



+ Rome, March 27, 2009

Dear Sisters,

With this letter I want to inform you about the Enlarged Council Meeting which took place in San Bernardo from February 9 to 18. I can imagine that you have been waiting for a report. However, the visitation of our Sisters in Uruguay-Argentina followed directly after the Enlarged Council. I returned to Rome only on March 24 so it is only possible for me to inform you now about the results of the conference. I hope you understand. I thank you very sincerely, also in the name of the Provincial Superiors, for your accompanying prayer.

THAT ALL MAY BE ONE (QUE TODOS SEAN UNO) – this motto gave direction to our discussions this time, as it had already done last year. In our conference room we had these words daily before us, as you can see on the photo. A hearty “thank you” to the Sisters in the Motherhouse who decorated the room so meaningfully and with much love.

Each day we began the conferences with a time of silent adoration and a meditation that helped open our hearts for the themes we had to discuss. During the first days we considered intensely your answers to the questions which you had received with my letter of March 19 last year. It was a joy for us to see the great agreement in the answers which we received from all the Provinces. Your consideration of the more future oriented questions (*In what ways can we work/collaborate better as a Congregation? What can I/we do to contribute to the life of the Congregation today and in the future?*) helped us especially during the discussions to find the next steps with regard to the reconfiguration of our Congregation.

Last year we began the process of reconfiguration by concentrating on the conversion and the reorientation of the heart – a process which will accompany us until the end of our life. The call to Metanoia is a constant challenge for us – not only during Lent. Reconfiguration is neither new in the Church nor in our Congregation. It demands an openness for and a commitment to God’s will here and now. A letter of Mother Pauline that she wrote to her brother George on November 19, 1877 can show us what blessings can come from this commitment. I attach it to my letter. (See appendix 1)

After some days, having kept the goal of reconfiguration in mind – the unity among us as a condition and a challenge for the credibility of our mission – we reached clarity with regard to the next step: the **reconfiguration of community**. Since the reconfiguration of the whole Congregation is essential for us, during this year we will consider the aspect of community on its various levels: the local, provincial and general level and finally on the global level. Your collaboration is again indispensable, dear Sisters. Therefore we composed some guiding questions which are attached to this letter (See appendix 2) It is again important that you – alone and/or in groups – talk about these and record the results of your sharing. We will evaluate your answers when the Sisters of the Generalate will meet again next year with the Provincial Superiors in order to consider further steps for the reconfiguration of our Congregation.

Another point for discussion was the question of whether or not we as a Congregation should aim for a membership as a **Non Government Organization (NGO)** at the United Nations in New York. This question had been discussed last year by the coordinators of JPIC when they met in Rome. Each coordinator, the Provincial Superiors and their councilors and the Sisters of the Generalate were asked to answer questions in this regard. One of the coordinators summarized the answers and submitted the report to the Enlarged Council. The result of our considerations was that we, at the present time, will not apply for membership as an NGO at the United Nations because of personnel and financial reasons.

Taking into account the different realities in those countries in which we are present we decided to collaborate actively in those organizations in which we are already members, for example Caritas, Pax Christi, Solwodi, Stop Trafficking and others.

We also evaluated the various **international meetings** which took place during the last years. The necessity to continue these gatherings was unanimously underlined because they are an important contribution for unity in diversity. The interest in the cultural differences of the Provinces and the Philippines grew, contacts were established, the readiness for learning one other language of our Congregation arose. Now and then a stay in another Province by some sisters has already been possible. Whether and how the international meetings could be expanded requires further proposals and considerations.

Sister DeSales gave a detailed report about the current **financial situation** of our Congregation, which is not exempt from the world-wide financial crisis. More than ever we are challenged to review our lifestyle and to manifest our solidarity especially with those who are hit most by the crisis. The American homilist and author Jim Wallis wrote in an article that in this situation we should not ask: "When will this crisis be over?" but: "How will this crisis change my life?" The author says that the structural crisis is also a spiritual one because we forgot the values which have to guide us in handling money. The material goods entrusted to us demand a responsible use and a transparent accountability. The General Treasurer gives a detailed report about the financial situation of the Congregation during each Enlarged Council and during the General Chapter. Every six years the Superior General is obliged to give a report about the financial situation of our Congregation to the *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life*. With regard to handling money we can learn much from Mother Pauline. When we read her letters we notice that the correctness in financial affairs had always been a great priority for her.

