# I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

# St. Paul our Model and Guide

Even though the year of St. Paul has come to an end, my reflection of St. Paul is on-going. I was richly blessed during this special year. Many things have led me to deeper reflection and prayer. One thing that continues to touch my heart is the way St. Paul embraced suffering and the way he suffered in joy. Paul clearly tells us of the physical sufferings that he had to endure. Among them were shipwrecks, being beaten, and imprisonment. As if that wasn't enough to endure, yet it didn't stop at that. He was rejected by the majority of his Jewish brethren. He preached with great zeal to them and went from city to city visiting synagogues. He knew there would be difficulties yet he didn't expect the mission to fail. However, it did and it was one of the biggest disappointments of his ministry. The typical questions asked at such times are: why did God permit this? Why are things going this way? Why was the word not received? Likewise you can ask yourself: Do I have trials in my life? Do I ask similar questions? Do I have the courage to go on as St. Paul did despite the difficulties and still knowing that it is ultimately God's work?

Paul also suffered internal conflicts within the community. The apostle dreamed of united, brotherly communities. Yet over and over there are serious divisions that he has to address in great love. He agonized over the divisions and his not being able to be with them at all times. Many more "why" questions begin to nag him. Yet he does not get discouraged. Instead he writes them pastoral letters to encourage them, to guide them, to confront them, and to show them of his great love for them. He continues to walk in faith and trust believing in the Jesus he encountered on the road to Damascus.

With suffering on every level, how could Paul embrace them with joy? The joy didn't come from the suffering. It came from knowing that he was loved, that Jesus was with him, and that he had been called to share in the mission of Jesus. This leads me to look at my own life. Do I embrace suffering like Paul? Do I get discouraged? Do I complain? Do I keep my eyes on Jesus and not on successes and failures? The list goes on.

This is one of the topics that stood out for me. What stands out for you? Where did the Holy Spirit touch your life during this past Year of St. Paul? How can you savor the urgings of the Spirit and the deeper awareness? How can you ponder them in your heart as Mary did? Are they bringing about changes in your life? Let us continue to reflect on this great apostle to the Gentiles who had one of the most extraordinary ministries of Church building that ever existed. Let us allow it to challenge our own lives and lead us to be builders of Kingdom who are filled with love and zeal.

By Sr. Gloria Schultz

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## Map of our Congregation

This year we had a 3'by 5' world map made that shows where we originated and all the countries where the Sisters of St. Paul serve. The background under the map is the wheat that characterized the wheat fields of Levesville where we were founded. Four pieces of wheat in the upper left hand corner symbolize the first four women who responded to the call to serve among the poor. The quote from our Book of Life in the lower left hand corner is as follows: "After the example of St. Paul, spurred on by the love of Christ, the Sisters make themselves all things to all people." One of these maps was hung in our Motherhouse and one at the Bishop Noa Home. Now we are working on a display of the History of the Sisters of St. Paul in District USA.







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As you know the Catholic outreach at Sawyer began on December I, 2008. On the day before Thanksgiving Bishop Alexander Sample dedicated and blessed the Center and Sr. Francis Mortola and Sr. Rosaline Charoenchantavit who would minister there. On May19 at 5:30 p.m. Bishop Alexander Sample led everyone in prayer and Fr. Ron Timock led the people in the May Crowning honoring our Blessed Mother since the Center bears her name Our Lady Help of Christians. A reception followed. Many attended this formal launching of the Center and ministry at Sawyer.



## Culture and Communication by Ira Hutchinson

Thirteen sisters patiently participated in a weekend workshop I was honored to lead on June 12-14, 2009. Although I have had almost 40 years university teaching experience, this is the first time I've ever had the opportunity to teach such a holy and well-mannered group. Frankly, I was spoiled: my water glass was never empty, there were always plenty of snacks; our meals were splendid; and, most importantly, there was an ample supply of cookies!

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The Holy Spirit must have been with us because what could have been dry sociology turned out to be leavened by many "spirited" discussions. In our first session, we talked about how our own expectations lead us to make judgments when our expectations are not met. Many times, we don't even know we have certain expectations until someone does something we do not like. In our second session on Friday, we talked about how rapid social changes presents us all with the need to adapt to new things which were not part of our growing-up experiences. As each person talked about their own countries, it was apparent that most of us felt that the many changes in our lifetimes were a mixture of both positive and negative. No one seemed to feel that our countries now are, overall, worse off than they were a generation ago.

