



INTERCAPITULAR ASSEMBLY
REPORT OF THE SIF
2013 - PHILIPPINES
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- My presentation takes the moves from some passages of the *Report* of the Superior General:

«On its part the General Government has committed itself to promote also the **other** forms of “missionary” presence, including them in the program letter of the Superior General in view of the Provincial Chapter or Regional Assembly and through the observations to the respective *Apostolic Project* and *Iter formativo* examined by the **CTIA** and by the **SIF** before being approved by the General Government».

- And in particular from **point 3.**, all dedicated to vocational animation and formation which I reproduce for practical reasons:

3. Vocational animation and formation

3.1. **Operative line 3.1.1** has established: “*The General Government, through the SIF, is to study adequate strategies to make better the formation of the formators and of the vocational animators.*”

The *Statute* of the SIF has been reviewed and approved by the General Government on 18.12.2010 and on the same occasion for this organism have been charged the General Councilors Fr. Carlo Cibièn (President) and Fr. José Salud Paredes, and 3 other Brothers have been nominated as members. From 26 to 28 April 2011 the members of the SIF have held their first meeting.

On 28 June 2011, the General Government approves the ***Guide of the SIF for the redaction of the Iter formativo.***

During the meeting of the Major Superiors with the General Government (14-20 November 2011), the President of the SIF has explained and handed over the ***Lines of action for the formation of the formators, Lines of action for the preparation to the perpetual profession, Presentation and valorization of the Constitutions and Directory for the formation of the formators and formandi.***

The President of the SIF has participated in the animation of the meeting of the **GEC** (16-20 September 2012, Cinisello Balsamo, Italy) and of **CIDEP** (03-08 December 2012, Lisbon, Portugal). All the *Iter formativi* presented since 2010, before being approved by the General Government, have been examined by the SIF.

The letter addressed on 23 May 2012 by the President of the SIF to all the workers of the SSP in the field of promotion and formation has not received feedback. The Congregation already has at its disposal **numerous and adequate texts** about vocational promotion and integral formation which merit to be better valorized.

1. *Some aspects relative to "formation" for the Society of Saint Paul*

■ The Society of Saint Paul – despite the different view of Fr. Alberione – has never seriously taken care of the cultural formation of its members and has often left it to personal initiative.

■ The neuralgic point is the "formation of the formators." If the formator has not received a balanced formation capable of combining *study* and *apostolate*, with difficulty will he be able to communicate it; with the risk of concentrating himself on "spiritual" forms that substitute both the apostolate and study.

■ Adding that today in some way mediating has come out and also apostolic apprenticeship, in the sense that the one who is more advanced in age finds himself to have to learn from one younger than he – touching in this regard is the image of the elderly papa being taught where to press his finger on a tablet in order to "twit" – it is even more necessary to reexamine the relationship between formator and formando.

■ If we do not have anything truly important to teach, it is possible to hear from the young: «May I know what you know?», and so all our presumed authoritativeness explodes and vanishes, and it is normal that some formator loses self control or, lacking motivation, falls into depression.

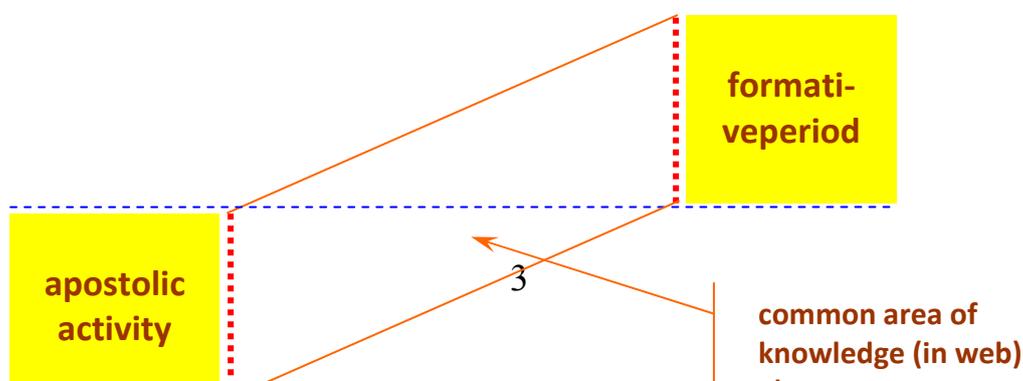
■ In truth, *we have some very important things to transmit*. For example, the apostolic enthusiasm that a young man is not bound to know; just as he does not know the deep motivations that make of our labor an apostolate and of our life a life consecrated to God for evangelization. We know well that, seen from the outside, many of our activities are not different from normal professions dedicated to work. The risk is that even our "community life," seen from the outside, does not differ from a normal stay in a hotel. And so how is it possible to practice the «*Vieni e vedi*» («*Ven y verás*», «*Come and See*»)?

■ To this is added the fact that the Church – finally – asks from our Congregation that “teaching” commitment which constitutes our charismatic trademark (cf Special General Chapter 1969-1971, *Documents*, III – *Sense of clericality*, nn. 22-31). How do we respond to this request? Certainly not by limiting ourselves to study initiatives in *e-learning*, or else organizing some even praiseworthy didactic initiative scattered in various continents. (Starting from the SPICS, to the present realizations in the Philippines-Macau Province, the SPSF; in the Province of Brazil, the FAPCOM; in the Province of Mexico, the COMFIL; and SPICE in India-Nigeria). For us it is not enough to organize structures that deal with teaching and utilize digital technology. They are very valuable initiatives. What the IX General Chapter has asked of us is however the ability to join together the “thing” and the “how,” otherwise the beautiful castle of the structure is a skeleton without a soul and body. Today, with greater reason compared to yesterday, the “how” is equivalent to putting in “creative network” the cultural organization of our Congregation in function of communicating-evangelizing. This must happen diacronically and synchronically, or connecting the successive generations and all the forces today in the field.

■ I believe that these are the two sides of the *educational* and *formative* challenge that awaits us in the immediate future: take care of formation *ad intra* and become formators *ad extra* in the field of communication for evangelization, taking into account the new digital environment wherein the man of today finds himself living.

2. *Practical actions for the “formative” future of the Society of Saint Paul*

■ In reviewing the *Statutes* of the GEC, of the CAP-ESW and soon, next November, also of CIDEP we have tried to place in close relation the apostolic and formative organisms (*General Director of the Apostolate* and *General Coordinator of Vocation Pastoral and Formation*). The ideal schema – and extremely simplified – that we intend to create is the following:



in which the “formative period” results as functional with respect to the “apostolic activity,” through the creation of a “sapere” (*know how*) transferable or adaptable to the future apostolic activity of the subject.

Seen in this way the schema can appear to be a “machine for the apostolate”... it depends what thing you understand by apostolate: if a simple “work” or an activity of “evangelization.” It will be the formative period that will make clear these concepts in the subjects of formation. The “know how” is however not constructed *casually*, but through a common accord between the formative area and the apostolic sphere, and it is aimed at the construction of a platform common among all, to which are added the apostolically oriented personal “specializations” and because of this *internationally* coordinated (cf the *operative lines* 1.3.1, 1.3.4, 3.2.3). Some accomplishments already ongoing: the Ibero-american Novitiate, the Spanish Juniorate, the Congolese Region, etc., as well as the availability of some Circumscriptions like Colombia, the Philippines, etc., ask from us a prompt reflection. Even in this we cannot anymore think only in terms of a single Circumscription, but of Congregation and, in the future, we hope also of Pauline Family.

2.1. *Identification of the Universities and of the Sources of knowledge*

■ A first step, already asked by the SIF (cf *Lines of action for the formation of the formators*), is that of asking the *General Coordinator of Vocation Promotion and Formation*, in collaboration with the Masters of formation and without forgetting the formandi, to single out in the place, in the various nations, the university Faculties and the Centers of research that are capable of offering a good level of formation in *anthropology, philosophy, theology, pastoral and communications*. Better if these Centers can enter in dialectics with us and with our charismatic aims (*vision and mission statement*). Thus we shall have a map of Centers of formation (in the various languages and cultures) with which to establish contacts and in which to prepare our students in the various phases of formation.

■ The *Presentation and valorization of the Constitutions and Directory for the formation of the formators and of the formandi* – made ready by the SIF – there where it dealt with the apostolate and formation (cf the valorization of artt. 69-76.1) it aimed at facilitating this type of work, indicating the disciplines that make up the *area of common knowledge* for the Paulines exactly starting from their future apostolic commitment.

■ If there is insistence on basic linguistic preparation (*Italian, Spanish and English*), it is not difficult to think about the swap of young men in formation as a recurring and indispensable fact.

2.2. *Creation of a new class of Formators*

■ Often formation has been entrusted to persons specifically prepared for this task, or to subjects with no other activity: their apostolate was formation. In other cases there have been *Masters* “robbed” from the apostolate. It is known that for Fr. Alberione the Pauline ought to be essentially *multitasking*. On the other hand the activity of the formator is not that of the one who assists children in an asylum: the young men go to school, they have their apostolic activities, etc. It is indispensable that he give them opportune accompaniment and that he be attentive to their specifically “Pauline” formation, that he *self* cultivates and cultivates *them*, that he be for them a point of human and religious reference. It is not therefore an exceptional fact that the *Master* “works,” that besides acting as the master he *also does apostolate*. It will be easier for him to operate that mediation that is always sought to be put in action. In this sense were oriented the *Directives* that closed the document *Pauline formation for the mission* – a document always valid – at the conclusion of the *International Seminar on Pauline formation* (Ariccia 1994):

«The formators are to carry out some apostolic task which, while it does not take them away from their principal occupation, also makes of them competent masters in the Pauline mission» (n. 10).

Experience teaches us that this is the direction. Let us not forget that the digital world has changed or will change the organization of our apostolate and that also in it vocation pastoral is to be integrated.

2.3. *An additional commitment for the SIF*

■ In the next years the SIF will continue to follow these initiatives, making itself available. It will then try to answer another question that has been addressed to it: the organization of the five years that follows the perpetual religious profession and the priestly ordination. It is a critical moment because one who has been in an environment of life that is “protected” enough is now asked to insert himself totally in the commitments of the Pauline mission.

■ Even more critical, however, is the position of those juniors who, while they are still students, are already invested with apostolic responsibilities such as to put in serious difficulty their primary commitment: the Pauline formation and study.

■ Then there is non-differentiation of the formative environments that forces subjects still in formation and sometimes on the first steps of the formative journey, to live as if they were already “perpetually professed” and together with them. If it is true that the community is the place of formation par excellence (cf *Const.*, art. 91.2; 98ff; 173.2; RF 104-108; 123-132.1; 184; 136), it is also true that for every stage of formation there ought to be assured the ambience and the accompaniment that are coherent and necessary.

■ Regarding these situations *everybody* must make a serious examination of conscience and a correct verification in order to produce a wise change in the programming and realizing of the *Iter formativo*. It is not logical and consistent to affirm that the young men of today are “fragile,” and then impose on them burdens that not even we are capable of carrying.

■ *Valorizing* must not absolutely mean: to exploit and to lead to psychological and physical wear and tear; it means rather to let the gifts that God has sown in the young men that he entrusts to our care, but who continue to be his, to flower again.