the path of the Word with the “mobility of dance steps,” as Pastor Lidia Maggi emphasized, along the roads being travelled by the people of today.

At this moment a hymn of thanksgiving springs spontaneously from all our hearts.

I want to thank the sisters of the outgoing General Government, who have concluded their service.

My thanks to the Pre-Chapter Commission, in particular to Sr. Paola Fosson, who was not physically present among us, and to Fr. Cristo Rey García Paredes, who inspired our preparatory work, oriented our steps toward the drawing up of the Chapter Document, and guided with great wisdom our discernment in view of the election of the Superior General and councilors.

My thanks to the Central Commission and the various teams that were set up for drafting, information, reading the minutes, liturgy and recreation.

My thanks to the group moderators and secretaries.

Thank you to the translators, who made it easier to understand the content of the talks and who facilitated communication among us.

Thank you to the sisters who carried out essential services “behind the scenes”: Sr. M. Gabriella Santon, Sr. Melba, Sr. Luz Helena, Sr. Teresita, Sr. Saveria, Sr. Paola Dutto.... Thank you also to the sisters of the Generalate community and the St. Paul House.

Thank you to our picture-takers and to the sisters who managed our Internet web site, which transmitted our faces and voices to every corner of the world.

¹ Pope Francis, Message for XXXII World Youth Day.

My thanks to each of you for the intense Eucharistic Celebrations, sharing sessions, and times of festivity lived in joy and communion.

My thanks to Sr. Livia Sabatti, who made it possible for us to enjoy a beautiful evening with Msgr. Frisina and the Diocesan Choir of Rome.

Thank you to our Pauline brothers and their collaborators, who welcomed us to this house and enabled us to enjoy a family atmosphere here.

Thank you to all our communities, to the members of the Pauline Family and all those who remained close to us, accompanying us with their prayers and helping us feel their presence on a daily basis by means of their messages of encouragement and best wishes.

Thank you to every sister of the Congregation, both the young and the less young, and in a special way to our sick and elderly sisters, who prayed and offered themselves abundantly for us. A big thanks to Sr. Vincenza for her testimony, which helped us understand that “youth” does not depend on chronology and that love for one’s vocation and passion for the apostolate have no age.

My sincere thanks to all the Chapter delegates for their commitment, seriousness and sense of responsibility—attitudes that characterized every phase of the Chapter and created a distinct atmosphere.

My thanks to the sisters who agreed to share with me the privilege of serving the Congregation in the General Government for the next six years.

And, together with you, I want to say a very special thanks to the *Holy Spirit*, the “Protagonist of our mission,” who guided our journey and prompted us to travel along paths that were often unexpected. But the Spirit blows like the wind, where he wills and as he wills....

Returning to our communities, we want to communicate with humility and faith what we experienced and the orientations that, with the light of the Spirit, we glimpsed for the coming years. Above all, we want to witness to the need to live in covenant with God for the salvation of the world. Trusting in the promise that the Divine Master made to the whole Pauline Family through our Founder, may we be able to *arise and go on our journey* “with the boldness that comes from the Spirit and the creativity that characterized your Founder,” as Pope Francis urged us yesterday. He then added: “Go out, leave in haste, like the Virgin Mary and St. Paul. You too are called to communicate the Good News to the people of today through your life and apostolic works. There is no time to waste!”

We seemed to hear Fr. Alberione saying once again: “Onward! Ever onward! Never stop, neither on the journey to holiness nor in the apostolate. Onward! Ever onward! ”(FSP55, 185)

Therefore, we must never stop. Instead we must travel the roads of the world, like the Pope said yesterday, “with a contemplative gaze full of empathy for the people of our time, who are hungry for the Good News of the Gospel.” In our sharing session this morning, some sisters underscored that the words of Pope Francis were like a stamp of approval on the content of our *Chapter Document*. Through him, we came to understand more deeply that the will of God for us today is this: *to revive the gift of faith so as to be missionaries by means of the witness of a life centered on Christ, allowing ourselves to be always enlightened by the Word, which keeps alive in our Institute the apostolic spirit that impels us to “go forth,” searching for opportunities to sow the Word with the “imagination” of communication, so that we can live on the peripheries of thought and on the peripheries of existence, maintaining in our hearts the ability to feel compassion for the many needs that surround us.*

We are called to “get through the winter so as to flourish and bear fruit,” without giving in to discouragement and resignation because, as Pope Francis repeated, “the road you have traveled has been long and fruitful. But the road ahead of you is also long.”

Dear sisters, the Chapter Assembly, by means of the qualified majority required, has voted to close this Chapter, and so

I OFFICIALLY DECLARE THE CLOSURE OF OUR 11TH GENERAL CHAPTER

which was celebrated according to the norms established in our Constitutions and Directory.

Let us leave this “Upper Room” with the certainty that the Lord *is and always will be* with us. We can’t do anything by ourselves, but we trust in him!

I want to end with the appeal that Pope Francis “delivered” to me yesterday when he greeted our group: “I recommend joy, joy!” he exclaimed. “Be joyful always!”

Joy is the distinctive feature of an evangelizer: It is a gift that we cultivate as we travel the road of life in the company of Jesus. It is the “identity card” of a Church that proclaims, of a Church that goes forth, of an itinerant Church, of a Church marked by exodus and gift (cf. EG 20).

Joy is the feature that characterized—and that we hope continues to characterize—the Daughters of St. Paul, who are happy women because God is our happiness. Let us always be women of the Word and of the Covenant, like the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene and our beloved Thecla, who longed to have a thousand lives so as to place them all at the service of the Gospel.