



350 Bernardsville Road
Mendham, NJ 07945
December 23, 2008

Dear Sisters and Companions of Pauline,

At this beautiful season during which we await the coming of Jesus into our hearts in a special way, I want to share with you the news that the Lord has come for our Companion of Pauline, Mary Berger of Wilkes-Barre, PA, on December 13 in Lancaster, Ohio.

Mary was born in 1917 in Jetto, PA, the daughter of the late Anthony and Catherine Duke Gregasavitch. In 1941, she moved to Wilkes-Barre where she became a parishioner of St. Nicholas Church there. She was predeceased by her husband William, her 3 brothers and two sisters. Mary is survived by her son William and his wife Anne of Wilkes-Barre; daughter Marilyn and her husband Richard Stai of Lancaster, Ohio; and also three grandchildren. During her long life she had been employed for 17 years by Mercy Hospital, Wilkes-Barre.

What was Mary like as a person, a parishioner, a Companion? Fellow Companion of Pauline, Kathleen Reiss beautifully characterizes Mary Berger:

"She was such a gentle, loving woman...holy, wise and so very compassionate. Prayer was never far from her heart and her rosary was never far from her hands. Over the many years of our friendship she became a confidante. I always thought of her as a "powerhouse" of prayer. I trusted her motherly insight and tender advice during times of stress, especially during my sister's illness...and beyond.

She was equally ready to celebrate the good times when the occasion arose. She loved any reason to gather family and friends and have a party. Despite her many health issues she maintained her optimism and courage and confident TRUST in God's comfort and care. In mid-November, she accepted the invitation of her daughter Marilyn to live with her family in Lancaster, Ohio. She truly valued her independence. She was always quite stylish, beautifully dressed...jewelry, accessories etc. She always looked like she had just stepped out of Lord&Taylor's window!

Her son, Bill was a classmate of mine at St Nick's. Her daughter Marilyn is also a St. Nick's graduate and also a nurse. She and Bill were devoted to their wonderful mother in addition to their own family duties and responsibilities. Although Mary and I were not acquainted during those school years, luckily for me, we did cross paths eventually. She was a wonderful cook and delighted many of us over the years with her specialties. She loved being a hostess. More than anything though, she LOVED St. Nicholas Parish... indeed, St Nicholas himself. I'm pretty sure St Nicholas was standing next to St Peter to welcome her to Heaven. Her love for the Parish and so many of the parishioners will surely continue as she begins her new prayer life, right at the throne of God. I know she

will continue to keep our intentions there as well. She was an angel friend. I'll miss her very much."

In the same vein, S.Andrea Weidner, currently ministering in Rome but Coordinator of the Wilkes-Barre group when Mary became a Companion, says "Mary was a woman who always thought about others. She did not want to inconvenience anyone. She was very independent, very devoted to St. Nicholas parish, very grateful when anyone did something for her. She had good taste in clothes and always looked well dressed."

Coordinator of the Wilkes-Barre group S.John Marie tells us that for the last ten years, Mary Berger was not in good health, so she did not attend many of the meetings. However, she was always interested in what the group was doing. Often other members would pick her up and take her home so that she could attend.

Sister of Mercy Mary Eleanor Thornton knew Mrs. Berger quite well. She told us that Mary helped her in getting the parish Eucharistic Adoration on Tuesdays moving. She also told us that Mary purchased two sanctuary candles (red) that burn before the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesdays.

May this wonderful woman who dearly loved God and His special Presence in the Eucharist, her family, her parish, her priests, St. Nicholas, and Blessed Pauline, have a wonderful Christmas celebration in heaven, her true home. As Companion of Pauline, she will intercede for us, that we, too, reach our heavenly goal.

We continue to keep Mary in our prayers and extend heartfelt sympathy to all those who mourn her loss, especially her children Marilyn and Bill.

With love and prayer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sister Joseph Spring, S.C.C." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC