

The studiosness of the Pauline

The manuals of moral theology or the distinctions of ascetic character frame *studiousness* as a virtue deriving from temperance, which regulates the desire for knowledge. However, beyond these definitions, in light of revisiting again the thought of our Founder and in relation to our specific end and mission, *studiousness* is a discriminating element in our rapport with the Church and the world. It is a matter, substantially, of acquiring an existential modality that is completely projected toward the valorization of knowledge, understood as necessary condition to make concrete our apostolic goal. That implies a constant exercise and a familiarity with the evolution of science, of technology and, more generally, of thought such as to favor the immediate identification of the “signs of the times” through a conscious analysis of phenomena and history.

Thus it can be affirmed that a serene rapport with the abundance of information increases our knowledge and learning as such and at the same time makes more efficacious our action. In fact, borrowing the axioms coming from marketing: the more information we have, the greater becomes our knowledge and the better the action we undertake.

Studiousness for the apostolate...

Therefore, every investment in the area of the apostolate to which corresponds an economic investment that is more or less considerable, has need of studies made beforehand – *studiousness* – that contribute to the efficacy of our actions. Even in reference to the “four wheels,” study and *studiousness*, surpassing the reductive concept of “notion,” involve a wider conception of *poverty*, of *piety* itself and of the *apostolate* as expression of the convergence of so many organized talents.

In substance, the dynamism of the “wheel” finds in *studiousness* a “fuel” which is not only necessary, but constitutive in order to guarantee energy and movement. Science, with its constant and adequate stimuli, assures us of perennial activity and ability for continuous progress in “thought” even at an advanced age. Because of this, it is desirable that all Paulines have a ready and preventive availability toward knowledge, so as to overcome that widespread and resigned “negligence,” together with the unshakeable certainty of “already knowing everything” because of studies already done.

... in a world in the process of transformation

Studiousness becomes therefore a *way of living* that makes the person a kind of “encyclopedia” completely incarnated in this day and always projected toward the future, almost anticipating its directions and consequent choices. A *way of living and operating*, predisposed toward creativity and fantasy, requisites that are extremely necessary for the apostolate and for evangelization today.

In a society characterized by sectional science and by the fragmentation of knowledge, the apostle perceives the moral obligation to insert himself in a perspicacious and imaginative way in the social and ecclesial competition, contributing new ideas and opening ways that are always actual and, because of this, always revisable.

Studiousness inserts itself well in the global phenomenon of communication that characterizes our era. A quantity of information passes quickly through an ever more instrumental multi-

channeling technology, so that familiarity with technology, besides that with contents, becomes the indispensable and necessary condition for all the mediations that the apostolate puts in existence.

Studiosness, for example, allows the widening of the horizon for a rapid overcoming of the productive and mental processes connected with the support of paper alone. It is paradoxical that a Congregation born for communication proceeds with labour exactly in what concerns her constitutive nature. Here we can see for ourselves the need to make grow the passion for *studiousness* starting from basic formation, to make her later on a solid *habit* thanks also to continuing formation. That implies more than an interrogative about the moment of formation in our Congregation.

It will be of necessity to invest in persons and, if it is of use, in structures in order to contribute to the production of a theology “of” and “for” communication, a discipline generally absent in the specific formative system of our Congregation and in the academic Institutes. It is legitimate, therefore, to affirm that *studiousness* represents the *soil* in which to cultivate thought and projects for our mission.

The permanent areas of studiosness

There at least three areas in which the *studiousness* of the Pauline must always be active: attention to the times, social communications, the literary production of the Apostle Paul.

Attention to the times – It goes without saying that we must always keep alert our attention and research regarding cultural, socio-political, economic and ecclesial transformations taking place on the local and global level; also regarding their indirect consequences in the living fabric of our Countries, of our people and especially of the young generations (those “born digital”) who take full-scale advantage of the always becoming new technologies at the disposal of communication.

A similar and constant monitoring allows to plan best our specific apostolic activity, to stem the cultural and generational distances present even in our Congregation, to favor a more fruitful dialog for the single mission and, reflectively, to make better fraternal life in community.

Social communications – Dealing with the specific modality of our evangelizing mission, it is surprising how in our communities and formative system is, in fact, almost absent the study of *communication* as a way for the transmission of the Gospel. But first it appears urgent to make up for the cultural limits that relegate us in marginal positions with respect to the innumerable specializations that characterize the “sciences of communication,” not least the property of language and the knowledge of meanings.

Saint Paul – The study of the *Letters* of Saint Paul for us represents the stable platform on which develops not only our personal adhesion and conformity to Christ, but in a special way our specific mission to announce to all the Lord Jesus Christ *in and by means of* communication.

Because of this, a fruit of the Centenary of the Society of Saint Paul could be the foundation of a *Studium Paulinum* that keeps alive in our Congregation the peculiar vision of the Apostle in reference to his anthropology, to the *mystery of salvation* and to the centrality of Christ. The recovery of the apostolic personality of Paul can make ever more full of meaning the appellation that identifies and characterizes us, the one of “Paulines.” It commits us to repropose today the qualities, the spirit, the zeal and the energy characteristic of the Apostle of the gentiles. Through the loving and incessant study of his *Letters*, accomplishing in an authentic manner the “journey” proposed by Fr. Alberione will become easier for us: to know, love and imitate saint Paul as form of our existence as “apostles” of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.