
*On-Going Formation for
Pauline Cooperators*

“Behold your mother.” (Jn. 19:27)

Group Study Program - (Total time: two hours)

Session Theme: Role of Mary, Queen of Apostles in Pauline Spirituality

Points to Cover:

- Mary’s Fundamental Role in the Lives of All Christians
- Mary as the Apostle par Excellence
- Mary as Mother, Teacher and Queen of Apostles

You will need:

- A Bible
- Music (instrumental or vocal)

Introduction:

In addition to St Paul, Mary, Queen of the Apostles plays a key role in our living of the Pauline Spirituality. For she in a singular way is the “secret” for understanding and living it.¹ And this spirit, our way of entering into and living in Christ, Way, Truth and Life, grows with her help and in her presence. (cf. Const #10)

¹ Guido Gondolfo, *Dispensa : Nello Spirito di San Paolo*. (Roma, 2009), 6.

What exactly is Mary's role in our lives as Paulines? Why has Blessed Alberione placed such an emphasis on her presence in our lives of consecration and mission? How does she help us to live in and of the Pauline Spirit?

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, you may pray the following:

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: 20 minutes)

Mary's Fundamental Role in the Lives of all Christians

First of all, Mary has always played a key role in the Christian life for she is the "way" that leads to Jesus: "to Jesus through Mary" is the famous teaching given to us by St. Louis de Montforte. From this fundamental truth Fr. Alberione has placed Mary in our lives of consecration and of apostolate. "Jesus is the summit of Christianity," says Alberione, "Mary

is the stairway. When one enters by way of devotion to Mary, one obtains as fruit the devotion to Jesus.”²

And again he says, “Who will reach the goal of identification in Christ? The way to arrive at this union is Mary. The one who is more devoted to Mary will be united more intimately to Jesus.”³ And we are not able to even speak of Mary if not in relation to Jesus; for Jesus is her “reason for being.”

Mary as the Apostle par Excellence

In addition to this fundamental role that Mary plays in the lives of all baptized persons, Fr. Alberione found in Mary the Apostle par Excellence. And why is Mary an Apostle? “Because she gave Jesus to the world,” states Blessed Alberione.⁴ In Latin the word “diede” is translated “edit,” and from this derives the word “edition.” Flowing from this intuition the Apostolate of the Editions or that of Social Communications derives a profound Marian mark or imprint, precisely because the scope of this Apostolate is to “give Jesus to the world.”⁵ And Pope Paul VI said to the Society of St Paul following their General Chapter on April 22, 1969: “Maria gave to the world the Word Incarnate; you, too, are called to give to the world the Word Incarnate.”⁶

Mary as Mother, Teacher and Queen of Apostles

Mother: Mary was able to give Jesus to the world because she had first carried him in her womb: she was first Mother. Thus she first lived in and of Jesus before she gave Him to the world. And to “live Jesus” is precisely the soul of the Pauline Spirit; it is of its very essence. We must first live in and of Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life before we can effectively

² Domenico Cascasi, *Come Maria, Con Maria: L'Esperienza Mariana nella Vita del Beato Giacomo Alberione*. (Roma: Grafica Animobono, 2006), 37.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵ Cascasi, p. 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

“give Jesus to the world.” The apostle, in order to generate life in persons, must first live that which it communicates. This is a fundamental law in communications, and this has always been the “first apostolate.” “Sanctify self in order to sanctify others.” Fr. Alberione said this so often and so clearly.⁷ And Mary did just this.

Teacher: “Your devotion to Jesus Divine Master/Teacher reaches perfection if preceded by devotion to Mary Teacher,” said Fr. Alberione in 1959.⁸ This statement affirms that in Mary the two components: disciple and teacher are harmonized in a profound way, but respecting the fundamental truth that:

- Jesus is the only Teacher, the unique Teacher by nature;
- Mary and we are always disciples by nature. We are teachers by vocation when the Divine Master/ Teacher in intimacy with him, authorizes us to announce him to the world.⁹

And we are teachers only with the condition of keeping alive the awareness of always first being disciples. If we lose this awareness, we become teachers who graze themselves with the illusion of grazing and caring for the sheep. (cf. Ez. 34:1-6) The real dignity of the apostle is not of being teachers but of being disciples. This was the authentic grandeur of Mary, the perfect disciple of her Son. And for this she has the authority of becoming our Teacher.

