

# "O POWERFUL SAINT PHILOMENA, THOU ART THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF OUR ASSOCIATION. REMEMBER THAT POPE GREGORY XVI HAS ESPECIALLY CHARGED THEE TO BE OUR ADVOCATE AND PROTECT US."



*"Pray to Saint Philomena, whatever you ask from her, she will obtain for you."*

... Pope Gregory XVI ...

I am eager to share with you, how we began our work for Saint Philomena. Like so many souls, we had a great longing and it was to this beloved Saint we turned in our impossible circumstances. The desire of our hearts was to have a child of our own flesh. We had two adopted boys and prayed for a little Philomena to make our family complete. Our prayers to St. Philomena always bore the fruit of joy and hope. In the year of 1984, we began our prayers after reading the book on the life of St. Jean Marie Vianney. It was, then, my dear mother sent me the booklet written by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, which furthermore ignited our devotion and gave us direction. We wrote to Mugnano asking for her sacramentals and shared our prayer of petition. A dear Irish nun, Sister Mary Philomena, who spoke English, sent a reply, the holy cord and oil, chaplet and prayer card. She encouraged us to have every hope that our prayer would be answered, and cautioned us to pray always for God's Holy Will. Thus, we knew the Shrine still existed and that her devotion was alive. We began to copy prayers, her life story and celebrated her feast day with a beautiful cake decorated in her honor.

After having shared our new devotion with my mother, she generously shared with me a First Class Relic of Saint Philomena. Thus, very much encouraged, we prayed all the more fervently. During this time, we lived in La Grande, Oregon. After all our prayers, we moved to Dickinson, Texas. At the local parish Church bookstore, we found a one-page article on Pauline Jaricot and the Living Rosary. Up until this time, we had done all that we knew possible to win the favor of Saint Philomena, but here was another lever in our favor! We formed a group of 15 souls to pray the Living Rosary for the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and in honor of St. Philomena, its Patroness and Protectress. One Rosary grew into two and these two Rosaries quadrupled by the end of the year. We initiated a monthly letter to our members encouraging them to be faithful to their *Decade* and included something spiritual, uplifting and instructive.

We longed to have the members of the Living Rosary take part in the Confraternity of St. Philomena, and wrote again to Mugnano begging that this favor be granted to our members. In response, we received a note from Fr. Braschi, Rector of the Shrine that he would like to come to America and visit with us. We were shocked. We had nothing and wished only to be a part of the Confraternity. Fr. Braschi realized that a group in America, organized with a newsletter and with the ability to reach numbers, was just what was needed to rekindle the devotion of Saint Philomena and spread it all the way back to Italy. Devotion to Saint Philomena was dying out in Europe and Father was not able to get any articles or information on the shrine published in the local papers. When Father heard of us, he said the Holy Ghost inspired him to visit us. He had every hope that we might rekindle the devotion and spread it to all the world and back, again, to Italy.

We paid for Fr. Braschi's journey to America, cared for his needs during his visit, translated the books and information he gave us and began, at once, to animate all the members of the Living Rosary to love their patroness and honor her in every way possible. My husband was not employed at the time and I was doing double nursing shifts to fund the printing and mailing of information and decades. It was a marvelous plunge into this faith filled apostolate - one *Decade* built upon another. St. Philomena helped everyone who called upon her then and she still does. Books were published, sacramentals distributed and we continued to mail out our monthly bulletin which, in time, grew into the beautiful little booklet you have in your hands, the *Dedicated Decades*. The publication is the lifeline of the Living Rosary. During the many years to follow, Fr. Braschi was sad not to have received financial

assistance from us. But, everything that was given to us went right back into our universal and heroic missionary effort to reach souls with the Living Rosary. Still, pilgrims began to come to Mugnano and their support, he greatly felt. Thus, his dream had come true: to revive the Shrine and to restore the pilgrimage to Mugnano, and our mission of the Living Rosary was spread throughout the world.

Father Braschi had given to us through our spiritual director the privilege of blessing, annually, the oil in union with the principal Shrine. Much of what we did was done for the Third World Countries and it had to be done without any expectation or hope of payment. But, our beloved St. Philomena seemed to care for all their needs and ours. The great goal and ambition was to help her reach them, so they would have her blessing, strength and courage. She brought to them the Anchor of Hope! In truth, we could not donate much to the Shrine in Mugnano, and what little we were able to send was returned to us by the Rector.

Our entire effort was focused on the missions of the world, after the great heart of our beloved Pauline. Still, we knew that all we were doing was contributing to the flow of pilgrims to Mugnano and they would lavish donations on the Shrine. This pilgrimage grew and grew and grew. All that has been done in Mugnano is the fruit of the seed planted by Pauline Jaricot through her spiritual Family of the Living Rosary. In the early days of growth, Fr. Braschi designated to the spiritual director of each group, who headed the Confraternity of St. Philomena, the privilege of blessing the oil, annually, in union with Mugnano and distributing it in their district.

During the following years, the pilgrimage to Mugnano continued and increased while the Living Rosary grew expeditiously. As our area of designation with the work of the Living Rosary was universal, we began to receive demands for St. Philomena's sacramentals, which poured in to us from our members throughout the world. Everything was given to them, absolutely free of charge. The mission area is vast and huge amounts of sacramentals were needed. Don Francesco de Lucia had encouraged Pauline Jaricot in every way possible to spread the devotion when she returned to her home in France.

Fr. Braschi is deeply indebted to the Living Rosary in Dickinson, Texas for the revival of the devotion to St. Philomena in the whole world and we knew he would want us to continue in the tradition of Ven. Pauline Jaricot. We remained in constant communication with the Vicar of His Holiness, ✠ Canisius Van Lierde, until his death. He encouraged us, again and again, to continue and increase our effort. Truly, St. Philomena has guided us all these years and blessed this heroic effort for souls. I believe very firmly that, as Pauline Jaricot was solely responsible for the introduction and culmination of devotion to St. Philomena, bringing

about her elevation to the Holy Altar, our dear Saint Philomena will be singularly instrumental in bringing about the cause of our beloved foundress to the elevation of the Holy Altar. They both exist only to bring souls to the Lamb of God and to support them greatly as they bear with faith, hope and joy, their heavy daily burdens.

We are the Living Rosary with a firm and God-given obligation to honor St. Philomena as our patroness and protectress and spread her devotion and sacramentals. Fr. Braschi as Rector of the principal Shrine carries the privilege and obligation as custodian of her relics and receiver of her pilgrims. Never can there be a competition for power, or money or control of either of these beautiful devotions which reside securely in the bosom of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**Saint Philomena,  
New Light of the Church Militant,  
Pray for Us!**

*Patti Melvin*

**PATTI MELVIN, ULRA Director**

November 13, 2008

Dear Patti,

**COPY**

*Thank you for the recent packet of material and for sharing with me the life story of Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot. Her devotion to the Eucharist and to Our Lady is a great example of love and prayerful thanksgiving. It is my hope that, through such devotion, the hearts of many will more deeply know and serve Our Lord.*

Sincerely in Christ,

*+Daniel Cardinal DiNardo*

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