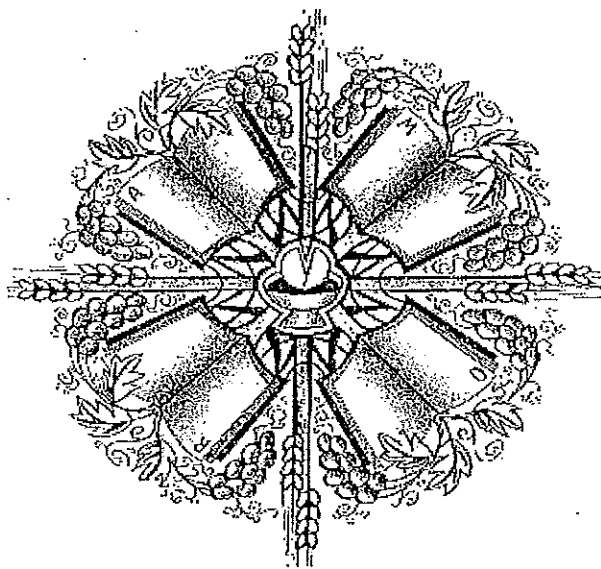


CHARISM OF
MOTHER
PAULLINE



Charism of Mother Pauline

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INTRODUCTION

The mandate to examine anew the charism of our Foundress resulted from the decree for religious issued by the Second Vatican Council. Article 2 therein states, that a timely, appropriate renewal of religious life requires "a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration (spirit and charism) behind a given community and an adjustment ... to the changed conditions of the times."¹ At the same time the mandate answers to an inner need of deepening ourselves more in the original spirit and, as a result, of striving for an authentic, trustworthy renewal.

The essential elements of the religious life: the following of Christ, the evangelical counsels, and community life, are the same for all religious orders and congregations alike. For individual communities, however, their following of Christ is to be carried out in the area determined, on the one hand, by the particular circumstances of the founding period of the institute and, on the other, by the charism of the founder.

Charism denotes "the action of the Spirit of God upon the individual members of the faithful, an action such as can never be forced upon them by men; but is, nevertheless, always and every-where presumed, because, like an official function and the sacraments, it belongs to the necessary and lasting nature of the Church."² A charism is likewise a gift or grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit for a specific work in the Church for the service of others (cf. I Cor. 12 and 14; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4: 11 ff.).

"Judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church, and to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good" (cf. I Th. 5:12, .19-21).³

A charismatic gift or grace is present not only when it leads to extraordinary and "enthusiastic movements"; it can definitely be evident as well "in heroic fidelity in the mastering of daily life, in perseverance and endurance of unfavorable spiritual and cultural situations and the like."⁴

The genuineness of every charism shows itself in this "that it is directed toward community and builds community."⁵ What is common to all charisms and is at the same time constant and valid in them is "devotedness in service to one's fellowman from a motive of faith in our crucified and risen Savior."⁶

The concept of *charism* is used in a variety of nuances. We have chosen only a few in regard to the following work. The Greek word *charis* may be translated as "goodness" or "grace." In the Old Testament it signified the loving kindness of God toward Israel in His election and guidance of it. We find the same word, *charis*, in the New Testament, in Luke: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men" (Lk. 2:52).

In St. John we read: "... grace and truth come through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). Here *charis* carries the connotation of a loving act of God, who permits man to experience His presence. We find a further aspect of the word *charis* in the first letter to the Corinthians: "According to the grace of God which has been given to me, as a wise builder, I laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let everyone take care how he builds thereon" (I Cor. 3:10).

¹ Perfectae Caritatis, Art. 2.

² Rahner/Vorglimler, Kleines theol. Wörterbuch, 1968, p.62.

³ Lumen Gentium, Art. 12

⁴ Cf. Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg, 1958, p. 1023.

⁵ Lippert, Charismen und Konflikte, in: Und ging mit ihnen, 1972, p. 63

⁶ Klaus Schatz, S. J., in Geist und Leben,, Heft 4 -- 1972, p. 243.

Thus, we may interpret the word *charism* as an experience of the enduring love of God, which at the same time includes a commission, a mandate, to proclaim His love to others.

A charismatic grace or gift is the mystery between God and the man who voluntarily places himself at God's disposal. The grace is in no way reserved only for a few. The founding charism operates in every member to the extent to which the person entrusts herself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and allows herself to be completely filled by Him.

"The grace of vocation and the charism bestowed upon the founder in which the Holy Spirit, so to say, has likewise included the institute, constitute one and the same grace, a grace which does not cease with the founder's death, but continues to operate further in the religious family. From this grace flows the vitality, which insures the institute a permanent actuality and a lasting youth."¹

A reflection on the charism of our Foundress can, therefore, essentially serve to this end: to recognize anew and understand better the offer made her by God, her ever-greater cooperation with grace, and through these, her charismatic way, in order that we, as Sisters of Christian Charity, be enabled thereby to discover our way, our mission in accord with the circumstances of our times.

¹ Gambari

PART I: GOD

UNION WITH GOD IN LOVE, TOTALLY SURRENDERED TO HIM SEEKING HIS WILL ALONE

"Who has led me here? God. For this I owe Him heartfelt gratitude and know no better way of proving it than by following His every inspiration I will try to find out what God wants of me in the future and how I can best further His glory. May that be the only, the highest aim of my life. "¹

These words of Pauline von Mallinckrodt, then twenty-five years of age, were written at the opening of her first retreat; they characterized an attitude of mind, which, in future, would permeate her life and her personality ever more strongly.

For her, God was the Almighty, the Lord, the One to whom she fully and joyfully submitted; the One who could dispose of her wealth, time, and talents, her entire being just as He pleased. She was conscious of her creaturehood and her dependence, but at the same time was attracted by, drawn to this God, whose greatness and beauty evoked her wonder and amazement.

She saw God in all; she encountered His greatness in nature and its conformity to law. She saw Him in works of art; in other human beings; in her entire environment. Already in her compositions as a child, she praised God's omnipotence and goodness that could create such a world. Her detailed accounts of her travels clearly demonstrated a natural susceptibility to all beauty, through which she always experienced anew this omnipotence and goodness. She did not remain with what was immediately apparent but always saw beyond the visible to God's activity.

Thus she recognized His greatness but also experienced His nearness and from this point of view everything else appeared insignificant. God revealed Himself to her as a God of love and aroused in her the desire to come ever closer to Him. There was nothing contradictory, therefore, in her many-faceted, clearly apparent joy in being alive, when she desired "that death would lift the veil separating this life from the world beyond. "² This desire persisted throughout her life, yes, it grew stronger with the years. She often spoke of eternal blessedness, of the Sisters who already possessed it; and she looked forward joyfully to the time when with them she herself would be wholly with God.

She found her happiness in serving Him without reserve, the impelling motivation of all her activity being to witness to and to further God's glory. She clearly realized, however, that her work for God was not enough; she must give Him the gift of herself and her whole love. Her response was a sincere determination to keep nothing for herself.

Faith and the Experience of God

The prerequisite for such a disposition of mind is a deep, unshakable faith. Already as a child, Pauline manifested a natural, elemental credibility and a desire to know more about God and the things of God. Later she had, for a time, to struggle hard for this faith. This she considered an exceptional grace. In her autobiography she wrote of a period of inner conflict, when all truths of faith appeared as absurdities. "During a novena He freed me, I might say miraculously, from this indescribable torture of scrupulosity, which, so to speak, disappeared all of a sudden.... After these tormenting temptations against faith, God ... flooded my soul with such a clear light of faith that I can describe it in only one word -- the Gift of Faith. A sense and a light of faith that imbued me with such certitude, clarity, and constancy in regard to every point of doctrine that I should sooner have distrusted my own eyes than this clear light."³

¹ Vol. 23, p. 2, Retreat 1842.

N. B. When only the volume and page appear, the quotation is taken from one of the 26 volumes of Mother Pauline's writings.

² Kurzer Lebensabriss (Autobiography), p. 10.

³ Autobiography, p. 9/10.

This experience of God so imbued Pauline that she strove with all her powers to live continually in God's presence. He became ever more visible to her, while she viewed all things in Him. It was a wholly direct rotation to God, a relation exercising itself not so much in individual practices and acts, but much more influencing her whole being and her conduct so forcibly that her whole life, the whole world, and all events became translucent; and she perceived God in all. She saw everything in the light of "the history of God's dealings with men."

Such a way of looking at things is not a static gift; it develops, unfolds, and deepens by prayer. There is many a proof from her youth and from her later years how much prayer was a part of her life. With God she talked over events, plans, and decisions. She begged Him to let her know His will, to help her in everything she did, and she thanked Him in advance for the outcome of an undertaking. Before Him she examined her motives and the performance of her works and united prayer and work ever more closely, prayer being the chief task. "Prayer is as necessary to the life of the soul as breathing is to the life of the body."¹ Prayer is as necessary as breathing, and for a person living entirely in God and with God this is likewise as obvious.

This conscious living in God's nearness and greatness, on the other hand, made Mother Pauline experience deeply her weakness and her own powerlessness. She admitted her personal guilt openly and unsparingly and tried to judge the reasons and motives for it honestly. However, she did not rest with that, but found a liberating way out: "If my misdeeds are great, Your mercy is exceedingly great."² So during a time when she inclined toward an almost scrupulous self-control, as her retreat notes and preparations for confession reveal, she came to depend explicitly and with absolute conviction on confidence in God, on His omniscience, His justice, mercy, and love.

The deeper she descended into the abyss of her own nothingness, the more she perceived the divine power that was operative in her. "My frailty terrified me, but with unwavering trust I must rely on Your strength, now that You have shown me that I am not to consider my weakness."³ She abandoned herself entirely to God, convinced that with His grace and in His strength she would be able to overcome all obstacles.

As a result, she developed a spirit of genuine humility, knew strength and weakness, which sought to value itself rightly, and consequently could place itself entirely at God's disposal. In this disposition of soul her model was Mary. Repeatedly, Pauline expressed her desire to be a humble handmaid of the Lord like Mary. Her total surrender to God necessarily led her to selfless readiness to serve. She begged God to use her as His instrument and to do with her as He willed, without considering her. This complete orientation toward God became of necessity her fundamental disposition of soul, from which flowed all her activity.

