



As Branches on the Vine...

Message from the Director

Dear Companions of Pauline,

By the time you receive this newsletter, you will have celebrated the Birth of Our Lord at Christmas and the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on New Year's Day. Perhaps your reading of this will coincide with the beginning of the season of Lent. Doesn't the year just fly by?

As we review 2007, I know I join you in thanking God for His many graces and blessings for each of us. With you, I mourn the passing, yet rejoice on their entry into eternal life, of our Companions Nancy Leonard, Betty Dooley, Ida Tamburly, and Rosemary Zimmerman. And then, in the past week, we experienced the "homegoing" of Sister Francetta Donnelly, one of our long-standing Coordinator of the Companions. May they, along with our other Companions in heaven, be our special link to Mother Pauline as they all see God face to face. I know they all intercede for us in a special way.

My prayer for each of us is that we grow closer to God as we follow in the footsteps of Mother Pauline. Paraphrasing the mission statement of the Sisters of Christian Charity, I pray that each of us, transformed by a Eucharistic lifestyle, will be impelled to give and receive Christ's love, joy, peace and healing for the life of the world.

With love and prayer,
Sister Joseph

Editorial note: I apologize for the omission of one name from the Ocean City Branch: Frances Foster. Due to her wonderful good nature, we had a lovely conversation and good chuckle over this error. Sorry, Frances!

A Tribute to Sister Francetta

All of us are grateful to Sister Francetta for her many years of loving, dedicated service as a co-ordinator of the Companions of Pauline. This message was sent to all having e-mail from Companion of Pauline, Lisa Burke:

Dear Companions and Sisters,

This e-mail comes to share with you the shocking news that our dear Sister Francetta Donnelly entered into eternal life this morning. Her death has come as a surprise to us all. After breakfast this morning, Sister Francetta made a visit to chapel and then proceeded to her office. The Sister who has the adjoining office heard Sister Francetta fall and immediately went to aid her but God had already taken Sister Francetta to himself.

So many of us have our own individual personal memories of our friendship with Sister Francetta. The Motherhouse-based Companions and Coordinators, in particular, have enjoyed a special bond with Sister Francetta and remain shocked by her sudden homegoing. Yesterday, a group of us had the grace of receiving Sister Francetta's insights as we reflected on and shared our responses to Pope Benedict's encyclical "God Is Love" along with thoughts from Mother Pauline's writings that Sister Francetta had prepared for our gathering. Sister Joanna, Sister Helen James, and Sister Francetta each played a role in yesterday's gathering and Sister Francetta was particularly concerned with ensuring that each person who wished had the opportunity to share with the group the thoughts in her heart. She also invited each one present to share the Mother Pauline thought drawn from the plate, and reflect on how it spoke to us at

the present moment in our lives. Divine Providence was clearly at work in that gathering—as each one shared, there was this calming surprise at how the "thought" drawn connected with her life. In closing, Sister Francetta pointed us towards Mother Pauline and underscored the importance of faith and trust in God and how surrendering all to Him lifts the burdens from us and draws us closer to Him. Referring to the encyclical she also pointed out how truly we are all, each and every one of us, God's chosen and how for her that was a truly beautiful reality.

Words cannot express fully how much we will miss Sister Francetta's presence among us, but hopefully in the days, weeks, months, and years to come we will continue to experience her presence by sharing the spirit that she shared with us through these years.

The wake for Sister Francetta will take place on Thursday, January 17, 2008 from 2-4 pm and 7-9 pm. Her funeral Mass will be on Friday, January 18, 2008 at 10 am—all at the Motherhouse.

We join the community in celebrating Sister Francetta's life and in mourning her sudden departure from us. Together let us be comforted by the certain knowledge that she lives eternally with her Spouse whom she has faithfully loved and served all these years. Extending sympathy to Sister Francetta's family, friends, and the community, we extend our special prayers and sympathy to the Sisters of the Motherhouse with whom she lived and shared community these final years, her students at Assumption College for Sisters, the Sisters of her investing group who are marking their diamond (60) jubilee this year—Sister Joanna Pappicco, Sister Marietta DiNunzio, and Sister Theresa DiNunzio, as well as Sister M. Pierre Koesters who was Superior General during the time when Sister Francetta served on the General Council.

