

August 28, 2002  
Feast of St. Augustine  
Dear Sisters,

As this *Year of the Chapter* draws to its climax, I greet you on this Feast of St. Augustine with the hope that you have experienced these months as an ever-deepening journey into the depths and roots of our spirituality. I hope that you have had time to ponder *A Fire Kept Burning*, the end-of-term reflection prepared by the General Council, as the first part of our State of the Congregation report. The very first reflection question in this booklet, “What might a one-heart/one-soul community look like?” reminds us of our grounding in the Trinitarian oneness of Augustinian spirituality.

There are several topics that I want to address in this letter. The unifying theme is our experience of our life in transition—life continuing to flow in individuals, communities, and units.

### **Romania**

On August 1, 2002, at a ceremony attended by sisters of the Romanian province, members of the Bavarian provincial council, and Sister Adelgarda Riess and myself from the General Council, the structure of the Romanian province was brought to a close. Within the context of a liturgy, the province was formally dissolved and Sister Salome Strasser, provincial of the Bavarian province, joyously welcomed each Sister, by name, into the Bavarian province. Offertory gifts and petitions included remembrances of the 70-year history of the province, of the deceased sisters who had ministered in the Province, and of the provident care of a loving God experienced even during the times of suffering endured by the sisters. Dinner and a vesper service, together with time to socialize, rounded out the day’s activities. It was a time of mixed emotions but the predominant one was the “delight of laughing and chatting together amicably.” (St. Augustine)

After four years of preparing the legal and canonical requirements, and more importantly, of preparing their hearts, the sisters showed their readiness to welcome this new reality. Grateful thanks to Sister Margit Donhauser for her two terms as provincial leader were incorporated into the vesper prayer. She will continue to serve the sisters as local leader for the “Romanian Community” of the Bavarian province. There was special joy as celebrating the new life emerging within this part of the congregation as evidenced by the two Romanian women who began their novitiate in Munich on August 14, and the three candidates currently living in Timisoara. Some pictures of the ceremony marking the transition are available on the SSND international website.

In loving solidarity in Notre Dame,

Sister Rosemary and the General Councilors