Other themes for our discussion were **Vocation Pastoral and Formation**. A sharing about policies for vocation pastoral clarified what is important for us – according to Mother Pauline – for the admission of women. Each vocation is a grace. Fundamental to vocation pastoral are, following the words of Jesus, prayer for "workers in his vineyard" and the witness of our life. It is also important that we appreciate one another. Young people capture that very realistically.

On August 21 of this year we celebrate the **160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Congregation** – a "little" jubilee. As a common preparation for this feast we agreed to the suggestion of a group of Sisters in the N.A. Eastern Province who gathered important dates from the history of the Congregation and compiled them into a booklet for the period from April 30 to August 21. Each week covers a period of ten years so that during the 16 weeks we get an insight into the 160 years of history of the Congregation. Right now the translation into German and Spanish is in preparation. During this period of preparation through the history of our community we will look back with special gratitude for God's guidance during the past 160 years. This retrospection will also strengthen our confidence that the Lord will continue to walk with us.

Dear Sisters, this letter will reach you shortly before Easter. I wish that all of us will look with "Easter eyes" on the way that lies before us and that we begin this new segment of reconfiguration with trust. Since Easter we know that we are never journeying alone. Jesus Christ gave us his promise: "I am risen and I am always with you."

During the Easter time we also celebrate the Feast of Mother Pauline. Her paschal faith, which gave her strength and unwavering hope even in the most difficult situations, can also give strength to us time and again to remain faithful to our mission in the midst a world of violence and exploitation and to entrust our future into God's hand.

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INFORMATION:

- During my visit in the Uruguayan-Argentinean Province in October 2007, I had considered with all the Sisters the situation of the personnel of the Province and had asked for suggestions for a structural change. Most of the Sisters suggested an affiliation to the Generalate. After consultation with my councilors we developed guidelines for this new status. Since November 2007 the Sisters were directly under the Generalate, “ad experimentum,” for one year. In November 2008 I evaluated this experimental phase with all the Sisters of the Province. Unanimously they expressed the desire to remain under the Generalate. My councilors and I revised the guidelines for this new status of the **Delegation** (as the Uruguayan-Argentinean Province is called from now on). During my visitation in March of this year I explained these guidelines to the Sisters and on March 19 they became effective. Sister María del Rosario Castro is the contact person in Rome; in the Delegation I nominated two Sisters as contact persons: one in Uruguay and one in Argentina. Their main task is to keep close contact to the Sisters of the Delegation as well as to the Generalate and to represent the Delegation in Church and Government offices. I am very grateful to the Sisters in Uruguay-Argentina that they accepted with great readiness this new structure. As you see, this is one possibility within the reconfiguration of the Congregation.
- On May 31 of this year the new Provincial Leadership of the Chilean Province will begin its term of office. Sister María de los Angeles Carrera was nominated as Provincial Superior. Her Councilors are: Sister Maristella Schmidlin, Sister María Soledad Córdova, Sister María Bernardita Núñez and Sister Flavia Pérez. Sister María Jesús Santelices remains Provincial Treasurer. We are very grateful to the above mentioned Sisters that they said “Yes” to this leadership service. – We extend our sincere gratitude also to Sister Luisa Pozo who with dedication guided the Province during the past five years through many challenges. We thank also the outgoing councilors: Sister María Clara Medina and Sister María Jesús as well as the Secretary, Sister María Fidelis Valdés, for their selfless service for the welfare of the Province. May God bless them on their future way!
- On April 27 Sister DeSales and I will travel to the Philippines, where we will stay until May 5. We are grateful that we can celebrate the Feast of Mother Pauline with our Sisters and Lay Associates as well as with our blind. As always I ask you to accompany us with your prayers.

With hearty greetings, also from all the Sisters of the Generalate Community,

I am your grateful

*Sr. Adalberto*

P. b. J. Chr!

Mont St. Guibert, November 19, 1877

Dear George,

It will surely afford you and dear Diene pleasure if, at this time I give you a brief survey of the effects which the Kulturkampf really had upon our Congregation.

Before the so-called Kulturkampf, we had 21 houses; namely, in Paderborn: the Motherhouse, the blind asylum, St. Joseph's House, the preparatory seminary; the more distant missions: Unna, Soest, Dortmund (2 houses), Witten, Steele, Solingen, Crefeld, Anrath (2 houses, school and hospital), Viersen, Sigmaringen, Constance, Höxter, Magdeburg, Oschersleben, Dresden.

