

Presentation

Dearest Sisters,

with joy we entrust to you the fruit of the preparation toward our 7GC which we have called *Instrument of work*. It gathers the contribution of prayer, reflection and studies of the communities¹ and the elements coming from the Provincial Chapters and Assemblies of Delegation².

The aim of this small instrument is to allow each capitular to take vision of what has been elaborated in the preparatory phase and gathered in its essential lines in order to express the hopes and the questions of the Congregation on the theme of our Chapter "*Leading to the springs of Life: the «care of souls»*".

With gratitude to the Lord and to the Sisters we have ascertained that a high percentage of communities³ has participated in the preparatory phase, manifesting interest for the theme and collaborating with reflections and proposals that reveal vitality and passion for our Charism.

After having attentively read the materials sent by the communities, we have made them object of prayer, study and discernment. We admired the beauty and the simplicity of the language used, a sign that in the heart of each Sister dwells the desire to live the vocation in the originality of the intuition of our Founder Blessed James Alberione.

The good reception of the theme and the accent set on the *triple work* have made us think that the orientation of the reflection goes decidedly toward the fundamental *knot* of being Pastorelle in the Church and in the world, *how* and *with* the Shepherds of souls.

In formulating the present text we have followed a method that has allowed us to work collegially, so that each one could take vision of all the documentation and then reread the material of each circumscription, through a grid of reading, previously agreed upon with the facilitator of the Chapter Sr. *Victoria Gonzales*, rscj.

In every step, we have shared that which we thought to be of common interests and inherent to the theme of «care of souls» and subsequently we have set them in narrative form which we hope may help you to know better the actual life of our Congregation.

The choice to insert some questions along the text aims to solicit a space for personal reflection so as to grasp those questions which are in the hearts of the Pastorelle, and in order to widen one's vision beyond one's own circumscription.

In the short time that separates us from the celebration of the Chapter, we will have the opportunity to use this instrument to prepare ourselves for the General Chapter through study and prayer.

¹ The green worksheets.

² The new path and topics voted upon during the Provincial Chapters and Assemblies of Delegations.

³ From the 123 communities of the circumscriptions, 111 responded, equivalent to 90.24%.

In communion,

Sr. Soeli Branco, Sr. Alicia Fogliatti, Sr. Narcisa Peñaredonda,
Sr. Lina Santantonio and Sr. Marta Finotelli
Preparatory commission

Sr. Giuseppina Alberghina
and the Sisters of the General government

Rome, 22 February 2005
Feast of the Chair of St Peter, the Apostle

1. Starting from the cry of humanity today

“When Jesus disembarked, he saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.”

(cf. Mc 6:34)

We have chosen to start from listening to the voice of the Spirit present in the cry of the human heart and we have described the *face of humanity* at the beginning of this Third Millennium as it was delineated in the responses of the green worksheets.

The wounded
person

Before the humanity of our time, we have gathered a vision of the human person wounded in its most authentic dimension which is *relationship*. All relationships seem to be threatened: that with God, that with others and that with the environment. We have ascertained that above all, interpersonal relationships are the most difficult reality to live today.

in a complex world

In fact we live in a complex and global world, in a society where the multiethnic and multicultural context suffers some problematic influence of globalization and technology, wherein the economic dimension prevails on everything. The dominance of the *little gods*: well-being and power seem to suffocate the question of life that we gather from our contemporaries.

Sciences and technologies have also shown their incapacity to answer the deepest questions of the human person; proof is that religion is practicing a new attraction on the new generations.

with a subjective
thought

We notice that the post-modern culture also provoked by the information network or internet, is confused and is incapable of answering the questions that progress itself has set. The mind remains weak and subjective; it favors individualism and extraneousness, causing the loss of the relational dimension and the uniqueness of every person, and producing a deep loneliness, the source of egocentrism, anguish, injustice, corruption and violence.

with inhuman rhythm

Even the simultaneous belonging to different worlds⁴, and the consequent difficulties to keep pace with a world which is advancing in a more and more rapid rhythm, increases the sense of inadequacy and profound impoverishment of existence, ever excluding more those who already live in hardships.

⁴. Displacement of work, and the family and social life

with
an increasing
poverty

In the pastoral listening, especially of some of the social classes of society, we have noticed that the person, side by side with a sense of emptiness, lives a poverty⁵ that humiliates her human dignity.

