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The Precursor

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VOL. XIX, No. 6

MONTREAL

November-December 1952

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THE MIRACULOUS Medal AGAIN

Sammy, the Chinese laundryman, was very ill. His old heart was giving him quite a lot of trouble as it beat wildly against his breast, and his old legs were so swollen they could hardly carry him any longer.

One sunny morning, he rang the doorbell at our Chinese Hospital.

"Sister, give me a place to lie down. I'm all in," he gasped as he crumpled down on a nearby chair. All the beds were taken up as usual but could we think of refusing to admit this almost dying pagan? Sister-nurse rapidly made up her mind. She would send Mr. X. home to recuperate and thus would have a place ready for Sammy. That very night, the old laundryman slept peacefully in a spotless bed of our hospital ward.

As the patient's heart condition was serious, Sister tried to prepare him for the final summons. He cynically laughed off all advances on that score. "Listen," he swaggered, "I've been a regular scamp all my life and have done much evil. Nothing you can say will ever change my opinions. When the time comes for me to go, I'll go right down there." A significant gesture punctuated this assertion.

However, Sammy's hardness of heart finally melted as Sister told him of God's merciful tenderness for His erring children. Could even he hope to be saved at last? The priest was called to his bedside, and within one short hour an avalanche of graces refreshed this sin-scarred soul; Sammy was baptized, received Holy Communion, was confirmed, comforted through Extreme Unction, and spiritually enriched with the indulgence *in articulo mortis*. As happy as a little child, he lay back on his pillows and sighed contentedly. The thief, death, could come in with stealthy tread; no longer would the old man demur. One short hour went by and Sister, making her rounds, drew near to Sammy's bedside; how surprised she was to find that her patient's soul had already slipped from its earthly prison. Fortunate old Sammy! The hospital ward had been for him the very vestibule of heaven.

We looked through the dead man's belongings stuffed in a paper bag, as we put the room in order, and among his treasures we found the "key" to this last-minute conversion — a miraculous medal. Sammy loved Our Lady and Our Lady in turn loved Sammy and saw him safely home at journey's end.

THE LITTLE FLOWER



We are thrilled when we read about the exploits of Christ's campaigner, St. Francis Xavier. We admire his superhuman courage, his burning zeal, his unparalleled apostolic accomplishments, and we readily approve the choice that has been made of him as Patron of the missions in general.

What we find more difficult to grasp is the reason why the Little Flower who lived within cloistered walls should share identical honors. Our difficulty to admit such a fact can only mean that for us also has been dimmed the age-old truth that the "soul of all apostolate" is loving, prayerful, self-denial. The selfsame love of God and of immortal souls which informed the life of the Jesuit missionary in his adventurous quest for the glory of His King, also impregnated that of the humble Carmelite nun in her solitary convent cell. Open the autobiography of the Little Flower and as you leaf through her letters especially, you will breathe at nearly every line the fragrance of her alert, passionate, ingenious zeal. The Saint warned her novices against the danger of limiting their ardor to their own perfection; always she reminded them of the value of little things done with a great love, even to the picking up of a pin or of a straw. Who will gainsay us if we affirm that her "Little Way" places the highest perfection and the missionary vocation itself within the reach of every one? Nobody has the right to consider the latter as limited to specialists in the field. When already grievously ill, Little Teresa made brave efforts to take the daily walk prescribed by her Infirmary, offering it up for the missionaries. Who among us has not many a tired daily step to offer for the same cause? Mothers in their busy homes, workers at the shops, girls

behind their counters, business men in their comings and goings, all can walk for an apostolic intention. Helping those in trouble, smiling pleasantly, saying a kind word as we go our way, breathing a short but fervent prayer, bearing up patiently under petty annoyances, all these things that form the woof and warp of our daily life may, according to the Little Flower, help missionaries to convert the infidels if we are, through grace, on terms of friendship with God.

How really indispensable is this spiritual help to the mysterious work of the conversion of souls! With characteristic insight the saintly Carmelite wrote to her missionary "brother" Abbe Roulland: "Let us work together for the salvation of souls. Alone I can do very little or rather absolutely nothing. What consoles me is to think that with you, I will be able to achieve something, for the zero worthless by itself acquires importance according to the unit by which it is placed. But it must be placed on the right and not on the left..."

On the point of bidding farewell to earth, this peculiar "zero" who could not rest satisfied with only one mission made the following prophecy, "Confidently I hope not to remain inactive in Heaven, for my desire is to work still for the Church and for souls. This I ask of God and I am sure that He will hear me. If I quit already the battlefield, it is not with the selfish desire of taking my rest."

Devotion to the Little Flower penetrates everywhere and charms all hearts like a rare mysterious perfume. Roses she has scattered all over the globe. At her canonization in 1925, hymns of thankfulness rose not only from France but from China, Annam, Cambodia, India, Ceylon, Africa, South and North America, and even from Keewatin where an Eskimo Mission flourishes under her patronage. From our own northern boundaries, like a gorgeous aurora borealis, was to rise Little Teresa's glory; His Excellency Most Rev. O. Charlebois, Bishop of Keewatin, was the first to sign a petition to the Holy Father to obtain the favor of having her appointed as Patroness of the Missions at large, together and on the same footing as St. Francis Xavier with all the rights and privileges involved.

Twenty-five years have passed since on December 14, 1927, Pope Pius XI proclaimed the Star of his Pontificate, the Star of Modern missions; twenty-five years of progress as may be gathered from *Evangelii Præcones* the recent Encyclical published by Pope Pius XII. We like to think that we owe to her intercession not only the rapid increase in the ranks of native priesthood and the wonderful multiplication of neo-Christians, but also the remarkable augmentation of apostolic vocations which rejoices the heart of Holy Mother Church.

On the occasion of the silver Jubilee of her missionary patronage, the Little Flower will unfailingly scatter over all the missions of the world, a shower of spiritual roses. Now is the time to plead with her to obtain the liberation of the Church in China from the clutches of Communism. And for every one of us is it not also the time to enter resolutely into the Saint's "Little Way" so as to save as many souls as possible through our prayers and sacrifices?

M.I.C.

ST

FRANCIS XAVIER

Conquistador of the East

This year, 1952, marks the four hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Francis Xavier on the isle of Sancian, off the south China coast. A modern writer goes back to Horace for the perfect description of this valiant knight of Christ. In the fourth Book of his Odes, Horace fitly labels the forbears of the Xaverian clan "the unconquerable Cantabrians"—Cantabrian being just another name for Spaniard. In the heart of the unconquerable Basque country, on April 7, 1506, was born the sixth and youngest child of Don Juan of Jassu and his wife Dona Maria. On the baptismal font, he was named Francis.

His boyhood was passed under the cloud of wars between France and Spain and of the ensuing impoverishment which fell on the families who defended the lost cause of Navarre. Although he had grown up with the clashing of swords sparking outside his nursery, although the blood of generations of warriors flowed in his veins, Xavier did not feel drawn to the military profession. Instead he early envisioned himself as a leader among the intellectuals.