Our four sessions on Saturday focused on American cultures and values, American families, aging and the elderly, and communication. We spent a lot of time talking about the multiplicity of American cultures, sub-cultures, ethnic groups and values. The old model for America used to be the "melting pot". The newer model, which seems to fit better, is that of a "tossed salad" (or stew). While there are some common elements regardless of location, how a person experiences American "culture" would be shaped by whether they spend time in Marquette, or Chicago, or south Miami, or Los Angeles... or any of thousands of places. Following the discussion about cultures, we looked at American families. Here, too, the emphasis is on the plural because there is no such thing as THE American family..... there are so many varieties. One of the constants among Americans is that we are still very strongly promarital (most people want to, and do, get married) and pro-natal (most people want to and do, have children). Part of this conversation was about positive changes: greater gender equality, declining divorce rate.

Saturday afternoon turned our attention to aging and later, to communication issues. Americans have never had a time where most people lived in extended family households (children, parents, grandparents) although earlier in our history we did have extended family neighborhoods. Although not commonly known, very few of our elderly (about 5%) are in nursing homes; the great majority of the elders in American society live in their own homes. This reflects a predominant cultural value: independence as long as possible. Unlike many Asian countries, the population density (persons/square mile) in the States is very low. For example, in South Korea, the

population density is 1274; in Vietnam it is 672, in America it is 84. This means that Americans, on average, are much more likely to live at greater distances from their kin. Our session on communication was an especially lively one, with many, many examples of cultural differences, gender differences, and regional differences. Even when we are all speaking English, we may not be saying the same thing! For example, a parent says to a child "would you like to pick up your toys"? This sounds like a question, but it is really a command. Since Americans' patterns of communication tend to be direct and assertive, we discussed some of the differences between this pattern and the more common Asian pattern of non-confrontation. (That said, in the States there are some very significant differences between how men and women communicate, as well as differences between regions of the country).

Sunday morning began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Garland. Then, our last sessions were on Catholics in America and on Intercultural Communities. Using the recent book <u>American Catholics Today</u>, by William V. D'Antonio and others, we talked about the current patterns: most Catholics are still very strong on creedal beliefs, the sacraments, devotion to Mary and helping the poor; but are less committed to the institutional church, to weekly mass attendance, or to reliance on the clergy for parish decision making. According to this book, most Catholics see the sexual abuse crisis (both priests and bishops) as the greatest problem facing the church. Contrary to popular belief, most say that this has not had an effect on their church attendance or parish participation.

Our final session, on Intercultural Communities, was focused on the tasks of all residential communities (for example, maintenance tasks, sentiments, internal and external relationships with others, decision making, and maintaining their "reason for being"). However, we also talked about a <u>unique</u> challenge facing intercultural communities: the tendency, during stress times, for "fault lines" (like earthquake fault lines) to develop along national boundaries and identities. These stress times can be small or large, they can involve worship or routine living, and they can involve ritual times like birthdays or thanksgiving or Christmas. This discussion took us back to our beginning session: when we have expectations different from someone else it is hard to avoid making judgments. Judging is a hard pattern to break and I expect to spend the rest of my life trying. This session also took us back to the importance of openness, honesty and clarity in expressing what we want and expect. Will any of this stick? Make a difference? I don't know; that's up to God. As usual, I was very over-prepared with notes and statistics and more notes. Some of the very



best moments were remembering something that was not in my notes (a saying: "I need to pay more attention to what I am doing to see what I really believe"); or a funny/happy story involving my wife Barbara (learning that she thought that a brick living room wall should be dusted); or, one of the sisters sharing a story or an experience or having an aha moment. The whole weekend was a blessing to me. It was fun. We laughed a lot. I am most grateful that God has put the Sisters of St. Paul in my life.

Ira Hutchinson

# Sister—Who are you?

Sr. Marie Claire Tuballa

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you...."

Jerimiah 1:5



special purpose. My mother was raised by her aunt and uncle who were both single, after her own mother died when she was an infant. After she was married to my dad her aunt invited them to stay and live with them since there was enough room in the house. My great aunt then was influential in the religious upbringing of their children. I was the eldest, my two brothers were in the middle, and my sister was the youngest. She was very religious and a devoted Catholic lady. In fact, she wanted to enter the Poor Clares Convent when she was young but was prevented to do so.

I do believe that God created each one of us for a very

We prayed the Angeles in Latin every 6:00 p.m. when the church bell rang. That meant we had to be in the house before 6. Evening prayers and the rosary were said at 8:00 p.m. On Sunday afternoons we had Catechism at home or we listened to stories of the lives of the saints and learned our prayers in Spanish and in the dialect. At 4:00 we went to church again for the Rosary and Benediction. My great aunt lived in the house like she was a Religious and looked after the four of us when my parents were out or at work. My brothers and sister thought she was our grandmother at first, but she told us that she was our mother's aunt.