The poor are also impoverished of their faith and of their culture, they are induced to lose the sense of true and deep relationships, and a lot of people seem to set their hopes on magicians, psychologists, TV, internet, fundamentalist sects. Unfortunately we also find an existential uneasiness that also involves Christians.

Materialism, consumerism and secularism that widen the existential void, produce fragmentation of conscience and the consequent loss of the sense of God.

and a weakened
Christian identity

We notice, in fact, a society more and more lost, in which confusion increases, especially in the family and in the young people. The human and Christian identity also appears very weak, continually threatened by the new pseudo-religious proposals, abstract and not demanding.

Christian faith results weakened because of doctrinal fragility, of proliferation of the sects, of relativism and religious syncretism, of the subtle influence and often unnoticed effect of the New Age⁶. Religious indifference and practical atheism are increasing; also many of those who claim to be believers live in fact as if God didn't exist.

A strong question of
the future

Despite the realism of this picture, it seems impelling among our contemporaries, the need for a future and the demand to decipher the sense of the world and history.

From the people whom we approach we gather a request of hope that interpellates us to offer them the certainty that Christ has triumphed over evil and death.

The urgency
of a clear Christian
culture

For this we have affirmed the urgent necessity to participate in the elaboration of a renewed Christian culture, which leads every person to recover the meaning of life in the Triune God. It seems to us, in fact, that behind the need of relationship and authentic love, a strong thirst of God, of spirituality and of true life is hidden.

⁵ There are various forms of poverty, fruit of social injustice that attack all continents, even if in different way. In the so called first world we find: e loneliness of the elderly persons and the sick, the difficulty of the young people to have an access to the working world, the crisis of basic relationships, growth of misery among a big number of population, including the situation of the immigrants and refugees, above all those who slip in countries illegally: without documents, without job, without houses. In Latin America, in Africa and in Asia, besides these poor, thousand of outcasts are added who live on the streets and live different forms of slavery: abuse of minors, prostitutes, unemployed, drug addicts, carriers of AIDS... Persons who need the basic goods: food, clothing, hygiene, education who live in inhuman outskirts of big cities, in continuous exploitation, and who above all, need to be recognized in their dignity as children of God.

⁶ cf. Pontifical Council of Culture – Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, *Jesus Christ, The Bearer of the Water of Life. A Christian reflection on the "New Age"* 2003.

With the passion of
Jesus Good
Shepherd

The need for listening, for dialogue, for healing from one's own wounds, the rediscovery of what gives deep meaning to life, of peace and of serenity in the heart, to be recognized and loved is the cry that touches us more and prompts us to reach out to others offering time, welcoming and company making ours the compassion of Jesus Good Shepherd.

In the style
of dialogue

Faced with a multi-religious society, there is in us, an increased awareness that only between clear and well defined identities is possible an authentic and fruitful dialogue so as to work together for justice, peace and integrity of creation.

We believe that it is more and more necessary therefore, to strengthen the Christian faith, for a respectful dialogue with Islam and with the different religions, to search together that which benefits the care of life.

And with
an integral
gaze

We feel called to promote a spirituality in which faith, mind and life grow in an integrated and organic way, so as to give to the world and our local Churches a visible testimony that the Gospel is the maximum way to live one's humanity⁷.



In a society so complex and in search of spirituality, how can the *Good News of Christ, only Savior of the world, be proposed, in the manner of the first Christian community?*

2. Pastorelle in the «care of souls»

Reading between the lines of the *green worksheets*, we have gathered with awe the work of God, who with His Spirit has led and continues to lead all of us there where humanity waits to satiate its hunger and thirst for life and heal the wounds with the oil of His compassion.

In the responses regarding the question: “*What kind of «care of souls» does humanity today is in most need of, and what options do we, as Pastorelle, have to respond*”⁸ it seems to us that the path which our Congregation is called to tread in the today of history and in particular in the next six years is traced.

We accompany

We have expressed in diverse ways the desire to place ourselves, with love and respect, side by side with our contemporaries, accompanying them in their most profound questions that dwell in their hearts.

⁷ Cf. *Gaudiun et Spes*, 22.

