



## **FORMATION TO INTEGRALITY IN THE PEDAGOGICAL TEXTS OF FR. ALBERIONE**

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This afternoon's reflection on the theme of integrality in the teaching of our Founder can be divided in two parts: first, the personal experience of Fr. Alberione; then, the teaching he transmitted to us in texts we view as pedagogical.

### **1**

#### **INTEGRALITY: A UNIFYING ELEMENT IN ALBERIONE**

A very enlightening text to help us understand how our Founder himself lived the dimension of unification of the person can be found in AD 20-21. In this passage, short but rich in meaning, Alberione prompts us to reflect on the elements that filled and marked not only his entire existence, but also how prayer, interior life and study—in short, all his formation—wove together in his daily life.

AD 20-21:

“The Eucharist, the Gospel, the Pope, the new century, the new means, Count Paganuzzi's thinking regarding the Church and the need for a new band of apostles—from then on these things always dominated his thoughts, his prayer, his spiritual work and his yearnings. He felt an obligation to serve the Church, the people of the new century and to work with others in an organized way.

“At ten o'clock that morning he must have let slip something of his inner feelings because a cleric (later Canon Giordano), meeting him, expressed his astonishment. From then on these thoughts were the inspiration of his reading, his study, his prayer and the whole of his formation. This idea of his, which at first was quite confused, became clearer and with the passing of time became more specific.”

Let us try to highlight and make a parallel reading of these elements that Fr. Alberione calls “thoughts”:

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- **The Eucharist** = *Jesus LIFE*
- **The Gospel** = *Jesus TRUTH*
- **The Pope with the Church** = *Jesus in his Mystical Body*
- **The new century** = *Jesus, the only WAY to the Father for the world of today*
- **The new means** = *Jesus—announced through the instruments of contemporary technology*
- **New apostles** = *Jesus living in those called to irradiate him today*

This is the personal experience of the young Alberione. We can ask ourselves: What does this experience say to us today? Is it meaningful? Can it be re-proposed to us in our own formation journey?

We believe that the answer is definitely *yes*. Obviously we are not called to slavishly repeat the attitudes and personal choices of Fr. Alberione but there is no doubt that this unifying element is not only possible but also has clear paradigmatic value for us today: just as the Spirit guided the first Pauline [Alberione], it is also probably true that he acts in the same way in the small but important events of our daily life....

If I were to reduce the discussion of these “thoughts” to a single guideline that can give direction to our journey, I would say that everything converges toward a proposal that has been reaffirmed many times and is therefore always up to date, namely: *integrality*.

To borrow an enlightening excerpt from Fr. J. Manuel Galaviz:

Integrality requires two elements:

1. *Completeness or integrity*, that is: *the presence of all the parts or elements that unify something*;
2. *Integration*, that is: *how all these parts interact among themselves in harmonious unity*.

**INTEGRALITY = INTEGRITY + INTEGRATION**

▪ **With reference to *INTEGRITY* or *COMPLETENESS***

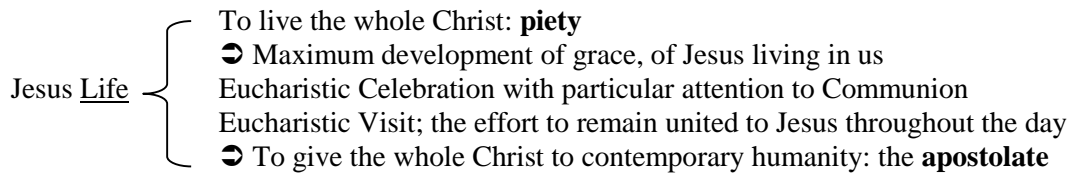
By this we mean the presence of *all* the components on which our integral formation is built. We usually summarize these in the “four wheels”:

- piety            Mass, Visit, meditation, prayer, life of union with the Master
- study            to make the most of one’s mind; discipline in study; the ability to supernaturalize things...
- apostolate      concrete and up to date; carried out with a supernatural spirit; unlimited self-donation
- poverty         human-Christian formation; capacity to establish sound relationships; discipline, self-denial

Let us try to make an initial synthesis of these components, taking as our starting point the centrality of the Divine Master in our life:

Jesus-Truth { To pray the *Lectio Divina* daily in its simplified form, applied to our [Pauline] spiritual structure  
 A methodical and rigorous study of the Word of God and of the “sacred sciences”  
 ➔ Sanctification of the mind: the thoughts and judgments of Jesus Christ

Jesus Way { Daily contemplation of Jesus our Model; comparison of our life with his in the examination of conscience during the Visit  
 ➔ “Replace my will with yours”  
 Commitment to *conform* oneself and one’s lifestyle to that of the Master: **poverty**



■ **With reference to *INTEGRATION*:**

In order for our formation to be fruitful, it is necessary that besides *wholeness* (the presence of all the components), there must also be *integration*, that is, the harmonious interrelation of these components. This is achieved when all the different elements are well-integrated and are developed in an orderly way.

In my opinion, it is here that our spirituality makes an inestimable contribution to this process. In fact, *to be in Christ and to live in him* not only gradually liberates us from the obstacles of a selfish and sterile life, but also leads us step by step and in a spontaneous way toward the fulfilment of our highest dream: unity of life!

But how can this ideal be realized concretely?

By abandoning the idea of spiritual-apostolic commitment as a sequence of duties that I personally control (voluntarism):

I am the one who prays | + studies | + carries out the apostolate, makes the effort to live a certain lifestyle...

...so as to entrust myself to Jesus Christ, in order that HE can live his unity as a Person within me, to the glory of the Father and the spread of the kingdom of God.

Indeed, Jesus alone is the unifying principle, the one who *refashions* and harmonizes every aspect of our life and activities. Only in him is it possible to reduce and eliminate all our “dichotomies” and obtain the miracle of a unified and harmonious person, full-realized under every aspect.

