

DRAWN BY THE LOVE OF THE MASTER



My vocation is a “story” of God’s faithful love that quietly breaks into my life and unfolds day by day. As I look back, I can see how He was preparing me to be able to hear and respond to His call through the people and the experiences with which He blessed my life. I am the oldest of 5 girls

in my family. My mother was born in El Salvador (Central America) and my father is from the USA, of Italian/Hungarian heritage. I grew up experiencing the joys and the challenges of the gift of a bi-cultural family. My parents offered us a beautiful witness of perseverance in faith and love. From them I learned and continue to learn that our relationship with God is our greatest treasure and that life is about sharing with others the abundance of gifts we have received from Him. This is what truly makes us happy.

The beauty of the consecrated life surrounded me. My mother’s sister is a religious of the Assumption in Guatemala. I was taught by religious sisters in school and we lived next door to a religious community from Argentina, but I had not seriously considered this as an option for my life. However, when I was about 12 years old, I made a retreat in preparation for the sacrament of confirmation. The Lord touched my heart in a particular way and I understood that my heart was created to belong totally to Him. I began seriously seeking the Lord in prayer, especially in Eucharistic adoration, attending daily Mass and finding ways to serve in my parish. I felt the power of the Gospel in my life, especially the words of Jesus “the gift you have received, give as a gift.” (Matthew 10:8). Jesus was becoming always a more real Person for me and I realized how much I needed him and could not live without him. At the same time I became aware of how many people, even among my friends, did not know the Lord or if they did know him, knew him very

little. Often I would contemplate people – in traffic, in the store – and I could see sadness or emptiness in their faces. Did their life have meaning? Did they know God exists and how much God loves them?

In discerning how to give my heart to the Lord, I began writing to various religious communities. Then the Lord literally came “to find me” through the Daughters of St. Paul as they carried out their mission of propaganda. They had just opened their community in Alexandria, Virginia and were visiting my neighborhood. They knocked on the door of my house (I was at school) and my Mom welcomed them. When the Sisters heard that there were 5 girls in the family, they invited us to come to a vocation retreat at their convent. And when I came home from school that day, I eagerly looked through the *Family* magazine and the books the Sisters had left behind desiring to learn more about them.



Several months later, I attended their first vocation retreat on the feast of the Queen of Apostles (also the name of my parish). We were 12 young women present for the retreat gathered in the “upper room” of their convent, which was still being remodeled. The Lord drew my heart through this encounter with the Sisters, through the experience of Eucharistic adoration and through the presentation they offered on their mission. Through the famous words of Blessed Alberione, “Where is humanity going, how is it moving, toward what goal? Humanity is like a gigantic river flowing into eternity. Will it be saved or will it be lost forever?” a greater light was ignited in my heart. It became clear to me: there were sisters who cared for children in schools, sisters who cared for the sick in hospitals, sis-

ters who provided for the needs of the poor. But, who provided for the spiritual needs of all the *other* people – those who were looking for God? This was the mission of the Daughters of St. Paul and the Lord was preparing my heart for *this* mission.