Of these the following have been dissolved: St. Joseph's House, Unna, Soest, both houses in Dortmund, Witten, Steele, Solingen, Crefeld, Anrath (school), Viersen, Constance, Magdeburg, Dresden; besides our activities were curtailed to some extent at Höxter, where our elementary and girls' school were taken from us; in the Motherhouse, where the novitiate and normal school were terminated; in the preparatory seminary, where we simply reside and take care of the household, and in Oschersleben, where they took the elementary school away from us.

As of today the following of our former missions remain: Our former Motherhouse, the blind asylum, the preparatory seminary, Höxter, Oschersleben, Anrath and Sigmaringen - among these the blind asylum and Sigmaringen have an uncertain future. Until now our Sisters carry on their former full activities only in the hospital at Anrath, in the Blind Asylum and in Sigmaringen.

Rightfully does sorrow fill our hearts at this retrospective glance. Nevertheless, we may not complain. Yes, God's mercy is great, His decrees adorable! They wanted to suppress us, to destroy us; yet, all the more widely has our Congregation expanded. What beautiful spheres of activity God has again given us! In Europe 5 really fine houses, the one in Gutenberg, the two in Bohemia and the two here in Belgium. And how beautifully our Congregation has blossomed across the ocean! In North America we have a Motherhouse and 25 missions; in South America, 4 houses: in Ancud, a Motherhouse and a hospital; in Puerto-Montt, a hospital, and the beautiful mission of St. Joseph's House, which our Sisters built last year.

Instead of one novitiate in Paderborn, we now, with the grace of God and the approval of Rome, have four: In North America, Wilkes-Barre; in South America, Ancud; in Bohemia, Mühlhausen; in Belgium, Alseberg.

The final summation is as follows: 7 houses have been retained in Europe, in addition God gave us 5 new ones, making 12. In North America there are 26; in South America, 4; all together totaling 42 foundations. In contrast, we had 21 before the Kulturkampf. Isn't this a rich, visible blessing of the Lord? Haven't we exactly doubled the number we had lost? Isn't it true that when God is with us who can harm us? However, we do not want to forget to prove ourselves grateful for such goodness. This we can certainly do best by earnest fidelity to duty and sincere striving for genuine perfection.

My sincerest congratulations for the feast of St. Nicholas, for the blessed feast of Christmas and for the New Year.

With all my love,

Your

Sister Pauline von Mallinckrodt

Explanation of the logo, designed by Sister Maria Clare Nagle, Eastern Province



*We cannot reconfigure/transform our hearts alone. It is only through openness to the power of God's love and grace that this can be accomplished. God's heart is always open to us. This is represented in the large heart to the left. God's Fire, God's Love desires to enflame our hearts and overflows into our world to bring it love, joy, peace and healing. We are called to be open to God. This is represented in the slight incline of the head – a life-attitude of humble surrender, in the extended and open right hand – a heart-attitude of openness to God, in the open left hand, holding our own heart – a heart-attitude of active participation with God. Only then can God work through us THAT ALL MAY BE ONE. This is represented by the 7 colors that come together as one and make a rainbow, a reminder of God's covenant to his people, the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity.*

## THE JOURNEY

Our journey began and must stay focused on the Mission (Art. 32)

**Goal:** THAT ALL MAY BE ONE (Art. 28)

Grow from "I" to "We"

Without detailed structures

**Process:**

Configuration of the Heart                      2008 –

**Getting To Know You**                              2009 –



**COMMUNITY** (Art. 29-30)

1. **PERSONAL LEVEL**

How can I deepen the knowledge of myself and accept myself as I am?

2. **LOCAL LEVEL**

1. Do I / we understand the Sisters with whom we live? Is each Sister important to me?

2. What would help me / us to get to know better the Sisters of my local community?

3. **PROVINCIAL LEVEL**

1. What responsibilities are mine / ours as regards Provincial matters?

2. What will be some creative ways to get to know / understand the Sisters of our own Province (Delegation, Unit)?

#### 4. CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL

1. Do I / we know Sisters from other Provinces / Delegation / Unit?
2. What helps me / us to get to know sisters from other Provinces / Delegation / Unit?
3. What would be some creative ways to get to know the sisters from outside our own Province / Delegation / Unit?
4. Which possibilities do I / we see for a more intense collaboration with the Provinces / Delegation / Unit?

#### 5. GLOBAL LEVEL

1. In what way can I / we support the global challenges (see General Chapter Document 2007)?
2. What would help me to expand my / our vision beyond “my” / “our” country?