Oriented by the Will of God

Her entire life was to be influenced by a conscious listening for the will of God and by a willingness to be led by Him. She endeavored to become always more detached from self, convinced that the more sincerely she turned to God, the more certainly would He make His will known to her and also the way she was to fulfill it. The recognition of this will often demanded a long struggle in prayer and consultation necessitated by external circumstances; for she did not expect minute details from God, but sought His action and guidance throughout everyday events and occurrences. She recognized God's designs relative to her own life and activity in specific circumstances: in obstacles which, for example, threatened a new foundation, in the ordinances of the authorities, in the illnesses of Sisters, in the transfer of spiritual directors, and such. Her numerous notes and comments showed how earnestly and sincerely she comprehended this basic readiness. "Like Samuel," she wanted to be prepared for the call of the Lord and for His service. He could dispose of her and all that belonged to her as He saw fit.⁴

In the first vow formula openness and readiness to do God's will was clearly expressed: "... I will comply exactly and willingly with the directives, exhortations, ... already issued or still to be issued ... and I will follow with exactitude and due submission the customs already existing in or yet to be introduced into the Congregation."⁵ From this it is evident that Pauline figured with changes within the Congregation. A principle of adaptation is to take note of the future.

It often requires great patience and perseverance to wait for an indication of God's will; for it can be a long time until His plans for man are clear. For that reason there remained naught else to do except to wait quietly as circumstances unfolded themselves in order to know the designs of God at the right moment and to act accordingly. This waiting was not particularly easy for her active nature, and there were situations in which, through her own quick intervention, she forced others to act quickly. For

¹ Vol. 23, p. 47, Retreat 1844.

² Vol. 23, p. 8, Retreat 1842.

³ Vol. 23, p. 7, Retreat 1842.

⁴ Cf. Vol. 23, p. 112, March 12, 1848.

⁵ Constitutions 1849, p. 113.

example, one of her weighty intentions was the consecration of the motherhouse chapel. Although the building was not as yet completed, she asked for the consecration of it. "I greatly desire to have divine services and the Blessed Sacrament, and for that reason made short shrift of the matter and have requested the consecration of the chapel, even though the building is not yet ready and the respective workmen are quite dissatisfied about it. I am, too, with their dillydallying. Now that they see that I am serious about the matter and want it finished, and have put them into a position of either working quickly or not working at all, they are going at it head over heels."¹

In her letters are to be found various examples of how ardently she endeavored to obtain light to see clearly when difficulties of the Sisters weighed upon her and she could do nothing about them. But she always looked to God, who has absolute rights and can dispose of matters as He wills, God who is love and whom she could trust unreservedly. She tried to see things from His point of view, before whose eternity, as she put it, a few years appear insignificant. She wanted her confidence to be tested like Abraham's, as long as it pleased God.² As a result, she became more and more conformed to God's will, until she was able to follow fully along whatever way He pointed, without regard to her own wishes and notions. Her orientation towards God's will was not, therefore, a commandment, but the outcome of a loving turning to God.

How she received God's call and answered it is clear in her own account of the founding of the Congregation. The Auxiliary Bishop of Cologne counseled her to establish a congregation of her own. In his advice she recognized God's will; she considered it, was prepared to follow it and resolved on her part to do it, to go through with the undertaking in spite of all difficulties. In so doing, God's power gave her calm surety. This attitude was hers all her life. She matured under increasing tasks and vicissitudes. Frequently she sought advice of qualified persons or authorities. She seized every opportunity and looked for such -- to know the will of God, whether it was made known to her through the wishes of the Church, through necessities within the Congregation, or through external circumstances. In answer to His trustworthy guidance she employed all her own powers and those of the Congregation in order to fulfill His will in the best possible way.

When the divine will became incomprehensible or inconvenient of fulfillment, when it tended to unsettle her in the security to which she had attained, she did not abandon the maxim which had become her standard for doing the divine will.

Many letters written during the time of the Kulturkampf proved the truth of this. At the beginning of that turbulent period she wrote: "I feel very strange about all the violent measures against us quiet, peace-loving people. Well, the dear Lord will direct and allow everything in a way that is for our good. May He only give us the grace to do His holy will."³

During these years she wrote no accounts regarding the difficulties in which she did not, at the same time, urgently direct the Sisters to submission to the divine will as the final criterion of all their activity, and so encouraged them. When the mission in Dresden was being dissolved she wrote: "It is hard for all the Sisters to leave their loved sphere of activity and those entrusted to them ... but it must be done. The good God has permitted the event to happen as it is now. He will lead us by the hand and will dispose all for our best, if only we are pious and entirely surrendered to Him; if we abandon everything to His guidance. Until now He has taken fatherly care of us. He will continue to do this in the future. To fulfill His divine will is our own task on earth, and in this case His will is very clearly manifest."⁴

This was not merely an admonition, but the expression of her own disposition in such difficult situations. "May God's holy will be accomplished perfectly in us -- that must be our only desire, whether we be persecuted with Him or even crucified, so that we may be glorified with Him. Ever and always we shall praise and extol Him. It is true, we all have reason to grieve over the many evils that are being perpetrated now, especially against the Church, His Bride; however, He is the Master and will restore calm and peace in due time We may not become despondent. Relief will come when it pleases the Lord to send it Meanwhile, we shall not let our courage sink, but we will rely firmly on the words that to those who love God, all things work together unto good."⁵

In the dissolution of most of the foundations in Germany and the almost simultaneous establishment of new activities in North and South America, Mother Pauline perceived the permission or the dispensation of God's Providence. Here also her characteristic open-mindedness to the demands of reality showed itself. She was ever prepared for setting out and beginning anew, ready to let herself be led away from the practicable and the accustomed. Her personality and her activity were marked by a strong, inner dynamism, which impelled her to adapt herself to the now and again changing world about her. Thereby she

¹ Vol. 5, p. 110-11 (German), Dec. 12, 1855, Sr. Josepha.

² Vol. 4, p. 180, Dec. 1854, Sr. Josepha.

³ Vol. 14, p. 77, July 5, 1872, Sr. Mathilde & -Augustine.

⁴ Vol. 15, p. 64/65, May 15, 1873, Sr. Walburga.

⁵ Vol. 15, p. 11, Jan. 22, 1873, Hofprediger Potthoff.

preserved her serene composure, firmly convinced that God would lead her thither where He wanted her to be and that He would also furnish means and ways, if she sought nothing else except to fulfill His Will. This openness was evident in many letters relative to the new foundations in North America. We find it likewise later when she was considering the acceptance of new activities in Chile.

While the foundations in the new world were flourishing, the situation in Germany was becoming more and more grave. One mission after another was being closed. One of the heaviest blows was the dissolution of the motherhouse and of St. Joseph's House. A substantial part of her exterior life's work was destroyed by this event. During this trial Mother Pauline showed a fortitude and steadfastness such as is given only to those who trust God wholly and claim nothing for themselves. She viewed the events not only as unavoidable, matter-of-fact occurrences, but she strove to accept the designs of God lovingly and joyfully. It is said that, after receiving distressing news, she often spent a long time in prayer, still prepared, however, with firm conviction, to praise and extol God and encouraging the Sisters to do the same. God's goodness and guidance, which she experienced so often, convinced her that all would serve for her own and the Congregation's good. It was a direct, straightforward orientation toward God, without ulterior or secondary motives -- a simplicity for which "God alone!" is enough and which could in consequence accept hard blows. Thus God was the resting point of her will at this time too.

As exterior uncertainty increased, her firm union with God deepened. The fulfillment of God's will was the hallmark of her way of life. In every phase of her life she sought to know the new gifts and claims of God and came thereby to a deeper and deeper unity of personal initiative and willingness to let herself be led. The short maxim, "As God wills," was characteristic of her entire life. With Mother Pauline the source and foundation of this readiness lay in her detachment from self, a disposition which can develop only when one is no more concerned with the realization of his idea. This attitude can develop only when one is concerned with answering God's call -- the call to be willing to leave what one has been given, to leave the already familiar and secure -- to leave all for Him, the living God.

She made every effort to familiarize everyone seeking for a meaning behind life's events with this conscious commitment. Especially did she exhort her Sisters repeatedly to seek the perfect fulfillment of God's will. She set down this obligation in the Constitutions- "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is the rule of all rules for us, our one and only task on earth, our sole purpose for being here. The Sisters will, therefore, deeply impress this upon their minds, will take great care and earnestly endeavor to preserve their firm determination-- to desire the most holy will of God at every moment and on every occasion; then to recognize this most holy will, and having recognized it, to fulfill it; and, should it be a question of suffering now or in the future, to submit to God's will immediately, quickly, and joyfully; that is to say, with love and through love to struggle and to accomplish 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, to accomplish his work' (John 4, 34), so says the Lord. That ought to be engraved in golden letters on the hearts of the Sisters of Christian Charity...."¹

This continual listening to God and her steadfast faith in His love and goodness signified at the same time an experience of security. From this proceeded Mother Pauline's unconditional confidence in His guidance. In her first letter to Professor Schlüter in 1840, she referred to the basis of her faith and trust: "Precisely this is God's greatness, that He regards even the smallest of His creatures with infinite tenderness, that He arranges even the most insignificant matters so graciously. It is this that fills one's soul with inexpressible confidence in Him.... Bertha often laughs at me teasingly when I go to the good God with a thousand trifles, but I simply cannot help it. Whenever I have a wish, I quickly pray a little and tell it to our Savior. He in turn cares for me so faithfully that I shall never desire another friend."²

Unshakable Confidence

There was nothing at all which she could dissociate from God; the world was transparent, as has already been stated. For such a person nothing evil can happen; everything must work together unto good. This mental focus leads necessarily to a simplicity which can "pester" God with the smallest problems, but which is also not afraid to expect great things from Him. "I can understand all these difficulties, but whether there are a hundred of them or one, the good God can just as easily remove the hundred as the one. And if He does not want a thing, one single obstacle can be sufficient to hinder the matter. Let us, therefore, look to God's will and to nothing else. I will do all I can will do it peacefully, calmly, and quietly; and God will direct the entire matter."³

¹ Constitutions 1849, p. 6/7 & 8

² Vol. 1, p. 69 (German), June 27, 1840, Schlüter.

³ Vol. 4, p. 18, March 1, 1853, Sr. Josepha

This confidence, from which she gained calm, security, and energy, she aimed to transmit to others, especially to her Sisters. To Sister Josepha she wrote: "Just remain calm, very calm; pray much and trust in God. He will never desert anyone who trusts in Him."¹ She herself had experienced this often enough. Over and over again, she refers to the unerring love with which God had guided her. In regard to the foundation of the Congregation she wrote: "Now when I look back over my life, I cannot admire God's marvelous dispensations enough. God had wanted this decision from me. He had guided me toward it on paths I should never have surmised would lead me to it. And these ways on which, with an upright heart toward God, I had been seeking something altogether different from what He had set as a goal, what He had in mind, served to fit me, according to the dispensations of His wise, fatherly Providence, for the accomplishment of that which He desired of me."²

Her confidence supported her when for a time she experienced great distress of soul. That she was conscious of this we see in various letters. She even wrote of a "dreadful," a very "terrible anxiety," which, for example, she felt when establishing new foundations entailing grave difficulties, or in serious financial burdens, to which she was practically always being subjected.³

This gift of trust unfolded itself during the period of the Kulturkampf previously mentioned. As one mission after another was closed and ever larger groups of Sisters returned to the motherhouse, Mother Pauline encouraged them to confide in God's goodness and Providence. She received the Sisters with such love and compassion that it seemed as if only they had to suffer persecution. At that time she wrote: "A glimpse into the future might fill us with fear and terror, did we not know that the good God still lives and will direct all to our best."⁴

An inner security and confidence, yes, joyousness and venturesomeness in all her undertakings proved that she possessed this trust in a high degree. Although exterior activities were in a precarious state because of the recall of contracts with the school authorities, she did not hesitate to accept new members into the Congregation.