Let us try to express this perspective by means of the following synthesis:

1. At the center: always and only Jesus Master, Way and Truth and Life.
2. The Master *grows* in the one who entrusts him/herself to him and gradually *conforms* the whole person to himself:
  - *mind*: activated by Jesus-Truth, the person’s intellect grasps the truths about God more quickly, retains them with greater fruit, and is gradually *sanctified* to the point of coming to possess the “thoughts and judgments of Jesus Christ” (DF 65);
  - *will*: moved by Jesus-Way, the person is gradually detached from human and selfish choices and is always more resolved to do what is pleasing to the Father: “replace my will with yours” (DF 40);
  - *heart*: in communion with Jesus-Life, the person’s heart takes on the yearnings of the heart of Jesus and desires to be the privileged place in which Jesus-Love reaches all people, especially those thirsting for the truth and those who are furthest away from him. Jesus-Life/grace enters us, purifies us from sin, frees us from selfishness, transforms our prayer into *Christian* prayer, and fills every detail of our being with himself, so that, through the action of the Spirit, we receive “enlightenment for the mind, holy affection for the heart and inspiration for the will” (DF 60).
3. Christ Jesus—who prays, thinks, wills and loves in us—is the same Christ who uses us to reveal and communicate himself as “the good news” for today’s world. Dwelling in us, he—the

Apostle of the Father—*makes us apostles*: he makes our daily activities truly apostolic and therefore salvific.

It is very clear that in this context our day cannot help but be marked by the flame of two vital encounters with Jesus in the Eucharist: the *Eucharistic Celebration* and the *Eucharistic Visit*. These, however, are no longer simple *duties* we are obliged to observe due to the style of life we have chosen. Instead, they are indispensable moments through which we allow Christ to grow and *be formed* in us, to infuse his mentality in us, to conform our will to his, to transform us into his *messengers* today through our very selves and the specific apostolic instruments we use.

With what intensity Fr. Alberione committed himself to living this harmonious synthesis, aware that it was an ideal to be proposed tirelessly to his sons and daughters!

“His overriding thought was that in view of one’s own salvation and in view of a more fruitful apostolate one needs to develop the whole human personality: mind, will and heart...” (AD 22).

## ②

### INTEGRALITY IN THE PEDAGOGICAL TEXTS OF THE FOUNDER

Having briefly considered the personal experience of the young Alberione, let us now take a look at the main points of his teaching. We will do this by examining the texts in which he more clearly underscores the connection between the trinomial Jesus Truth-Way-Life and the trinomial mind-will-heart. Let us also keep in mind that the Founder remained faithful to this vision up to the end of his life: we can say that there is no homily or written or oral conference he ever delivered in which this *threefold* vision of the human person is not present in an explicit or implicit way.

#### ① 1932: “*Donec formetur Christus in vobis*”

Let us start with the text we consider to be fundamental for getting to know the spiritual-apostolic proposal of Fr. Alberione: the small book, *Donec formetur Christus in vobis*.

After the Preamble, at the conclusion of the stage dedicated to God the Father, the Founder inserts a brief chapter with the meaningful title: “*L’uomo adunque*” (“*And so we come to man...*”) Because of its clarity of presentation, breadth of perspective and recapitulation of the human condition, this text can be considered to be the font of inspiration regarding the specific nature of the Pauline identity within the *Donec Formetur* itinerary.

DF 35-36:

Having emerged from the hands of God and being called to glorify him in eternity, man has to make a “test journey” that is called life. The Father himself sent his own Son as Teacher to point out, walk, and make himself the Way for humanity. At the end, therefore, man will be judged as to whether or not he conformed himself to the Son of God in mind, in will and in life. This conformity must be loving because those who love must continue to do so; it will be their reward for all eternity. Those who do not love will remain far from God forever.

The world is the imperfect kingdom of God because of human faults, because of the weeds. Eternity is the perfect kingdom of God, including on the part of human beings, who glorify God eternally. “Let us make man in our image and likeness” (Gn. 1:26). The image that was spoiled by man is repaired in the Son of God, and, through the Holy Spirit, through a superabundance of grace, it will surpass the first in beauty.

It is not hard to see in this vision, which could be called “programmatic,” the spiritual horizon toward which Fr. Alberione is guiding us:

\* *“Having emerged from the hands of God and being called to glorify him in eternity, man has to make a “test journey” that is called life.”* Human beings are called to life so as to undergo a “test journey.” This journey has well-defined coordinates: a starting point, identified as “*the hands of God,*” and a concluding point: the eternal glorification of the Holy Trinity.

\* *“The Father himself sent his own Son as Teacher...”* After creating human beings and placing them in the world, the Father does not simply abandon them to their destiny. On the contrary, as a good Father, he gives them none other than his only Son. Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to us as *Teacher*.

\* *“to point out, walk, and make himself the Way for humanity...”* Here are sketched out the “duties” he assigned his Son on his mission to earth:

- *to point out:* this verb contains the idea of teaching, guiding, directing, etc. In the figure of the Master who points out we can easily discern *Jesus-Truth*;
- *to walk:* Jesus Master does not limit himself to pointing out the direction in which we must travel and what type of journey we should make. Instead, he himself is the first to walk this path and he follows it to the very end, in obedience to the Father’s plan of salvation. Here the Founder is thinking of *Jesus-Way* as the model for all believers;
- *to make himself the “vehicle” for humanity:* Jesus Master takes his creatures in his arms and becomes their “vehicle.” We see here *Jesus Master-Life*, who is not only our irreplaceable travelling companion, but also our source of grace, energy and spiritual strength....