And so it happened that when only nineteen years old, he exchanged the battlements of Xavier for the gothic silhouettes of the University of Paris, which was then the University not of a town but of the whole world. In Paris, he entered the College of St. Barbe where he first shared a room with one Peter Favre, and later with Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatius was a keen judge of men. He saw more deeply into the soul of Xavier than did any other of their companions; he saw beyond the brilliance in learning and the excellence in games, to the soul longing for an ideal large enough to occupy all its energies. Francis often spoke about his dreams of success and preferment. The constant, sober comment of Ignatius was, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" These words at first rasped on the proud, sensitive heart of the Basque nobleman who was winning more and more distinction in University circles, but

the logic behind them gradually began to penetrate. His complacent thoughts about the future underwent a subtle mysterious disturbance. Born in him somehow was a vague but growingly insistent desire for something higher, better, costing more. No half measures would satisfy the dashing scion of the Xaverian clan. He wanted to live dangerously — and for a great cause. And so he surrendered, completely, absolutely, unconditionally.

In 1533, Francis with Ignatius, and five others, took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. He was twenty-eight. Six years later, the King of Portugal asked Ignatius for men to go to India as missionaries. Two were chosen, but at the last moment when one could not travel through illness, Francis Xavier was substituted. In Xavier's soul burnt like a searing piece of hot iron Ignatius' last command, "Go and set all on fire!" God had molded his elect into a vase of election to the Far East.

Fifteen years was all the time allotted to him to convert the East, fifteen years of superhuman effort and endless journeyings. To the saga of history's conquerors must be joined the name of Francis the Cantabrian who brought more nations to their knees than any other man who ever lived. What were his missionary methods? He threw all technical methods of theory to the winds, content to use what Francis Thompson somewhere calls "divinely unprincipled sleights, heavenly cunning," to bring all souls, shriven and exultant, to the Heart of their Savior.

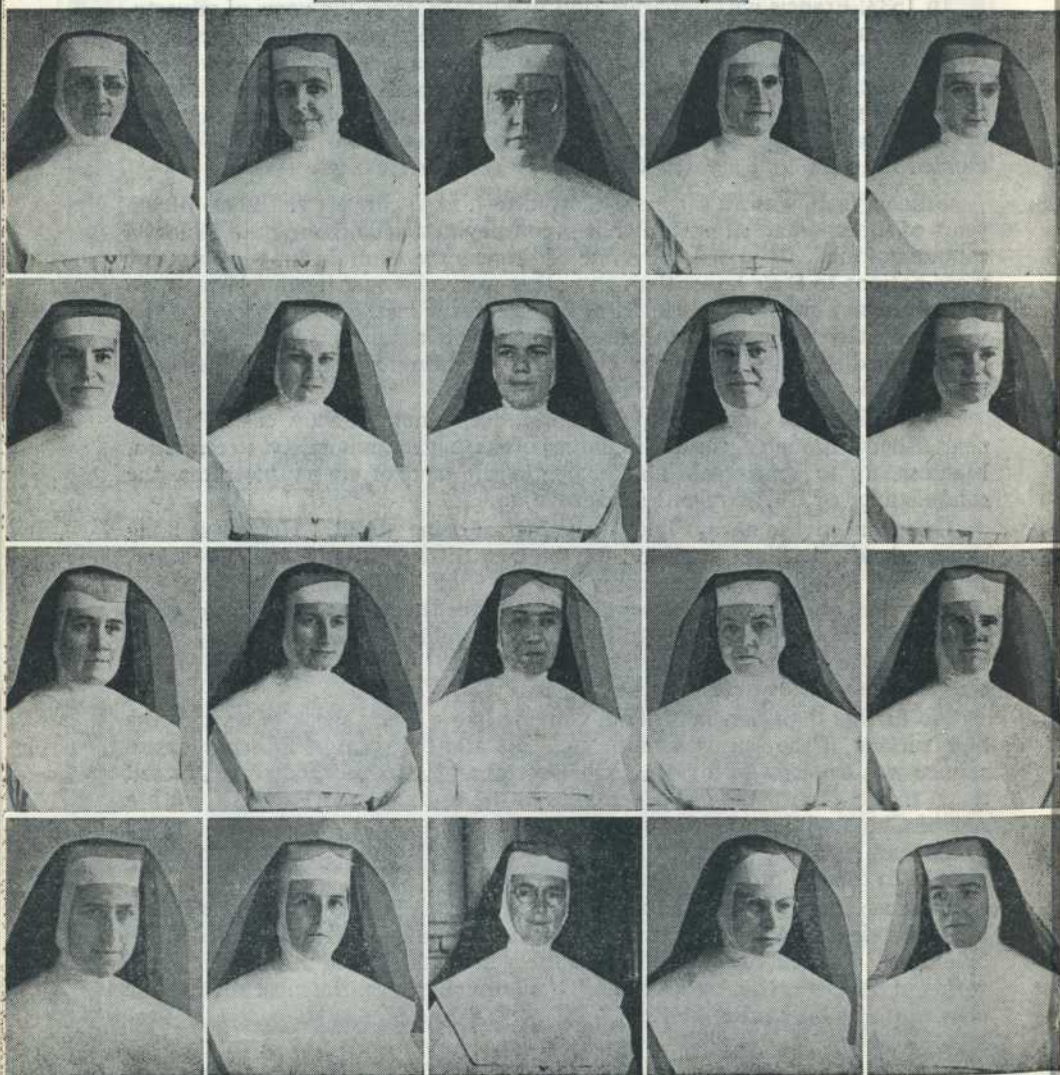
From Lisbon to Goa, to Cape Comorin, deep among the low caste Paraver pearl fishers, through a world of malaria, cobras, pagan immorality, to Sumatra, Malacca, up to Yamaguchi and Kyoto in the land of cherry blossoms, the conquistador of Christ relentlessly drove on.

One fear only he always had — the fear of being afraid. He was striking the spark of a brilliant tradition for the men of the "First Legion". Later, Jogues and Marquette were to carry it to the wilds of the American continent.

And then one day his gaze wandered out over the rolling main to the coast of China. It was a challenge to the unconquerable Xavier, a challenge that proved altogether too tempting . . . he would go. In 1552, he set out for the conquest he was not to achieve here below.

No further than Sancian Island, clinging like a black speck of dust to the blue surface of the sea, was he to go. His allotted span of fifteen years of service was drawing to a close. On December 2, 1552, Francis laid himself down to die. With the dawn breaking in the unconquered Far East, with a son of China wiping the clamminess from his brow and holding the crucifix to his eyes, with the waters of a strange sea lapping at his feet, the conqueror yielded to the call of His divine Captain.