Considered in nearness to God, all situations and events received their proper evaluation. She did not regard a difficulty as an evil, but thought of it as part of an aggregate, and this latter as always under God's direction. Her cheerful calmness was so imperturbable that others regained courage because of it. The order prohibiting members of religious sisterhoods to teach in the public schools first struck her foundations in the Rhine Province. Mother Pauline immediately visited all the houses in the Rhineland and encouraged the Sisters, who, in the face of her great courage, revived their own sinking spirits and regained confidence in God's all-wise and merciful Providence, when they witnessed her child-like and cheerful trust.⁵ Her firm faith and unwavering confidence, as well as her personal competence in dealing with men and circumstances, constituted such a unity that out of it emerged a natural, invigorating power. It was that which made her such a charming personality.

In all her activity and personal engagements she was able to leave the outcome of a matter and the weight of responsibility in last analysis to God. In this attitude she exercised her authority, ever open to others' direction, convinced that God's ways can take a course other than the one we human beings foresee or command a view of. Such being the case, her dealings were characterized, on the one hand, by attention to God, a will and the dispensations of His Providence; on the other, by the application of all her personal powers and abilities, which not only permitted her to begin a work, but in perseverance and constancy even under hardship, helped her to finish it. In all her writing a joyful confidence in the realization of God's nearness is perceptible. From it resulted her positive view of life despite her awareness of its transitoriness. Her whole personality was shaped by her life in God.

Heartfelt Gratitude

Inseparable from her total surrender to God and her trust in His guidance is her spirit of gratitude, implicit even in occurrences which, humanly viewed, were disastrous for herself and/or the Congregation. She wrote in the Chronicles: "Continue, O God, to watch lovingly over us. To You be praise for every struggle, for every suffering that You send us, as well as for every joy, because both suffering and joy come from your fatherly heart. Both are for our salvation...."⁶

Her one great desire was to have the Church's approval of the Constitutions. When Bishop Conrad Martin was to procure it during his stay in Rome, she begged the Sisters to pray "urgently," earnestly, "to storm heaven" in this intention. Upon his

¹ Vol. 3, p. 278 (German), Dec., 1852, Sr. Josepha.

² Autobiography, p. 35.

³ Vol. 3, p. 252 (German), Nov. 11, 1852, Sr. Josepha

⁴ Vol. 16, p. 6, Jan. 24, 1874, Bogaerts

⁵ Cf. Chronicles 1857-1873, p. 156 (German).

⁶ Vol. 22, Chronicles, p. 19b- (German).

return from Rome her question was "In what way must we now praise God, for success or for failure?"¹ The more closely she was united to God, the more spontaneous was her gratitude towards God and in Him toward her fellowman.

Mother Pauline's deep, vital relation to God, which found expression in her steadfast faith, her loving compliance with His direction, in confidence, gratitude, and joy, was best expressed in her own words: "My heart is all gratitude toward You; ... and I would rather silently feel this gratitude and love in Your right than express it aloud. In a marvelous manner You have drawn me to Yourself and have taught me things unknown to me before. Gladly I surrender myself to Your loving guidance and pray in Your sight, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Your word. I Lord Jesus, You know how unutterably eager I am to have You use me according to Your good pleasure...'"²

Thus, Mother Pauline's personality and life were marked by such boundless faith in God, such loving, complete surrender 'to Him that all events, the endowments of her temperament, domestic and family situations; social, political, and ecclesiastical situations; the circumstances of life and of life in the Congregation, brought her further unfolding and development of her entire personality, and effected in her an attitude of mind that made the special working of the Spirit of God perceptible.

PART II: CHRIST-MYSTERY

THROUGH LIVING THE CHRIST-MYSTERY FULLY

Christological Aspect

In the Christological dimensions of Pauline's charism the offer of the love of God in the Eucharist, which captivated her completely, was undeniably perceptible. On the other hand, her love's striving to attain to the stature, the likeness of Christ, for the glory of the Father in the service of her fellowman, was likewise apparent. Precisely in the Christ-Mystery, "the threefold form of the Body of Christ, " -- the historical, the eucharistic, and the mystical -- did she experience the inexhaustible salvific action of the Triune God. Christ is the form, the mold, of her life. In Him she encounters the One who fulfills her inmost desire, her longing to consecrate life and love as He did and thus to be permitted a participation in His work and mission.

In the light of faith, she recognized Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus was the One who is the personified Gift of God to the world, the One who at the Last Supper, in His Passion, the Resurrection, brought to completion His total surrender to God. He was for her the only possibility for achieving a unity of life with God and her fellowman.

Christ the Model

In the retreat of 1843 she understood: "... my entire life should be modeled on His sacred example, and as the foundation of all virtues meekness and humility stand before my mind. 'Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, I says our loving Jesus.... He, who is equal to God, became man...' "³ Resolutely she determined, "This fundamental humility and meekness will in future be the whole ambition of my soul. They should not be confined to mere words or externals but should have their roots in the innermost recesses of my heart; they should prove themselves in sterling deeds..."⁴ Like everything else in life, Mother Pauline took seriously these words, too.

¹Chronicles 1857-1873, p. 119 (German).

²Vol. 23, p. 71, Retreat 1846.

³Vol. 23, p. 36, Retreat 1843

⁴Vol. 23, p. 37, Retreat 1843.

Christ the Teacher

During her whole life this basic disposition deepened in her, rendering her more and more capable of union with God and of service to men. Jesus' example of allowing Himself to be at the disposal of His Father became life's norm for Pauline. She was consistent. "I am nothing; You are all."¹ Listening made her docile to the words of Jesus, and she pleaded, "You be my teacher, O Jesus."² She knew that she had much to learn in order that this transformation might be accomplished in her, a transformation not always agreeable to her nature, but one she, nevertheless, opened up to. Always acknowledging her insufficiency, she entreated, "Give me strength to follow You. Do not regard my inclinations, but only Your good pleasure."³

The first directives or rules of her congregation were entirely permeated with the words and teaching of the Master. When offering individual counsel, she likewise pointed to this Way: "... always look to Jesus, ... Interiorly and exteriorly, let us impress Jesus on our entire being, on our thoughts, words, and action... The whole day through, in everything that happens, look immediately to Jesus..."⁴ In daily life she combined sincere endeavor and humble prayer in the happy consciousness of her life in God.

Thus she came to an understanding and to the final significance of Our Lord's counsels. These she wanted to live as Our Lord had lived them -- as a concrete, radical realization of the following of Christ. As a result, she delighted more and more in becoming free, detached, for God and for her fellowman. Unalloyed love became ever more the impelling force of her being and action. This is manifested in her words: "Jesus, my divine Spouse, ... You shall be the sole aim of my life. With delight I throw away, all this rubbish that impedes me on my journey,, in order that, with agility and ease, swiftly and directly, in poverty, chastity, and obedience, I may find You, the precious Pearl of Eternal Life."⁵

Her soul's capacity for assuming responsibility, so naturally expressed here, and her ability to surrender self came to happy supernatural maturity in a life of consecrated virginity. This led her to a fruitful life of profound divine and human encounter.

Christ poor, chaste, obedient

Christ was also the measure of her poverty. She was ingenious in finding contentment, was easily satisfied, and penetrated deeply into the spirit of poverty-- a thing that was no easy matter for her. "Love of the cross and of poverty," she writes, "two difficult virtues (literally, "two hard nuts") but they must and will be resolutely considered."⁶

She contemplated and meditated on Christ and His life over and over again, and was profoundly touched by His obedience. "He emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men... He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:7-8). Here she learned that the matter in question concerned willingness to be disposable, available; a willingness to be led where one does not wish to go (cf. Jn. 21:18).

Her readiness to follow our crucified Savior increased. "Jesus Christ, who can look upon Your cross without being moved to the very depths of his soul.... Jesus, the servant is not greater than the Master; mortify me as You will... Through mortification keep fervor in Your service alive in me," thus she prayed with sincere heart in her retreat.⁷ All was to be a proof of her love: "Jesus loved us to the death on the Cross. Let that be my measuring rod."⁸ "We have become one," she continues in her diary, "so that You do not need pay any heed to me. The Cross and suffering, as much as You will -- only Your glory, O my God."⁹

Her Sisters, too, were to follow in the footsteps of the Lord: "... With a truly magnanimous heart bring to God, Our Lord, one sacrifice after another, yourself and everything you are and have, so that you might please Him and belong to Him entirely."¹⁰ On another occasion, she wrote to Sister Josepha- "He was crucified. I too want to and must be crucified. He was crowned with thorns, I also must be willing to be thus crowned. In this way the soul must always be ready for battle, must always have some

¹ Vol. 23, p. 121, Retreat 1850.

² Vol. 23, p. 131, Retreat 1848.

³ Vol. 23, p. 131, Retreat 1848.

⁴ Vol. 4, p. 48, June 28, 1853, Sr. Josepha.

⁵ Vol. 22, Autobiography, p. 47/48.

⁶ Vol. 23, p. 74, Retreat 1846.

⁷ Vol. 23, p. 15, Retreat 1842.

⁸ Vol. 23, p. 39, Retreat 1843.

⁹ Vol. 23, p. 67, Retreat 1845.