\* *At the end, therefore, man will be judged as to whether or not he conformed himself to the Son of God in mind, in will and in life. This conformity must be loving....* The Father sent humanity the gift of Jesus as Teacher for a specific purpose: to help human beings conform themselves totally to his Son, since the final judgment will be based on whether or not they attained that goal.<sup>2</sup> (It is a journey that challenges the human being in the totality of his/her faculties and initiatives. This concept is explained by means of three applications:

- *in mind:* our intellectual activities (thoughts, reasoning, reflections, evaluations and judgments) must be conformed to the mind of Jesus Christ Master;
- *in will:* whatever initiates in the will and is moved by it (words, activities, practical choices, orientations in life, etc.) must be conformed to the obedience with which the Master responded to the will of the Father;
- *in life:* an all-encompassing term used to indicate that all our thoughts, decisions and activities must be aimed at conformity to Jesus Master and at the same time be “informed,” that is, draw its form, from this conformity. We immediately realize how important this aspect is for us, who are called to an *apostolate*. Viewed from the perspective of conformity, the term “life” encompasses the entire range of daily apostolic activities, which are “apostolate” to the degree that they are conformed to and cooperate with the activity of Jesus, the Apostle of the Father.

A final and very important point: From where does the effort to conform ourselves to Jesus Master spring? From love (*“This conformity must be loving.”*) Love comes before everything else and gives life to everything else!

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<sup>2</sup> In an important text dating back to 1949, Fr. Alberione sees conformity to Christ as the “decisive factor” regarding the Pauline at the moment of the final judgment: “The soul will appear before Jesus the Judge, who will see himself in that person (*“conformes fieri imagini Filii sui”*) and will present him/her to the Father, who will note the soul’s resemblance to the Holy Trinity—a resemblance restored by Jesus Christ himself. The Father will be very pleased with this and the soul will sing for all eternity: “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit” (*Introduction*, in: Stefano Lamera, *Notes on Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life*, Pauline Editions, Alba 1949).

\* “...because those who love must continue to do so; it will be their reward for all eternity. Those who do not love will remain far from God forever.” Fr. Alberione looks very clear-sightedly at the human being’s destiny, seeing it as giving continuity, indeed *indefectibility*, to the choices he/she made on earth with regard to love.

\* “*The world is the imperfect kingdom of God because of human faults, because of the weeds. Eternity is the perfect kingdom of God, including on the part of human beings, who glorify God eternally.*” Almost as if to support his assertion that the vocation of human beings is to allow Christ to grow in them until he reaches full stature and they are consequently conformed to him, Fr. Alberione offers us a twofold “argument.” The remedy for sin and evil (“human faults”) and an effective check to the damaging work of the enemy (“weeds”), which make the kingdom of God imperfect in this world, is conformity to the Lord Jesus. At the same time, our response to the Father’s invitation enables us to conform ourselves to his Son and contribute to making eternity “the perfect kingdom of God, including on the part of human beings.” Human holiness—that is, conformity to the only-begotten Son of God—is thus a true apostolate for spreading the kingdom of God and his Gospel.

\* “*Let us make man in our image and likeness. The image that was spoiled by man is repaired in the Son of God, and, through the Holy Spirit, through a superabundance of grace, it will surpass the first in beauty.* It is now possible to admire the splendid result of the meeting between the initiative of the Trinity and human cooperation. The Trinity’s initial image of humanity was spoiled by sin. However, this image was repaired by the Son, thanks to his salvific sacrifice. Even more, this new image “will surpass the first in beauty” due to the “superabundance of grace” poured into our soul by the Holy Spirit!

In a subsequent paragraph, Fr. Alberione further explains the link between Jesus Truth-Way-Life and the human faculties of mind (intellect), will and heart. The paragraph, significantly entitled “Incarnation,” is of enormous importance for us inasmuch as we find here one of the first (if not the very first) summarized formulations of our spirituality, together with the applications (the “needs”) that derive from it:

- It is the whole Christ the Master—who revealed himself as Truth, Way and Life—who wants to make his dwelling (incarnate himself) in us and grow.
- It is necessary that the whole Christ be applied to the whole person—mind, will and heart—resulting in a new person (the Pauline method).

#### **Incarnation - DF 37-38:**

1. This period must incarnate in us Jesus Christ, Truth, Way, Life, resulting in a “new person.” Supernatural life will blossom into eternal life: “joint heirs with Christ” (Rm. 8:17).

2. Jesus Christ is Truth for the intelligence; thus we must study Christian doctrine, and in a special way the *Gospel*.

Jesus Christ is Way for the will; thus we must imitate Jesus Christ, with particular attention to *Holy Communion*.

Jesus Christ is Life for the heart; thus we must clothe ourselves with sanctifying and actual grace, especially through the *Holy Mass*.

3. Consequently: divide the hour of adoration into three parts: a) a reading of the Gospel and Christian doctrine so as to honor Jesus Christ Master; b) compare our life with Jesus Christ our model and make the examination of conscience; c) prayer, especially that which prepares us for the Holy Mass (The Way of the Cross, The Sorrowful Mysteries [of the Rosary]).

Therefore we have to *incarnate* Jesus Christ in us. This moment marks a key step in our journey toward conformity to the Divine Master.

It can be seen from a twofold perspective. If we consider it *from the viewpoint of God* (theological perspective), we see that Jesus incarnates himself in the believer and gradually grows until he is *formed* in that person, in line with Ga. 4:19. If we consider it *from the human viewpoint* (anthropological perspective), we see the happy result of Jesus formed in the human being, who gradually takes on the *form* of Jesus and winds up *con-formed* to him.

Jesus-Truth questions our *intellect*, which is enabled to grasp revealed truths, understand them thanks to the light of the Spirit, and assimilate them. But human cooperation is needed, which means we need “to *study* Christian doctrine, and in a special way *the Gospel*.”

Jesus-Way is presented as the one who draws our *will*, enabling us to conform ourselves to him, follow him and imitate his examples and style of life. From here derives the “need” to imitate the virtues of Jesus.

Jesus-Life questions and reaches out to his faithful follower through that person’s most precious element: *the heart*, resulting in the need to “clothe oneself” with sanctifying grace.