May Sister Francetta rest in peace and may we, inspired by her example, be drawn closer to the heart of Jesus and the spirit of Mother Pauline!

Your sister in Christ,
Lisa Burke

Meet the Companions

Rockaway Branch

Coordinators Sister Marie Elise Briel, Sister Jeanette Szyzputowski, and Sister Mary Martha Garzon write :

It started out as an ordinary Saturday morning; however, God had something special in mind. After Holy Mass, Amanda Rodriguez invited the Sisters to go out for breakfast at a nearby restaurant. While there, the conversation led to stories of commitment. Without thinking, I mentioned the Companions of Pauline. The seed was planted.

We Sisters at St. Cecilia's often spoke about the idea of forming a group of Companions here. We felt that the ground was fertile, but time constraints and lack of energy prevented us from going ahead.

Amanda wanted to know more about the group. Who, what, when, where were questions that were easily answered. Her eagerness and enthusiasm sparked ongoing conversation. She wanted to know how she could become a companion. We spoke of our desire to have a group at St. Cecilia's, but thought we would be attempting something that could not be sustained. Amanda offered to help with

the organization and Sister Mary Martha offered to chair a group.

In a very short time, we had eight women interested and eager to begin. Sister Joseph offered to come and give her power point presentation and to speak with the group we had gathered together. Their enthusiasm peaked and the candidates for the Companions of Pauline were born.

At our first gathering on January 10, 2007, we became more acquainted with these women. All of them are very involved in the life of St. Cecilia Parish. All of them shared a bit of their own spirituality and their desire to grow in the Spirit. It was an A-Ha moment! Several of them had begun or had already read THE WOMAN WHO COULDN'T BE STOPPED and the other literature that we shared with them. They immediately loved Pauline and wanted to share in her charism and mission. They wanted to journey with us in faith, hope and love and to be transformed into the image of Jesus. The prayer "Grant, O Jesus, that your image be formed in me..." was embraced.

They wanted to become Companions as soon as possible, so we gave them the Application Forms and the process began. We agreed to gather every second Wednesday of the month in the convent for our meetings. We begin each meeting with a half-hour of Eucharistic prayer in the chapel. Vespers is prayed and quiet time with the Lord is relished.

In addition to discussion on Mother Pauline, we decided that as women of the Church we would read a chapter from the UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CATECHISM FOR ADULTS by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and discuss it at our meetings. The books were purchased and the discussions ensued.

We had a bumper crop as seven of these women became Companions on April 29, 2007. One of them could not because of illness and family circumstances. However, she continues to have the desire to make her commitment and we have another woman who has been coming to the meeting with the hope to become a Companion also.

God works in strange ways, and the idea we had shunned for years became a reality. We found out that it could be done when we decided to weave it into the fabric of our lives.

Companions of Pauline from Rockaway:

Judith Criaris
Annemarie Eckert
Rita Funicelli
Diane Milo
Helen Nestor
Amanda Rodriguez
Sue Von Dollen



Save the date...

April 27, 2008

***Companions of Pauline
Covenant Day
Mallinckrodt Convent
Mendham, NJ***

Monroe Township Branch

Coordinator Sister Donna Brady writes:

Our SCC ministry began in Nativity of Our Lord Church in 2005. In this same year the Companions of Pauline began as well. At present we number 10 Companions. We spent our first year becoming acquainted with Mother Pauline through the book, The Woman Who Couldn't Be Stopped, the CD, "Love Never Counts – Love Alone Counts", pictures from places of interest in Germany, ...Sister Joseph also shared her trip to Germany through a Power Point Presentation.

During our second year we tried to imbibe the spirit of Mother Pauline through reading and discussion of her writings, virtues and spiritual advice.