Because there was a Xavier our world is a much better place and we have a clearer view of what it means to love our neighbor as God intended us to love him. The real meaning of such a life is best understood in the light of the words of St. Denis the Areopagite, "Of all divine things, the most divine is to co-operate in the saving of souls."



They Leave

For the Missions

Twenty-two Sisters left our Cote des Neiges Motherhouse during the last few months, for the mission fields afar.

In the order shown on this photo, they are, Sr. Teresa of St. Augustine (Beatrice Corneillier, Collinsville, Mass.) and Sr. Joseph of the Holy Family (Jeannette Delisle, Worcester, Mass.) who will open a new house at Davao, Philippine Islands.

Sr. St. Adelaide (Adelaide Tremblay, St. Cyprien, Temiscouata), Sr. John of the Immaculate (Annette Bonin, St. Hyacinthe), Sr. St. Eloi (Cecile Desjardins, St. Eloi), Sr. Marie Odila (Odila Plante, Princeville), Sr. St. Clement (Carmelle Caron, Tourville), leaving for a new Mission at Morondava, Madagascar.

Sr. Jane Frances (Jeanne d'Arc Desrochers, Quebec), Sr. Joseph Albert (Juliette Morneau, Kamouraska), Sr. St. Yvette (Yvette Carle, Joliette), Sr. Marie Laurentia (Yvette Belanger, Ottawa), Sr. St. Elias (Therese Godbout, Grand Sault, N.B.), Sr. St. Bonaventure (Hedwidge Lapierre, Sainte Marie de Beauce), assigned to different missions in Northern Nyasaland, Africa.

Sr. Teresa of the Cross (Therese Cote, Beauport), Sr. St. Augustine (Marie Aurea Perron, Lac aux Sables), Sr. Joseph of the Child Jesus (Lise Mercure, Normandin), Sr. Rita of the Sacred Heart (Rita Ready, Montreal), assigned to Haiti, Antilles; Sr. Marie Eugene (Simonne Perreault, Joliette) to Cuba; Sr. St. Alberic (Genevieve Paquin, St. Ubald), to Haiti; Sr. Marie Cecilia (Cecile Legault, St. Vincent de Paul), Sr. St. Alexis (Dolores Tremblay, Kenogami) to Cuba; Sr. Magdalen of Pazzi (Madeleine Dugal, Quebec), also assigned to Haiti, Antilles. (West Indies).



PRISON MEMOIRS

Sister St. Victor's (1) Account

(Continued)

UNDER THE SICKLE AND HAMMER

Every evening, Agnes who taught the littlest ones, had them sing hymns to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Mother. At this moment of the day the older orphans gathered around us, telling us all they had seen and heard. We tried to encourage our poor children to be polite and obedient, to watch over the younger orphans, and especially to find means of baptizing the dying babies; they cheerfully assented and bravely accomplished what they had promised.

(1) Germaine Tanguay, Nashua, N.H.

As has already been mentioned, the Communists had allowed our orphans to hear daily Mass. During the afternoon of March 1, the older girls who wanted to tell Father Casey about this permission, asked to be allowed to go out to buy some bananas. Had the new masters guessed their real intention? Two soldiers accompanied them, but the children were not to be outwitted. On March 2, Lo Sail addressed herself to the new Directress "We are Catholics. The Sisters are supposed to hear Mass every morning; besides we have been allowed by your officials to have it. I am going out to fetch a priest." Without waiting for a protest, she sallied out with the virgin Isang. It was nearly 6.30 a.m. when they left the house, but as Father Casey had been warned, he had decided to wait until seven to say his Mass; the courageous messengers brought him back in triumph.

On March 3, Father Narbais came to hear confessions. We consulted him about the events of the last few days; he was of the opinion that we should ask a permit to leave the Mission. Sister Superior⁽¹⁾ and Sister Marie Germaine⁽²⁾ went to Canton on the following day to consult His Excellency Most Reverend Dominic Tang. Before they left the house, the Reds ordered them to hand over the account books.

Our Chinese Bishop reluctantly advised us to leave. "I would like to keep all my missionaries but I have reasons to fear your imprisonment."

That very evening, we let the Reds know of our decision. "Are you really expressing a resolution or just a simple wish?" Upon our answering that it was a resolution they informed us that it would be better to make a formal, written request addressed to the chief. They felt triumphant! Until now they had lulled the children into believing that their broad-mindedness would stretch so far as to keep us on at the Creche. Now they could point out that we were leaving of our own accord.

Sister Marie Lucia⁽³⁾ prepared a clever letter which we presented at General Headquarters. We waited expecting to have blanks to fill. Our presence was ignored for about ten minutes; then one of the agents deigned to take the trouble of reading our request. After perusing it, he went on working as if we did not exist. Sister Superior finally ventured to inquire whether there were any formalities to be gone through, but the agent merely waved his hand in a gesture of dismissal. We left the Bureau convinced of our impending imprisonment.

We set to work immediately, cutting out and sewing black cotton habits which we could use instead of our regular ones. White would not be practical in prison. Five days went slowly by and still we were kept in the dark regarding our eventual fate.

Until March 12, the priest offered Mass at our Convent although he left immediately afterwards. Father Narbais felt highly elated over the audacity of our orphans who had obtained this permission and he encouraged them

1¹ Antoinette Couvrette, Ste Dorothee, P.Q.

2² Germaine Gravel, St. Prosper, Co. Champlain.

3³ Lucia Ho, Canton, China.

to keep on. But the Communists were only biding their time. They hoped through these concessions to win the children's confidence. They had counted without the passionate love of God burning in the hearts of these little ones, a love that transformed them into little lions ready to defend their Faith and their adopted mothers.

TRAGIC FOREBODINGS

Father Casey strove to keep up the orphans' courage. Every morning after the Gospel, he commented the words of Jesus to His disciples: "Those whom thou hast given me I guarded; and not one of them perished . . . I am the good Shepherd and I know mine and mine know me . . . I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." He also told them stories of child martyrs who had confessed their God before the tribunals. On Passion Sunday, eve of our departure, he comforted them as follows, "You are now saddened as were the Blessed Mother and the Disciples after the death of Our Savior. Be of good cheer, however, for your present sadness will be changed into joy when Easter dawns for you as it eventually will."

As Father Casey hurried home after Mass the guards warned him not to call again at the Creche. They would tell him, they added, when his ministry would be required.

FIRST ARRESTATION

Knowing that it would be impossible for Father Casey to come for Mass, on the morning of the twelfth, three Sisters asked leave to go to Church. They had hardly taken a few steps outside, when a police official called them back. "Something important will happen today, so you had better all remain here." The Sisters insisted but to no avail.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Communists began to arrive. They ordered the children to assemble for a meeting, in the refectory, at the other end of the house. Lo Sail whose suspicions had been aroused, gave the orphans a counterorder to assemble, not in the refectory, but in the sewing room next to the Sisters' quarters. She cautioned one of the aides to watch the door while she herself sat in the place assigned to her. In the meantime, four policemen and a woman attached to the Central Bureau, invaded our premises. They gave lecture in Chinese of a mandate ordering Sister Superior and Sister Marie Germaine to follow them to the Central Bureau. Before leaving the woman who accompanied the policemen was told to search the Sisters. We who remained behind, were instructed as follows: "You may keep on living here and doing your work as usual, under the Director's authority."

