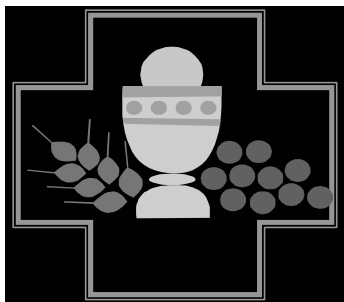


Message from the Director



As Branches on the Vine...

Dear Companions of Pauline,

My love and prayers go out to each of you at the beginning of this new year—2009!—160 years of Christian Charity! How pleased Mother Pauline is to see over 600 vowed members of her congregation and nearly that number of associates of Christian Charity. As we celebrate this Jubilee Year, let us keep each other in our prayers that we continue to live the charism of Blessed Pauline that we each have “that fire of God’s love which should burn constantly in [our] hearts, an inexpressible love.” (First Draft toward the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity, 1849.)

It is in this spirit that I want to share with you the poem by noted spiritual writer Joyce Rupp:

WELCOMING A NEW YEAR

A new year stands on my doorstep
ready to enter my life’s journey.

something in me welcomes this visitor:
the hope of bountiful blessings
the joy of a new beginning
the freshness of unclaimed
surprises

something in me rebuffs this
visitor:
the swiftness of the coming
the boldness of the entrance
the challenge of a year’s good-bye

something in me fears this visitor:
the unnamed events of future days
the wisdom needed to walk love well
the demands of giving away and
growing

a new year stands on my doorstep
with fragile caution I move
to open the door for its entrance
my heart leaps with surprise,

joy jumps in my eyes,
for there beside this brand-new year
stands my God with outstretched hand!
He smiles and gently asks of me:
can we walk this year together?

and I, so overwhelmed with goodness,
can barely whisper my reply:

Welcome In!

My prayer for all of us is that we welcome in the Lord in whatever manifestation He comes to us this year.

*Love and prayers,
Sister Joseph*

Life of Mother Pauline

A Glimpse into the Adult Years of Pauline von Mallinckrodt

When Pauline was 17 the happy circle of her family was suddenly broken by the death of her beloved mother. The sentiments of trusting faith with which her dear mother had received the Last Sacraments and the spirit of heroic fortitude with which she had faced death aroused in Pauline an intense longing for heaven. At the same time it awakened in her a vigorous determination to prove herself equal to the responsibilities that had been transferred to her youthful shoulders. The carefree thoughtfulness of youth had matured overnight into adult decision.

In the training of her two brothers and her eight-year-old sister Bertha, Pauline, following the advice of her mother, sought the wise guidance of Reverend Father Clasen. Happily she understood the mischievous pranks of her roguish brothers and by her gentle firmness always commanded their respect. Besides caring for the children and supervising their education, Pauline, as mistress of the Mallinckrodt household, presided at the social functions held in the home and appeared in society at her father's side. Nevertheless, despite the strain of domestic cares and the demands of social engagements, Pauline found time for the sick and the poor. In fact, Pauline together with her friend Anna von Lommessen, who also presided over a motherless household, soon became the soul of a club organized for the purpose of caring for the poor and needy. Because of the rapid growth in the population of the city, public authorities could not reach every destitute individual. Moreover, when epidemics and contagious diseases broke out, dire misery often threatened certain sections of the city. Thus it happened that the youthful daughters of distinguished families of Aix-la-Chapelle, as members of the newly organized club, vied with one another in bringing relief to the

poor, the sick, the aged, to all afflicted in body or soul. At first the astonished world termed the conduct of these zealous women "madness"; not long after, however, when the fruits of their unselfish charity became manifest, the people called it "sanctity" and were wont to describe these self-sacrificing women as "the holy ladies."

Blessed with earthly wealth, endowed with physical advantages, admired by the elite of society, Pauline was, nevertheless, a lonely young woman. The untimely death of her mother had left the youthful Pauline alone in life just at a time when she stood most in need of maternal guidance. This period of loneliness was followed by a time of interior struggle. Natural inclination and clear discernment were waging a fierce battle in Pauline's soul.

"...A sweeter and more charming picture of living in God can scarcely be imagined. Whoever observes Pauline must readily perceive how pleased God is with His child, for He lavishes His graces upon her."

Rather, we would say, God and the world were contending for the mastery of Pauline's affections. Courted by a man of mature years, a distant and intimate relative of the family, Pauline at the age of eighteen, had prospects of a brilliant future. Nature was more than ready to give its consent to a marriage with this Protestant suitor, but deep faith and sound judgment gained the victory in Pauline's heart. In this struggle between a recognized moral duty and a strong natural affection, Pauline's nobler self stoutly defended her religious obligation. It was during this period of inner conflict that Pauline found a sympathetic and prudent friend in her cousin Bertha. In a letter to her former teacher, Luisa Hensel, Pauline described the struggle which she was undergoing. She wrote:

“Fierce battles raged within my soul. I felt as though I could never say farewell to my friend. However, one week after my Confirmation, in August 1835, God gave me the strength to break off all connections with this man. Thanks to His special grace I gained a complete victory over self. In this renunciation I broke every fetter that attached me to the world. A new life, a higher life now dawned for me.”

Externally, however, Pauline’s life went on as usual. At social functions, on drives and journeys, Pauline was now as formerly the constant and devoted companion of her beloved father. With holy determination she had resolved to meet every situation cheerfully, whether it be agreeable to her or not. As mentioned before, her rule of life was to give God pleasure in every action. Obviously, such a principle of conduct demanded heroic self-denial, but Pauline had mastered the art of self-conquest to such a degree that she sought only and always to accommodate herself to the wishes of others.

An interesting incident related by Pauline’s dear friend Anna von Lommessen reveals in a striking manner Pauline’s degree of union with God. The day after a ball one of Pauline’s acquaintances remarked, “We are wondering why you were so very gracious last evening, since as has been rumored, you have already chosen the Divine Bridegroom as your spouse. With whom did you dance at the ball?”

Pauline quietly answered, “I could not tell you. You see, I hear the heavenly choirs and see the splendor of the angels and the saints. In their company I find delightful entertainment. When I dance with angels, I cannot but be gracious.”

This disposition of constant union with the Beloved of her soul secured for Pauline, then but nineteen years of age, deep peace and abiding joy. In a letter to Professor Schlueter dated June 27, 1840, Bertha von Hartmann described her

cousin Pauline thus:

“...A sweeter and more charming picture of living in God can scarcely be imagined. Whoever observes Pauline must readily perceive how pleased God is with His child, for He lavishes His graces upon her.”



Activities of our Various Branches

Most of the “Branches” included in their meeting minutes that the Companions were eager to correspond with their pen pals at Holy Family Convent, Danville. It seems that this is a nice treat for the Sisters there, too. They also reported use of the booklet, *Servant of Jesus Poor* and/or the PowerPoint presentation as the basis for discussion.

S. Mary Veronica Kulsar gave an excellent presentation of the SCC congregation during the Kulturkampf to both the Monroe Township and Allentown Branch.

S. Joseph Spring presented the ministries of the congregation to the Allentown and Wilkes-Barre Branches and the life of Mother Pauline to the Mendham Branch.

Due to distance, the Ocean City Branch was not able to participate in the retreat Day in Mendham. On October 21, S. Josita Marks presented a day of reflection on site. This was extremely well attended,

not only by Companions but by women of the parish and neighboring parishes.

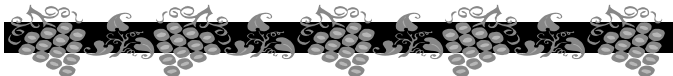
The Monroe Township Branch visited the local nursing home and sang with the residents; they also visited the Veterans' Home to distribute prayer shawls which the Companions made.

The Williamsport Branch reported that in keeping with the characteristic virtue of simplicity, they are "going green" and making an increased effort to recycle.

The Wilkes-Barre Branch had a Covenant Renewal Service at their October meeting, since many were ill and/or unable to travel to Mendham in April.

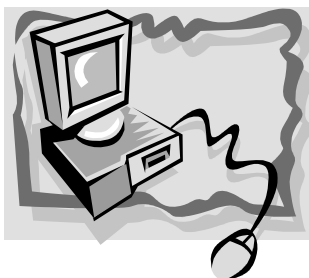
The Williamsport Branch joined the Sisters for their annual retreat before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The Mendham Branch visited Holy Family Convent, Danville and distributed a poinsettia and a candy Santa to each Sister.

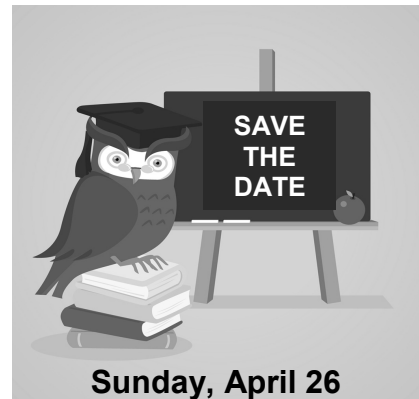


If you have an e-mail address and it is not listed in the directory, please send it to Sister Joseph at:

srjoseph@sceast.org



COVENANT DAY 2009



Sunday, April 26

Sisters from the SCC Leadership Team of the North American Western Province will join us for that day.



Prayer Corner



Please keep in your prayers the recently deceased:

Companion of Pauline, Mary Berger
(Wilkes-Barre)

Mother of Maureen Heffren
(Pittston)

Mother of Mary Gertrude Ackenbrand
(Pittston)

Mother of Cathy Macey,
Ann Conrad
(Wilkes-Barre)

Sister of Dorothy Guidone,
Joan Long
(Mendham)