But what does this *incarnation* process involve? The word itself conveys the idea very clearly: Christ Jesus *takes flesh* in the person. The presence of Mary, Virgin and Mother, is essential to this process, in keeping with the biblical presentation of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Just as Christ Jesus took flesh in Mary, the same thing happens to the believer by way of analogy: the Master *takes flesh* in the Pauline who is docile to the Holy Spirit.

## ❷ 1933: “*Apostolato Stampa*”

A year after the publication of *Donec fometur Christus in vobis*, Fr. Alberione wrote the book *Apostolato Stampa (The Apostolate of the Press)*. He thought of this text as being tightly linked to DF. It is well known that in order to underscore the unity-continuity between conformity to the Master and mission, the Founder wanted to conclude DF with several pages presenting the fundamental aspects of the press apostolate—a subject upon which he had been reflecting as he wrote DF.

The press apostolate—and in this category we include all the specific apostolates of the Pauline Family—aims at prolonging and giving continuity to the salvific work of the Master, who “spoke and had others write.” In this way, the message of salvation would spread everywhere, reaching everyone according to their needs. The apostolate of the press, carried out with the most rapid and effective means, “is directed to everyone.”

The very nature of this apostolate, which is a continuation of the evangelizing work of Jesus Master, requires a very high degree of conformity to Christ Jesus. Reciprocally, awareness of lending him one’s mind, heart, words and energies should rouse (to use a verb very dear to the Founder) in every member of the Pauline Family the desire to conform him/herself to the Master in an always more life-oriented way.

In our opinion, this offers us the way to attain harmonization and mutual exchange between sanctification and activities, which remains one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome in our fatiguing daily journey.... But it is essential to follow this route with “holy stubbornness” (as the Founder put it), certain that this grace has been given to us since it is included in the gift of the Pauline vocation itself.

With regard to our specific theme, in Chapter V of *Apostolato Stampa (The Apostolate of the Press)*, entitled, “Preparation for the Publishing Apostolate,” Fr. Alberione writes that this preparation is threefold: formation of the mind, the will and the heart.

### *Preparation of the mind*

This consists in the intellectual or doctrinal formation of the apostle in the areas of the *secular sciences*: languages, history, literature, etc.; a theoretical-practical *philosophical* formation; a *theological*

formation that includes Theology, Sacred Scripture, Canon Law, Church History, etc. Some subjects are essential, while others serve to complete the curriculum...

The need for preparation is clear: the Apostle of the Press is a teacher by nature, by election and by position; he/she is one who teaches from the highest seat of learning; who disseminates doctrine with greater accuracy; who has a wide variety of disciples. So it is clear that his/her knowledge must be broad, profound and practical.

*It follows* that the fruits will be in proportion to one's academic preparation; that people will be more greatly convinced if the teacher is more persuasive; that before undertaking this apostolate one must undergo the tests and examinations that authorize one to fulfill it (as in the case of the apostolate of the word); that the period of study is extremely delicate and requires sufficient time, a good school; sound study methods; practical exercise; exemplary application; abstention from whatever can impede or turn one away from study; above-average or at least average intelligence.

One's preparation should be proportioned to the particular duties he/she will be carrying out in this apostolate: it is one thing to teach children, which requires a store of knowledge that enables one to explain the main truths of Christian doctrine clearly, practically and effectively; it is another thing to engage in traditional or scientific apologetics to defend the dogmas of the Catholic Church from rationalists, materialists, modernists, heretics and schismatics.

### *Preparation of the will*

A good life and the [practice of] the virtues is necessary because the work is supernatural and thus absolutely requires the grace to convince others, zeal, and special enlightenment so as to understand the truths [to be presented].

Indeed, the Apostolate of the Press requires a very strong will because it is necessary to possess the social virtues of humility, a spirit of sacrifice, constancy, and a love for souls and for the Lord. One must therefore cultivate the theological virtues: faith, hope, love; the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance; the moral virtues: obedience, purity, poverty, humility....

*Spiritual combat* is very well taught by Scupoli and St. Francis De Sales, who apply it in a powerful but gentle way to all the conditions of life....

Virtues too are acquired by systematic and constant work. One should begin with the most necessary virtues, cultivating them fervently and exercising them to the point that one puts them into practice promptly, easily and with relish....

### *Preparation of the heart*

The life of the Apostolate of the Press is Jesus Christ himself: "For me, life is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). There can be no other strength, health, life and resurrection apart from Jesus Christ, in heaven, on earth, in souls and in the apostolate.

The life of Jesus Christ is acquired through the holy sacraments, sacramentals and prayer. *Through the holy sacraments*: in fact, these are channels by means of which life flows from the heart of Jesus to the heart of his apostle....

*The devotions that nourish* one's spirit and draw grace are those directed to the Blessed Mother (especially through the rosary); St. Joseph, protector of the Universal Church; Sts. Peter and Paul, who keep us united to the Church herself; the guardian angels; the souls in purgatory. These are the devotions proper to the Apostolate of the Press.

*Pious reading*: of the Bible, especially the Gospels and the Letters of St. Paul, and then the other books of God, followed by the writings of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and then the lives of the saints. One must be nourished by God-Truth if one wants to live in him, possess him and give him (not oneself or human wisdom) to others.

*Meditation*. At least a half-hour of meditation every day in order to keep one's lamp filled with oil so that it can illuminate our steps and give light to all in the house: "Your word is a lamp for my feet; a light for my path" (Ps. 119:105). We are not converted simply by preaching to others ("giving them bread"): we too must nourish ourselves "on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4).

*An 8-day course of spiritual exercises every year*: "Unless you like solitude, it is not safe for you to appear in public."<sup>3</sup> The more recollected a soul is, the more good he/she will do: "Pay close attention to

<sup>3</sup> *Imitation of Christ*, Book I, chapter 20.



yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tm. 4:16). We are never so useful to others as when we attend to ourselves: «*Come apart to a solitary place.*” This withdrawal to a *solitary place* is without a doubt more helpful to souls than the pulpit or even the pen.

