

+ Rome, April 23, 2007



Dear Sisters,

In a few days we will celebrate the Feast of Mother Pauline. Every year, in preparation for April 30, I take the chronicles in hand in order to, in some way, spend the last days of Mother Pauline close to her. Those days had been days of dramatic strain for the Sisters: on the one hand days of slight hope for a recovery of their beloved Mother, on the other hand days of anxious foreboding of a near separation. For

Mother Pauline these days were characterized by a growing readiness of letting go and by an ardent longing for the encounter with Jesus Christ. During these days all that had been important in her life – love of God and love of neighbor – flashed before her eyes like a shining light.

In this letter I want to present to you words of Mother Pauline herself through some excerpts from her last conference that she gave to the Sisters on April 25, 1881. These words are known to us, maybe so well that we risk no longer grasping their far-reaching implications. Therefore, for this reason, it is important to ponder them time and again since their message is never out-of-date.

My dear Sisters! Let us at all times endeavor to obtain true Christian love! Let your love always be a supernatural one, one that is universal, active and self-sacrificing. Let us have a kind heart for all. From this kind heart only loving words should emanate. Consider the words, which made so deep an impression on me, whilst I was still a child: "Judge not, that thou may not be judged." And then, my dear Sisters, let us ever look upon all as coming from the Hand of God, be these spiritual or physical afflictions, interior or exterior troubles. Let us ever be resigned to His Holy Will, come, what may. To those, who love God, all things will turn to their good. Those, who unreservedly place themselves in the Hand of God, will always be taken care of by Him.

The annalist concludes the record: *The instruction given us by our beloved Reverend Mother can, in all truth, be called her legacy, her last will. The virtues she cherished so dearly, and which she endeavoured at all times to practice heroically, yes, the virtues which were part and parcel of her own dear self – childlike humility, sincere charity and unwavering confidence in God, she wished to recommend to us once more in the evening of her life as fervently as she possibly could. She begged us never to speak a word against charity, no matter how insignificant the fault might seem, never to utter an unkind word about an individual Sister, nor about a community. If, however, we should have committed a fault in this respect, from sheer human frailty, then we should never fail to make reparation to the best of our ability. How often she repeated to us the commandment of the love of God and then she would add with special emphasis: And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love your neighbor as thyself. And: With that measure you mete out to others, it shall be measured back to you.*

Love – that was the spiritual driving force in Mother Pauline's life. Therefore, for her grave, no better words than these words of Jesus, could have been chosen: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you" (Joh 15:12) and "Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are." (Joh, 17:11) When we gather on April 30 in thought or in reality at Mother Pauline's grave let us silently contemplate these words. These are words of insistent demand and at the same time words of imploring prayer for us. The Last Will of Jesus is given to us as Mother Pauline's last will of love. Does it still speak to me/us -- here and now? Does it challenge me/us to concrete action?

I want to close with a text that characterizes in a poetic and compact way that attitude which alone is necessary for us in order to act in a transforming way in our world.

WHERE GEARS ARE MESHING,
machines change the world.
Only the human being who invents them
and operates them, still asks
whether it is worthwhile,
that hands reach out to hands.

When hands reach out to hands,
human beings change the world.
Only the fear that troubles us,
is stealing into us, still asks
whether it is worthwhile.
that human beings reach out to serve one another.

When human beings reach out to serve one another,
they change, godlike, the world,
because the Lord who did not dominate,
but served, never asked
whether it is worthwhile,
to reach out our hands to others.

D. Trautwein

Information/Remarks:

- In my Easter letter I informed you about the appointment of Sister Janice Boyer as Provincial Superior for the N.A. Western Province. In the meantime her assistants were also appointed: Sister Rosemary Schwer (1st Assistant), Sister Alice Mary Ortmann (2nd Assistant) and Sister Carol Bredenkamp (3rd Assistant). The term of the new Provincial leadership team begins on September 8 of this year. Let us thank these Sisters for their generous Yes for this task and let us accompany them with our prayer! Once again I want to express my sincere gratitude to Sr. Mary Clement for her selfless service during the last six years. I thank also Sister Caroline Schafer, who will leave the office as councilor, for her untiring support in the Provincial Leadership Team. I wish all of these Sisters God's blessing.
- I want to thank you for the many good wishes which you sent via mail, fax or e-mail for Easter and for my name day. I can only thank the Lord for all the gifts, especially for the Holy Masses which you had offered for me – and therefore, for all the Sisters, because it is self understood that you are always included.
- According to Article 90d.1 of our Constitutions, I want to give you the opportunity to send to the General Chapter proposals that had not been considered during the Provincial Chapter and which are of importance for the future of the Congregation. Please, send the proposals to me **by May 15** via e-mail or fax.
- On April 25 our Generalate community will take part in a pilgrimage, sponsored by our parish, to Our Lady of Loreto. We are very grateful that we can go to this particular Marian Shrine because Mother Pauline prayed there in May 1876 when she travelled back from Rome to Paderborn. There we want to implore God's blessings through the intercession of Mary, especially for our General Chapter.
- From May 6 to 10, I will participate in the UISG Plenary Session. This year's theme is: "Challenged to weave a new spirituality which generates hope and life for all."

Again, I wish you a very blessed Feast of Mother Pauline on April 30. In gratitude, united with all of you, your

Sr. Adalberta