After the departure of our two companions, we found on their beds, their scapulars, and medals, the passports and money they had been carrying in case of emergencies. We put these away; then we prepared some blankets, towels, soap, and toilet articles with the intention of forwarding them to the prisoners as soon as occasion offered.

Downstairs, the orphans who had caught a glimpse of the Sisters' black mantles, gave the alarm crying, "Seu La, (cry of distress) the Sisters are

being taken from us." All rushed out from the room where they were kept assembled, crying and clinging to the Sisters. The policemen had to pull them away and herd them inside the enclosure wall whose gate was immediately padlocked. But the youngsters followed the wall with piteous cries and lamentations. When the Sisters had walked far enough from the wall to see the hilltop, Sister Superior turned and waved her Rosary as a last request for prayers. The official rudely bade her walk on. Once again she turned for a farewell look at the Creche and a salutation to the Blessed Mother's statue set up on the hill's summit.

Grouped in front of our quarters, the children kept on asking the Director to bring back the Sisters, upbraiding him for his treachery. "You are forever telling us that you represent the people. We are the *People*; we are the victims of your underhand schemes. If you don't believe the Sisters believe us. You despise us because we are orphans . . . The Sisters loved us and took motherly care of us. We want the Sisters! Give us the Sisters!"

These heart-rending scenes lasted from 1.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. To get rid of the demonstrating orphans, the Director came out and assured them that the Sisters had merely been taken away for an investigation; they would soon come home.

"Lies! Lies! . . ." shouted the indignant little ones. "You have taken the Sisters to prison and we know all about it. Don't try to fool us into believing your deceitful words. The Sisters have no bedding in prison and they will be sick."

"The prisoners have all they need," snapped the Director suddenly dropping his suave manner. "Go back to your quarters and I will call the Chief."

A few minutes later, the Chief strode into the room where the orphans were huddled, defiant and tearful. What did he say to these defenceless lambs? We never knew but they were doubtlessly cowed for a complete silence fell over the group.

Late that evening, three of the older girls evaded the vigilance of their guardians and slipped in to talk to us. Fearing lest they be punished on our account, we advised them to return to the rooms assigned them by the Reds. Two of them had already been threatened with prison but the Directress pleaded in their favor.

NEW ARRESTATION, March 13

Needless to say we slept very little. As we rose on the morning of the thirteenth, we had a premonition that our fate would be sealed that very day. We found the Community doors padlocked. None of the children would be allowed to come near us. Our only thought was to be re-united to our Sisters to share their trials and privations.

At noon, four policemen and a woman from the Central Bureau called. The orphans were locked up in the parlor and securely guarded. The woman

made haste to strip us of our beads, medals, crucifixes; through the door, the policemen shouted at her to hurry with her task. At last, we also were led away to prison. Before we crossed the threshold, the Director demanded that we give up the keys; we gave him the only one still in our keeping.

From the parlor where they were kept in custody, the orphans heard us coming down. A pitiful wail rose but the policemen silenced it by pounding angrily on the door. Under military escort we were marched off along Wai San Road.

IN PRISON — FIRST QUESTIONINGS

On the day that followed our arrival in prison I underwent my first questioning which lasted six hours on end. Everything about my person had to be brought to light; family, social condition of parents, degree of my education, the work I did at the Creche, the funds used for the children's maintenance, the work assigned to the older girls, the babies' food, the common grave used for the dead foundlings.

After this questionnaire I was sent to the common room. There I was to remain for three whole months, a proof that I was in for more trouble.

WONG LICK SI IS IMPRISONED

It happened in the last days of April. We had been led out for our usual, sketchy toilet, one day, when we espied our orphan Agnes who was also washing her face under the watchful guardianships of a policeman. Of course, it was impossible to exchange even a few words. How anxious we felt about the probable cause of the girl's arrest. Was she here on our account? Had she been imprudent?

Some days later, one of her prison cell companions was brought into our common room. This woman assured us that Wong Lick Si had been arrested in order to have her bear witness against us. "Ever since she has been imprisoned" added she, "the guards have tried to constrain her to admit that all the charges made against you are true. Until now they have been unable to break her either by threats or by fair promises."

One evening as she was alone in her cell, the guardian asked her if she would like to go out for a bath. She replied that she was unwilling to go out alone. Ignorant of the fact that Agnes was in any way acquainted with us the official said to her, "The she-devils (the Sisters) are going. Would you mind accompanying them?" Feigning indifference to hide her joy at this unexpected proposal, Agnes nonchalantly acquiesced. "If the she-devils go, I don't mind going." Thus she enjoyed a chat of about ten minutes with Sister Superior and Sister Marie Germaine.

On this occasion, our Sisters learned that many among the older orphans had been sent out in different houses to work; that the youngest remained at the Creche; that babies were still brought in and that all of them died as usual. Thanks to the courageous zeal of the orphans not one child had been

allowed to die unbaptized. Agnes went on to tell the Sisters about the acts of vandalism committed by the Reds. The statues of the chapel and garden had been smashed to pieces. Respectfully, the little ones had buried the debris.

In order to inveigle Agnes into accusing us, the Communists deceitfully asserted that the Sisters had confessed to their guilt. Sister Superior encouraged Wong Lick Si to be faithful and strong in order to have truth triumph. Some time before her arrest, she had visited the Bishop of Canton, telling him about the difficulties encountered with the new masters and her fear of being arrested. How strengthened and comforted she had felt by his kind and fatherly blessing!

SECOND QUESTIONING

At 8.30 p.m., one night, I was called for a second questioning preceded this once by a harangue. "You know that God loves truth. You are not only a Catholic but a missionary so you must love truth also. If you withhold the truth you will be punished by God and by the People's Government. We know that you are not as guilty as the others because you worked in the kitchen, in the sewing room and in the garden, so you will not be punished as severely as the others if you tell the truth. If not, then you will have to take your punishment. Tell us all that you know, all that happened at the Creche before and after the liberation. Be frank and sincere because I have proofs of all that happened."

After a few minutes of reflexion, I replied: "I have neither seen nor heard anything that should be reported to the Court. We have only a few moments of recreation everyday and then we speak only of things that can help us be gay and cheerful. All that I know, is that many children are brought to us because nobody wants to take care of them; they are so sick that nearly all of them are hopeless cases when they reach the Creche. Many have been abandoned on the streets or in the gutters because they are girls, or crippled, or because the parents find they already have too many mouths to feed."

"Where are those children?"

"A few are still living at the Foundling Home. The others are dead."

"Poon Nga Fong (Sister Superior) did not say that."

"I'm sure Sister Superior told you the truth as I'm telling you."

The judge then took out a paper from his brief case and read. "One man asserts that he took a child to your house and that you wrested \$50.00 from him before taking it in. Three months later, he came back and asked to see the baby; you then obliged him to pay \$35.00. How do you account for this?"

"We accepted money from people who wanted to give it to us. The most we have ever received in such cases is \$5.00, sometimes \$1.00 or \$0.50; the great majority never give a cent."

(to be continued)

GOLDEN JUBILEE ECHOES

FROM HONG KONG

T. R. G. FLETCHER

*Remarks made by T. R. G. Fletcher, Canadian Government
Trade Commissionner, Hong Kong, June 3, 1952, on the
occasion of the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of the
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.*

"My wife and I are very pleased indeed to be here with you this afternoon. In the first place, we are delighted to share in the celebration of this Golden Jubilee Anniversary, for the 50th Anniversary is a wonderful occasion at any time. It is a milestone which all of us seek to attain for various reasons, but which few of us achieve in fact, and, therefore, we add our personal congratulations to all those which are being offered to the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception today. Second, my wife and I are gratified to be here because in one sense this is a distinctively Canadian occasion, for the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception are a Canadian Order.

It would not be proper, however, to emphasize the Canadian aspect today, much as I am tempted so to do. While each Sister of the Order is undeniably proud of her Canadian nationality, it is not meet that we should today stress such a circumstance. In the first place, we are all aware that these Sisters have dedicated themselves to be subjects of and to serve a Kingdom which is far greater and far more important than the Kingdom of Canada, from which they all come. Moreover, to emphasize any incidental Canadian aspect that might apply would be to divert from these Sisters and from God Himself the tribute and thanks and honour which are most definitely theirs and His.

In my brief residence in Hongkong, I have become aware of many associations which link this Colony with Canada. There are the ties of business relations; there are the links provided by transportation companies, some by sea and some by air; there are the bonds of blood shed in a common cause as witness the participation by Canadian soldiers in the fighting in defense of

Hongkong in 1941. In addition to these several associations there are most definitely those invisible but not intangible bonds which the Canadian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have been weaving between this Colony and Canada through their devoted work and expressions of love and compassion, and interest in their ministrations locally. I suggest that these bonds being woven by the Sisters are no whit less important and they are probably more lasting than the others of which I made mention.

Religion in Canada is a vital force amongst the population. Vitality implies growth and certainly the amazing record of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception indicates that they are vitally alive. My day to day duties lead me to review statistics which economists produce respecting the rate of growth of my Country over the first half of the 20th Century, but I must concede that the development of the Order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception far overshadows the rate of Canadian development. For example, statistics indicate that between 1900 and 1950 the population in Canada increased $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, yet all of us here have been reading the history of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and we have noted that their numbers increased from three members in 1902 to over 800 today. Other statistics indicate that the value of total production in Canada has increased five times between 1900 and 1905, yet the efforts of these Canadian Sisters, whom we are honouring, have resulted in their established Missions in their far-flung fields of work being increased from one in 1902 to 50 this year.

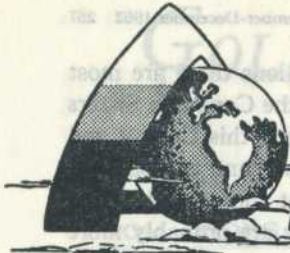
Certainly all of us here are impressed with the wonderful work which these Sisters are doing and in paying tribute to them today and in giving thanks to God who has prospered them in their work on His behalf, we all humbly beseech His grace, His guidance and His blessing upon them as they embark on their second 50 years of devoted duty.

WORTH REPEATING

RESPONSIBILITY

We are responsible for the words we ought to have said and did not; for the things we ought to have done and did not do; for the things we ought to have uprooted and let grow; for the things we ought to have planted and did not plant.

CARDINAL POLE at the Council of Trent



DAY POSTULATE

Rev. R. Blackburn, C.S.S.R.

When the Church sends forth her missionary sons to the field afar, her objective aim is not so much to have them administer Baptism as to have them establish the Church in new countries. The missionary's concern must be to fulfill the wish of Christ, by placing within reach of all his brethren of every race and color, this divinely-appointed means of attaining unto bliss eternal. The conversion of souls is only the beginning, the first stone in its establishment.

Official ambassador of Christ, the missionary combines within himself the varied phases of the Church's work. But alas in spite of his multiform activities, he is after all only a poor human being unable to cope, unaided, with *all* the requirements of the apostolate. Upon his arrival in mission territories, it does not take him long to realize that the task confronting him is really too gigantic for his own limited means. He must seek to promote human welfare, physical as well as spiritual, among the peoples to be evangelized. To achieve this end, schools must be built, hospitals equipped and staffed, social service centers created; then, a native clergy must be trained, a hierarchy established, an elite formed among the Christians.

The nurturing of priestly and religious vocations presupposes that the truly Christian spirit is flourishing in mission centers. Who will form the elite from which stems such a sterling family spirit? The missionary can teach his converts the principles of Christian family life, but he cannot show them the way by his own example. Even when he is helped by numerous devoted Brothers and Sisters, the minister of the Gospel must, perforce, leave many apostolic problems unsolved.

Civilization as it penetrates further and further inland, creates new needs occasions greater miseries, moral and physical. Only too often the missionary is forced to stand helplessly by while in certain destitute countries, hundreds of infants die because they are not cared for according to the rules of hygiene. Elsewhere, workers fall an easy prey to the insidious Red preachers of a godless creed. In Universities, the most perverse philosophies poison the minds of youth; students are fed on empty husks, forms without substance. They are kept ignorant of the fact that only to the extent that it is impregnated with the true spirit of Christianity, can civilization give happiness and peace and promote true progress.

A nation's cultural contribution to human society may be gauged by the value it places on womankind. But in mission lands only too often, woman's education is neglected; her mental development considered quite superfluous; it is even denied that she has an intelligent soul. And yet is she not to be the mother of the next generation? Who will help the missionary improve these appalling conditions? God's grace is at work in these countries as everywhere else on earth and it can work miracles, but we must not forget that God's plan for the spread of the Church is to use human agents — men and women who are strengthened by His grace to employ their talents for this cause.

We may then assert that lay apostles bearing witness to the dynamism of Catholicism are a grave and vital need of the missions. What an immense field of action opens before them! Not only lay specialists in educational or economic fields, doctors, nurses, and technicians, but also social workers, teachers, journalists, University professors are needed everywhere. These people exert a great missionary influence by the good example of their Catholic life and the exemplification of Christian charity. When the natives see the practical example of lay apostles living in their midst, it means for them that the Catholic Faith is really universal as the missionaries say it is.

This hour of the potential unification of humanity and the world through the progress of science and techniques, is above all the hour for the extension and intensification of the lay apostolate. May this most missionary of hours in the history of the Church be also the hour wherein lay missionaries gain in numbers, in capabilities, in generosity, in holiness.