Queen: Mary is the Queen of every apostle, not because she places herself above us, but because she takes care of us, she takes care of all! And hers is a reign of service, not of power. “Mary has the task of forming, sustaining, of bringing to fruition the apostles of all times.” We are her task, her duty, to make of us apostles! This function of forming apostles was begun in Mary at the Cenacle, for here she awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit together with the Apostles. (cf. Acts 1:14) And it is precisely Apostles who “give Jesus to the world!”

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹ *Ibid.*

From this we can see the central role that Mary, Queen of the Apostles, held in the thought of Fr. Alberione and thus in our lives as consecrated Apostles. We will live more fully our Pauline Spirit if we first strive to live “in the presence of Mary,” (cf. Const #10) and under “her gaze.” This is what Blessed Alberione meant and desired of us when he spoke of living in a “Marian way.”

Honoring Jesus Way

(Allotted time: 15 min.)

From this we can see that Mary holds a key position in the thought and spirituality of Bl. Alberione. Does she hold a central place in my life as a Pauline Apostle? How can I grow in my devotion to and love for Mary?

We take some time for quiet reflection and examen...

Pray Together:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and in failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Honoring Jesus Life

(Allotted time: 25 min.)

Bl. Alberione had a great love for the rosary. In fact, it is said that he would not make an important decision without first praying it! And so we pray together what the Pauline Family refers to as the “Queen of Apostles” mysteries, saying as many mysteries as time allows...

- 1) First Mystery- the Annunciation
- 2) Second Mystery- Jesus gives us Mary as our Mother from the Cross

- 3) Third Mystery- Pentecost; the Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles as they are gathered in prayer with Mary...
- 4) Fourth Mystery- the Assumption of Mary into Heaven
- 5) Fifth Mystery- the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven & Earth

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary as did Bl Alberione...

Entrusting of Oneself to Mary

Receive me, Mary, Mother, Teacher and Queen, among those whom you love, nourish, sanctify and guide in the school of Jesus Christ the Divine Master.

You identify in God's mind those whom he calls, and for them you have special prayers, grace, light and consolation. My Master Jesus Christ entrusted himself wholly to you, from the Incarnation to the Ascension. For me this is doctrine, example and an ineffable gift. I too, place myself entirely into your hands. Obtain for me the grace to know, imitate and love ever more the Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life. Present me to Jesus, for I am an unworthy sinner, and I have no other recommendation to be admitted to his school then your recommendation. Enlighten my mind, fortify my will, sanctify my heart, during this year of my spiritual work, so that I may profit from this great mercy, and may say at the end: "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me." Amen

We close by Singing or Reciting the following:

You're the Queen of all Apostles,
Mary, and a Mother to all.
On your children look with mercy:
Show Jesus to us in heaven.

You're the Mother of our Savior
Spouse of God, the Holy Spirit,
Favored Daughter of the Father...
Most beloved of all you are.

All immaculate, resplendent,
You are Mother, ever Virgin.
Assumed in heaven and crowned Queen,
Now every grace will pass through you.

You obtained for the Apostles
Gifts of light and zeal and love.

Do obtain for us the Spirit

Who gives wisdom, grace and life.

Close with 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) St. Louis de Montfort coined the phrase: "to Jesus through Mary." Why do you think Mary's role is so central to the Christian life?
- 2) Why is Mary the Apostle "par excellence"?
- 3) Bl. Alberione always said that the "first apostolate" is that of sanctification: "sanctify self in order to sanctify others." How does Mary do this? How does she help me in this process of sanctification?
- 4) Mary is the Queen of Apostles because she takes care of us; hers is a reign of service. How/ in what ways does Mary take care of you?
- 5) What did Bl. Alberione mean when he instructed us to "live in a Marian way"?