¹⁰ Vol. 11, p. 315 (German), 1865, Sr. Gabriele.

word of Jesus at hand, and act accordingly. In this way He will really be the Way, the Truth, and the Life for us. Note the way, consider this well, and act accordingly..."¹

Christ crucified

Actually, the encounter with God in her own personal life, as well as in the Congregation meant the Cross and suffering of every kind. It was her Father's love that wanted Pauline and her congregation to grow into the likeness of His Son. With open heart she responded magnanimously and courageously to the ever-mounting demands of love and always repeated anew her "Yes, Father" to the Christian life principle of self-oblation. "To carry the cross silently and with smiling countenance" -- that was her response to love.² With constantly renewed loyalty, she fought the daily battle in order that Christ's spirit of total self-surrender might become truth and life in her. The Paschal Mystery led her to union with God, in proportion to the strength of her faith and the intensity of her active love. She became ever more enamored of God's infinite mercy involved in the salvific act celebrated on our altars. Like Mary, the Mother of Our Savior, she united herself with Christ's sacrifice as a perfect gift to the Father, but also as a gift to the world. In this way at the Eucharistic celebration she entered into Christ's disposition, His attitude of complete availability, as well as His total giving of Himself in the Sacred Banquet in order to be a true sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, petition, and atonement. In everyday circumstances, these attitudes characterized her life and all her actions and omissions more and more. Her following of Christ was to be a life with Him and in Him and through Him. With recurring interior emotion she prayed: "...so I draw near to You to unite myself most intimately with You . . . henceforth let me no longer live, but do You live in Me."³ "Lord, help me so strive to live, that it is not I who longer live, but that Christ, the Lord, live in me; may my life be hidden with Christ in God."⁴

Eucharistic Christ

Faith in His Presence

Christ the living and life-giving Bread that has come down from heaven shared His own life, His own spirit with her. Under His influence her love of Christ in the Eucharist developed so strongly and quickly that He became the center of her life. From her words to Luise Hensel, we can conceive to some extent the depth of her interior relation to Christ. "... what is especially indispensable to my happiness is the daily reception of this life-giving Sacrament. Without this Bread of Heaven life is death to me... the Blessed Sacrament is my life, my bliss... Perhaps you fear that I seek to experience sweet feelings at the Table of the Lord. -- No; I seek the Lord Himself. In Him alone is all my strength. Without Him I am nothing ... Jesus invites the poor and humble to His banquet. In them He will be glorified, for nowhere do His humility and love show forth more brilliantly than in His entering the heart of such a wretched sinner as I am. There is no one who can doubt that whatever good there is in me comes only and solely from God, while all the evil in me is the fruit of my perverse, miserable self ..."⁵

If she had to overcome difficulties, prejudices, or opposition with regard to daily Holy Communion, she endeavored all the more interiorly to please God alone. She did not allow herself to become confused but took the matter seriously, so as not to occasion any scandal and was especially concerned to become increasingly Marylike in her disposition of soul. In the midst of worldly distractions, cares, and labors, of renunciations and privations, she succeeded in transacting all with "the Beloved of her soul," in order to please Him in everything. The result of a possible deprivation of union with Him was deeper love of Him. Her personal prayer expressed this strongly. Who can separate her from the love of Christ, in whom she believed, whom she followed, and whom she loved?

On her many journeys and trips, which appear as a kind of symbol of her life, traces of this attitude of mind were especially noticeable. How great her spirit of sacrifice, then, just to be able to participate still in one Holy Mass under almost impossible circumstances, or to deepen the sacramental union with Jesus, no matter where or at what hour. If this deep need were fulfilled, she was pure joy. Like a wise virgin carrying the burning lamp of faith and of love, she went to meet Christ, until she would finally be united with Him in everlasting love.

¹ Vol. 4, p. 48, June 28, 1853, Sr. Josepha.

² Vol. 23, p. 73, Retreat 1846.

³ Vol. 23, p. 12, Retreat 1842.

⁴ Vol. 24, p. 91, Retreat 1859.

⁵ Vol. 1, p. 74 (German), July 7, 1840, Luise Hensel.

Union with His Sacrifice

Far in advance of her times, in her growing desire for a life of union with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, which lighted up and fructified her whole life, she penetrated deeply into the Eucharistic Mystery. She grasped clearly the significance of this sacrament, not only for her own personal spiritual life, but she also perceived its definite function in her life's task as foundress of a congregation bearing the name Sisters of Christian Charity.

When she wrote the words: "The sacrament of Life be the source of life of the future congregation. May its growth proceed from the Holy Eucharist. In the Blessed Sacrament be its development, its armor, all its life, its peace, its bliss..."¹ she bequeathed to the Congregation the seed of her own deep, fruitful union with God. To obtain this grace no sacrifice was too great. "Oh, please do not deprive us of the Bread of Life ... the seal of sacrifice will be impressed on the Congregation, of the greatest sacrifice that could be asked of us with our glowing love of the Blessed Sacrament, and that is not good ... to everyone what belongs to him ... Put in a good word for us that he (the Bishop) may let us keep this life-giving intercourse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament... Every congregation has its individual character. Oh, beg the Bishop that he allow ours to be a joyous, youthful enthusiasm and vigor, blossoming forth from intimate intercourse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."²

This was no put-on, eucharistic piety, as might be supposed, but a capturing by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, whom she sincerely permitted to operate in her while she humbly cooperated. When Pauline wrote of the Blessed Sacrament in her letters and notes, she could not express herself in any other way except in the language of her times and her individuality. They reveal, however, her true attitude of mind and heart and these were decisive.

When establishing a foundation, she directed her first interest and effort humbly and confidently toward obtaining permission from the proper authorities for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, the celebration of Holy Mass, and daily Holy Communion as a special grace. If refused, she did not lose heart, because she knew she was fighting for a hidden treasure. She waited patiently and repeated her request until she obtained what she had longed for. She found the Lord and had recognized and desired "the Gift of God", namely, that Christ in His Eucharistic Mystery might be for her Sisters the source of love, of humble self-oblation, of joy, and of vigorous activity in the service of their neighbor.

It was surprising how many arguments she could advance for her inner conviction and her great longing regarding daily Holy Communion in the Congregation.

In all this, however, she did not seek her own satisfaction; the matter went much, much deeper and concerned the Father's gift -- the Son Himself in the Holy Spirit whom she wanted to receive unto the fullness of new life in the service of the Church,

In her written petitions she always promised to be concerned about a worthy veneration of the Blessed Sacrament in every respect: the spiritual and liturgical, as well as the material. Every time Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the true Adorer of the Father and the Savior of the world, blessed one of her houses with His Real Presence her joy was indescribable, and she was prepared to make even greater sacrifices for this Gift. Repeatedly she told the Sisters that they could obtain the Sacrament only by humility, love and fidelity. "... It is only right and just that the greatest exertion be the price of this most holy Sacrament, but may our burning desire make it possible to obtain Jesus Eucharistic. I implore You, dearest Jesus, grant the Congregation daily Holy Communion. Please grant it!"³

Docility to the Holy Spirit, Humility, Charity

Mother Pauline knew that only the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, who is given us in Holy Communion, can develop true love in us. For that reason her special relation to the Holy Spirit is inseparable from her union with Christ. Conscious of her own insufficiency, she begged at Holy Communion that He give her His seven gifts. "... Come and stay with me. With faith as firm as a rock I beg this of You. Instantaneously, You can give my soul strength, that henceforth I may never again waver and fall."⁴

Docile and willing, she yielded her natural eagerness for activity to His influence, because "His Spirit impels strongly, but not in storm and impetuosity. O Jesus, teach me to always recognize Your Spirit, to understand, and to love Him; to follow wherever He may lead and no matter what sacrifice He may demand."⁵ In this way the spirit of her congregation will be a spirit of vivacious joyfulness, of strength, vigor, and facility in bearing burdens connected with their works of charity. Pauline herself

¹ Vol. 23, p. 75, Retreat 1846.

² Vol. 2, p. 40, Summer, 1849, Vicar General Boekamp.

³ Vol. 23, p. 75, Retreat 1846.

⁴ Vol. 23, p. 17, Retreat 1842.

⁵ Vol. 24, p. 82, Retreat 1855.

was very clear about the essential fruits of Holy Communion -- humility and love.¹ Daily she strove anew to think, to speak, and to act in accord with the truth. "Let him whom the Bread of Life does not make humble remain far from the humble Jesus. He who does not draw love from Holy Communion should stay far away from this Banquet of Love," she concluded logically.²

An expression of her deep love of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was Pauline's public and private veneration of the Eucharist, a matter to be highly esteemed. She could spend hours in Christ's presence in continuous thanksgiving, adoration, and love. "... in the presence of Your life-giving Sacrament, there let me love, love. There my need is to love, not to meditate."³ Her love likewise impelled her to unite herself with Christ's atonement, to make reparation for her own sins and the sins of others. In her account of the house of prayer she stated, "...We are happy that now we can have a group praying before the Blessed Sacrament in order to place all our intentions into the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to make reparation for the numerous sins and "sacrileges by which our Savior is so greatly offended in these present evil days."⁴

Over and above sacramental Communion, from an inner need, she fostered repeated personal contact with Him as Lord and Confidant, with whom she talked over everything and in whom she found the right solution in every situation. In faith she experienced in all its profundity the exact meaning of God with us. "After all, it is His joy to be with the children of men."⁵ "Lord, You know that Your Blessed Sacrament is the innermost life of my soul; that I consider my eyes blessed when they behold the Sacred Species only from afar; that for me the place where You are not present is deserted and barren; that I am renewed and revived when I come into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Lord, You will not desert me. Without You I can hardly live. Stay with me, dearest Lord."⁶

Here, in the presence of her Eucharistic Lord, incorporated into His sacrifice, in living companionship with Him throughout the workaday, her liturgical and personal prayer-life unfolded itself in a harmonious union, making her life and activity increasingly fruitful. Faith, hope, and charity deepened her intercourse with God and her total surrender to Him. The prayers she has written down are proofs of her very personal, living union with God, whom she strove to love with all her powers, and whom she, therefore, sought to please. In happy consciousness of her own poverty, but also of God's all-loving condescension, she simply confided in her Beloved and implored and awaited from Him all necessary graces. "... Who would presume to believe that he always knows for what or how to pray," Pauline wrote encouragingly. "How fortunate for us if during prayer we have an upright heart that allows the Spirit of God to plead for us."⁷

God, who allowed her to attain to "the maturity of Christ," demanded much of her. Day by day, year by year, Pauline struggled and rejoiced in the fulfilling of this mutual offering-and-giving-of-self between God and her soul, for the good of the whole Church. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today, yes, and forever" (Heb, 13:8).

Ecclesial Aspect

Love, Obedience and Fidelity to the Church

Mother Pauline lived the Christ-Mystery in the Church, with the Church, and through the Church. She considered herself fortunate to belong to the Catholic Church and regarded it a grace of special predilection. Do not the extraordinary circumstances of her baptism already reveal that God has destined this child for an important mission in the Church? She expressed her gratitude for this grace in many of her writings, as well as for the Catholic education she had received. With a view to her later task, Divine Providence led her to a great love and devotion to the Church, to unconditional obedience and loyalty through the influence of persons deeply loyal to the Church.

¹ Vol. 2, p. 40, Summer, 1849, V. G. Boekamp.

² Vol. 23, p. 75, Retreat 1846.

³ Vol. 23, p. 90, Retreat -- Nov., 1846.

⁴ Vol. 13, p. 127 (German), Feb. 6, 1870, Marie v. Mallinckrodt.

⁵ Vol. 23, p. 75, Retreat 1846.

⁶ Vol. 23, p. 75, Retreat 1846.

⁷ Vol. 23, p. 52, Retreat -- Autumn, 1844.