France is always to be found in the lead of missionary initiative. Through its association called *Ad Lucem*, it trains lay apostles for their work and gives them spiritual guidance from the time they leave the home country until they return. Faithful to its splendid program of action, *Ad Lucem* has already sent to the missions more than a hundred of its members belonging to all social conditions.

Belgium followed in the footsteps of France, in 1937. Under the direction of China's great modern apostle, Father Lebbe, the society of the Lay Auxiliaries to the Missions was formed. "The aim of this Society is a totally disinterested service given to the native Bishops in all mission lands without any exception. It trains young girls who accept to work in groups, without any material advantages, under the form of apostolate accepted by their Society."

What has been Canada's response to this challenge? Although we, as a nation, have but lately entered the field of the foreign missions, we have already taken giant strides in that direction. Opportunities for our youth to serve the Church in heathen lands are practically unlimited. At present, groups of young people are meeting in Quebec and Montreal to discuss this vital mission need; the movement will no doubt soon spread like wildfire all over our country.

A realization of this problem for young girls especially has been initiated in Ottawa. Under the maternal aegis of Our Lady Queen of Missions, a lay missionary society was born there on the morrow of the memorable Marian Congress, in 1947.

Young Canadian women, do you really love Christ? Do you want to win souls to His divine Heart? Are you ready to take part in the Church's modern apostolate to restore the whole human society to Christ?

If so you will be heartily welcomed at No. 64 Cooper St., Ottawa. The Society of Lay Apostles to the Missions is waiting to help you realize your missionary dreams.

For particulars please contact,

Society of Lay Apostles to the Missions,

64 Cooper St.,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Tel. 5-5716.

FUNERAL RITES

Sister St. FRANCES(1), M.L.C.

KATETE, Nyasaland

Most of the funeral rites in these parts are inspired by superstition. As soon as the moribund has drawn his last breath, he is laid out straight on his mat, his eyes and mouth are closed, and his face is covered with a cloth for no one would dare take a second look at a dead person's face.

The news soon spreads far and wide. Parents, friends, and neighbors arrive to tender their sympathies to the bereaved family in a noisy, extravagant manner. Loudly wailing adults lie prostrate on the dirt floor. Children whose father or mother have died, whimper, "Mamma is gone! Who will take care of us? Papa is dead. Who will build us huts?" For her child who has passed away, the mother chants on a dismal tone, "My beautiful, strong, intelligent, lovable baby..." Men also adopt a conventional monotonous lament when their vocabulary runs short.

Meanwhile, inside the hut, the dead person's last toilet is made; he is rolled up and securely tied in his own sleeping mat with whatever meager

1. Lucienne Dandurand, St. Clet.

personal belongings he may have possessed. When the time for the funeral has arrived, the men carry the dead body out, literally running all the way to the cemetery through fear of pursuing, malicious spirits; the makeshift coffin is temporarily shoved in a shady corner. A member of the family or clan then chooses, according to superstitious rites, the last resting place and the grave digger sets to work. Never will the latter dig a grave in advance for he might then easily be accused of witchcraft or of depositing fetishes therein which might later facilitate his use of the corpse for magical purposes. The grave digging rite varies with the different clans. In our sector, at the bottom of a hole six feet deep, an excavation is made wherein the body is placed. Before throwing in the earth it is covered with another mat and pieces of wood. All the male members of the family must help to fill up the grave; otherwise they will unfailingly be accused of suspicious relations with marauding spirits or of putting fetishes in the excavation. Every single particle of earth must be carefully thrown in to keep enemies from using it as a charm. Small stones are then piled up over the funeral mound, while one of the men runs around it brandishing a stick, and another digs a hollow ditch, all around, to cut off any communication with the spirits.

After the funeral, all the members of the family dip in the river for a purifying bath. The man who ran about the grave with a stick, cuts off hanging vines from neighboring trees to tie about the shaved heads of the principal mourners. These vines are tokens of mourning in Nyasaland. The time has now come to partake of a banquet where the principal dish served is chicken meat called *ciwawulera*. The funeral guests remain a whole week in the dead person's hut.

After one month has elapsed the vines are discarded and buried in a hole dented somewhere in forest paths by a wild animal's paw. Dances which last all night officially close the mourning period. Nevermore will the departed one be mentioned among the living. The natives here believe in metempsychosis and greatly fear to see their dead, reincarnated in the form of animals or birds, come to wreak vengeance upon them.

The Catholic religion gradually does away with these superstitious rites. At the mission of Katete, the funeral lamentations now give place to piously recited prayers for the souls of the dead. Still, our Christians are set on doing things the African way and in showing their sorrow in an original manner; at the funeral, they usually don their most patched-up clothes worn in slovenly style. Their shuffling gait moreover emphasizes the fact that their sorrow renders them forgetful of usual conventions.

Fear of the dead is deeply ingrained in the souls of the Africans. Never will they visit the graves of their departed ones for only witch doctors or unsuspecting foreigners are bold enough to enter graveyards. Ordinary people seen on the premises would be accused of relations with the spirit world. Our Christians are not as yet reconciled to the custom of visiting the graves of the dead on All Souls' Day.

Catholic Action

IN

CUBA

Sister FRANCES TERESA(1), M.I.C.

To My Former Granby Pupils,

Knowing you as I do, I am sure you will be interested in reading about Catholic Action in Cuba, the historical account of the movement, its ideal, the Aspirant's promise, and the formation he receives.

In order to introduce you into the very beginnings of Catholic Action in this country, let me quote an excerpt from a letter sent by Gilberto Aldamas to the Aspirants, and published in the review *Vanguardia*.

"After the war of Independence, in 1895, Cuba underwent a thorough transformation. The Island that had until now been a mere cog in the colonial system, became a fullfledged Republic. National leaders strove to endow it with a flawless Constitution.

Faith, alas, was to enter upon a period of decadence. With the passing years, churches grew empty and neglected; society's prevailing tone became not merely indifferent, but openly hostile; materialism impregnated the masses; families were dechristianized; youth grew perverted. As a Republic, Cuba had indeed progressed in a wordly way, but the lively faith and the blameless morals of the nation had suffered attainat. Serious people deplored this situation; others chose to ignore it. Somebody, however, had to be found, brave enough to stem the creeping tide of materialism and godless communism.

Young people were faithful to religious practices only as long as they attended Catholic colleges or other religious institutions. Their studies over, they fell under the more or less nefarious influence of their milieus. In their new surroundings, they soon forgot the good counsels received; indifference to spiritual values gnawed at the seed of Faith like a cankerworm."