This year we are interested in actually working with the poor, as Mother Pauline did through her active involvement in the needs of society. At one of our meetings we took time to wrap plastic ware in napkins and tie them with ribbon. Over 400 pieces of plastic ware was taken with us as we assisted in serving the needy in Trenton's Soup Kitchen. This experience made us very conscious of what Mother Pauline would do in our society today. Besides serving food we were intent on showing concern for each individual by greeting each person with a cheery word and smile as Mother Pauline would have done.

We are looking forward to similar experiences in the future, especially sharing Mother Pauline's spirit with all we meet.

The Companions of Pauline in Monroe Township include:

Toni Acone
Marge Crowley
Catherine Hurley
Jane Gatto
Cathy Kotlarchick
Irene Kimberlin
Tracy Noonan
Maranda Noonan ("Junior" Companion)
Marianne Pittelli
Debbie Amabile—preparing to make Covenant
Jean Ebinger—preparing to make Covenant



Mendham Area Branch

Coordinator Sister Helen James Peck writes:

The Mendham Area Branch was the first group of Companions of Pauline to be formed when the Associate Program was begun in 1994. The first Companions made their Covenant in 1995. It is composed of Companions of Pauline from Mendham, Bernardsville, Chester, Florham Park, Chatham, and a few distant cities. They come from all walks of life but have in common a love for Mother Pauline and the desire to further the Kingdom in their families, parishes and surroundings.

The Companions gather at the Motherhouse for their monthly meetings. The latest of these on December 15, was a Christmas visit to our retired Sisters at Holy Family Convent, Danville. The Companions had dinner with the Sisters during which they surprised each of them with a beautiful poinsettia plant. This has become an annual tradition. The Sisters take such good care of these loving reminders that many of them will still be blooming next Christmas. Robert Seliga, husband of Maria Seliga, came along as Santa and he and Maria mingled among the Sisters distributing candy canes. Later we visited our Sisters confined to the infirmary. Several had the privilege of visiting our dear Sister Florence Mary Henderson whom the Lord called home just two days later. Everyone arrived home very happy to have witnessed the joy and the Christmas spirit of our elderly Sisters.

At the November meeting Sister Joann Marie Aumand, SCC, presently directing the Newark Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Charities, shared how she is involved in assisting trafficked women who have been brought to our country. She helped us to understand the plight of these women and how the Church is helping them. Our January meeting will be devoted to the study of Pope Benedict's first encyclical, *God Is Love*.

Five local coordinators have the privilege of working with this group:

Sister Francetta:

Adrienne Gazda
Mary Alice Horn
Carol Marconi
Claire Mehalik
Mary Lou Nickerson
Marie O'Hara
Mary Rackowski
Roselyn Stefanelli
Cynthia Sturla
Dorothy Sullivan

Sister Martha

Donna Cofalko
Alana Davis
Patricia Emanuele
Betty Fasciana
Ros Garcia
Linda Keady
Anne Manto

Sister Joseph

Patricia Milligan
Joan Neijstrom
Carol Shilakes
Rita Lingvall

Sister Helen James:

Sally Barr
Lee Ann Burke
Angelina Cologera
Patricia Coppel
Elizabeth Dudley
Barbara Fischer
Dorothy Guidone
Anita Kalyan
Agnes Kleschick
Rev. Richard Loch
Patricia McLaughlin
Lorraine Parisek
Ruth Saenger
Charles Schuler
Manuel Tan
Angela Wade
Evelyn White

Sister Joanna

Margaret Allocco
Jean Apa
Lisa Burke
Diane Dunn
Joan Fleischl
Helen Flynn
Suellen Franz
Marilyn Grant
Joyce Groft
Jim Groft
Frances Iacuzzi
Patricia Jacobs
Russell Jacobs
Judith Johnson
Janice LoBiondo
Jean McLean
Marian Monti
Carla Murphy
Sally O'Connor
Trudy Reaney
Anita Schmidt
Carmela Schommer
Rev. Robert Timchak
Joy Weiler
Marie Witham



Prayer Corner



Please remember in prayer the families of our Companions who have recently lost a loved one:

Mother of Diane Dunn
Mother of Marion Monti
Mother of Patricia Emanuele
Son of Joan Kwak
Grandson of Dorothy Sullivan

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace!