

# IN HIS LOVE

## The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne SUMMER 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

May God's abundant graces and blessings be upon you and bring you peace!

Where there is life, there is hope; where there is hope, there is peace and joy in the hearts of men. The greatest gift that God has given to each and everyone of us is the gift of life. God loves us so much that He wants to share His life with us infinitely— and that is pure joy!!

The Easter season may have passed, but the joy and graces of Our Lord's Resurrection continue to be with us. We hold fast to His promises that "He will be with us until the end of the world". This is where our Christian hope comes from- to share life eternal with Him!

We are all created to be happy- to have deep, lasting joy in our hearts. What is joy? According to Father M.V. Bernadot, O.P., "the basic joy for the Christian is to know that God is. God exists! It is to know that there is the infinite, the essential and necessary being, the cause of all truth, beauty, goodness, benevolence, power, holiness, sovereign purity, justice and love...God exists!! To know this is a source of supreme and unending joy for the loving soul". God calls each one of us to this infinite joy because He loves us infinitely.

There is a purpose for each one of us— for our existence. Let us be thankful for that life— the gift of life that God has given to us. God in His goodness created us and became one like us to be with us forever, to be our brother. Our God is a God of life!!

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Let us pray for sanctity of life in all of its stages. The unborn and the most vulnerable are also loved by God and called to share in His joy. As human beings, we are all created in the image and likeness of God and everyone of us is endowed with that dignity. “In the life of man, God’s image shines forth anew and is again revealed in all its fullness at the coming of the Son of God in human flesh” (Evangelium Vitae, 36). At every stage of life, we all need to feel connected with others, to feel loved. Suffering may be great at the end of life, but John Paul II had reminded us that at the basis of all human sufferings, the same redemptive suffering of Christ...He Himself is the one who in each individual experiences love...He Himself is present in the suffering person... Christ has taught man to do good by his suffering and to do good to those who suffer (Salvifici Doloris, 30). As Hawthorne Dominicans, we give this hope to those who are suffering and dying, the hope of eternal life. A sister once said, “You are the last face the person sees before seeing the face of God”. This is a great privilege. Being with the dying, being there at the last moment of life is sacred beyond words. Really, at the end of life, nothing but love has importance, God’s love.

May we be God’s presence to all and bearer of God’s love to the suffering, and the dying. “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being” (CCC, 2258). Let us then, choose life, life in Christ, life eternal!!

The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne



*Let the Little Children Come to Me*

“Whoever shall receive the kingdom of God  
must first become like a little child.”  
MATTHEW 18:3-4

May God bless each one of you abundantly

# “In Person”

## *Sr. Mary Richard’s Heavenly Colleague*

Many of us enjoy special relationships with those in heaven, whether it be our own personal patron saint or simply a loved one believed to have led a holy life. Our Sr. Mary Richard is a prime example. In the Community for over forty years, Sr. Richard stands out as the sister with a direct link to the renowned St. Anthony of Padua. Stories abound, for time and again throughout those years many a sister sought her prayers to this great saint of lost articles. Just one little, recent tale shall suffice.

Once upon a hectic Spring day at the Motherhouse, Sr. Maureen sought in vain for the community’s credit card. Offices, rooms, wallets had been turned upside down to no avail. Her search unsuccessful, Sister made known her dilemma, and was promptly advised to call Sr. Richard (Sacred Heart Home, Philadelphia). Responding instantly, Sister lit candles around St. Anthony, imploring his help. As she did so, Sr. Solanus passed by and asked what was up. Hearing the story, Sr. Solanus announced, “I have the credit card!” The exuberant sisters relayed the happy news to Sr. Maureen, who received it with great sigh of relief and many a thanksgiving to our dear St. Anthony.



