

# The Rose Hawthorne Guild

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**Rose Hawthorne  
Foundress  
of the  
Dominican Sisters of  
Hawthorne**

## CHEERFUL COMPLETENESS

Excerpts from the writings of Mother Mary Alphonsa

*...To make the poor who are dying of a terrible disease, as comfortable and happy as if their own people had kept them and put them in the very best bedroom...*

*Mother Mary Alphonsa was firm in her conviction that her sisters were to live evangelical poverty. The poor obedient Christ who St. Dominic modeled in life is the same model for a Dominican Sister of Hawthorne. The sacrifices and religious observances as lived by Mother and the Sisters opened them to the deeper love of God which extended their generosity and kindness to their guest-patients. Mother Mary Alphonsa clearly understood her mission to the sick poor as can be seen in the following excerpts from the **Report of the Homes of the Servants of Relief for Incurable cancer, Sisters of the Dominican Order 1913.***

The work done by the Sisters presently in two homes is diligently served in every department of house-work and nursing. The capacity of our newly built city home is 100 patients and our country home can accommodate seventy-five. These houses owned by the Servants of Relief are as large as they should be, and demonstrate pretty well what the Sisters are driving at: to make the poor who are dying of a terrible and variously manifested disease, as comfortable and happy as if their own people had kept them and put them into the very best bedroom. Our poor in earnest call their abode a foretaste of heaven and the humble and genial aim adopted does not prohibit duplication of houses.

No money is received from a patient or their relatives. The Sisters make printed or written appeals to public mercy for donated money. How are such donations used to ameliorate the sick poor?

Fuel is a large item for the Homes. An atmosphere of 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit is needed in most rooms for our cancer patients who suffer from drafts and the cold and are easily liable to pneumonia. Good food is necessary.



Rosary Hill 1913

At times the Sisters must tax their wits for the well-cooked best of whatever the sick person likes. The food is bought only of the best firms.

Eggs are cruelly expensive; yet we care for men and women who can only swallow egg-nogs and they must have at least four a day. Fruit is relished particularly oranges and is bought of a fine grade. Ice-cream and cake although served regularly are often a last treat.

A serious source of expenses are the all-important medicines, salves and materials to care for wounds.

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Guild**  
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## LETTER FROM THE POSTULATOR OF THE CAUSE

Dear Guild Member,

This is the moment when the cause for Rose Hawthorne's canonization must appeal to Guild members to spread the word of her life and virtue more widely. As a convert, wife, mother, widow and founder, she can serve as a good example of Christian holiness to a broad range of people. She can become a most useful spiritual companion and friend to those in need. As she was always attentive to the most needy in her life on earth, we can be sure that from her place in eternity, she is still attentive to our needs and the problems of the suffering and the poor.

The work of the Guild is to encourage devotion to Mother Alphonsa, within the confines of the norms of the Church.

In the process of beatification and canonization, every cause must carefully follow the established norms of the Church. The first stage of the process, the diocesan phase, concludes with the presentation of the case to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. This begins what is referred to as the Roman phase. An integral part of the process is a careful consideration of the devotion of the Catholic faithful towards the candidate for sainthood. The Church is concerned about the pastoral significance and usefulness of every cause for canonization.

The work of the diocesan investigation into the life and work of the Servant of God, Rose Hawthorne, Mother Mary Alphonsa, O.P., is nearing completion. Within the next several months, the report of the Historical Commission will be formally submitted to the officials of the Archdiocese of New York, together with supporting historical documents. These will be used for further development when the cause is presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.



Rev. Gabriel O'Donnell, O.P. Postulator with the Historical Commission: James Russell and Juliet Demeter [Rev. Peter Batts, O.P. not present]

A large portion of the documents gathered by the Historical Commission has been drawn from the archives of the Dominican Sisters of St. Rose of Lima, founded by Rose Hawthorne, whose motherhouse is in Hawthorne, New York.

The motherhouse archives is the major repository for Mother Alphonsa's letters and papers. Other letters and documents are in various archives across the country, but the good work of the Historical Commission has been possible because of the quality of the motherhouse collection.

In addition to the historical research required for the Church's ongoing approval of Rose Hawthorne's cause is the need for evidence of the *fama sanctitatis* and the *fama signorum*, or, in simple English, her reputation for holiness and the evidence of her intercession in securing favors from God. Widely viewed as a holy woman, even during her own lifetime, the Church asks for evidence that this reputation for holiness has continued after her death. In addition, the Church looks for witnesses to the power of her intercession among the people of God. Thus the importance of the reports of "favors received" published in various editions of the Guild Newsletter. When members of the faithful report favors they believe have been granted through the intercession of Mother Mary Alphonsa, these testimonies become an important part of the record to be conveyed to Rome.

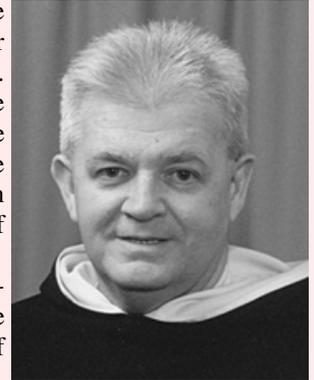
Finally, as most Guild members know, the decision to beatify or canonize a Servant of God requires a miracle. Only when God intervenes in a miraculous way into the ordinary rhythm of life as in an instantaneous healing or reversal of some situation will the Pope consider the formal action of beatification. This is commonly called the *digitus Dei*, i.e., the "finger of God," pointing out his desire for the Church to act in this matter. Members of the Guild should be alert to situations of need so that by suggesting that a family group of friends turn to the intercession of Rose Hawthorne, and report any positive results to the Guild.

