

## DOC. V.

TESTIMONY OF PAULINE: MARIE JARICOT about the works of the Servant of God Claudine Thevenet, 1817.

Pauline Jaricot, universally known as the foundress of the *Propagation of the Faith*, and whose heroic virtue the Church has (25th February 1963) recently proclaimed, was not only the witness of the apostolic works of Claudine Thevenet, but, from 1817 on, she was also for some years her disciple and collaborator.

In this document we present some extracts from the numerous writings of Pauline which constitute an important testimony of the virtue and works of the Servant of God.

The Thevenet and Jaricot families must have known each other for a long time. They had similar customs, social rank, commercial activities, and both belonged to the parish of St. Nizier, near which they lived. Later on, the relations between the two families became closer when Paul Jaricot, elder brother of Pauline, married Jeanne Marie Julie Germain on the 14th June 1815. The latter was the sister of Francois Antoine, who on the 16th December 1813 was married to Flabelli Sleinman, cousin of the Servant of God, with whom she lived in the house of me Masson. In fact, the signature of Paul Jaricot appears with those of the Thevenet family in some records of the parish register of St. Bruno.

The same Pauline Jaricot tells us in the *Histoire de ma vie* — History of My Life — "At sixteen and a half years of age, during a Lenten sermon in the Church of St. Nizier in which the preacher described to the life a young person who was vain, grace touched my heart, and I resolved from then on to give myself entirely to God." "At seventeen and a half years of age I made a vow never to marry, but I did not then know that there might exist in the world works which united some pious persons in order to procure the glory of God". (From the copy kept in the S.C. of Rites, Vol 1, p. 54). In these last words, Pauline refers to the Association of the Servant of God (cf. Doc. IV, p. 38); and at that moment of her life which she called that of her conversion, and which corresponded to the years 1816-1817, we see her enter into intimate contact with Claudine. Before that time they could not have developed a deep friendship because there was a difference of 19 years between them; but at the beginning of her new life Pauline, seeing and admiring the apostolic works of "Mile Gladys", sought support and guidance from her. The Servant of God, who could not but notice the qualities of the young girl and her determined resolve to follow Christ, must have felt drawn towards her, with a maternal affection and the desire to protect her; and as the conversion of Pauline coincided with the foundation of the Association, she welcomed her into it.

The Register of the Association testifies that Pauline was admitted unanimously on the 21st June 1817, and that on the 31st July 1821 she was named President of the Section for Consolation and Almsgiving (cf. Doc. IV,

2, 49f, p. 146). In this circumstance, as in so many others, Claudine Thevenet gave proof of the discernment which God had given her to guide souls, encouraging their natural aptitudes, for the greater glory of God.

Pauline undertook the works of the Association with very great interest, as is confirmed by the letters which we publish (cf. *infra*, 1 and 2). Of great significance is the testimony that Pauline was to give in later years, about the activities which she carried out in the Association, visiting hospitals and helping the poor, as President of the section. In the memoir addressed to the Church towards 1856 (cf. *infra*, 4), referring to the Association of the Servant of God, without naming it, she says that the associates were the models and guides of her youth. More explicitly, in a letter written towards 1857 to the Superior General of the Dominicans (cf. *infra*, 5), Pauline emphasised the good influence that the directives and counsels of the Servant of God had on her, which certainly played their part in the great works of Mile Jaricot.

However, when Claudine, though directing the Association until the end of 1825, founded the religious Congregation in 1818, Pauline did not follow her, as other associates did (cf. Doc. VI, p. 182).

Claudine Thevenet, co-operating with God's designs for her, as President of the Association continued to direct it and to guide the associates, among whom was Pauline, with her counsel. As foundress of the religious Congregation she concentrated her best energy in organising it, marking with the seal of her charity and prudence a work which she desired to be for the greatest profit of the young of all social classes, to whom she wanted to give a solid Christian formation.

Pauline, urged on by her zeal, dedicated herself to a multiplicity of works, but not all were as important and lasting as that of the *Propagation of the Faith* and the *Living Rosary*. She died 25 years after the Servant of God, in January 1862, after enduring an unforeseen calvary through ruin, misery, poverty and finally persecution from good people.

Such a difference in age, temperament, views and method did not separate these two great souls. The same fervour and zeal for the glory of God maintained their friendly relationship all the time on a plane of mutual edification (cf. Doc. XVI, C, 6b, p. 323 and XXV, 3, p. 492).

## 1.

*Letter of Pauline Jaricot to her brother Paul, 13th September 1817. —*

From the copy kept in the S.C. of Rites. *Writings*, vol. 9, p. 2.

Paul Jaricot, elder brother and god-father of Pauline, went to Naples on a business trip. His father had sent him to that city especially to distract him from the great grief brought about by the death of his wife Jeanne Marie Julie Germain, which took place on the 29th June 1816, one year after the marriage.

Pauline, who a few months before had begun a life of piety and apostolate, called on him to help her in her charitable works and in particular that of the *Providence of St. Bruno*, recently founded by Claudine Thevenet, to whom she refers by the familiar name of "Glady" (cf. Docs. III, p. 21 and IV, P. 121).

To Mr Paul Jaricot, at Naples.

Lyon, 13th September 1817

My dear friend and brother,

I am taking advantage of the fact that Papa is writing to you, to bother you with one of my letters. Thank you very much, dear, for the present you would like to give me of a parakeet . . . but alas, I do not know if you will find the bill too high at the baker's? I am afraid that you will find me very imprudent. But what can you expect? The poor unfortunate people are hungry, and while blessing the Lord for the resources that I have in your unrestricted permission, I cannot help making full use of it. The other day the baker wanted me to pay because she already has an account which amounts to 25 Louis (625 frs), without counting the vouchers which I since gave her.

You promised Mile Glady that you would help her in setting up a workroom, which she will place under the direction of two Sisters. It will be very useful because it will provide shelter for young girls who find themselves without financial resources and may be tempted to make mistakes that cannot be easily rectified afterwards.

How grateful I should be if you kept your promise! I can assure you that there is no lack of good work to be done, but the means to do it are lacking. At times I feel as though I am between the devil and the deep blue sea. Right now, for example, I can see the good that would come from this establishment, and yet I have no money. I find myself in the same position on so many other equally pressing occasions.

If you were here, I would often turn to you. But we are so far away from each other that it seems difficult. I see the members of Jesus Christ suffering and I cannot fully alleviate the pain. But enough of this, dear friend, you feel their sufferings more than I do, and I hope that you will point out some good means to mitigate them. Heaven, beautiful heaven, will be the reward, if God alone is the motive of our charity.

I am your friend and sister in Jesus Christ,

Pauline-Marie

P.S. Please send me an answer, but do not think that Papa does not give me anything. He does give, but how can these small amounts of money be enough?

## 2.

*Letter of Pauline Jaricot to her brother Paul, 2nd November 1817 —*

From the copy kept in the S.C. of Rites. *Writings* Vol. 9, p. 3.

Paul Jaricot was still at Naples. Pauline thanks him for the money she has received, and tells him in detail the use she is making of it. She refers to "Monsieur Wurtz", her confessor, to whom she owed her conversion, and tells of the happiness of "Glady" "who burns with zeal for our God".

To Mr. Paul Jaricot — at Naples

Lyon, 2nd November 1817

My dear brother and god-father in Jesus Christ,

You would have been quite astonished perhaps to see the joy that I experienced when I found myself so rich. Thanks to my Divine Spouse whom I often asked to send me some money. He made use of you to be the instrument of His tender mercy towards some unfortunate people without any resources, and whom I did not even know. Already, thanks again to our Heavenly Father, I felt hope arise in my heart, for the salvation of a young girl aged seventeen years at most who, at the mercy, so to speak, of her weak will had the misfortune of committing a grave sin at the solicitation of a deceitful friend.

Fr. Wurtz, to whom I recounted the way in which I found her the resources available when it is a question of reforming a young girl who lacks experience and probably also instruction, and who has not yet developed a habit of vice, and all the signs that she shows of good will to return to God in all sincerity, was filled by all this with admiration for the loving Providence of God who always watches over men even those who are most blameworthy. He shared the joy that I felt, in seeing me able to put this girl on the path of salvation by means of the resources that Providence procured for me through you. I am going to give you an account of my first steps, that is to say, of the little things I did. First of all I thought of clothing her, and she is now nicely dressed. After that I found a fairly old woman but one who is of a very cheerful disposition, and above all prudent, who took charge of teaching her; she is skilled at this as she has had many young girls at her house whom the parish priest of St. Bonaventure's placed there for that purpose. This woman has promised me that she will not let this girl go out of the house, even for confession, without going out with her, that she will take care of her in such a way as to correct her entirely, if the girl has good will.

I must tell you that, on the advice of Mme Perrin, I have bought as much as I needed of a kind of material of which I don't remember the name, for our poor, who were already feeling the cold very much.