St. Anthony pray for us

## **My Twin: St. Mary Ellen, O.P.**

It is well known among many of our sisters that Sister Mary Ellen often jokes that she and the late Pope John Paul II are twins. She lovingly insists upon this despite the geographic distances of her being American born and our late pope having been born in the town of Wadowice, Poland. After all, do they not both have Mary as their Mother? The Pope and Sister both happened to be born on the same day and the same year, May 18, 1920. Sister says many years ago she noticed his birth date on a holy card someone gave her and she took it as a sign. “From then on I said we were twins and I became more interested in his life.” Sister says she began to follow all that he said more closely, particularly his Wednesday audiences and talks that he gave regarding the family and the sanctity of life. She saw his amazing witness to the Gospel of Life and was always taken how children were so drawn to him wherever he went. “He had such a love for life and for all around him. Even when he was dying he lived the Gospel of Life and gave love in his final blessing.” Sister urges that through our prayers and having the courage to speak out when the opportunity presents itself on issues regarding the sanctity of life we can imitate our late Holy Father. This suggestion of Sister Ellen’s corresponds well with John Paul II’s encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae*, for in #82 of the documents he states: “In the proclamation of the Gospel, we must not fear hostility or unpopularity, and we must refuse any compromise or ambiguity which might conform us to the world’s way of thinking”. Knowing her love of Pope John Paul II, when asked how she feels Pope Benedict XVI is doing in continuing to preach the Gospel of Life she says, “he is the perfect man for the job”.



Sr. Mary Ellen always has a radiant smile for the patients , families and visitors. She is assigned at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Home in Atlanta, Ga.

## Patients' Stories

### Joseph

Joseph had been abandoned as an infant and a good family took him into their home and their hearts. This family had quite a number of children already, yet when they saw Joseph's need, they responded with compassion.

Joseph quickly became one of the family. He enjoyed sled rides in the winter and swinging in the summer. He took part in as many of the family events as he could.

As a young adult, Joseph was diagnosed with cancer. We had the privilege of offering a place at Rosary Hill Home for Joseph to spend his last days in the comfort and peace of God's Love. We learned of Joseph's story through two of his sisters and we could see very plainly the love that the three of them shared.

Everyone who met Joseph walked away a little different, for Joseph was full of love, joy and complete trust. Many of our staff would compete to care for Joseph. One was unchanged by the encounter. We all came out of Joseph's room a little kinder and happier.

It has been many years since Joseph left us for his Eternal Reward where he surely saw the Face of God. However, he left the memory of his precious life in our hearts and changed us all just a little by his presence. In our world today, many people would think that Joseph's life was not "useful", for, Joseph was blind, deaf and mute. Those people are so wrong!

Joseph's life was full and he responded to everyone around him with love because all he knew was love. The pureness of his life is what most of us strive for all our lives. Joseph was always just as God intended him to be. Joseph's life was a gift pure and simple. As St. Therese so aptly said: *"Love encompasses all vocations, love is everything, love embraces all time and all places"*.

We thank God that Joseph's mother chose life for Joseph. We thank the family who so lovingly adopted Joseph. We thank God we met Joseph.

We thank Joseph for sharing his love with all of us.



Sister Maureen and Sister Stella Mary with two of our male patients

## Stories cont...



**Julia**

At Rosary Hill Home, we affirm the sanctity of life in all of its stages even to the moment of death. In our prevalent secular culture a human being is valued only for what he has done and what he has, be it a good job, good looks or money. In our apostolate of caring for incurably, ill cancer patients we proclaim that each person is loved as a child of God and therefore given the highest respect at all stages of life. Let me give you an example.

Meet Julia. She is in her eighties and a victim of brain cancer. She has lost the ability to care for herself. We Sisters do everything for her including bathing her, feeding her, dressing her in pretty gowns. The love of her life, her husband Joe, sits by her side every day. He talks to her and even sings to her. Julia once was able to sing with him, but she has lost her ability to do this. Julia is almost completely deaf and blind as a result of her cancer.

Before Julia got sick, she and her husband were very active in their parish. They generously gave much of their time and talents to organizing and participating in many of the church's activities. If anything needed to be done or run, Julia and Joe would do it.

You could never talk about Julia without mentioning her large and loving family who are completely devoted to Julia. Every Sunday the whole gang goes to our 10:30 am Mass for the patients, families and friends. Afterwards they gather in our solarium to have lunch, chat and most importantly be there for Julia and each other.

Julia was dying when she was admitted to Rosary Hill Home. The doctors said she had only a short time to live. Eight years later Julia has become a part of our family here. We love her and her family dearly. Every day when Joe comes into visit Julia he says to her, "I love you" and "do you know you're beautiful?" Indeed we think Julia is beautiful, too, a beautiful child of God.

Joe once spoke about his outlook on life. "It's all about respect. You have to respect God." He then added how much God respects and honors our lives." If God respects our lives, how can we not respect life, too?

Julia died this year a few days before Palm Sunday. At her death, Joe and all her family surrounded her. In dying, she remained beautiful and serene; she was born to eternal life.

Even to her last breath, she was loved for who she was, a child of God, not for what she could do. We Sisters had witnessed this priceless gift of life in Julia.