⁸ Cf. *point c* of the green communitarian worksheet p. 2 in the Itinerary of preparation to the 7GC.

in the
search
for God

We felt strongly invited to encourage them in their struggle to search for God, in openness to the signs of the Spirit, in the reading of one's own experience of salvation and of the most authentic desires.

with the charity of
the truth

In one word, we have understood better how important today is the task which the Founder has entrusted to the entire Pauline Family: *Do to all the charity of truth*⁹.

learning
the art of
leading

We want to learn always more the art of "**leading**" to God, with attention to the integrity of the person: mind, will and heart, attentive to an anthropology that is born from Christian Revelation.

through the triple
work of our *First
Program*

Fr Alberione, in delineating the physiognomy of the Pastorella Sister within the pastoral mission of the Pauline Family, expresses it as the *First Program* with the triple work: **Christian instruction, Christian formation and Christian sanctification**¹⁰.

The Founder will go on specifying more and more the characteristics of this triple work until arriving at what will be for him the heart of the charism: the «care of souls». *Among all the Sisters nurses, teachers, the most in the center for the care of the soul is the Pastorella. She accomplishes the apostolate of prayer, of suffering, of holiness. Like Jesus and Mary, Parish priest and Pastorella are for the salvation of souls. (...) Priests and Sisters must do three things: instruction, formation, sanctification*" (PrP III, 1948, p. 213).

we carry out the
highest mission of
«care of souls»

It is underlined in almost all the communities that this is the highest mission entrusted to us by Jesus Good Shepherd: *"The Sisters consider themselves sent on a highest mission which they share with the parish priest. They have to bear in mind that they must **take care of those souls** in order to bring them to God. Great responsibility and great merit. Therefore, they must be ignited with holy zeal"* (Constitution of 1953, art. 265).



What specific connotations must Christian *instruction, formation and sanctification* have today?

⁹ Cf. Bollettino S. Paolo, gennaio 1954: "*Far la carità somma: quella della verità*".

¹⁰ Cf. *First Program in the Internal Bulletin of the PSFSP*, April 1937, and Union of Cooperators for the Publishing Apostolate, April 1937, in honor of Jesus Good Shepherd and the Constitutions 1947, art. 2, in D. Ranzato – G. Rocca, *50 anni di una presenza pastorale*, Roma 1988, pp. 185-186.

Besides, talking to the Paulines our mission is described as: "*Pastoral spirit is to communicate to people Jesus Christ that he defined in his own words: «I am the Way, the Truth and the Life». It is to uplift and sanctify the whole human being – mind, feelings, and will – by way of dogma, morals and worship. [...];. The Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd carry out a direct contact apostolate with people and families; [...]. They do this attending to and undertaking parish works, in accordance with their condition. As angels of light and comfort they have to deal with everyone: from the new-born child to the dying man or woman. They are, as it were, a bridge, a motherly intermediary between the people and the pastor by means of their prayers, works and words of comfort*", in *Ut Perfectus Sit homo Dei*, 1960, 376-377/4

To bring to the
encounter with Christ

We feel called to orient decidedly ourselves toward a “care of souls” that brings to an encounter with Jesus and to find in Him the meaning of life, the source of every reconciliation and the answer to the desire for true and lasting happiness.

This «care of souls» is addressed particularly to heal interpersonal relationships, to offer acceptance, listening ear, and accompaniment in the journey of the Christian life in the different phases of its development so that each person may reach full maturity in Christ. (Cf. Ef 4:13).

in collabora-
tion with the
pastors

Always lived in the womb of the Church and in collaboration with the pastors, the “care of souls”, addresses the same attention to each single person and the community, without neglecting those people who are in the borders of the Christian community, so that “*there may be one fold under only one Shepherd*” and privileging a style characterized more by “staying” than “doing”. “*We are to give God, otherwise what is the use of living?*” (PrP III, 1948, p. 220).

in the specificity of
our charism

In the reflection of the communities, the theme of *our identity* recurs with insistence, with regards to other ecclesial vocations. In effect our pastoral praxis and the way with which we present ourselves in the local Churches, are at times, not deprived of some ambiguities.

in a similar manner
to the Pastors of
souls

When we are asked to dedicate ourselves solely to pastoral activities that privileges social or charitable fields, it is necessary to ask ourselves whether, while remaining open to helping in the immediate need whoever comes to us, is it not more productive, to commit ordinarily all our strength in accomplishing that which is typical of our mission. In this way, it’s clearly expressing our religious color dedicated to the “care of souls”, side by side with Pastors and all the other vocations.



In our pastoral praxis, how can we not lose what is specific of our charism even when we are involved in activities oriented to social pastoral action or charity?