For Mother Pauline the Church was, in the first place, the teacher and guardian of the Faith. In a conversation with Professor Schlüter, she remarked that in serious doubts against faith "nothing had helped her except unconditional adherence to the pronouncements of the Church and to a consideration of its unaltered doctrine... She was happy not to doubt or hesitate for a moment, once she knew what the Church teaches." ¹ Schlüter writes further: "She likewise explained how the certainly that something was a teaching of the Church immediately put her at ease and convinced her more strongly than if she had understood with her own mind."²

This certainty of faith was the source of her consolation and joy in the faith. These were the foundation of her strong ecclesially oriented attitude of mind -- to think and feel with the Church, to live on the vitality of the Church, but also to serve the church untiringly.

Union with the Church

Already at the age of eighteen she showed how sincere this loyalty was, she decided against a mixed marriage "because the Church did not approve of marriage with Protestants."³ It was not mere accident that this renunciation resulted as a fruit of her Confirmation, by which she was maturing to the full age of Christ. This loyalty and attachment to the Church was strong and sincere. Pauline perceived the inimical, anti-ecclesial currents of her day, attacking and oppressing the Church from without, but also the more deplorable conditions that had arisen within the Church itself. Her position, however, was always clear, straightforward, and certain. She knew whom she believed in the Church -- Christ. From this was born her strong and courageous faith. She stood up for the Church, defended its teaching; she courageously acknowledged her submission to the teaching authority of the Church, even when by doing so it meant harm for her family, especially for her father.

Exterior attacks on the Church and her regulations steeled and deepened Pauline's love and loyalty toward it and prepared her for the far more grievous persecution she was to suffer with it. Thus, Mother Pauline identified herself ever more with the Church. She often renewed her baptismal vows in order to become more conscious of her union with the Church and to be all the more determined in her fight against Satan and the godless, hostile world, and likewise to live her total surrender to Christ. Her obedience sprang from and was nurtured by her faith and love, and, in the last instance, was itself love as fulfillment of the Father's will, which it discerned in everything. Therefore she observed to the smallest detail all the commandments and prescriptions of the Church.

Militant (Relations with the Hierarchy)

"In all her letters there is not the least trace of opposition to ecclesiastical authority. Certainly, she too had at times to fight against difficulties in order to carry out her plans, but she always did it with complete submission to ecclesiastical authority. In doing so, she manifested a childlike trust, but also a childlike attitude toward all priests, bishops, and all in authority. Her whole manner and way of acting and of speaking with them . . . showed what profound, faith-inspired reverence toward God's representatives filled her heart."⁴ She never undertook a work without the sanction and blessing of the ecclesiastical authorities. For Bishop Conrad Martin, the persecuted and exiled Shepherd of Paderborn, she did all in her power to ease his hard lot. She even secured a new home for him in Belgium, and after his death brought him back to his episcopal city, a deed which at that time was a courageous and hazardous undertaking.

In a letter to Professor Lachmann she clearly expressed her inner sentiments toward the Church and her resultant exterior submission: "I am papal-minded through and through, am heart and soul a Roman Catholic. Gladly do I observe every ceremony of the Church, even the smallest, because I am devoted to her with my whole being; and with complete conviction I love her as the teacher of truth and love the Pope as her common Father. Whoever comes to know the Church and her doctrine better must love her, must be enthusiastic about her. Wisdom and mildness are united in her to such a degree that a person does not know which to wonder at more. She bears no aversion toward anyone; on the contrary, our Savior Himself has declared what the hallmark of her true children is -- 'By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (Jn. 13, 35)."⁵

¹ W. Meyer, *Pauline v. Mallinckrodt*, p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ Cf. Vol. I, p. 72 (German), July 7, 1840, Luise Hensel.

⁴ P. Bhreaborg, S. J., *Referate über das Tugendleben der Dienerin Gottes Pauline v. Mallinckrodt*, p. 57. (*Phases of the Life of Mother Pauline von Mallinckrodt*), p. 88.

⁵ Vol. I, p. 177 (German), Apr. 18, 1845, Lachmann.

She made her own the intentions, cares, and sufferings of Christ's visible Vicar on earth. She was exceedingly grateful for the many great favors which the Holy Father had bestowed upon the Congregation. She strove in every possible way to support His Holiness, who had been robbed of the Papal States and was so sorely tried from all sides. She even offered him as home the St. Joseph's House in Paderborn. Through her meeting with Pope Pius IX, whom she personally wanted to assure of her childlike devotedness and deepest reverence, as well as through her visits to the sacred shrines in Rome, she experienced in the innermost depths of her soul the beauty and the greatness of the Church, its unity and universality. Animated anew with love and enthusiasm for the Church, she bequeathed this ecclesial character as a sacred heirloom to her Sisters.

Mother Pauline demonstrated her faith in the mission of the Church and her love for it in a very obvious manner during the founding period of her Congregation. Then she was complete openness and absolute preparedness to receive the Holy Spirit in the founding charism, and in the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work in accord with the advice of the Auxiliary Bishop of Cologne. She undertook the work by order of the Church. She worked hand in hand with the Church and requested its approbation in the aforementioned instance of the Auxiliary Bishop, so that the undertaking might be supported by and blessed by the Church. "Thus, from the beginning I shall lay everything at the feet of God's Church. May she, the Bride, decide what will tend to the honor of the Bridegroom. I will follow her -- we all will follow her unconditionally and not lift a finger in any undertaking which she does not approve."¹

In perfect freedom she answered the call of the Church. She became completely absorbed in her loving, unreserved surrender to God. Her own experience, plans, and desires were not the determining factors, but the will of God alone. Herein lies her honor and greatness as a foundress. Totally surrendered to the Father in her union with Christ, she was mother and bride with the Church. Mother Pauline and her work participated in the life and the holiness of the Church and cooperated with her task and mission. The Church approved the work and the Constitutions, thereby declaring them fitted to lead the Sisters to holiness. The more intimate their union with Holy Church and therefore with Christ, the more fruitful and bountiful will be the life of the individual Sisters and of the Congregation. In this way, through their apostolic and charitable activity, the mother-love of the Church becomes visible.

In all seriousness she assumed the obligation to be entirely at the service of the Church -- "to serve her with all her powers and to be and ever remain a fruitful branch on the vine. Especially in these times, when unbelief and godlessness, like raging waves beat against the Church, must all her children stand prepared at her slightest hint to meet her enemies calmly and with steadfast courage."² Mother Pauline rejoiced in humble service. It was a holy service, leading to holiness and in it with its serene glow led to Christ.

Enlightened and led by the Holy Spirit, Mother Pauline penetrated ever deeper and deeper into the inner nature of the Church. Already in her day, she grasped and lived what the Second Vatican Council, about a century later, was to declare in regard to the ecclesial dimension of religious life. The new religious family was born of the living and sanctifying Church and was to be intimately united with it in order that it might draw its life-substance from it and become fruitful: "All that is to redound to Your glory must grow from the trunk of Your Church, and never will I undertake such a work, if it does not derive its life's sap from Your Church. That, O my Jesus, You have made very clear to me during this retreat: how every branch that is not united to the vine withers and will be cast out, how the Father always prunes the vine that it may bear fruit a hundred-fold. Perhaps, it is just for this reason that until now my activities have not borne fruit -- they lacked the influx of that life-giving sap that flows from the mustard tree of holy Church. The honor of holy Church was indeed the most ardent, sincerest desire of my soul; nevertheless, only to this degree did my labors belong to it; they did not flow immediately and directly from the Church."³

Mother Pauline's image of the Church was not only that of an institution established by Christ, but was also one of the vine and the branches, an image which, in content, is similar to that of the Mystical Body of Christ with all its sublime realities and effects. The Head-body-members relationship is a living, organic one. The innermost principle is Christ Himself. The organic unity of the members with the Head and of the members among themselves was the basis of the dynamic love that animated Mother Pauline's thought and action.

According to that, the Congregation for her was not an institution in the Church, still less one alongside the Church, but was the Church -- a branch on the vine, a cell of the Mystical Body, called to live Christ, to proclaim Him, and to reveal Him more clearly every day.⁴

¹ Vol. 23, p. 79, Retreat, Aug. 12, 1846.

² Constitutions 1849, p. 27.

³ Vol. 23, p. 71172, Retreat, Nov. 26, 1846.

⁴ Lumen Gentium, Art. 46.

The new sprout of the ever-youthful, life-giving Church was to flourish for its "joy and honor." Herein Mother Pauline's love, a love that could never give and do enough, showed itself so perfectly. "His glory, His will -- that will be the whole aim of my life; and what is inseparable from these is the glory and adornment of holy Church.."¹ "May He grant me the grace to promote at all times the splendor and beauty of holy Church, His dearest Bride; to have this objective in mind: to love holy Church and never cease to labor for her, to love and labor until I die -- calmly leaving the success, the result to God, but never giving up what I know to be a good work in spite of a hundredfold failures; but ever and again setting to work anew and not abandoning the work of God until I succumb in the effort. Thus speak only great and generous souls."²

From her faith in Christ's power, which operates through the Church, proceeded Mother Pauline's deep appreciation of the blessing of holy Church and her confidence in it. She was convinced that the blessing of the Church was the blessing of Christ. She, therefore, never missed an opportunity, on meeting with a priest, to ask for his blessing, because for her this blessing meant a pledge of God's blessing and favor, a protection against the powers of darkness, a source of joy and strength. Blessed by holy Church, she no longer feared anything. Confidently and courageously she undertook the most difficult tasks because she was sure of God's help and protection. She was especially impressed with the solemn blessing the Bishop pronounced on her clothing day. It was not only the joy over "the precious, gratifying thought that holy Church had blessed the clothes she wore, nor was it the realization of the "dignity of a vocation approved and blessed by holy Church"³ but it was like a new Pentecost, a real descent of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a new creation: "A new life dawned.... A life in the Church and for God's holy Church in the strictest sense of the word."⁴ Deep within herself she experienced the fruits of this blessing -- a calm confidence in God and the assurance of help and assistance. Her whole later life proved that this blessing was fruitful and lasting.

She also received her appointment as superior from the Church and, in a certain sense, considered it a participation in the Church's task as guide. "He who enters in by the right door ... he is the good shepherd. Through the right door, through Christ and His beloved Church, I have entered. May He grant that I be a good shepherdess, who is willing to give her life for her sheep. May He grant that I lead the souls entrusted to me to good pastures, that I may not lose any. I can do nothing; I must first learn everything from the divine, the well-beloved Bridegroom of my soul. I have begged Him to help me. He will surely do it."⁵

Union and life with the Church is actualized above all through a conscious, active, and fruitful participation in the sacred liturgy⁶, which is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all power flows."⁷ Mother Pauline knew how to treasure it and derived fruit from it. She prepared carefully for the liturgical feasts and celebrated them devoutly and solemnly. The heart and climax of the liturgical life was the Holy Eucharist. Her participation in the liturgical and ecclesial life was not restricted to that in her own community. Her close connection with the parish church was striking. How enthusiastically she could relate about the church celebrations in her letters!