For both the *fama sanctitatis* and the *fama signorum*, the Guild is dependent on its members for news of favors received. These reports are important in placing the cause before the diocesan bishop and the Holy See. Do not hesitate to report favors to the Guild office. The example of one who endured much suffering and whose suffering bore a great bounty for the Church is important for us today. Spread the word and let your family and friends know the good news about Rose Hawthorne.

Devotedly yours,

Fr. Gabriel B. O'Donnell, OP

You can check on already reported favors online at [www.hawthorne-dominicans.org](http://www.hawthorne-dominicans.org). Click the Rose Hawthorne Guild link to discover the graces others have reported.



Rev. Gabriel B. O'Donnell, O.P.,  
Postulator for the Cause of Rose Hawthorne

CHEERFUL COMPLETENESS

Continued from page one

Comfortable chairs and pillows are matters of course. Rooms must be repainted every year or two and receive new linoleums. The house-linen and all household articles must be renewed frequently in a work of this nature. Adding to aesthetic needs, the men will ask to venture outdoors with a pipe and a beer; an indescribable morale lift. The women sew and hold endless talking-bees often considering their meals after and before. Many enjoy reading daily and weekly prints, writing letters and being soothed or frolicked by the phonograph's discourse of the most excellent music: Caruso's voice, Elman's violin or the voices of the Sistine Chapel Choir.

In the Homes the spirit of prayer abounds, for many of the men and women pray frequently between the regular times for prayer, and some are always to be found speaking to God. This numerous family of sick are devout and heroism is the trait of nearly all. They are examples to their Sister-nurses, who know them



*Despite lean intervals, Mother Alphonsa was a lavish spender when means permitted, but always for the benefit of the patients, never for herself. Ever solicitous for their comfort and happiness, she took advantage of every opportunity to provide them with special little favors over and above their ordinary requirements, which she knew would surprise and delight them. Sister Mary Joseph Blessington, O.P. Out of Many Hearts pg 146.*

in the pale of suffering and crucial trial such as cancer-patients know.

In truth, the expenses of the Homes are many, of which the foregoing items are a part. The idea is to arrive at a certain cheerful completeness, and to make the patients glad that they crossed the threshold that is to be their last boundary.

There is a last and greatest joy for almost all who enter these Homes of work, prayer, suffering and waiting. As a true mother's face lights up in recognition of a child who is, after a long absence, returning to her, so belief in and love of God brings supernatural light into the life of creatures who are advancing toward Him. God seems to be pleased, to be acknowledging the sufferers as His children, and to be blessing them with open arms. In going from our kindly Homes, the deceased sufferers, happy servants of God, move away from the field of a well-fought battle to the presence of their King.

*The idea is to arrive at a cheerful completeness, and to make the patients glad that they crossed the threshold that is to be their last boundary...*

REPORTED FAVORS ATTRIBUTED TO ROSE HAWHTORNE'S INTERCESSION

April 9, 2008

Dear Father O'Donnell,

A couple of years ago while attending a prayer group, I learned of a man being told that he had stage 4 lung cancer. His physician told him to get his affairs in order, as the cancer was so far along. The couple telling me this story were the man's parents, as well as the leaders of the prayer group. I promised them that I would pray for their son.

For the next several months, I prayed, daily to Mother Mary Alphonsa to intercede for their son. Following a few months break, the prayer group resumed. I approached the couple and asked them how their son was doing. They replied that their son had been operated on, and the surgeons found only a slight trace of cancer, which they removed. Their son did not require any radiation, or chemotherapy, and is currently cancer-free.

Father, in my opinion Mother Mary Alphonsa interceded . . .

Thank you and GOD bless you.

Staten Island, NY

Aug 13, 2007

. . . In November my granddaughter gave birth to twins. They weighed 1 lb each and had so many medical problems... a deacon friend of mine gave me a prayer card of Mother Mary Alphonsa. . . I prayed to her every day since November and the twins now weigh about 14 lbs each. . . They are happy healthy babies and are doing very well. Thanks to Mother Mary Alphonsa, Rose Hawthorne's intercession, God answered my prayers.

Yonkers, NY

Guild Membership and Spiritual Benefits

Many Catholics are still unaware of Rose Hawthorne and her influence as a spiritual intercessor, mentor and friend. Because she was a convert, wife, mother and religious founder, she serves as an example of Christian perfection and holiness to a wide range of people. As members of the Guild we should make her life and spiritual help known among family and friends. I ask you to use the contact information on the back of the Newsletter to direct others

to the Guild so that we can let more people know the good news of Mother Alphonsa's virtue, vision and mission. Don't forget, there are spiritual benefits attached to Guild membership. Not only is there a monthly Mass celebrated for Guild members and their families, but during the seasons of Christmas and Easter members are remembered at a novena of Masses offered for their intentions.