*The monthly retreat*, by means of which we “settle our accounts with God» and prepare to live a new, holy and apostolic month.

*Adoration of the Divine Master, dwelling in the Blessed Sacrament*: the Truth that enlightens us; the Way that guides us; the Life that sanctifies us. In this school, it is very easy to form the upright person, the saint, the apostle.

*The liturgical spirit*, which is to say: intense participation in the life of Jesus Master, who is presented to us by the Church during the course of the year. The apostle learns, finds the way, acquires zeal, because every apostolate is in the Church and in Jesus Christ. Apart from this there is only empty appearance. The Pauline Apostolate is entirely “in Christ and in the Church.”<sup>4</sup>

From this perspective, Chapter XIII, entitled “The Communion of the Apostle of the Press,” is very interesting. Fr. Alberione introduces us [to the subject] by means of a premise: «Communion is the union of man with God; it is the fruit of Jesus’ love for us; it should nourish the divine life in us. [This] union must be complete: of mind, will, heart. In this way, it will honor Jesus Master and will nourish the spiritual life of the apostle.» He then goes on to explain in detail:<sup>5</sup>

#### *Union of the Mind*

Union of the human mind with the mind of Jesus by means of a faith that is profound, practical and heartfelt. God became man so that man might become God by acquiring his divine thoughts, his divine will, his divine grace.

The fall of man did not corrupt him essentially; instead, it weakened his nature. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, human beings drifted from one error to the next, proving the fact that in every age and society it is difficult to perceive the truth, to reason in a Christian way and to think theologically. Thus there is need of religious instruction, by means of which the Church communicates the mind of Jesus Master. The inclination to believe is the fruit of the grace and faith infused in a person in holy Baptism. Before a student begins [to study] sacred theology, a Christian and theological preparation is needed so as to ready the person to grasp the divine truths.

In redeeming us from the lies and deceptions of the evil spirit, Jesus, who is the Truth, preached divine truths to us: “The truth will set you free.” We must learn these truths, but even more we must believe and profess them. Believing them requires grace, and professing them requires even more grace. This is what we seek in Communion. We unite ourselves to Jesus Christ and, in him, our mind embraces the teaching of the Church and of the Gospel, and seeks rehabilitation.

In Jesus Christ, with all his wisdom, the person rises above the world and becomes God in his/her mind!

In the first part of our preparation for Communion and in our thanksgiving, let us adore Jesus-Truth, ask him to forgive our lack of faith, and beg the Divine Master, our Head, to establish our mind in him—a mind that learns, adheres to, retains and professes the divine truths. [Let us also ask him to] sanctify and supernaturalize our judgments, reasoning, counsels, advice, decisions and memory.

#### *Union of the Will*

Union of the human *will* with the will of God. Uniformity means love, and perfection lies precisely in this: the love of God. The more intense and perfect this union, the livelier will be our love of God. The will of God is manifested through the commandments and through everything that happens, but that will is living and concrete in Jesus because he confirmed, implemented, explained and elevated the commandments by means of his supernatural counsels and precepts. He lived the commandments, the counsels and every virtue to the highest degree. Thus he is the holiness, the living will, of the Father.

In him, we move toward the Father, toward perfection, toward heaven. Because of this we must adhere to [Jesus Christ]: to his will, to his examples. In the commandments, the will of God is theoretical; in the life of Jesus Christ it is concrete, put into practice and alive. In him, the Father’s will becomes easy,

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<sup>4</sup> J. ALBERIONE, *Apostolato Stampa*, pp.19-23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ivi*, pp.58-62.

because we are on the way [of perfection], and whenever the path becomes rough Jesus carries us on our journey. In general, it is prayer that enables us to adhere to the will of Jesus Christ, and there is no doubt that Communion is the most excellent specific prayer of adhesion because it gives us courage and strength. In Jesus Christ, by means of Communion, we are like wild olive branches grafted onto Jesus Christ, the healthy olive tree.

The will has two advantages: it is healed and uplifted. Jesus, the Savior of the human race, saves the will from weakness, inconstancy, laziness, obstinacy and bad habits, and penetrates it so that it will bear fruit: “He who abides in me and I in him, bears much fruit (Jn. 15:5).

So what should our preparation and thanksgiving consist of? We should adore the holiness of Jesus, make a good preventive examination of conscience for the day, followed by an act of contrition and a resolution on the principal point of our spiritual work. We should then beg Jesus to be our daily nourishment and strength: «O salutaris Hostia, quae coeli pandis ostium, da robur, fer auxilium». «My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink» (Jn. 6:56).

### *Union of the Heart*

Union of the human *heart* with the heart of God. Divine life is communicated to us by means of the grace of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. In this way, incorporated into Jesus Christ (“to bring everything together in Christ”), we become children of God. The constituent elements [of this divine life] are: faith, hope and love and all the spiritual goods and fruits that derive from these virtues; the beatitudes; the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the fruits of charity and of the ascetical-mystical life, and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Jesus Christ belongs to the Father and if we belong to Jesus Christ, then we also belong to God in the Holy Spirit. United to him through the grace of the Spirit, we nourish ourselves on Jesus Christ so as to be one of heart with him, as the Father and Son are one. In this way, our heart will beat in unison with his for the glory of God and the peace of all humanity. We will come to understand the depths of our nothingness and the heights to which we are raised in Jesus Christ.

In the Holy Spirit, the heart of Jesus heals our heart of indifference, distrust, bad inclinations, unruly passions, empty feelings, human yearnings.

So what should our preparation and thanksgiving consist of? This third stage consists in giving glory to Jesus Christ, our resurrection and life: «*Ego sum resurrectio et vita*». Therefore, let us become aware of everything the mercy of God has already accomplished in us for his glory and peace to humanity. Let us humble ourselves before Jesus and Mary in the depths of our heart...and let us go to drink Life, to eat Jesus! Then let us set out once again, taking Jesus Christ everywhere, allowing him alone to live and work while we remain hidden in him and in his work because “it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” (Ga. 2:20).