Her last instruction to the Sisters five days before her death shows how seriously Mother Pauline lived the ecclesiastical year. Regarding this, her last words- "Let us penetrate deeply into the spirit of holy Church, dear Sisters; let us live with the Church, " were the spiritual testament of Mother Foundress.⁸

Because everything in the liturgy centers around the love of God, revealed to us in Christ, and because the love of God is joy in the Holy Spirit, for Mother Pauline the living of the liturgy was the source and the soil of her own very joyful love.

Love and joy expanded Mother Pauline's heart, and consequently, like the Church, she had a catholic, universal spirit and heart, and was ingenious in the way she practiced charity. Her horizons extended far beyond the bounds of the Congregation and the diocese, evidence of an intense interest in the Church throughout the world. Her zeal for souls was all-embracing and untiring. How she rejoiced when she saw the Catholic Church in America vigorously unfolding, while it was being persecuted and enslaved in Germany. Her apostolic zeal was the expression of the impelling love of Christ in her, a love having the glory of the Father and the salvation of souls in view. Time and again she strove to enkindle this zeal in the hearts of her Sisters.

Mother Pauline's ecumenical spirit was genuinely ecclesial. Overjoyed in being a child of the Catholic Church herself, through a gratuitous grace, she wanted to help others, the separated brothers and sisters, to attain to this happiness by setting them on the

¹ Vol. 23, p. 67, Retreat, May 11, 1845.

² Vol. 23, p. 69, Retreat, Nov. 20, 1845.

³ Cf. Autobiography, p. 43.

⁴ Autobiography, p. 46.

⁵ Autobiography, p. 46.

⁶ Sacrosanctum Concilium, Art. 11.

⁷ Sacrosanctum Concilium, Art. 10.

⁸ Hüffer, Pauline v. Mallinckrodt, p. 364.

path to the true Church. In the Diaspora, where she endeavored to strengthen and spread the Faith, she established schools with inexpressibly great labor and sacrifice.

As a true daughter of the Church, Mother Pauline felt that hers was the obligation every Christian has, namely, to spread the Faith, for "the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature."¹ She was interested in establishing foundations in the United States, Brazil, Columbia, New Zealand, and Chile. "I will consider it a great grace, should God deign ..."² "I will be very happy if He should deign to use us for the spread of His holy, Catholic Faith in the far distant regions of the earth."³ As soon as Sisters were available and she recognized God's will in the matter, she began her extensive missionary activity in North and South America.

With the pilgrim Church, Mother Pauline also lived its eschatological hope, which longs for heavenly fulfillment. The thought of eternity was the measure of her actions and decisions. In reality it was nothing else except the loving desire to be finally with Christ in the Father. Here the foreign, the ephemeral, dark faith, the misery and wretchedness of sin-, there, our homeland, the everlasting, the face-to-face vision, holiness in perfect love. This eschatological bent of mind in Mother Pauline produced a soundness of judgment in thought and action, an imperturbable serenity and nobility which are rooted in the Eternal. From this disposition of soul, resulted her "eschatological virtues": her patient waiting and perseverance, her fortitude and detachment from all earthly things, her deep joy, which was like an anticipation and a training for the unending happiness and blessedness of heaven, her heroic love of the cross and of suffering, because "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8, 18). With her advancing years, her longing for heaven grew stronger and deeper. With holy impatience and absolute confidence she awaited the coming of the Lord and with the entire pilgrim Church entreated, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Apoc. 22, 20)

Suffering (Devotion to the Holy Souls)

Her faith in the communion of the whole Mystical Body of Christ united Mother Pauline intimately with the suffering Church. Following the teaching and the example of the Church, she assisted the Poor Souls, who already live in love, but are in need of purification, through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, prayer, indulgences and good works, especially so in November, All Souls' month. She implored their intercession in special needs, encouraged the Sisters to a like confidence in them, and admitted that she had often experienced their assistance.

Mother Pauline considered the saints in heaven -- those perfect members of the Mystical Body of Christ -- as her friends, her brothers and sisters, with whom she was united by the same life-stream of grace. She rejoiced in their perfection and drank of God's love and light, which every saint exemplifies in his particular way. She always relied on their intercession, venerated their relics as precious remembrances, devoutly celebrated their feasts, and spurred herself and others to understand and live the message of the saints in active love.

Because Mother Pauline lived in communion with the Church in heaven, the Church triumphant, she was likewise in lively contact with the holy angels, the messengers of God's love. The veneration of the holy angels, above all of her guardian angel, was very great. The presence of their guardian angels was also a reason for her reverential love of her fellowman, especially of little children. "Every Sister whom obedience has placed in the midst of the little ones and their angels should consider herself fortunate. She should be the children's visible guardian angel, taking the holy guardian angels as the model of her deportment."⁴

Triumphant (Devotion to Our Lady, the Angels and Saints)

A special love and veneration of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and of the Church, completed and perfected Mother Pauline's ecclesial attitude of mind. Her bridal love of Christ and her motherly heart for Christ's members made Mother Pauline delicately sensitive and receptive to the mysterious relationship between the Church, which is bride and mother, and Mary, Virgin and Mother. Therefore, her love of the Church is Marian and her love of Mary is ecclesial, since "veneration of Mary is the heart of our devotion to the Church."⁵

¹ Ad Gentes, Art. 2.

² Vol. 17, p. 174 (German), Nov. 21, 1877, Sr. Innocentia.

³ Vol. 17, p. 154 (German), Nov. 11, 1877, Sr. Mathilde.

⁴ Constitutions 1849, p. 27.

⁵ Suenens, Maria im Plan Gottes, p. 83.

Marian Aspect

Closely related to and a consequence of Mother Pauline's charism in its Christological and ecclesial dimensions is its obvious Marian orientation. From her youth, a marked feature of her spirituality is her devotion to Mary, a devotion¹ that was to take a twofold direction. To borrow from Pope Paul, God's holy Mother was truly to become for her "the main road leading ... to Christ, and, in Him, to the glory of God and the love of the Church,"² and precisely from Christ, through His holy Church, was Mother Pauline to learn with ever greater clarity and surety the specific form of Marian devotion for which God had destined her and her spiritual progeny.

In the plan of divine Providence Mother Pauline was to impress an unmistakable Christo-Marian character upon her congregation, not unlike that of the first Christian communities. Jesus' law of love was to be for her and her Sisters the principal law and rule; Mary Immaculate, their Mother and model; and Jesus Eucharistic, "their Bread of Life, the source of all their strength, their treasure of treasures, their All in all,"³ after Mary's example. Baptized Maria Bernadine Sophia Pauline, she herself was to be another Mary in her relation to the Sisters and to everyone else. From her baptism, when that immaculate Mother brought her forth to supernatural birth in the Holy Spirit, until the day she uttered her final fiat, Pauline was to mark off on life's calendar days full of Mary's tender love and motherly guidance and protection. What is by far more important, Mary was to be Pauline's model, teacher, queen, and mother, her cloud by day, and her pillar of fire by night⁴ in her journey to the Eternal. In the light of these facts, Mother Pauline's devotion to Mary takes on a new and meaningful importance.

Mary Immaculate, Mother and Model

When God bestows a name, either directly, or indirectly through His Church, that name, just as the life of the bearer, enshrines the recipient's future in what ever degree God intends. In the person of Pope Pius IX, the Pope of the Immaculate Conception, Mother Pauline's congregation came to be officially designated Daughters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, a title profoundly significant for her own times and for the future.⁵

God called Pauline von Mallinckrodt to be a witness to the Immaculate Conception. This new apostleship adds a special luster to the foundress' temporal and eternal greatness and to her specific service in the Church and to all mankind. Pauline was to make operative, we may say make visible, in a way both admirable and imitable, this unique prerogative of Mary's. The call came on the evening of Pauline's First Holy Communion day, when, through Father Anton Claessen, Jesus gave her a fragment of His Gospel destined to become a reed and a core for her specific way of imitating His holy Mother, especially in the implications of her Immaculate Conception. Standing with his twelve-year-old protegee before the miraculous image of Our Lady in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, he prayed.- "O Mary, sweet Mother of God and our Mother, be a mother to little Pauline. Extend your hands in loving protection over her. Take her under your patronage. Implant in her your virtues, especially your humility and total surrender to the holy will of God. Keep her your child forever."⁶

Identification with Mary's attitude: "Ecce Ancilla"

That the gracious queen of heaven accepted this "child of predilection,"⁷ "this soul singularly blessed by God,"⁸ for nurturing and molding according to her own image and likeness became more and more evident. In the felicitous phrase of St. Augustine, Mary was for her truly the forma Dei, "the mold of God", forming her into a perfect Christian, for from that day Pauline was consciously to "take the Immaculate Way of Mary" for her norm. Each successive period in her life reveals a keener awareness, a profounder insight into the role of Mary in her life, a stronger resolve to live fully her heavenly Mother's Ecce ancilla Domini. Her prayer reflected this attitude: "O dear Mother of God, let us together place our gifts on the altar -- you, your Son, and I -- oh,

¹ Devotion 'according to the definition given by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis deSales, meaning "devotedness, an alacrity and readiness of will."

² Words of Pope Paul VI

³ Cf. Constitutions 1849, p. 88.

⁴ Cf. Exodus 13:21.

⁵ Constitutions 1934, p. 13

⁶ Cf. Vol. 23, p. 12, Retreat 1842.

⁷ Sr. Floriana, Mother Pauline in Her letters, p. 96.

⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

accept it, dearest Jesus-- myself with all that I am and have, together with my dear blind children and the other little children, and the plans for the Congregation. "¹

Once she had attained her goal and the bond between her divine Bridegroom and herself, was to be sealed through her holy vows, His Mother must also be part of it: "O dear Mother of God, accept the bride of your well-beloved Son as your daughter. On the day of my First Holy Communion Mary was given me as my protectress. Oh, she has cared faithfully for me; but now may she be my Mother even more intimately than before. "² "Even more intimately than before, " that is the tell-tale phrase that holds the secret of Mother Pauline's sanctity. Mary and Pauline have been on intimate terms for many years. To live the vows perfectly she could learn best from her Mother. "O Mary, holy Virgin, your beautiful example has illumined the way for us; you lived the evangelical counsels most perfectly. Implore God to grant me the grace to follow in your footsteps, so that I too may be a handmaid of the Lord, and it may be done to me according to His word. Amen. "³

The older she grew, the more did the influence of Mary Immaculate operate in her until it so transformed her that, like the Virgin Mother, she brought Jesus with her wherever she went. Small wonder that her contemporaries perceived Mother Pauline to be a remarkable woman, making even a chance meeting with her a memorable experience. With the simplicity of a child, she came time and again to Our Lady to entreat, to learn, to open her heart, to beg forgiveness, just as the circumstances might call for.