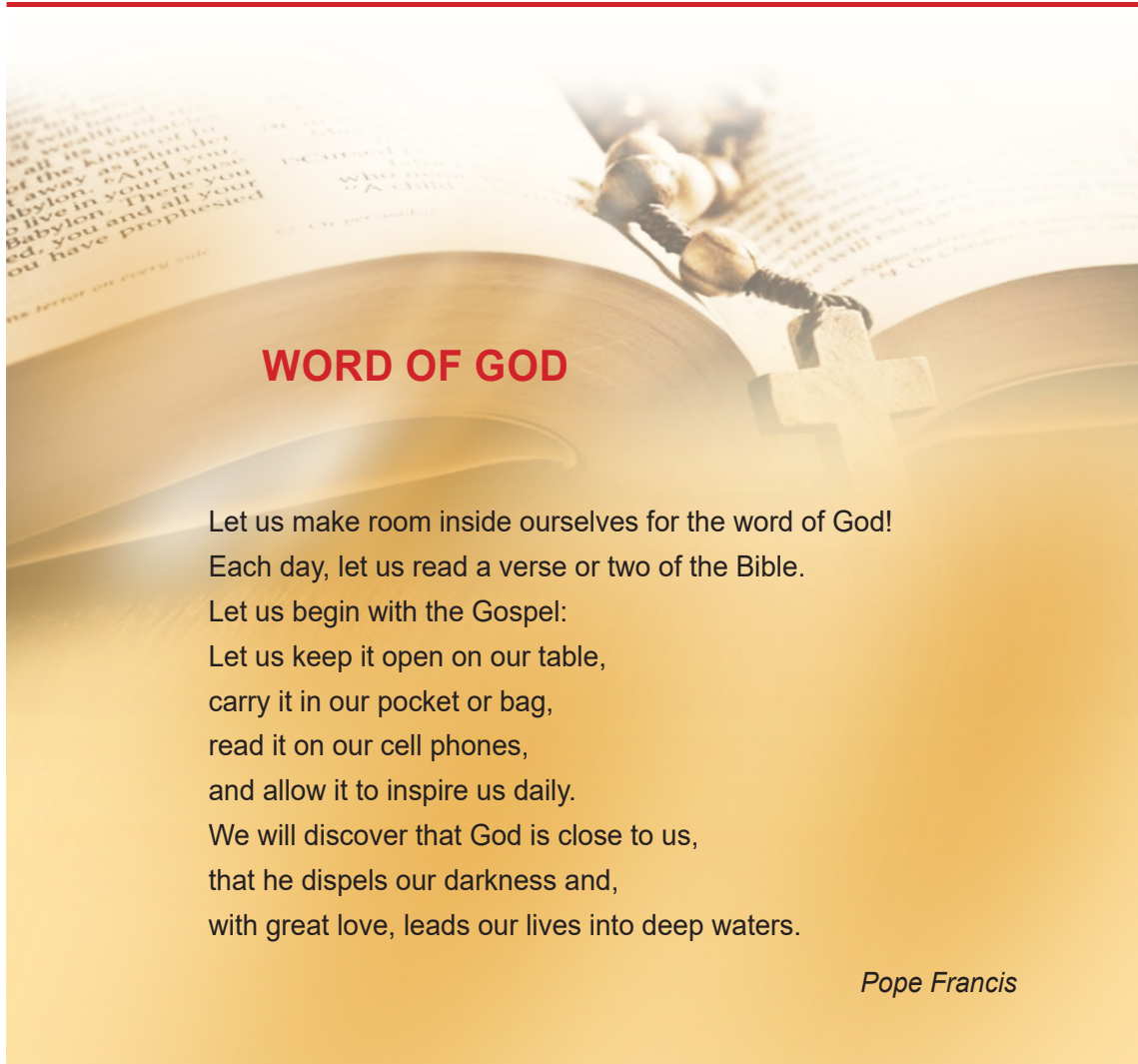
Sharing life with the sisters, praying with them, experiencing mission with them, the Lord continued to draw my heart. One month before my 17th birthday, on the feast of the Assumption, I entered the community and the Lord has truly guided me every step of my journey as I seek to embrace and live my vocation always more fully.

In my life as a Daughter of St. Paul, I have experienced the joy and the “totality” to which Blessed Alberione invites: “Him, Him, in everything, in everything!” In our mission I have been blessed to serve in the bookcenters, in the graphic arts department of the publishing house, in the Spanish radio apostolate, in outreach to schools and parishes. For many years, I have served in the vocation and

formation apostolate accompanying young women in their journey to discover and follow the Master’s call and particularly enjoyed the years I spent assisting our senior sisters. Whether engaged in direct apostolate or in various services to the community, my joy is found in opening myself to the Lord’s love and in the opportunities He offers me to communicate Him, in my littleness and poverty and in communion with my sisters.

The “power idea” that strengthens me every day in my vocation comes from article 36 of our Constitutions, “Offering our entire being to the Lord, we open ourselves to his love and allow the Holy Spirit to gradually transform us. Communion with the Master frees us from egoism, enriches our life with spiritual fecundity and develops in us a capacity for love.....love makes us creative and dynamic and deeply committed to doing something for the Lord and for the people of our time.”

Carmen Christi Pompei, fsp



WORD OF GOD

Let us make room inside ourselves for the word of God!
Each day, let us read a verse or two of the Bible.
Let us begin with the Gospel:
Let us keep it open on our table,
carry it in our pocket or bag,
read it on our cell phones,
and allow it to inspire us daily.
We will discover that God is close to us,
that he dispels our darkness and,
with great love, leads our lives into deep waters.

Pope Francis