With the heart of
Jesus
Good Shepherd

The Pastorella is asked to have the heart of Jesus Good Shepherd: “*a big heart as big as the needs of humanity*” (A Return to the Source, 9) capable of welcoming all without distinction, with attitudes of patience, availability, generosity and sacrifice until spiritual martyrdom: “*We consume our life for souls*” (PrP III, 1948, p. 199). “*Who is the Good Shepherd? He who gives life, not only with words; redemption is accomplished more with suffering, patience and silence more than zeal. To give life signifies to consume life for souls!*” (PrP IV, 1949, p. 165).

in relationship with
the Trinity

An appeal to know how to weave healthy and vivifying relationships, founded on the Trinitarian relationship, is also renewed. In this way, spirituality of communion and the effectiveness of forgiveness is rendered more and more visible.

with the pedagogy
of God

There are plenty of opportunities which the pastoral mission offers in order that we can give witness of our manner of living the relationship with Pastors. Together with them we are called to give spiritual food, the content of the Christian message, according to the pedagogy of God, seeking to make ourselves companions on the journey of our brothers and sisters so as to lead them to the springs of life, “*without losing ourselves in so many accessories.*” (PrP III, 1948, p. 220).

attentive to the
formation of the laity

We are also dedicating ourselves, in a more attentive manner, to the formation of the laity called to serve the Church as pastoral workers, and even those who are committed more directly in fermenting with evangelical spirit the social and political life.

and cultures

We have stressed many times the importance of openness to dialogue with cultures and the great religions. We feel called to place greater attention to the inculturation of the faith and the evangelization of the cultures themselves.



How can we contribute to the evangelization of cultures and to the development of ecumenical sensibility and inter-religious dialogue in the pastoral realities that we serve?

2.1 *In specific fields*

In response
to the signs of the
times

We have singled out from the responses some specific fields in which we feel called to exercise with particular competence and love the «care of souls».

- *The family*

In ascertaining the increasing crisis of the family institution, aggravated by laws that don't protect its integrity and its duration¹¹, we want to develop a pastoral care that considers the dignity of the family as it has come out from the hands of the Creator and that promotes the value of life of each of its member.

¹¹ Cf. Laws on divorce, on abortion, on artificial insemination, genetical modification, euthanasia...

we make choices

- *The youth*

The collapse of the family seriously affects the young people, creating an educational void that leaves them without points of reference and deprived of fundamental values that help them to welcome life as a gift. We want to devote ourselves with renewed commitment to the *youth ministry* to take care of the Christian and human formation of the new generations. Within youth ministry, we hold decisive to dedicate ourselves with greater conviction to accompany the young people in vocational discernment.

in some fields

- *The immigrants*

In the face loneliness, marginalization, the frequent abandonment of many elderly persons, the sick, the suffering of various kinds, we want to address the poorest of the poor and excluded with the compassion of the Good Shepherd and to also orient the pastoral collaborators to take care of the weakest class.

- *The mass-media*

The ambiguous impact of mass media on the population, especially among children and young people, moves us to take care of the formation to the critical use of these means. At the same time we want to train ourselves to use, in a more effective way, the multimedia language in catechesis and generally in the pastoral.

which we consider priority

- *Lay cooperators*

In ascertaining the increase of interested laity to share our spirituality and mission, and in the face of the necessity of pastoral workers with a solid Christian spirituality, we want to take care of and to sustain their formation. Their openness to our mission can be a premise to form an eventual *lay movement of Pauline Cooperators of Jesus Good Shepherd*. To such purpose it could be useful to elaborate some general principles in a form of statute to be experimented in the whole Congregation.

- *Ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue*

In different ways we have expressed the necessity to know always better the spirituality of the Eastern Christian, but also the reality of Islam and the great religions in order to weave a dialogue that is not only desired, but experimented, where there is possibility to realize it.

- *Retreats, Spiritual exercises and accompaniment*

Considering the necessity to strengthen the Christian faith and to consolidate the following of Christ in the ordinariness of life, we deem important to develop the gift of spiritual discernment and to prepare ourselves to guide and animate retreats and Spiritual Exercises and, there where it is asked, to train also ourselves for spiritual accompaniment.



To qualify our presence in the described fields in the style of the «care of souls», could it be useful to constitute, ad experimentum, some communities, that assume, prevalently, some of the indicated fields, so that we can reflect starting from the praxis?

Like Mary at the foot
of
the Cross

The icon of Mary at the foot of the Cross is very dear to us precisely because it recalls love until sacrifice, to the offering of self, to the sorority and universal maternity, to “*remaining in the complexities of our time*”¹².

To generate children
to grace

“*You are born mothers!*” (A Return to the Source, 35-36). Fr. Alberione will say, thinking of our maternity as the most natural path to generate life: “*The spirit of the Pastorella is spirit of high spiritual maternity*” (PrP IV, 1949, p. 90) and to carry out the mission of «care of souls»: *It is good to develop in you the concept to become brides and mothers. To you, the Lord has changed the cards in hand: you brides of Christ generate little children to grace. The concept of maternity essentially enters in the vocation of the Pastorelle. Jesus and Mary intimately related.* (PrP IV, 1949, p. 32-33).

and to nourish their
faith

The maternal spirit of the Pastorelle is expressed precisely in accompanying, in forming, in nourishing the life of faith of all the children of God. “*The spirit of maternity that is inherent in your nature, has to develop in supernatural sense (...). Love the sick, the sinner, for these same souls for which Jesus has given life.*” (PrP VIII, 1957, p. 238).



How can icon of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd, enlighten our ministry of the «care of souls» in the actual context?

2.2 As well as within the Congregation

Care toward the
sisters

Almost all the communities have recalled the importance of living among us what we are expected to offer in the pastoral mission: the spiritual care towards the people of God is credible in the measure in which we commit ourselves to live it among us.

Love of souls also means love and care toward the sisters, with the same research of the good that we offer to other people. A supernatural love that makes us feel and live as true religious family for

¹² Cf. Prayer to Mary at the foot of the Cross in the *Pianificazione del Sessennio 1999-2005*.

which we are called to work, to think and to provide just like sisters and mothers: “Love your institute as your family (...) it is a spiritual family in which, also naturally, everything is received and everything needs to be given (...). The sister, who is a mother by nature for motive of religion becomes spiritual mother, here she has to think and provide in all manner that which is her new family” (AAP 1957, 386).



Which personal attitudes can give quality to our style of community life in order to make our «care of souls» toward others credible?

To
up-date
our
formation

Re-owning our first program also pushes us to see again our initial and continuous formation, in those aspects that concern the field of Christian education, of Christian formation and of Christian sanctification: “Your life demands firmness and stability to lead all to Jesus. Wide doctrine, firmness of character, intense piety.” (PrP IV, 1949, p. 8).

to Christian
instruction

We are convinced of the urgency that the Congregation reaches, together, a higher solid doctrinal and theological preparation, which makes us capable to educate, to instruct and to help decipher the confusion that reigns within faith and religiosity. It moves us to overcome relativism, dichotomies, the lack of clarity in responding to the challenges of the world, and makes us more vigilant regarding the tendency to assume insensitively a non-evangelical mentality.

demands *habitus* to
study

We are aware that in order to accompany the growth of faith in us and in others, it is necessary to increase in the Congregation, the *habitus* to assiduous and profound study, a superior and constant reflection which makes us capable to a wise reading of life.

without distractions

We don't underestimate the temptation to neglect study using the excuse that we have to relax: “If one remains watching the television or listening to the radio until late at night she will be filled with wandering thoughts. Concentration goes away. Meditation and communion of the next day will not be so perfect, because the imagination is disturbed: she remains impressed by certain things. So also are conversations and reading and so many news-bulletins that don't interest us. We have other and other things to do. What interest us are the things that concern God's glory, our sanctification and the apostolate, which is the «care of the souls» (AAP 1962, 547).

It concerns of that dimension of on-going formation which Fr. Alberione calls “studiosity”, the second according to the *four wheels*.

Qualifying ourselves
in
pastoral
theology

Among the studies of theology, pastoral theology occupies a special place for us: “Pastoral theology teaches how to do some good, how to apply dogmatic theology, moral, ascetic and mysticism. It is the theology of

Jesus Good Shepherd; it is yours (...). Here in the study of theology, you have special graces, graces to be able to understand pastoral ministry.” (PrP III, 1948, p. 208-209).

Sometimes we realize, with suffering, that our pastoral responses are more easily addressed to the immediate ones and are not always accompanied by personal and communitarian reflection which considers the global pastoral vision and knows how to recognize the presence and the action of God in history.

