

Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Blessed James Alberione Apostle of the Media *Basilica of the Queen of Apostles*

As the members of the group were preparing to leave the basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls, they were met by Fra Guiseppe Galli, a brother of the Society of St Paul, who had come to bring the group to the Basilica of the Queen of the Apostles where the body of Blessed James Alberione is enshrined.



Blessed James Alberione was a simple priest with a great vision – to use the new media and communications industry to preach the Word of God and bring Christ to the men and women of the world. He founded ten new religious institutes, religious congregations, secular institutes and pious associations to work in this apostolate. The Fraternity of St Genesius honours Blessed James Alberione and looks to him as one of the guiding lights to help our family of prayer realize the importance of our mission in the Church and the world. It was as a mark of respect, and out of a desire to honour this devotee of St Paul, that a pilgrimage to his tomb in the Basilica of Queen of Apostles in Rome was included on the itinerary.

The Basilica of the Queen of Apostles (or officially Basilica di Santa Maria, Regina degli Apostoli alla Montagnola) stands near the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls and is the spiritual home of the Pauline family. On his death Blessed James was laid to rest in the crypt of the church, and with him, in various parts of basilica lie the remains of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, the first Pauline priest, and the

Servant of God, Mother Thecla Merlo, co-foundress of the Daughters of St Paul.

A welcoming committee was waiting for the bus when it pulled into the courtyard of the Pauline complex. The Provincial, with a priest of the Society of St Paul and a translator extended, a warm welcome to Bishop Smith and the group, and we were brought into the Sotto-Crypto, to the chapel where the remains of Blessed James are laid out in a glass tomb. The Bishop and pilgrims spent some time in prayer before the remains, and then all gathered to pray Vespers with the representatives of the Paulines. Bishop Smith presided over Vespers of the Apostles SS Simon and Jude, it being their feast day.

Afterwards, Father Provincial gave the group a talk on the life, message and foundations of Blessed James. Bishop Smith thanked Father for the warm welcome, after which he was presented with a DVD of the life of Blessed James by the Provincial. On behalf of the Fraternity, Fr John presented Father Provincial with an icon of St Genesius. Photographs were taken and after people had time to converse and look around at the beautiful chapel it was time to return to Casa La Salle for dinner. Father Director and the Fraternity were most grateful for the warm welcome afforded them by the Paulines and the pilgrimage to Blessed James was considered not only a success, but a highlight of the pilgrimage.



Fr John presents an icon of St Genesius to Father Provincial of the Society of St Paul