I assure you that it is bitter and that I have put on my winter clothes without hesitation. These poor unfortunate people needed very much to do the same, and I thought that you would be happier when you knew that they were in good clothes made of thick cloth lined with fleece. I made Mr Dessere (or Sere, I do not know which), put all this on your account. I do not promise that I will not go back there again; I have a number of our "brothers" who have only simple little clothes which make one freeze to look at them, and which indicate in a touching manner that your expenditure has not yet come to an end.

I assure you that you have made many people happy by your letter. I could not express to you the joy of Mile Glady (who burns with zeal for our God) when she saw that you gave one hundred crowns for her establishment. She wished you all kinds of blessings and promised me that she would pray to the Lord for you and for the success of your affairs. I assure you that God inspired you to write and send this aid at the right moment when this establishment was worrying us, as we

feared that it would collapse for lack of money. Ah! how good it is to have money to give! How sweet it will be for you to hear these words coming from the lips of Jesus Christ: "Come beloved of My Father." It is then you will know that you have not given money without hope of return, but, on the contrary, that Jesus does not let Himself be outdone in generosity, and will give a hundredfold for what is given for love of Him. So, no more sadness, my good friend, no more sorrow at being separated from the one you loved; both of you, reunited in the heart of the Lord, will forget yourselves or rather, your hearts will be mingled together and you will know only one love: Divine love! Oh! what happiness, dear brother. When you feel your heart troubled by sad memories, lift up your eyes towards the heavenly country and this vision will give rise to peace of soul. Remember that here we are only travellers and that the end of our journey is perhaps not far off. Courage! There are still some battles to be fought, still some sufferings to endure, still grief, and when you have triumphed over so many dangers, God will give you the grace to rest in His embrace. So, stop mourning over your companion. You are only separated for a while and then God will reunite you to her, never to separate you again. My dear friend, what God wants of you is a generous but painful sacrifice; your heart gives and would take back; you must not act like that with God who has poured out all His Blood for us. Yes, God loves us more than His life, since He sacrificed it for us. Let us then, generously give Him all He requires of us. Let our hearts be an altar for our sacrifices.

Good-bye, dear brother in Jesus Christ. May God who is so generous make you feel in your heart how sweet it is to love Him alone.

I remain, your sister in Jesus,

Pauline-Marie.

## 3.

*Extracts from "Histoire de ma vie".* — From the copy kept in the S.C. of Rites. *Writings*, vol. I, pp. 54 ff.

It seems that Pauline wrote this *Histoire de ma vie*, on the advice of her confessor, Fr. Wurtz; it is in four exercise books. In the original of the second of these books, there are some corrections, made by Fr. Wurtz. Since he died in October 1826, these writings must date from between 1817 and 1826.

We are publishing some extracts from these which, without giving names, refer to her connection with Claudine and her activity as a member of the Association founded by the Servant of God.

At sixteen and a half years of age, during a Lenten sermon, in the church of St. Nizier where the preacher was giving a vivid description of a young girl who was vain, I was struck by divine grace, and as a result I resolved that I would give myself entirely to God.

When I was seventeen and a half years old, I made a vow never to marry, but I did not then know that works existed in the world which united pious persons to procure the glory of God . . .

I made known to them in simple terms that I was completely resolved to serve the Lord and forget the world, and that I avoided the society of those who never spoke about Jesus Christ, because all other conversation was a burden to me. I spoke to them of the dangers into which they were running in this world which seems so enchanting and which carefully hides the thorn under the flowers it offers. They insisted on my visiting them, but I let them see that it was useless to ask me for close friendship if they were not resolved to renounce the maxims of the world . . .

Soon they all withdrew, one after the other; I lost sight of them and found myself surrounded by pious persons who replaced them, true friends who were eager to propose to me the means for pleasing Him whom I would follow and love alone. Everything changed before my eyes, which had seen, when I loved the vanity and amusements of the world, only those who loved vanity and amusements. It seemed to me that everyone thought as I did, and that piety was almost extinguished in the hearts of all. Soon I saw, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ still had numerous adorers and all that I saw near me, edified and encouraged me to follow the impulse of His love . . . Far from despising my return, the faithful children of God forgot my infidelity and bestowed on me the most affectionate friendship, eager to make

me join in their generous efforts to love God and his suffering members

I ran without effort, or rather He ran, holding me in His arms, along the path of works of charity towards the poor and the sick who occupied my thoughts and actions almost all the time. No obstacle came my way, for my parents assisted me with the greatest generosity....

## 4.

*Extract from "Adresse touchante de Pauline-Marie a la Sainte Eglise Romaine" 1856.* - From *'Inquisitio super documentis quae ad devotionem Societatis a D.N. Angelorum et ad rem oeconomicam Servae Dei [Pauline-Marie Jaricot] se referunt* (hist, sect., n. 117). Vatican City 1962, p. 60.

This writing of Pauline is addressed to the Holy See and is not dated. From the context it would seem that it was written in 1856. Towards the end of her life, Pauline was in a difficult situation in which those who took advantage of her good faith, abandoned her, having brought her to ruin. Wishing to repay those who had been robbed together with her, she addressed herself to the Holy See asking for aid and advice. For this, she made a summary of her life, in which she refers to her dealing with Claudine. She signed the writing *La Pauvre de Marie, Pauline Marie Jaricot*.

From the depths of tribulation where my ignorance of business trickery has thrown me, I raise my cries to you, Holy Church of Jesus Christ; O my Mother, listen to my voice. Do not turn away your eyes from my misery, but rather see the itinerary of my pilgrimage in this valley of tears. And if I have ever ceased to occupy myself with your affairs, O my sweet Mother, since I was seventeen years of age until now, at almost sixty, I accept that you forget me in my sorrow.

The love of Jesus my God having mercifully taken possession of my heart, made me seek, in the visits to the poor on their bed of suffering, in the hospital, in the hovels of the destitute, the opportunity to jender Him some service; then, without realising it, I learnt to recognise the hideous wounds which were consuming souls; I learnt that Jesus was not loved because He was not known, and that His people had made gods to adore within themselves. . . . From then on, the anguish of His divine love filled my soul like a consuming fire.

To give me some comfort, Jesus allowed me to be admitted into a society of Christian Virgins; they were my models and the guides of my youth; but as they were of mature age, my heart was only half-satisfied. I thirsted to lead young persons to attach themselves to God who alone is worthy of all love.

I found among the young working girls hearts that were well prepared. They understood me, and were soon disposed to repair by adoration the coldness and forgetfulness in which Jesus was left, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. We united to form an association in honour of the Sacred Heart . . .

### 5.

*Extract from a letter directed to the Master General of the Dominicans.*

*It is without a date, but must have been composed about 1857. From the copy kept in the S.C. of Rites. Writings, vol. 15, p. 30.*

The work of the "Living Rosary" founded by Pauline, gave rise to some anxiety among the Dominicans. When Pauline learnt of this she was sorry that her work, sustained with such zeal and disinterestedness, could be badly interpreted, and she wrote this account to justify it to the Master General of the Order of St. Dominic, Jean Joseph Alexandre Jandel, in religion, Vincent Ferrer (1810-1872). In it she records once again her activity with the Association of Claudine Thevenet, and the example she received from her.

To the Reverend Father General of the Dominicans,

Very Reverend Father,

I have learnt with unspeakable sorrow that, no doubt by mistake and without bad will, some Fathers of the Dominican Order have presented the work of the Living Rosary as overshadowing the ancient and venerable institution of the Great Rosary.

With the most profound respect and humble confidence, I come, very Reverend Father, to place before your great wisdom the following facts: for a long time, France, ravaged by godlessness, had been reaping the reward of its undertakings, the bitter fruit of sarcasm towards everything connected with pious practices, and there were scarcely any people who dared to declare their belief in God, in the open. Hence, indifference was feigned by the best people who, from prudence, thought that they should not make themselves conspicuous

among their relatives and friends, and kept the sacred fire of devotion hidden in the depths of their heart.

As a result of this state of things, there was moral isolation in society for people who decided to live piously in the world. When I was seventeen years old I believed that devout persons were all hidden away in cloisters and, if I had not been admitted into a congregation hidden from the knowledge of the world (though devoted to diverse good works in the world), I would have been liable to discouragement and perhaps I would have become completely cold towards religion.

But these congregations were rare then and it was only with difficulty that people were admitted, and then only in small numbers.

God, having deigned to fill my heart with a great desire for His glory and the salvation of souls, made me want to seize all the opportunities with which His Divine Majesty provided me to contribute to these ends. While I was busy with the different works of mercy that the congregations had the goodness to confide to me, I got to know young girls whose good dispositions and isolation touched me very much. I made them welcome and I believed that I could speak to them with an open heart about the love of Our Lord and the need to make amends to His love for the sad indifference of which it was the object. Their hearts appreciated what I said, and soon a number of courageous and pious friends united to make reparation for the outrages committed against Our Lord in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist and wherever His love was not recognised.