Standing at the crossroads of life and not knowing which road to take, she looked not only to the Holy Spirit, but also to His Immaculate Spouse, for light and guidance and firmly made the decision to renounce the thought of marriage, a grace she ascribes to the Spirit of Jesus given her in the sacrament of confirmation the week previous. On that day the Holy Spirit had filled her heart with such a passionate love of Christ that "the bliss and splendor of every earthly union" no longer held any attraction for her. ⁴ From then on she strove to acquire what there ever was in Mary, in consequence of her Immaculate Conception -- a single ness of devotion, an undivided spirit of love and loyalty, such as there ever was in Jesus. On that day Jesus made such a gift of Himself to Pauline that, after the example of her holy Mother, she, in turn, became His gift to others. ⁵ "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word, " became the leitmotif of her canticle of praise of His glory. "I remained active and interested in external affairs, with peace in my heart. Unconcerned about myself, I could the better care for others. It was a genuine pleasure to lavish my love and attention on the poor, the members of Christ. An intense longing to become a Sister of Charity welled up in my soul. "⁶

The hour of her annunciation had struck. True to her motherly nature, she was to be a mother not in the flesh, but in the spirit. With what clarity she grasped the significance of the spiritual dynamism entailed in spiritual motherhood is evident in her diary entry on the eve of her clothing day. "Mysterious, " she writes, "is the blessing Holy Mother Church imparts -- she blessed the bonds between You and me -- the union which You, O Jesus, will to render indissoluble. In this blessing lies an inexpressible strength and security, which can only be experienced, but cannot be expressed in words. It seems to me as if a nuptial blessing lies therein -- a blessing of fecundity. O God, if You deign to bestow it upon me, then You Yourself give me milk and grace, the light and strength to rear spiritual children for You that they may stand like tender olive plants around Your table. Alleluia! Amen! ... Give me, O Source of love, a true motherly heart for all. May this heartfelt love be dedicated not to my immediate environment only but to all mankind. May it go out in comfort and beneficence to all. "⁷

A perfect Mary-prayer, transcending the limitations of time and space and extending in reality to generations to come; for in the world of spirit it is much the same as in the world of matter; there exist forces that exert a seminal influence. That she might be a perfect mother, a perfect teacher in the art of living, Mother Pauline went "to the throne of grace, " "to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. " "Dear Mother Mary, be my intercessor, my mother, my teacher, my protectress. "⁸ "Holy Mother of God, model and help of Christians, pray for me. Let me be the handmaid of the Lord..."⁹

¹ Vol. 23, P. 117, Retreat 1848.

² Autobiography, p. 52.

³ Vol. 23, p. 31, Retreat, June, 1843.

⁴ Autobiography, p. 48.

⁵ Joseph Farrell, The Spirit Enshrined, p. 29.

⁶ Vol. 1, p. 73 (German), July 7, 1840, Luise Hensel.

⁷ Vol. 24, P. 9, Retreat 1849.

⁸ Vol. 25, p. 20, Retreat 1861.

⁹ Vol. 23, p. 3, Retreat 1842.

The motive for all this study Mother Pauline clearly understood. "The loving heart," she wrote, "seeks only the good pleasure of Jesus; it seeks His Heart; it perseveres, no matter where He goes and fashions its heart after Mary's heart, because Jesus found no heart more faithful than the heart of His Mother."¹²

Where to learn what that immaculate, faithful heart of Mary had to teach her? A true daughter of holy Church, she knew that it had the answer in its great Marian prayers, the prayers she herself dearly loved. Some, like the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother Pauline had cherished from her youth; others, like the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, she had come to know and love later, not simply because, along with the Rosary she was obliged by rule to pray them, but most of all because they were the mirrors perfectly reflecting Our Lady in all events of her life, the thorn-and-sorrow-filled as well as the joyful and glorious. These prayers were the answer to her petition, "O Jesus, teach me to study Mary's example."³ All else that conduced to make the study inspiring and helpful -- tridiums and novenas in preparation for Mary's feasts, especially for the great feast of the Immaculate Conception -- she used in order to deepen her love of Our Lady and so to grow in her fervor for her following of Christ in the spirit of His holy and immaculate Mother.

Imitation of Her Virtues

Her days were to be spent like Mary's. She must consider nothing too trivial; she must be lovingly concerned about everything. The model of the home must be the little house of Nazareth; and as Mary guided the Child, so must she too strive to guide those God wished to train through her. All this would be possible if she learned to love as Mary loved, therefore, she implored that openness to Mary necessary for the task she had set for herself. "May the Lord give me a candid, sincere, childlike spirit, such as the Child Jesus possessed while He was being guided by Mary. I, too, will allow myself to be guided by her and trust that she will accept me as her child."⁴

To achieve her goal, she must become a child, pure and innocent, as her holy Mother. This conscious striving for purity of soul, for that sinlessness characteristic of those who clearly understand that sin is a refusal to love the One who alone is worthy of love, was one of the earliest lessons she had learned in the school of Mary. It was a lesson so mastered that the result was evident to all who knew her. Her notes prove that she abhorred even the slightest sin, in order that she might attain to perfect love of God and in Him to perfect love of neighbor, in a word, to that renunciation and forgetfulness of self that is the language of Marylike simplicity.

But the way of such purity of soul, such Marylikeness, is invariably the way of suffering, of active and passive purification. With Mary she must be prepared to bear the cross in whatever form it might come. Her life story is too well known for its "sorrowful mysteries" to need detailing. In this regard, as in all else, Mother Pauline had learned every virtue from her immaculate Mother Mary. No matter what their duty, their cross, their circumstances, the Sisters would have some word of hers, but most of all her own shining example, to light their way and to spur them on along the path of difficult duty and of humdrum, daily toil. "If matters get too difficult," she would encourage them, "do not worry; cast a quick glance at your meek Jesus, at your amiable Mother Mary, and remain friendly and affable."⁵

Mother Pauline encouraged, entreated, assisted, yes, corrected them when necessary -- all only to bring them to the realization she herself had come to through long and loving companionship with her Mother Mary, namely, that "the essence of Mary's perfection consisted in doing and suffering everything, all with a view of intimately uniting herself to God and His holy will,"⁶ in utter self-surrender and love.

¹ Cf. Constitutions 1934, -Art. 7.

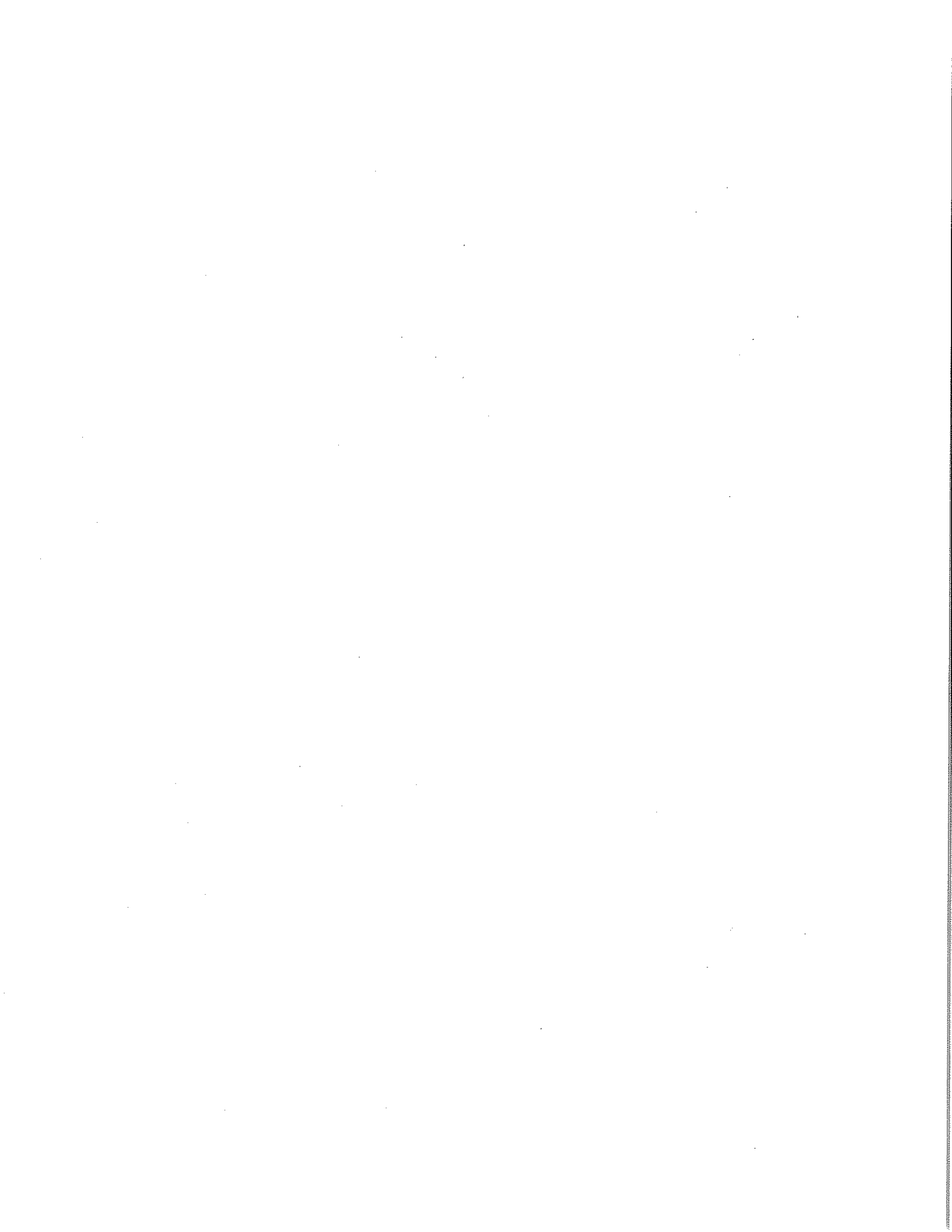
² Vol. 23, p. 104, Retreat, Sept., 1847

³ Vol. 23, p. 100, Retreat, Sept., 1847.

⁴ Vol. 23, p. 115, Retreat, Sept., 1848.

⁵ Vol., 23, p. 108, Retreat, Sept., 1847.

