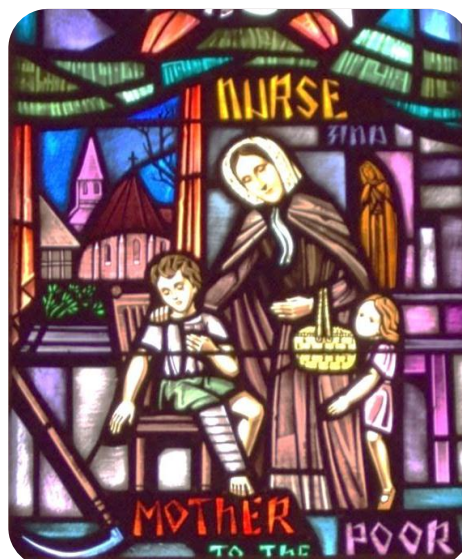


**A Saint
is like a stained-glass window,
through whom the sun is shining.**



+ Rome, April 20, 2011

Dear Sisters,

In a few days we will celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, the beginning of new life for all who have died and risen with Christ in Baptism. “You were raised with Christ,” says St. Paul. (Col 3:1) This new life is still hidden for us; it is a promise and a challenge at the same time. It is a promise because it points beyond our finite earthly life towards eternal life in the Trinity. It is a challenge, because it demands from us to “be in the world, but not of the world.” (cf. John 17, 14-18)

It is a good coincidence that the 130th Anniversary of Mother Pauline’s death falls this year in Easter week. Her life was marked by her faith in the Resurrection which was reflected in the paschal joy which is so characteristic of her, even amidst the adversity of the Kulturkampf. The longing for heaven and the joy to be united inseparably with the “Beloved of her heart” (cf. 1849) did not mean a separation from the needs of her time but was rather a drive for her to serve the people. Love of God and love of neighbor were for her inseparably united. This constitutes her holiness: Seized by the love of Christ she perceives those who need help. She lived the polarity: “to be in the world, but not of the world”. That characterizes the following of Christ at all times. “This openness, to be seized by the Lord, to belong totally to him and with him to belong to the others – that is a question for us... Are we aware of the unbreakable bond between the surrender of the whole heart and life to God and presence to the neighbor?” (Bishop Hemmerle)

God was clearly visible through Pauline’s life of joy and service. We have much witness of this from people for whom the encounter with Mother Pauline remained unforgettable. One Sister wrote: “Her entire appearance gave me the impression of that of a saint. She met everyone so simply, naturally and heartily. She resembled a being from a higher world; her countenance shone as though transfigured; her face was deathly pale... And yet during

her beautiful weekly instructions, she was full of life. It was admirable how much strength and warmth lay in her words, especially when she exhorted us to love, to patient, forbearing love.” Bishop Sales from Concepción said after an encounter with Mother Pauline: “Reverend Mother is a noble, saintly lady. She is the valiant woman described in the gospel.” The witness of a Protestant mayor is impressive: “I do not believe in saints, but if there are such things, this lady is a saint.” Alfred Hüffer tells in his biography of Mother Pauline about a beggar who enjoyed every time Mother Pauline passed and greeted him. “He expressed his opinion that a lady like that was not to be found anywhere in the world anymore, one who would greet a beggar in such a friendly way.”

“A Saint is like a stained-glass window, through whom the sun is shining”. I was reminded of this saying when I looked at the windows in the chapel of Holy Spirit Hospital. I chose a detail of one window for this letter. It represents the “Mother of the poor,” as shown by the inscription. Mother Pauline knew that holiness cannot be reached by our own achievement. It is not ascetical efforts that make us holy but the openness of the “windows of our soul so that the light of God can enter.” (Pope Benedict XVI)

To become a Saint was for Mother Pauline the main task for every Religious. As much as she let herself be formed by God she also wanted the Sisters to become holy. “I would like to see the souls entrusted to me rise toward holiness, and I cut and burn without mercy what seems a hindrance to that.” (1857) During Mother Pauline’s last years of her life the admonitions with regard to holiness become more frequent. “Be intent upon your sanctification. This is of the greatest importance; everything depends upon it.” (1880) With these or similar words she admonishes the Sisters time and again. This appeal of Mother Pauline does not lose anything of its relevance. To bear witness to Jesus’ way of life is more important now than ever. Saints are visible signs of the following of Jesus; they are a memory of Jesus’ life and action in our world, as we read in Article 1.

In 1963, on the occasion of the reinterment of the remains of Mother Pauline, Archbishop Lorenz Jäger said in his homily: Mother Pauline is “a modern Saint at a time when there is so much insecurity in human hearts, when so many questions and doubts have shaken the security of faith.” Pope John Paul II similarly closed his homily on the occasion of the Beatification of Mother Pauline: “The life of Mother Pauline is an example to us. In answer to the anxious unrest of modern men and women she shows us a way to inner peace by courageously and trustingly seeing God in one’s suffering brother and sister. Thus her message has relevance today, too, for the search for God is always relevant.”

Holiness is not a privilege only for some. By Baptism we are all called to holiness – each one very personally. I remember a short story thereto telling of a Rabbi named Susja, who said: “In the next world I will not be asked, ‘Why weren’t you Moses?’. I will be asked, ‘Why weren’t you Susja?’ “Why weren’t you (*enter your own name*)?” Let us ask: Am I aware that I am unique in God’s plan and that I have a task to fulfill which is uniquely mine?

May Mother Pauline help us to become a saint in and for our time!

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Information:

- From May 4th to 14th the Enlarged Council will take place In Wilmette. During the first three days Sr. Rosemary Howarth, our facilitator in the process of reconfiguration, will be with us. First we will evaluate your answers, which – we hope – will give us the direction for the next steps or rather the next step for our reconfiguration. Some other important themes of the agenda among others are questions with regard to formation, mission and ministry, our life-style and the financial situation of the Congregation. You see that it will be a very intense conference. We trust in your prayerful support, dear Sisters, because unless the Lord builds the house, we labor in vain. (Cf. Psalm 127)
- While most of the Sisters of the Generalate and the provincial superiors will visit the Eastern Province for some days after the Enlarged Council, Sr. M. Judith and I will begin the visitation in the Western Province. On June 27, I will return to Rome. Already now I thank you very heartily for your accompanying prayers.
- A hearty THANKS for all your good wishes and mainly for your prayers for my Feastday. May God reward all!

I wish all of you a blessed, happy Easter Season and a grace-filled April 30th. With hearty greetings also from the Sisters in Villa Paolina,

I am you grateful

Sr. Adalberta