Every year during Lent she invited young Sodality members of the parish for an eight-day retreat at home. She herself directed the retreat by using the Exercises of St. Ignatius. She had the book and I saw it myself. I had no idea where she learned how to give retreats. All I heard was she had studied with the Daughters of Charity in Cebu when she was young. There was complete silence around the house the whole week. I only heard the sound of a little bell, their vocal prayers, conferences, and someone who read aloud during their meals. My family had to observe the silence too, and wouldspeak in a low voice when we needed to communicate with each other.

I must have been 5 or 6 years old when my mother took me along with her to a Eucharistic Congress held at a park in the city. Dumaguete, the capital of our province, is about seven miles north of my hometown. After the outdoor mass, my mother and I went around to see the different booths and displays in the area. It was that special occasion when I saw two Sisters of St. Paul for the first time in my life. They were standing by their booth selling religious articles. They smiled at everyone who approached them and were very friendly and welcoming. I whispered to my mother and asked her who they were or were they human beings like all of us. I thought they were some kind of angels because they were both dressed in

white from head to foot. I even wondered if they ever did all the things people do, like eating and sleeping. I was so impressed by their appearance and graciousness that I kept thinking about them. After we got home, I took a white bed sheet, covered myself from my head, except my face and went in the front of the mirror and admired myself looking funny when all of a sudden I heard my mother asking what I was doing. I smiled at her and told her that I was just playing nun.

I went to the Public School for my Elementary Education. When I was ready to go to High School I asked my father if I could go to the Provincial High School in the city. There were only 2 high schools then, the Provincial and the Sisters of St. Paul College High School. He told me it was better for me to go to the Sisters of St. Paul High School. Thanks be to God and to my father! This was the school where I got to know the Sisters so well and learned to love them all. They were not only the best teachers, but they were so kind and very attentive to all the girls. Our homeroom teachers were all Sisters who showed interest in whatever we did and were always ready to help us with our little problems. I was very attracted to

their way of life and their charity towards the students. They were always happy and smiling when you met them and were prayerful. I started thinking of becoming one of them one day but was not really serious about it yet. I



also wanted to be a school teacher.

Then I went to college and before the end of the year I experienced a strong desire in my heart to become one of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres. My desire grew stronger when one of the Sisters asked me when I was entering the convent. It was a surprise for me since I never told anyone that I was interested to be a nun. The next day I dared knock on the office door of the Mother Superior, who was French and the Dean of the College Department at the same time and told her about my strong desire and intention. I was so nervous and could hardly wait for her answer. Right away, Mother Marguerite told me to write to Sr. Anne Patrice in Quezon City and tell her about my desire. The following week I received a letter from Sr. Patrice telling me I was most welcomed. I was very happy and excited and thanked God for listening to my prayer.

My big problem was that I did not know how to tell my mother about my plans. I know I would not be allowed to leave my family and enter the convent. My father had passed away four years earlier when I was 16 and I was the eldest of 2 brothers and a little sister. But the Sisters told me to go home and ask permission. So I went home and asked my mother if it was fine with her if I went with 2 Sisters who were going to Manila the next month. She cried bitterly because she was suspicious that I might not come home anymore. She told me she was not giving me her permission, but if I insisted I could do whatever I wanted but she was not in favor that I enter the

#### Summer 2009



convent. Anyway, I prayed harder and my mother and sister saw me off at the airport on the day of my departure. I knew I broke the hearts of my whole family but my daily prayers were that God was going to take care of them and not leave them alone.

In later years I realized God took care of my mother, my 2 brothers, and sister in my absence. They all worked hard and the Lord has blessed them up to the present time with beautiful children and grandchildren, even a great granddaughter. Without my presence at home and my help, my family throughout the years had enough of everything they needed and were grateful to God for His many blessings each day. My family is very happy and proud that I am a Sister of St. Paul and I love them dearly and am proud of them, too. God is so good all the time.



Sr. Marie Claire celebrated a milestone birthday this year. This pear tree was planted in her honor.

Everyday I thank God for His call and for my wonderful family. Most of all I thank the Lord for the many blessings He has bestowed each day on my whole family. I also thank God for my Congregation, my Province, and my District USA. On my part, with God's help, I am very happy as a Sister of St. Paul and I have never regretted that I entered the Religious Life.

Sr. Marie Claire Tuballa





## **Mission Projects**

As you know, on January 26, 2008 we decided to take on 3 Mission projects for one year and then decided to extend them to June 29, 2009. One of the projects was to help our poor children in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The second one was to help supply a system that provides safe drinking water for tribes in Venezuela as well as a central meeting place. The third was to help the people of Haiti to rebuild schools that were destroyed by the mudslides. Later we added to feed the children since the conditions in Haiti were growing more desperate due to natural disasters. We are proud to say that we collected a total of \$24,840.96. Thank you to all who contributed and helped to make this undertaking a success.