### ***The Publishing Apostolate*** (1944)

In a successive edition of the book, printed in 1944 under the title “*The Publishing Apostolate*” and subtitled, “*Handbook of Formation and Apostolate*,” we find a chapter dedicated to the method [to be used] in the publishing apostolate. Research reveals the contribution of Fr. Guerrino Pelliccia, who set down what he had learned directly from the Founder in the lessons of the latter to his first sons and daughters.

In the apostolate too it is helpful to follow a method—that is, a mix of principles, criteria and dispositions that regulates how things are done. A method directs one’s steps in view of the goal to be achieved.

In the publishing apostolate the method suggested is called “way, truth and life,” based on the Gospel trinomial. The apostle must study it, examine it in detail, follow it in his/her formation and then put it into practice in the apostolate....

The crux of the “Way-Truth-Life” method is the principle that the person has to adhere to God completely, in other words: to cling to God with all his/her main faculties: will, intellect and feelings.

But how is this to be achieved in practice?

By following Jesus Christ, chosen by God as our Mediator of truth, holiness and grace: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” More precisely, to follow this outline:

1) To follow Jesus Christ Way – walking in his steps (adherence of the will).

- 2) To follow Jesus Christ Truth – listening to his doctrine (adherence of the intellect).
- 3) To follow Jesus Christ Life – living in his love and in his grace (adherence of feelings and spirit).

Basing him/herself on this principle and following this outline, the apostle will find the right way for his/her own formation and for the apostolate.<sup>6</sup>

This is followed by a lengthy exposition concerning the natural and supernatural *foundations* of the method, how it can be put into practice in every field of human activity, and what *practical conclusions* can be drawn in this regard:

Following the method sketched out, the apostle will find it easy to cleave to God completely and to become, like Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life for people.

In practical terms, however, the person should not become a slave to this method. Flexibility is necessary so as to adapt it to the circumstances and also be open to the opinion that sees the will as the faculty that reigns supreme, harmonizing it with the intellect, for if it is true that the will is the queen of human faculties, it is likewise true that the intellect has a certain pre-eminence as regards actions. Indeed, it is thought that prompts action, action that stimulates feelings, and feelings that fortify and reinforce thought and action.<sup>7</sup>

### ③ Years 1948-1957

The preceding texts underscore Fr. Alberione's attention and concern to convince us of the need for all our faculties (mind-will-heart) to be harmoniously involved in our journey of spiritual-apostolic growth and development. At the same time it is clear that our point of reference must be the whole Divine Master, Way, Truth and Life. In fact, the teachings of the Founder with regard to integrality can be summed up in the statement: "The whole Christ in the whole person."

Once this directive had been clarified, it was enough for the Founder to offer us quick reminders of this orientation: insistent, heartfelt recommendations that echo down to us even today.

These "echoes" can be detected in the following excerpts from various writings of the Founder, above all the excerpts which appear in what he called "booklets" that were subsequently reprinted in the anthology, *Soul and Body for the Gospel*.

#### ***Brief Meditations for Every Day of the Year*** (1948)

The Founder's integral approach is clearly reflected in every meditation which, with very few exceptions, is presented in three parts, corresponding to the vision of the whole Christ, Truth-Way-Life, present and active in the whole Christian, mind-will-heart.

The first point of each meditation sets forth "what must be believed": the subject of the proposed theme; the doctrine the mind is called to learn; the primary truth to be grasped.

The second point usually consists of a practical application: how our will should implement what the Lord proposes. Our sole model is always Jesus: we should contemplate how he lived the specific virtue under consideration and offer him our will in such a way that it adheres fully to his manner of being faithful to the Father.

The third point is usually an invitation to a type of prayer that involves the heart in a life-oriented way, in keeping with the Founder's directive: "Prayer should also involve our feelings" (DF 14).

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<sup>6</sup> J. ALBERIONE, *The Publishing Apostolate*, pp.61-62.

<sup>7</sup> *Ivi*, p.66.

Another expression of the mind-will-heart approach is offered in the three final stages of every meditation, in which the Founder invites us to:

- make an examination of conscience (become aware of our convictions and compare them with the divine teachings: mind);
- make a resolution (an act of the will), so as to second the divine plan;
- pray (a prayer drawn from the Liturgy or, more often, springing from the Founder’s burning love of God: heart).

Simple souls love the Lord profoundly; they earn great merit in their supernatural union with God through mind, will and feelings. [...]

Charity is the virtue that leads to the greatest holiness. In fact, it unites the whole person to God: mind, will, feelings. It transforms the soul in God; establishes an intimate friendship with him; multiplies the person’s zeal and energy: «For love is as strong as death» (Sg. 8:6). [...]

The same struggle takes place in every Christian: it is a struggle between Jesus Christ and our old human nature, which battle each other, competing for the person’s heart. Jesus Christ wants the whole person: mind, will and feelings.<sup>8</sup>

**Introduction**, in: STEFANO LAMERA, *Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life* (1949)

Preparing oneself for eternity—already underscored in DF under the title “The key of life”—is emphasized here once again with the words “one’s whole being.” As always, the trinomial mind - will-feelings is presented in relation to the whole Christ, Truth-Way-Life.

Life on earth is a preparation for heaven through the sanctification of one’s whole being: mind, will and feelings, precisely because heaven is the vision of God, possession of God and happiness of God. Vision of God is merited by the Christian faith of the one who adheres to the entire doctrine of the Divine Master. Possession of God is merited by living the virtues Jesus Christ taught by word and example. The happiness of God is merited by remaining united to Jesus Christ through grace and participation in the merits of the Cross. The one who does not believe is already condemned.<sup>9</sup>

**“Love the Lord with Your Whole Mind”** (1954-1955)

The first of what Fr. Alberione called his “booklets,” better known under the title, *Sanctification of the Mind*, this text clearly underscores the unity or integrality enjoyed by the human faculties at the moment of creation. Sin splintered this unity, requiring the intervention of divine grace so as to “restore unity in Christ”: all the human faculties in the whole Jesus Christ!