We would like to be more and more in an adequate condition of reflection on «care of souls» shared with Pastors, to single out paths and methodologies suitable to the pastoral mission in the different contexts.

In our heart, the question of adequate preparation comes back with insistence; because many studies, even systematic, and many courses of updating seem not enough to make us feel prepared for our ministry.

In order to reflect together with the Pastors



What is lacking in order to acquire that spiritual wisdom which values our preparation and also elevates the cultural level of the whole Congregation?

Christian formation

In assuming the Christian formation of others in our pastoral ministry, questions are being raised regarding the area of our own religious formation. Upon entrance in the Congregation, it is essential to give the young ones solid nourishment which is drawn from the Word of God, from the great Tradition of the Church and from the Fathers and Mothers of the faith, especially those who have been religious and pastors, and can offer even today meaningful testimonies to our mission. *“Leading others is the art of arts.” (PrP IV, 1949, p. 22).*

in order to acquire the sense of hearing of the disciple

Besides, we recognize always valid those means which our formation already indicates particularly: meditation of the Word, spiritual reading, spiritual examination of conscience, discernment as style of life, study and systematic spiritual accompaniment. We are convinced in fact that if we have the *sense of hearing of the disciple*, trained to listening to the Lord and his brothers and sisters, we will know how to give the *responses of God* to the questions, to the doubts, to the sense of void of so many companions in the journey.



How can we take better care of our Christian formation so that it may continue to sustain the task of forming and accompanying others in the faith? What are the instruments to be privileged for us?

Christian sanctification

In listening to life and to the restlessness highlighted by the communities, we also find a strong insistence on holiness.

In the paths of the Spirit

In this time, a lot of Pastorelle, together with the other members of the Pauline Family, are doing courses of Spiritual Exercises and deepening of the charismatic inheritance left to us by Fr. Alberione. We know that he has borrowed the itinerary of Christian sanctification from the spiritual patrimony of the Church and has expressed it in a meaningful way in the *Donec Formetur*, which as it is known is articulated in three ways¹³. The *way of purification*, the *way of illumination* and the *way of union*, traced by now from centuries, is the journey of maturation in the faith for us and for all the Christians.

Therefore we have stressed the importance of an intense life of personal, community, ecclesial prayer; of assiduousness to the sacraments, the celebration of a well prepared Liturgy and lived in fullness.

We feel the daily difficulty of taking *spiritual things* seriously, with strong decisions and determination toward a journey of conversion, offered to us continually by the divine mercy.

with theological virtues

We remain convinced however that solidity in the faith, in hope and in charity, will make us capable of facing the difficulties and crises proper to our existence and to be capable of being *companions* who orient and lead others to the Spring of life.

toward pastoral holiness

“Jesus Good Shepherd requires from you only one thing now: holiness! True holiness, authentic holiness. To take spiritual things seriously. What does seriously mean? A strong decision, decision that is astuteness which uses all means. And the means are: prayer, commitment, resolutions, use of the sacraments, counseling and [cor]respondence to everything that is given. Not mediocre persons! But instead persons full of fervor and ardor, truly holy” (AAP 1962, 663-664).



What does this insistent call to holiness mean to us, Pastorelle of the Third Millennium?

¹³ Cf. *Donec Formetur Christus in vobis*, nn. 17-92.

3. *Enlightened by the Word*

During our Provincial Chapters and Assembly of Delegations we have deepened the theme «care of souls» with the contribution of experts. We think it 's useful to report some of the significant points to enlighten and to subsequently enrich our Instrument with the Word of God as has been deepened in the chapters of circumscriptions.

Jesus Lamb-Shepherd

Jesus is the Shepherd who leads the people of God to salvation. He is above all the Lamb who became Shepherd (*cf. Rev. 7:17*) who in donating His life, takes upon Himself the sin of the world (*cf. Jn 1:29*). His task is to lead the flock to the springs of life-giving water. Jesus, sent by the father in the strength of the Spirit (*cf. Jn 6:57*) brings us the same life of the Father and the living water of the Spirit.

leads

The action of leading is accomplished by someone in favor of the other. It is going out from oneself so as to encounter and give precedence to the other. The task of leading demands that the person is in the right path and allows herself, in turn, to be led. The verb *to lead* is strongly pastoral, it evokes the principal actions of the Shepherd: leads, accompanies, watches over, takes care, protects, defends the flock from every danger, bears upon himself with tenderness all the sheep, especially the weak, the wounded, the little ones.