During this project, we started the Compassionate Hearts Club which will be an annual drive to collect money for the poor. Starting on July I 2009 we decided to continue with Haiti and Child & Family Services for one year. We are adding the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Marquette. We hope to help with tuition funding for families in need. If you didn't join the Compassionate Heart's Club the first time around, we invite you to do so this year. Please give some thought and pray to joining our efforts to support those in need.





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We, the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, were honored by two visitors from Rome: Mother Myriam Kitcharoen, our Superior General, and our own Sr. Mary Ann Laurin who is the first assistant. They arrived in Washington D.C. on August 12 to visit our four Sisters missioned there. From there they flew to Wyoming, Michigan on August 14 to visit our Sisters serving in a Vietnamese Parish and to attend the First Profession of Sr. Zennie, an American Vietnamese. This house is directly under Rome and not a part of the USA District. Two Sisters joined me to drive to Wyoming for the celebration. We returned to Escanaba on August 17 with Mother Myriam and Sr. Mary Ann. While at the Bishop Noa Home they attended a special reception, met with the Board of Trustees, toured the Home, and met with the Congregation's council. Mother Myriam also talked privately with each Sister.

At 3 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup>, we headed to Sawyer to see the ministry of two of our Sisters. We were greeted by the Planning Committee who served refreshments as they shared about the present ministry at Sawyer as well as future plans. The Sisters prepared a power point of some of the activities and ministry. Mother Myriam and Sr. Mary Ann were pleased to learn about this new ministry and were also pleased that our Sisters could be serving in pastoral ministry there.

While in Marquette they met with Fr. Mike Steber as well as visiting and going to mass at Jacobetti Home for Veterans since this is part of the ministry of one of our Sisters who does pastoral ministry in St. Peter's Parish. The last time Mother Myriam visited six years ago we didn't have a Sister here. She also met with Bishop Sample. This was followed by a lunch at our Motherhouse with the Bishop, his mother, and friends. Sunday we were off to Trenary to attend mass at St. Rita's Parish since this is also a new ministry since her last visit. Fr. Jacek Wtyklo and the parishioners welcomed Mother Myriam and Sr. Mary Ann warmly and had a reception prepared for them in the Church Hall after mass.

The afternoon was spent with the Sisters of St. Paul in the Marquette Diocese and our Companions of St. Paul when Sr. Myriam shared some reflections on the role of our Companions and how they support us by their prayers as well as share in our ministry. Mother Myriam was impressed with the spirit of our Companions and really happy to have met them. We shared power points on the ministry that is done by all of the Sisters of St. Paul in the United States. While our numbers are few, the Sisters give of themselves generously in their ministry, prayer life, and community life.

We ended the day at our cottage in Gwinn with a picnic and an opportunity to say thank you. These were blessed days for us to have both Mother Myriam and Sr. Mary Ann in our presence. We were affirmed and encouraged. We now look forward to their return in 2013 when we will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the District in the United States.









We would like to send a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who had donated to the Sisters of St. Paul—monetary or time and talent. And a special thank you to all who and graciously donated to fund our new statues of St. Paul.

Ray & Jeanneane Adamini, Marquette, MI Patty Adkins John & Mary Baker, Escanaba, MI John & Barbara Balbeirz, Marguette, MI Frank & Catherine Borris, Washington, DC Jack Buckler, St. Joseph, MI Merle Byers, Washington, DC Maria Carmona, Silver Spring, MD Betty Christensen, Escanaba, MI Church of the American Martyrs, Kingsford, MI Gina Clansky Agnes Coleman, Washinton, DC In memory of Agnes L. Edeline Feb. 10, 1910 - Feb. 4, 2009 Gaynell Corriveau, Escanaba, MI James Crawford, Escanaba, MI Mr. & Mrs. John Davenport, Silver Spring, MD Rosemary DeLoach, Marquette, MI Irene DeShambo, Escanaba, MI Ray & Maureen DesJardins, Marquette, MI In honor of Sr. Lucienne Catherine & Michael Dobkoski, Green Bay, WI Grace Dunleavy, Marquette, MI In honor of Sr. Lucienne The Dupras Family, Marguette, MI Margaret Finnerty, Escanaba, MI Ari Fitzgerald, Silver Spring, MD Mrs. Marilyn Flynn, Bethesda, MD Thomas Foye, Marquette, MI Francis & Vera Gaudrault, Bark River, MI Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Gregorich, Marguette, MI In honor of Agnes & George Gregorich Joseph Grondine, Escanaba, MI Nancy Giuliani, Marguette, MI Patricia Hallman, Washington, DC Richard & Donna Hubert, Escanaba, MI Hank & lleen Hughes, Gladstone, MI Bonnie Hurkmans, Gwinn, MI Jean Jackson, Marguette, MI Mary Jo Johnson, Escanaba, MI Phil & Marilyn Johnson Knights of Columbus, Marquette, MI Council #13333

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