Man needs unity or integrality, by which is meant that the human faculties (mind, will, feelings) must be integrated. Human reason, which is able to grasp the good in a pallid and cold way, needs to be warmed by feelings so as to glow and incite enthusiasm, in order that good can be obtained from what is true and beautiful. In man, these three faculties (the true, the beautiful and the good), inasmuch as they are three aspects of the same thing (*convertuntur*),<sup>10</sup> were unified in a practical way.

Sin broke this unity and now things are seriously off track. The mind was supposed to govern the heart; the heart make the mind glow with love; and the will, once the obstacle of the passions had been removed and fortified by reason, would have done what is good. Unity!

Divine grace contributed to and admirably elevated this unity in such a way that man represented the One and Triune God. “Created in the image and likeness of God” (Gn. 1:27), man was triune in his faculties (mind, feelings, will) and one in his interior and exterior activities.

<sup>8</sup> J.. ALBERIONE, *Brevi meditazioni per ogni giorno dell’anno*, pp.206, 209, 545.

<sup>9</sup> J.. ALBERIONE, *Introduzione...*, pp.15-16.

<sup>10</sup> The allusion is to Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, which establishes an equivalence or reversibility among the fundamental categories of Being: «*Ens et Verum convertuntur; Ens et Bonum convertuntur; Ens et Pulchrum convertuntur.*»

When this unity was broken, mind and heart pulled the will in opposite directions: [now] reason acts on its own; uncontrolled love burns in the senses and consumes the person; and the will, deprived of God's grace, is dragged by the heart along muddy trails: behold the two laws—one of the flesh and one of the spirit (cf. Ga. 5:16, 19-24; Rm. 8:2-13). "I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want" (Rm. 7:15, 19).

[We need] to restore unity in Christ!<sup>11</sup>

### ***"Human Formation"*** (1953)

The key element in this booklet is formation, beginning with human formation, which is the point of departure for forming the Pauline religious. Here integrality is seen from the Trinitarian perspective presented in the stages of DF: the starting point is the upright person (the goal of the first stage); on this platform the Christian person is constructed (second stage: Glory to the Son), in order to reach the goal of the holy person (third stage: Glory to the Holy Spirit). Without the foundation—that is, the correct use of one's mind, strength (will) and heart—"everything would collapse."

1) The aim of formation in the Congregation is to form the Pauline religious. It is necessary to proceed with wisdom and love.

It is necessary to have a foundation, a starting point: the upright person. On this foundation it is possible to construct a good Christian, a child of God, and from there to form a holy religious (who can be either a lay person or a priest). The holy religious can be shaped into an apostle after the great model, St. Paul.

Without the foundation—that is, the upright person who uses his/her intelligence, energies (will) and heart according to reason—everything would collapse, as can be clearly seen in those who do not obey the commandments.<sup>12</sup>

### ***"For a Social Conscience"*** (1953)

In this booklet too, which underscores the basic elements for community life, the Founder does not fail to stress what community life requires, namely: "an open and understanding mind that is inclined to interpret things favorably"; a will disposed to observe the "rules of courtesy, good manners, submissiveness and gentleness"; a heart that is able to understand the poor and the suffering, that is ready to forgive and eager to "remember only the benefits received."

A person who wishes to enter the Institute must have a sociable character. We said earlier that community life requires:

- a kind, sociable and optimistic character: which is partly a gift of nature and partly the fruit of formation;
- an open and understanding mind that is inclined to interpret things favorably;
- an upright attitude toward the poor, the suffering, one's superiors and inferiors;
- observance of the rules of courtesy, good manners, submissiveness, gentleness—at all times, but especially when in company;
- a readiness to forgive wrongs and negative things and remember only the benefits received; without reproaching others for their faults or humiliating those below us, etc.;
- to be always steadfast and simple, not proud when things go well or when honors are received, and without becoming downcast in the face of adversities.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> J. ALBERIONE, *Anima e corpo per il Vangelo* (ACV), pp. 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> ACV, p.119.

<sup>13</sup> ACV, pp.140-141.

## **“Work” (1954)**

How should one perform his/her spiritual, intellectual and material duties? Beside carrying them out in a way that is orderly in every detail (an indispensable condition), Fr. Alberione insists on generosity, that is, the conscientious application of mind, will, heart and physical strength (to one’s responsibilities). In this way a person will not be limited to “accepting an office/duty with forced resignation,” but will be able to love it, indeed, “carry it out enthusiastically and passionately!”

Dedication can be compared in a certain sense to a high-powered or low-powered engine. A generous person carries out his/her duties and mission by applying mind, will, heart and physical energies to it. *Mind*: so as to understand the job and determine what means will ensure good results; *will*: to use every means (both physical and moral); *heart*: so as to love one’s apostolate and carry it out joyfully and meritoriously.

It is one thing to accept an office/duty with forced resignation, and another to love it: to carry it out enthusiastically and passionately.<sup>14</sup>

## **“To Bear God in One’s Body” (1954)**

This profound booklet, with its vast horizons, is one of the most original of Fr. Alberione’s writings and manifests a surprising openness to the subject of the “body” if one keeps in mind the way the human body was viewed in the 1950’s.

After a few rapid, enthusiastic and contemplative “brush strokes” concerning how the human being came forth from the creative hands of the Holy Trinity—“a work of art”; a “divine masterpiece”—Fr. Alberione acknowledges the damage caused by original sin: the intellect was dimmed, the will weakened and false ideas arose “under the semblance of glory....” Fortunately, human beings have already been “raised up” in Jesus Christ, opening the way to our “deification” in Christ.

Man is made up of material and immaterial elements; of the finite and the infinite; of the temporary and the eternal.

His whole being is a work of art, of love, of power and of divine wisdom.