All the actions of Jesus are addressed in favor of the human person (*cf. Mt 12:12*) welcoming him in his reality and leading him in the truth (*cf. Mc 6:34*). It is a loving care in order that person may have life and life in abundance which flows from the Father (*cf. Jn 10:10*).

the lost humanity

Humanity of today appears lost amidst many things that pulls it far from Christ. The most profound and diffused desire of humanity of today is the thirst for God. As Pastorella, we are urged to accompany the encounter with God offering spiritual food and drink. We are called to witness spiritual maternity, to be mothers and sisters according to our Founder in leading, in accompanying the people entrusted to us to Christ. These persons are our spiritual children and they are entrusted to our loving care. Let us accompany them with a compassionate gaze and a welcoming heart.

in the Way of Life

«Care of souls» is to walk in truth and in humility. We recognize that we are creatures in need of God's mercy and forgiveness. The Pastorella, nourished and enlightened by the Word has to have a clear understanding of the good which God desires for His children. It is not enough that we know the goal and the dangers of the journey, but to walk with the signs of the times, offering alternative ways in favor of life, of fullness of life destined to eternal happiness.

with abundance for
all

We have felt a constant appeal to our *First program*, given us by the Founder, to consider it and to propose it in our care of souls, to safeguard the dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Gen 1:27*). Considering the integrity of the person, we are inclined to offer Christian education, Christian formation and sanctification of life to all. The *First program* pushes us to look for the most, for the best, and spurs us to go beyond our usual pastoral activities, so that the new may be born from faith and from the desire to lead to Christ all his little sheep.

4. Toward the new paths of the Spirit

The *new paths* regarding «*care of souls*» of the Pastorelle are presented; they have been singled out after a careful pastoral discernment, accomplished in each Chapter or Assemblies of circumscriptions.

These ten indications will be object of further discernment during the General Chapter in view of the future choices of the Congregation:

Argentina Bolivia

Revitalize the «attitude of listening» as the fundamental key of the relationships of the person in all its dimensions (with God, with herself, in the fraternal life and with people).

Australia

*To give authentic witness, as a community of religious women consecrated to Jesus Good Shepherd, Way, Truth and Life for the care of souls through our pastoral ministry:
Continuing to developing skills in listening and in spiritual discernment so as to create an authentic contemplative approach to pastoral ministry.*

Brasil
Caxias do Sul

Begin a reflection in view of setting up a Pastoral Institute, according to the intuition of Blessed Don Alberione.

Brasil
San Paolo

Our stay in Africa as a Province “Father Alberione”.

Colombia-Venezuela-
Mexico

Strengthen fraternal relationships, as prophetic signs in the dehumanized situation in which the globalized world lives.

Cile-Perù

Accompany persons integrally giving special attention to those who are “far away”.

Corea

In the complex and challenging pastoral reality, we want to live better the Pastorelle identity

- going back to the foundations of Religious life and of the charism, immersed in the Trinitarian mystery;
- renewing our spiritual life ;

developing our spiritual maternity toward those who have gone astray and have lost their way, giving them Jesus Christ.

Philippines

Ministry of healing, in the *light of RoL 14* in its varied expressions:

- presence, listening, accompaniment, counseling, spiritual direction, etc.;
- according to the pastoral priorities of the local Church and in collaboration with the Pastors.

Italy Central North

Assume pastoral discernment as a style of community life in the context of cultural and religious pluralism.

Italia Central South

Returning to the roots of the charismatic Christian identity, **we live missionariety:**

becoming promoters of Christian *culture*,
 privileging the areas most in need of *evangelization*
 giving attention to those ‘who are far’ from ecclesial community,

- in being available to collaboration and planning
- through welcoming and dialogue with the socio-cultural and religious diversities

so that men and women of today may be oriented to Christ, Savior of humanity.

5. Proposals for the 7GC

We summarize the *topics of general interest* proposed by the circumscriptions which will be object of reflection and discernment during our General Chapter.

We present them in the order of frequency:

Lay cooperators

To strengthen and to sustain the accompaniment and the formation of the laity, and to elaborate operational guidelines to promote a possible lay movement of *Pauline Cooperators of Jesus Good Shepherd*.
 To elaborate, on the Congregational level a Statute ad experimentum for lay Cooperators.

(ARG-BO; BR-CdS; BR-SP; ICN)

Prepare ourselves to spiritual ministry

To favor specific initiatives, also methodological, so as *to deepen* and to prepare ourselves to the ministry of the “*care of souls*” according to our Founder James Alberione both in to forming ourselves to the “spiritual maternity” and in apostolic choices.
 Each choice is to be evaluated attentively.

(ARG-BO; AUS; BR-CdS; CO-VE-ME)

Formation to
internationality

To nourish the *missionary spirit* beginning from the initial formation, favoring insertions of the young ones in countries other than their own, so that they grow with a more universal vision of the Church and the Congregation; and from the beginning they experience broader relationships, also international in the service of evangelization of cultures, giving attention to the field of communication.

(K; BR-SP; ICN)

ISM
and the
Study-Charism
community

To strengthen the *International Secretariat for the Mission* so that it may help elaborate proposals and projects on the frontiers of the pastoral mission and to increase the community of *Studies and Charism of Via Traversari* in order to continue to deepen themes of common interest.

(BR-CdS; ICN)

Youth

To be more present in the *youth ministry* in each country with particular reference to the formation of the seminarians and young priests.
To reflect on the intuition of the Founder (AD 345-346) to start an Institute that will take care of the formation of young people as future priests who desire to live the very spirit of our pastoral charism.

(ARG-BO; CI-PE)

Vocational animation

The awareness of being debtors of the charism to the new generations and at the same time the knowledge of the few number of vocations impels us to propose:

- a) to question strongly how we are living our being Pastorelle;
- b) the comparison and exchange among the vocational animators of the different circumscriptions;
- c) the possibility of missionary experiences on the part of young people who are more sensible to our charism in the different circumscriptions.

(ICN)

Pastoral
collaboration

Explore *new paths* on how to live collaboration with Pastors of the Church.

(CI-PE)

Congregational website	<p>To make our website also <i>for vocational animation and formative instrument</i> for the young.</p> <p>(K)</p> <p><i>To always better invest in the culture of communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informing, evangelizing, conscientizing ; - divulge the life and the mission of our insertions; - facilitating communication and participation of the communities. <p>(BR-SP)</p>
Economy	<p>To give the <i>treasurer general</i> the possibility to visit the different circumscriptions periodically in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know closely the economic reality of each circumscription, their resources and difficulties; - meet the Economic commission of each circumscription and the treasurers of the communities; - help in management of investments, give clear guidelines ; - animate the circumscriptions to solidarity, to sharing of goods and exchange of information. <p>(PI)</p>
Method of consultation	<p>To facilitate the <i>consultation</i> of the Sisters for the nomination of the Provincial government.</p> <p>(BR-SP)</p>
RoL 109	<p>Review art. 109: that the <i>election</i> of the Provincial Superior and the Councilors be done in assembly directly in the province with the presence of a representative from the General Government.</p> <p>(BR-CdS)</p>
RoL 103.1 132 and 133	<p>Modify the article as: “<i>Anytime the delegation rises above the 30 members, the superior delegate participate by right and one elected member</i>” (cf. Atti del 6CG, mandati al Governo generale, p. 160); and consequently, modify art. 132 about the participants by right to the General Chapter and art. 133 regarding the numerical proportion between members by right and elected members.</p> <p>(GG)</p>
RoL 118	<p>Take into consideration art. 118 and the modification considered during the 5th Interchapter.</p> <p>(GG)</p>

International initial

Actually, we present ourselves in the different nations with the congregational initial translated in one's own language. For motives of clarity and of universal identification, it is necessary to present ourselves, in any part of the world, with only one initial in the Latin language: *SJBP* (= *Sorores a Jesu Bono Pastore*).

(GG)

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“A Shepherd of souls
has to be close to each one
with the language of compassion and understanding..

He must, in a singular way, be capable of uplifting himself
above all others through prayer and contemplation.

The sentiments of piety and compassion
will allow him to make the weaknesses of others his own.

May contemplation bring him to overcome
and win over himself with the desire of celestial things.

Nevertheless the desire of achieving spiritual heights
May not make him forget the demands of the believers.

And in the same way the task
of providing and satisfying the needs of others
may not make him neglect his duty
to uplift himself to celestial things.

Saint Paul is a living example
of so much equilibrium in the pastoral ministry. ”

(St. Gregory the Great, The Pastoral Rule, II, c. 5)