⁶ Vol. 23, p. 125, Retreat, Sept., 1848



PART III: LOVE

SHE GIVES CHRIST'S LOVE TO EVERYONE IN CHEERFUL, WHOLEHEARTED SERVICE

Love of God and love of neighbor were a living unity for Pauline. God was the ultimate and absolute reality in her life. She strove that every breath, thought, affection, and movement of hers would be, consciously or unconsciously, as life's matters permitted, impelled by and to Him. Her total response to Him was made in and with Jesus through self-giving service to others. There was no dichotomy in this response to Jesus and to others. She fully absorbed the implications of the word: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..." (Lk. 10:27) "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12). Already in 1843 Pauline writes: "... for love of You I will love my neighbor as myself. Only then will my love for my neighbor prove genuine -- if it flows from You as its source... The vocation I have chosen demands a double commitment to love."¹

The love of God had become concretized and incarnate in Jesus. What captivated her in Christ was His love of man. She strove to be permeated with His Spirit that she might bring the inexpressible love of God to man. It was from companionship with Christ in the Eucharist that her love was nourished so that she could bring Christ's love to all she contacted and could also find Christ among those she served. Joyous, youthful enthusiasm and energy were drawn from familiar conversation and union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. These characteristics were to mark her future congregation.

Dynamic Response to God's Love

Pauline's was no passive acceptance of love of God. She realized that she must be Christ, and so she brought her whole being to respond to the movement of the Spirit within her. Her personality was marked by a wide range of character traits, but through the mystery of the love of God and the collaboration of Pauline they were integrated into a harmonious unity. Her spontaneity and lively imagination were balanced by a strong will-power. Her rich gifts of mind and heart were coordinated by her clear power of reasoning.

Pauline's writings, even those dating to early youth, give evidence of her ability to find and integrate ideas which stimulated and activated her daily conduct. Everything which influenced her disposition, whether pertaining to home and family relations, to social, political, or ecumenical situations, or to life in her religious community, led her to a more total development of her personality whether they affected her favorably or adversely. By such means, then, her soul-life matured and the activity of the Holy Spirit within her became more visible.

Though the love which comes from deep contact with God grew steadily in Pauline, her characteristic individuality did not diminish, but became more and more marked. In her contacts with others she retained her natural spontaneity and warmth, while becoming more and more detached from herself. Her power of persuasion and her keen and logical judgment enabled her to counsel others, and her deep understanding of human problems, together with a clear discernment, provided comfort and direction to many. She had the courage to face the tensions of daily life and to take the risks necessary to further God's cause. She was sensitive to the feelings of others and to her own womanly feelings. She sought to enrich her competence and her talents that she might become more fit to answer the calls of God. In this way, Pauline's personality was the reflection of God within her. Fundamentally, it was the vital flame of the Creator Himself which warmed and matured her soul.

An outstanding trait in her life was her ability to accept the demands of the present moment. Her personality and her work were impregnated by a certain dynamic power which urged her to react to the world about her without losing sight of God's outlook upon the world. She consciously adjusted to both the call from within and the appeal from without.

Her characteristic humility caused her to be her own best critic, ever seeking to do the most perfect thing in the sight of God and man. When challenged by a new and unfamiliar political or social environment, she realized the need to adjust regardless of personal opinions, but always in accord with the Church. Her inherent sensibility for the diverse needs of all men, and of life generally, led her to discern the difficulties of her time and to devise ways and means to alleviate them. Precisely this attitude endowed her personality with a certain vibrancy which prevented stagnation.

¹ Vol. 23, p. 39, Retreat 1843.

Identification with Christ

On entering upon each new phase of her life, she studied and reflected upon God's new gifts to her and their corresponding demands. In this way she succeeded in correlating her own initiative and her willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Though Pauline was progressive by nature and was ready and open to change as circumstances demanded, the source of this readiness was not her personal inclination but the call of God. For Him she was willing to set aside accustomed ways and risk the insecurity necessary in order to come closer to Him who is Life.

As Pauline's mind and actions conformed increasingly to the divine so did her ability to deal with others. Though her natural qualities of understanding, open-mindedness and cordiality easily paved the way, it was her genuine humility and charity rooted in faith which opened the hearts of others and facilitated her successful guidance of them.

Reverence for Each Person

Just as Pauline was conscious of her responsibility as a creature of God to cooperate in the development of her life toward Him, so too did she perceive every person as a creature and image of God, with a life to be developed and sanctified. This conviction developed in her a very obvious respect for others. With a heart that was naturally attracted by goodness, intelligence, and charm, Pauline's own wealth of being was impressed more deeply with the remarkableness and worth of each individual person. By her faith's strong vision she saw all men not only as naturally appreciable to some degree, but infinitely so, as God's own children. These God commanded her to love as herself and as He loved them. To what extent she showed this great love and reverence for each person she encountered is evident in her letters and biographies. Flavored though her letters are by the formality of style and the culture of her day, her priceless, genuinely sincere care, reverence, and tactful candor toward each person of every sex and station in life break through, irrepressibly refreshing, delightfully human -- all unmistakably the product of her divine view of man. Doing God's will for her is primarily loving everyone with His love.

This was the ultimate source of her respect for others, her courtesy, and her efforts to practice justice and amiability when speaking of others, even of those whose opinions and beliefs differed from her own. She believed that every person had certain rights and beliefs which it was her duty to respect. It was natural then that already from early childhood she was drawn most to the poor, the suffering, the helpless, and later, particularly to the blind. These won her most tender, selfless, generous love and devotion. How much that inborn tendency was intensified by her faith's vision of God and her neighbor can only be imagined. Like Christ, she tried to supply by every means in her power, any physical or moral need. Compassion, kindness, gracious availability, these the poor could always find in Mother Pauline. On the day of her first holy vows, reflecting on the ceremonies of the day, she writes: "I declared that I wished to place my time and my strength, my health and my life in the service of the blind, the poor children and the needy. Dear God, help me! I desire to be a victim of love, to be consumed in the service of charity..."¹ Neither race, color, or creed mattered to her since the very condition of the individual made love for him imperative. Her service was universal and self-forgetting. She took everyone seriously and placed full confidence in his/her good qualities. Only by presuming the good in others did she hope for the development of each individual as a unique person.

The imitation of Christ moved her more and more to accept with sympathetic charity every person with his or her respective disposition, as well as to sense the momentary needs of each. There was an ever closer interrelation between her inner life with Christ in His Mystery and her service of His members. Paschal joy saturated her service, and so she brought the warmth of God's love to everyone.

Mother Pauline had a special place in her heart for her Sisters. She felt that the love that should exist within the Congregation toward all men was certainly due, first of all, to the Sisters. The love binding the Sisters to Mother Pauline and to each other incarnated their shared experience of the love of Jesus and their mutually supported response to that love.

Pauline herself was aware of and reverent toward the uniqueness of each Sister. Her recognition of diversity of characters influenced her dealings with them as well as assignments to apostolic works. "Some allowance must be made for their personality; otherwise life would be too hard for them."² Repeatedly her letters reveal a deep insight and knowledge of each Sister. If she detected shortcomings in someone, she ordinarily withheld final judgment until further inquiries had confirmed her opinion. When someone under her direction needed to be corrected, she preferred to consider the situation from a positive point of view in order to facilitate the possibility of a new start. She always upheld her Sisters, even when they had disappointed her or

¹ Vol. 24, p. 24, Nov. 4, 1850

² Vol. 8, p. 12, Jan. 24, 1860, Sr. Walburga.

by some indiscretion had caused her embarrassment. Frequently she offered suggestions in her letters but often added: "You are acquainted with the circumstances and ... can judge more suitably than I, who am at a distance."¹

Though Mother Pauline respected each Sister's aptitudes and desires, she expected obedience from them as a faith-response to God's will. She felt the need of communication and dialogue with the Sisters in order to best discover God's will. "Since I cannot visit the houses ... I would like to learn the wishes and the needs of each Sister in order to consider them when making the proposed changes. The most practical way at the time seems to be to have each Sister write to me -- a candid, childlike, simple letter telling me what she believes the good God would wish her to write... Naturally, I cannot promise to satisfy everyone's wishes . . . Yet, I can give you the assurance that I love each and every one of you sincerely and heartily."² Also in other important decisions she often consulted the Sisters to learn their views. She encouraged her Sisters to openness of mind and maturity of action by providing opportunities for them to accept mutual responsibility and to give wholehearted cooperation in loving obedience. Mother Pauline's relations with her Sisters were characterized by true solicitude without over-anxiety. She desired to have them unite with her in the search for God's will.

Mother Pauline was concerned about the continued spiritual and professional formation of the Sisters. She wanted her Sisters trained for any position they took and to be professional women in their varied fields. Above all, though, she was solicitous for the Sisters' spiritual progress. "First and foremost we may not forget that we all are religious."³ She not only gave the Sisters instruction on the spiritual life but also made every effort to assure good spiritual directors both in the motherhouse and in the missions. In her extensive correspondence, she emphasized the importance of prayer in living the Christ-Mystery and expressing it in service to others.

Victim of Love in Cheerful, Wholehearted Service

The basis of all her relationships with others was love characterized by gratitude, prudence, justice, and zeal. She was deeply concerned that the same love should characterize the community spirit within the Congregation. "I am of the opinion that a congregation must be one heart and one soul in the fullest sense of the word. Only in this most intimate union lies strength and blessing. One and the same spirit must permeate the entire congregation."⁴ It was the spirit of Christ that Mother Pauline wanted to permeate her congregation through and through. She writes in the first constitutions- "An active charity is to emanate from the fire of God's love which must burn constantly in their hearts: an inexpressible love. Let holy charity be the principal law and rule of our Congregation, its whole character and life. It should shine upon the countenance, sparkle in the eye, radiate from the lips; it should temper conversation and regulate conduct in all places and in all things, it should increase in us those virtues the Apostle praises as its fruits. . . In order that this principal characteristic of the Congregation, charity, might instantly do everyone good, all the Sisters ought to be distinguished especially for the virtues of friendliness and cheerfulness."⁵ This, then, was the love Mother Pauline wanted to bind the Sisters to each other, to all men, and to God.

Pauline's life, as we have seen, was based essentially on a firm belief and dynamic relationship with God, who is Love. He was the center of her life, therefore love was the center of her life. Christ is the incarnation of this love and so it was natural that Christ became Pauline's model and way to the Father. This personal companionship with Jesus was nourished and strengthened by union with Him in the Eucharist. Since Jesus continues His salvific work in His Church it was there, serving the Mystical Body of Christ, that Pauline found expression of her love. There she brought Christ's love to the poor and needy and there she also found Christ. With Mary she surrendered wholeheartedly to the Father, and like Mary brought Christ to everyone she served. Through this deep love-union with God, in total surrender to Him and seeking His will alone, in living completely the Christ-Mystery, Pauline brought to everyone a cheerful, wholehearted service. Pauline von Mallinckrodt was, indeed, a Sister of Christlike Love.

¹ Vol. 4, P. 8, Jan. 19, 1853, Sr. Josepha.

² Vol. 12, p. 18, July 30, 1866, Sr. Ludgera.

³ Vol. 19, p. 16, Oct., 1880, Superiors.

⁴ Vol. 2, p. 74, Apr. 12, 1850, Cordier

⁵ Constitutions 1849, p. 18.