

## REFLECTION IN THE EVENING OF AUGUST 20, 2009

160 years ago, on the evening preceding the investing day of Mother Pauline and her three companions, Mother Pauline remembers: “The solemn bells of our parish church announced the glad tidings of the morrow.”

We are at the evening of the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Congregation gathered here with immense gratitude. “Bells” of joy are resonating in our heart and on our lips in hymns of praise and thanksgiving, accompanied masterly by organ and the choir and tomorrow, I am sure, with violin, trumpet, drum, triangle, cymbal and others. We thank God specially for our two new novices Sr. Marie José y Sr. Maria Angeline. With Mother Pauline we jubilate: “What can I say as I reflect on the infinite goodness of God? My God and my All! I might well echo the canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid.”

And then Mother Pauline continues: “I have received the blessing of the Church - and I fear no longer... A new life had begun - a life within the Church and for the Church of God in the fullest sense of the word.... I felt endowed with fortitude and grace to accomplish the duties of the office which God was imposing upon me through the voice of the Church.”

Can we say the same: “I fear no longer?” Can we say with St. Paul: “I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.” (Rm 8:38-39) Can we say that with firm conviction?

Sisters, our life as Christians and more as Religious is only possible when it is based on faith. It might sound contradictory, but to believe means to have the only correct view of reality. To believe means to surrender ourselves to a person, to God whom Jesus proclaimed as his and our loving Father; to believe means to let ourselves be taken by his hand, to be led by him through darkness and often through territories without roads and directions. To believe means to trust God and to let him take the lead. To believe means also to be on guard not to lose the treasure of our faith, of our vocation.

Faith is a risk, dear Sisters. Do we dare to launch out into the unknown and to trust that we are called to more than the mediocre state of a half-committed Religious Life? Like the migrant bird – as the following short story tells us - we are faced with a decision if we want to live our faith to the full.

*“Migration is not an easy or a pleasant thing for a tiny bird to face. It must turn from solid land, from food, shelter, a certain measure of security, and fly across an ocean unfriendly to its life, destitute of everything it needs. ... The tiny bird, before conditions force it – not driven by fear, but drawn by hope – commits itself with*

*perfect confidence to that infinite ocean of air; where all familiar landmarks will vanish, and if its strength fails it must be lost. And the bird's hope is justified. There IS summer at the other end of the perilous journey. The scrap of valiant life obeys a true instinct when it launches itself on the air. It is urged from within towards a goal it can attain; and may reckon the suffering of the moment not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed.*" (EVELYN UNDERHILL)

This tiny bird has reached a stage in its life when it must respond to a powerful inner instinct to leave the womb of security and launch out into a world totally unknown to him. Likewise, the decision that confronts the tiny bird is one that faces every Christian. Each of us is called to the "Duc in altum", to launch out into the deep. It is a call to live the Christian life at a deeper level. Let us not take only a half step! We are asked to give up our apparent securities and to put our trust into the one security, that is God. May Mother Pauline intercede for us the grace of unlimited confidence into God's wise plan for us! May the Lord give us that faith which was so characteristic for Mother Pauline, so that also we can say: "We fear no longer. Blessed by the Church we feel endowed with fortitude and grace to accomplish those tasks which God imposed and will impose upon us."

Blessed Pauline, pray for us!

Mendham, August 20, 2009

*Sr. Adalberto*