His material side seems to fix his home on this earth, while his spiritual side—which guides and rules him—makes him a co-citizen of heaven and places him among the pure spirits there.

Man is a summation of the universe. The human organism is a divine masterpiece.

Because of the Redemption, he is part of the divine family in Christ.

The soul endows the body with the power to grow,<sup>15</sup> to feel, to work; without it the body would return to dust. The soul has a transcendent power with regard to the body: unlike the latter, it is able to understand and will. Thus in the mind of God, both as Creator and Redeemer, there had to be a third element that gives man an incomparable dignity: participation in the divine nature, making him a quasi-divine being. This third element, which is not a consequence of human nature but given to man by God out of his goodness, is a force that orders, elevates and harmonizes the desires of the body and the law of the spirit, making human acts supernatural and worthy of a supernatural reward: that of being children and heirs of God. “In creating nature, God instilled grace” (St. Augustine).<sup>16</sup>

This is the total sublimation of man. When he is deprived of this element, he is restless, dissatisfied, including with regard to virtue and knowledge. He is like a fallen son who does not know how to adjust to his condition: *«inquietum est.»*<sup>17</sup> When the supernatural is missing, everything appears unfinished. This

<sup>14</sup> ACV, p.184.

<sup>15</sup> That is, to take advantage of the vegetative life.

<sup>16</sup> «*Simul condens naturam et infundens gratiam*» (*The City of God*, XII; quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, qu. 12).

<sup>17</sup> “Our heart is restless until it rests in you.” (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, I. 1).

“raising up” [of the human being] occurs in Jesus Christ–Man-God and a divine Person. “Therefore, sin must not reign over your mortal bodies so that you obey its desires” (Rm. 6:12).

“You have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Co. 6:20).

This is the power and the path to our sanctification in Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Because of original sin, Adam was not only deprived of grace but his entire being, soul and body, was wounded with regard to natural goods, and he felt the consequences of this in his body and spirit.

The *intellect* is weakened, falls more easily in errors, or gets lost in useless things.

For example: anyone who is enlightened by God or by upright reasoning can understand these three truths: perfect chastity is a greater and more intoxicating love; obedience is the greatest and happiest freedom; poverty is the greatest joy.

But an intellect that is weakened, numbed by the senses and pressured by the law of the flesh, will see things very differently.

The *will* is weakened and consequently, instead of being the queen it should have been, it is deposed from the throne and disaster follows. The faculties that were the most divine and at the same time the most human (intellect and free will) are darkened and paralyzed or else misled even when this does not seem to be so due to false ideas “under the semblance” of glory, prudence or strength.

The result of Adam’s sin leads to two kinds of cemeteries. 1) Moral cemeteries in which millions of souls, judging by what can be seen externally, are detached from God. This separation is the death of the soul and the act that provokes its descent into mortal sin. These people seem to be alive but in reality they are dead. 2) Material cemeteries scattered all over the earth: “Remember man that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” The infirmities, sorrows and fatigues of the present life conclude with decay in the tomb.

### ***“Testimonium conscientiae nostrae” (The Testimony of Our Conscience) (1957)***

This summarized treatment of a very complex theme, that of the conscience, is very helpful. It is the conscience that enables us to choose and carry out “actions that are in conformity with the divine will.” Once again, the sublime model offered us by the Founder is the person of Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life.

At the foundation of everything lies the conviction that human life is a journey that starts from God and returns to God. We must always model all our faculties on Jesus by means of the truth (mind), example (will) and grace (heart) that he himself brought us from heaven!

Human life is a journey *from God to God*. Christ is our Way by means of the truth, example and grace that he brought us from heaven.

To make this journey means, concretely, to accept the will and the commandments of Jesus Christ and to bring our life (that is to say, the individual internal and external acts that we have freely chosen) into conformity with them. Our conscience is the spiritual faculty that points out to us the divine will in each circumstance so as to help us choose and determine the acts that are in conformity with it. Thus our conscience is the faithful echo, the clear reflection, of the divine law for human actions. Statements such as “the judgment of a Christian conscience,” or, “to judge according to Christian conscience,” mean that the rule to follow in making a decision regarding a moral action must be in keeping with the words and the will of Jesus Christ, who is the Way, Truth and Life not only for humanity in general but also for every individual person (cf. Jn. 14:6)—not only adults, but also teens and children.

It follows that to form the Christian conscience of children or teenagers, we must first of all enlighten their minds about the will of Christ, his law, his life. In addition to this, we must seek to influence their souls, insofar as this can be done externally, so as to lead them to freely and steadfastly carry out the divine will.

“This is the highest task of a teacher,” says the Pope.

Where can the teacher and pupil concretely and unmistakably find the Christian moral law? In the law of the Creator imprinted on the heart of every human being (cf. Rm. 2:14-16), and in divine revelation; that is to say, in all the truths and precepts taught by the Divine Master.

Both the law written in the heart (the natural law) and the truths and precepts of divine revelation have been entrusted by Jesus, as a moral treasure, to the Church so that she can preach them, teach them,

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<sup>18</sup> ACV, pp.223-224.

transmit them to all creatures without alteration, and defend them against any contamination and errors from one generation to the next.<sup>19</sup>

### ***The Person Integrally Established in Christ Jesus...***

“To be fully established in Jesus Master, Way (will), Truth (mind), and Life (feelings); indeed, to reach the culminating point of our personality, that is: to think in Jesus Christ, to live in Jesus Christ, to will in Jesus Christ; or rather, that it is Christ who thinks in me, who loves in me, who wills in me.”<sup>20</sup>

“Jesus Master, sanctify my mind and increase my faith... Jesus, Way between the Father and us, I offer you everything and await everything from you... Jesus Life, live in me so that I may live in you....”

“[Mary, Mother, Teacher and Queen of Apostles], enlighten my mind, fortify my will, sanctify my heart during this year of my spiritual work....”

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<sup>19</sup> ACV, pp.270-271.

<sup>20</sup> *San Paolo* (SP), August-September 1956.