**'HIGHLIGHTS'**



Students from St. Peter's school in Yonkers visiting our heritage room with Sr. Alma Marie.



CONGRATULATIONS Sr. Mary Dominic celebrated 70 years as Religious!



Fr. Nicanor Austriaco, OP Main celebrant Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday.



Sr. Mary Ursula with our chaplain Fr. Martin Connors, OP

HAPPY EASTER!!!  
ALLELUIA



Sr. Carol Marie visiting from our mission in Africa with Sr. Maureen preparing the readings for Easter Vigil Mass.



Easter dinner with patients and families.



## COLUMN

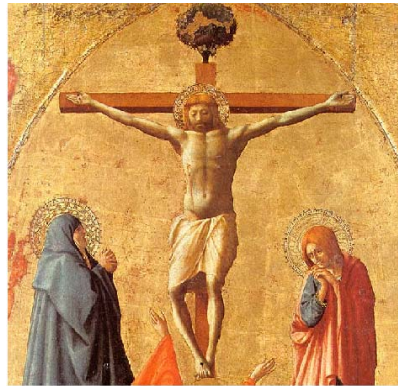
### 'With Mary at the Foot of the Cross'

'Will a breath of the warmth of Mary's desire for the desires of Jesus call to us to follow her to the starving and maimed whom Jesus loves?'



On May 20<sup>th</sup>, as we commemorated the birth of our beloved Mother Mary Alphonsa, I was struck anew by how profoundly the Virgin Mary influenced our foundress in developing the apostolate of her budding community. In her later years, while reflecting upon the work she had begun of nursing the cancerous poor, Mother Alphonsa wrote: "we know that Mary visits every abode of sorrow and suffering, and shall we fear to accompany the Immaculate Queen of Heaven when she invites us?" How truly Mother identified her vocation with the virgin Mother! She did indeed accompany the heavenly Queen traversing the streets and alleyways of New York, seeking out lost and destitute sufferers to show them the warmth of a mother's love in the midst of their afflictions.

At the foot of the Cross, Mary becomes the Mother of all humanity. And there – at the Cross – rests the vocation of each Dominican Sister of Hawthorne. Mary's presence at the Cross manifests for all time that "she will be where the suffering and spiritual needs of human beings would have brought [her Son]." This same "desire for the desires of Jesus" inflamed Mother Alphonsa and is the spark that fires her Sisters, whom she described as "religious nurses laboring at the side of Mary for the love of the interests of Jesus." The Sisters' days are spent in those common maternal tasks of bathing, nourishing, consoling. Daily they stand by the bed, the wheelchair, the gerichair, the Cross – praying and sharing – in a word – loving those lying thereupon. Theirs is the task to bring the Christ to those in their final presence and joy of the resurrected agony.



This is the call of each Dominican Sister of Hawthorne. It is likewise the call of every Christian who knows someone in need – and isn't that each one of us? Today, let us embrace the dignity of every human life by being faithful to our duty to "stand beside our Mother at the foot of the Cross and not to pass on."

### **VOCATION DISCERNMENT WEEKEND:**

**Oct. 16-18, 2009**

During the course of the weekend, young women have an opportunity to experience the life and charism of the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne. Those attending join in our community prayers, witness our apostolate, and meet some of our sisters.

Reservations are required... please contact Sr. Alma Marie. Her contact information is on the back of this newsletter.

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Rose Hawthorne  
(Mother Mary Alphonsa, O.P.)  
Servant of God



*Hawthorne Dominicans Motherhouse and Chapel*

**DOMINICAN SISTERS OF HAWTHORNE**

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Dear Sister Alma Marie:

I would like to speak with you about visiting your community during vocation weekend or some other time.  
My number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me additional information about your community.

Please send me your Vocation Video on a CD. (The video is also on our web site.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY \_\_\_\_\_

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Please add the above name to The Rose Hawthorne Guild.

Please add the above name to your mailing list to receive **IN HIS LOVE**.

**JOIN THE CAUSE**

There is a lot happening with the Cause of Rose Hawthorne (Mother Mary Alphonsa). If you're interested in learning more, join the Rose Hawthorne Guild. There is no cost to become a member. We are happy to have your interest. All we ask is that you spread the word about Rose Hawthorne and share with us any favors you know of that are received through her intercession.

*The Rose Hawthorne Guild*  
600 Linda Avenue  
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(Please use the coupon to the left.)