If youth while it remained at college kept the Faith, why not found an association which would keep the students united, fortify their weakness, save them from their environment, and better still, prompt them to transform

it? Brother Victorino was the one to realize this noble ideal. He dreamt of molding the youth of Cuba according to the teachings of the Gospel, then of launching them on the most alluring of all quests, the quest for immortal souls. His was the folly of a true lover of Christ, a folly that led him to disregard self completely, to conquer opposition, to embrace the cross with unflinching ardor. Need we be surprised if he was successful where many predicted he would fail? This ardent lover of Christ, was also a passionate devotee of Our Lady; he captured the good graces of his Heavenly Queen by founding his association on the anniversary of her smiling apparition at Lourdes, February 11.

As early as 1928, Cuba could boast of a Catholic Action organized along the lines of a well-defined hierarchy. School boys and girls were called Federates; married people assumed the suggestive titles of Catholic Knights and Catholic Ladies. Cuban Catholic Actionists chose as their slogan the following words reminiscent of St. Paul's epistles. "*Restaurar todas las cosas en Cristo.*" (Restore all things in Christ).

An ideal is an inspiration that raises the tenor of life. What are the distinctive traits of the Cuba Catholic Action ideal?

It is *logical*; man was created by God. The Federation aims at raising men to their Lord and King.

It is *necessary*; because separation from God occasions all unhappiness and is at the root of all evil.

It is *noble*; Christ is the noblest type of our human race. The Federate's ideal is to copy Christ, his model, and to draw all inspiration from Him.

It is *beautiful*; the Federate's aspirations are pure. He must seek only God's glory and the welfare of his country.

It is *practical*; it would be of little avail to think up a beautiful but un-



practical ideal. Ours is realisable because it does not run counter to human nature but sublimates it; because experience shows that it can be put into practise; because God wants it and that to God nothing is impossible.

It is *total*; love is the irresistible craving of every human heart. The Federate's ideal is resumed by love; love of God, love of virtue, and love of all that is noble and beautiful.

THE ASPIRANT'S PROMISE

The Catholic Action Aspirant promises to belong to Christ, to live in the state of grace, to be a happy warrior, pure, cheerful, mission-minded.

The Federate belongs to Christ, the King, that is to say that he will strive by all means in his power to spread the kingdom of His Lord everywhere.

The Federate lives in the state of grace, as becomes a son of the Heavenly Father, a brother of Christ made man in order to transform us into God.

The Federate is a happy warrior, who avoids at all costs, mortal sin, and who shuns venial sin and every occasion of transgressing God's law.

The Federate is pure, striving to keep himself unsullied, keeping at distance from objectionable films and notorious public places. To obtain this grace of purity, he often receives his God in Holy Communion, and cultivates a tender devotion to Our Lady.

The Federate is cheerful. Happiness is based on the state of grace. True

ONE OF CUBA'S STUDY CLUBS



joy is contagious of its very nature; others will benefit by our keeping in close friendship with the Wellspring of all joy.

The Federate is mission-minded. He knows that every Catholic is bound to be an apostle. His apostolate begins right at home, by trying to do all the good he can in his immediate surroundings. For instance, by tactfully changing the subject of doubtful conversations, by cheering some companion who feels despondent, by leading another to assist at Mass, by restoring peace in families,

THE ASPIRANT'S FORMATION

Under the direction of an instructor, the Aspirant learns how to mold his intelligence, his heart, his will; he is helped in this fascinating pursuit, by meetings, games, excursions, retreats, prayers, meditations.

Meetings are held regularly. In an apostolic spirit whose keynote is joy, they stress the necessity for every Christian soul to meditate upon the Gospel message in order to live that "full" life which Christ preconized. Study circles discuss problems of actuality. The method employed is *to see, to judge, to act*. Firstly, the evils of the student milieu are studied, one particular point being chosen for closer scrutiny. When this point has been thoroughly investigated, judgment is passed on the appropriate remedy to be applied, then action is taken in a practical manner.

Games and excursions are an important part of the program. They not only develop and strengthen the body, but also promote initiative, mutual understanding, self-reliance, unselfishness, cheerfulness, generosity, straightforwardness. Excursions favor a staunch team spirit while they afford a means of relaxation and culture.

Days of prayer, retreat, and meditation are of paramount importance. Only in the intimate communing of the soul with God, will the Catholic, Actionist find the strength and the solace he needs in the battle of life. Steeped in the burning bush of prayer, his zeal will daily become more ardent and more enterprising.

As I have already mentioned, Catholic Action in Cuba has been operating since 1928. Much work has been done; much more remains to be done. The archenemy of mankind has vowed to bring about the complete destruction of the religious spirit. We must not only construct, but we must also destroy the ideas of neo-paganism, materialism, free-masonry, communism.

Armies of dauntless young apostles are needed for this tremendous task. Instinctively, my thoughts turn to you, dear Catholic Actionists of Granby. The field of action you would find here, would satisfy your wildest ambitions to do great things for God and neighbor. You enjoy struggling and wrestling with difficulties. Plenty of them you would encounter in Cuba. You love joy, and cheerfulness, and song. Cubans are a naturally happy people who love to sing. You love Love with a capital L. It would be granted you to sow it here to your heart's content.

Come to Cuba! Souls are calling! Will you turn from their entreaties?



FILIPINO

CRUSADERS

Sister MARIE ALBERTINE(1), M.I.C.

Nestor waylaid me as I prepared to enter the classroom where the Crusade meeting was to be held.

"Madre," he made an evident but futile attempt at nonchalant poise, "I'm not going to be a Crusader any longer."

"Come, Nestor", I replied, half pushing him into the room. "We'll discuss matters when the meeting is over."

Nestor was an ace Crusader and I did not intend to lose him if it could be helped. Chasing away the anxious thoughts that scurried through my brain, I recited the opening prayer and sat down to conduct the usual weekly meeting. The ten alert members of my unit made things hum as was their habit, all except Nestor who sat sullenly apart.

For two years past, the boy had taken an active interest in the Crusade. As a plain "private" he had been noted for his pleasant, obliging manners, his unvarying punctuality to every reunion. This year he had been promoted "apostle." When the doctrine courses for public school students were initiated, Nestor had recruited a group of eleven fifth graders whom he had brought in triumph to the Academy. Every Sunday, at three p.m. he unfailingly showed up with his catechism in hand, ready to coach his chosen group in Christian doctrine.

1. Jacqueline Blondin, Longueuil.

How eagerly his pupils responded to his zeal! And now, this future leader in Catholic Action was contemplating desertion. What could have come over him, I wondered.

Half an hour later, I had the key to the enigma. Nestor was simply going through a period of despondency and he felt like throwing everything overboard and letting his little boat sail at random on the sea of life. He tried to make me see his reasons.

"Nestor", I suggested, "Wait a few days before doing anything drastic. Go to communion tomorrow and when Jesus rests within your heart, talk things over with Him. Ask Him whether He approves your desertion of His beloved Crusade."

The very next day a repentant Nestor knocked at my office door. "Madre, I've made up my mind to remain a Crusader."

One month went by and Nestor's group of pupils with that of his friend Arturo, were ready to make their First Holy Communion. It did my heart good to see how carefully these two apostles had prepared their young classmates for the reception of the Sacraments. On the morning of the great day, as Mass was about to begin and these two particular groups were not yet in sight, I went out to reconnoiter. In a retired corner of the yard, I found the children kneeling and repeating after their ardent leaders, fervent acts of desire and of love in preparation for Jesus' first visit.

Nestor was almost as happy as the little ones whose red-letter day it was. The amateur photo taken on this happy occasion will give you an idea of their happiness.

Pervent Eucharistic Crusaders, Mati, Davao.



IRENE PAULIN ALEJANDR LAURENTIN

Sister MARIE PAULE(1), M.I.C.

HOPE OF THE FUTURE

Some time ago, Sr.St. Edmund(2) introduced you to her Filipino Magi, Nestor, Nicanor, and Victor, the irrepressible Las Pinas trio. Today I would like you to meet my quatuor of Altar Boys, Paulino, Ireneo, Laurentino, Alejandro, with the heads of cherubs and the seven imps of mischief twinkling in their brown eyes! No golden Magi these four, but red-blooded boys steeped in genuine quicksilver. If you have any doubts just watch them serving mass.

Contrary to the laudable habits of ordinary Altar Boys all over, the members of my quatuor are on time, even ahead of time, most of the time. These bundles of energy are apparently convinced that the very best preparation for serving at the altar of the Lord is to toboggan down the stairs two or three times, or raise a general rumpus in the sacristy beforehand. Can they help it if the sacristan, Sister Marie Auguste(3), suffers a few distractions in her morning meditation?

When they ring the doorbell before Mass, they are as trim as new candles and very neat, but as they leap about the sacristy after Mass their general appearance is more or less altered. Epic struggles with surplices and cassocks have left them with tousled hair; candles held askew have rivuleted down freshly-pressed kaki trousers; wine stains polka-dot clean white blouses. Between the vestibule and the altar, they manage to settle more than one brotherly feud where doughty fists and sturdily shod feet come into play. In a family of six brothers, personal rights must be asserted. It is not always the same fellow's turn to transfer the missal, carry the cruets, ring the bell, or hold the paten for communion.

1. Marie Paule Larocque, Montreal.

2. Irma de LaDurantaye, Cap St. Ignace.

3. Blanche Gerin, Coaticook.

After allowing the Albano brothers to carry on a collective service for a while, I decided that Chaplain and Sisters alike had had more than their quota of distractions during the Holy Sacrifice. My quatuor of acolytes received warning that they would henceforth serve one at a time and each in turn. I am still wondering about the wisdom of such a decision. Bright and early, on the following mornings, the brothers who were not on duty at the altar scampered into the chapel and made a beeline for the front bench. Three or four pals accompanied them. At the least hesitation on the server's part, all would leap to the breach in chorus and rattle off the unsaid word or words; when the poor lad suffered such a minor contretemps as tripping or spilling the wine or water, they would noisily cough to call the world to notice. If the Sisters in the rear had not objected in a forcible manner they would not have been above sprinting over the altar rail to set the missal at the right slant! Laurentino especially was in for the worst time when his turn came to serve at the altar. After three days of trial, I invited his over-zealous brothers

THE ALBANO QUATUOR



to kneel in the last bench so that their little brother could have a chance. In spite of his *Confiteor short-cuts* he has lately become a dependable acolyte who can even supply a bright Deo Gratias occasionally forgotten by his elders when their turn comes to serve Mass.

At the time when the accompanying photo was taken, Paulino, the eldest sitting on the left, had made up his mind to become a pirate; Ireneo, second in line, dreamed of being an Indian; Larry aspired to be a cowboy; Alejandro modestly hoped to attain the rank of a Bishop. Looking at the last-named we sometimes muse. "What will this child become?" Time will tell for at present he is yet a first grader. Cowboys and their doings hold irresistible appeal for Larry who delights wearing a huge sombrero and wielding a lasso during recess, but until he attains his ideal of owning a ranch, a lot remains to be done if he is to make the grades. Ireneo who with his older brother Paulino has just finished grammar school is supposed to study medicine and follow in his honorable father's footsteps. What a splendid Catholic family are the Albanos! Benefactors of our Academy, these noble parents after raising a family of eight sturdy children, have adopted eight more whom they want to educate as their own. On Paulino, their eldest, rest their fondest hopes. The lines that follow will help you strike up acquaintance with this manly Filipino boy.

This year, St. Tarcisius' League has been organized at the Academy, under the direction of S. Teresa of the Holy Face⁽¹⁾. Paulino was elected as first President. On the following Saturday I noticed the boy coming in wearing his Sunday best. "What's up?" I teasingly inquired, "Are you going to a wedding? Or perhaps to call on the Mayor?" Paulino blushed as he replied, "Sister, I just wanted to look my best because I have decided to make a speech to thank my classmates for electing me as President." Such behavior was too good to last.

On the twenty-fifth of the month, as the younger children were preparing to lay their sheafs of sacrifices at the foot of a statue of the Divine Child, someone called me to take a look outside. There, riding on the garden fence, I saw a baker's dozen of our older boys industriously breaking off branches of the *gumamelas*, large red and yellow flowers. The leader of the gang was none other than the President of the League. His face was the color of a red *gumamela* as I made him march his thieving unit through the corridor where Sister Superior usually stood at this hour of the day; he tried to mumble an excuse. "We wanted the flowers for the statue of the Holy Child." "If that is the case," I answered, "Carry them right away to the kindergarten; the little ones will do their own offering." The *gumamelas* have since suffered no further depredations.

Once during a brisk game of basket ball, I was informed, "Sister, there is a big boy out in the yard wearing the minimum of clothing. Should he be allowed with our pupils?" Looking out of the window I descried a lad

1. Therese LeBlanc, Moncton, N.B.

wearing red shorts and looking suspiciously like Paulino. I had him called and he came running when told that Sister wanted him. I only had to look him up and down. Murmuring an apology and a "Yes, yes, Sister," he rushed to rescue his kaki trousers spread out on the trunk of a cocoanut tree. As he was putting them on, however, the ball whizzed over his head; what boy could resist such a challenge? The garment was dropped halfway, while two sturdy brown arms shot out to catch the flying missile. Everybody laughed when the hero got caught in his trousers as he stumbled forward forgetting all about them.

As I write, from my office I can hear the Tarcisian's Choir rehearsing hymns for the First Friday. Can those boys sing! High and clear, above all the other boyish voices, rises the voice of Paulino, the President, Paulino the leader. Keep on being the wide-awake, enthusiastic lad that you are, dear boy! You will need every ounce of your wonderful energy in the life that lies ahead. Souls you will win who will share your grand ideal of making your country, *the most catholic country of all the Orient*, a beacon light to the benighted peoples of Asia, weary of marching to the Red Star's baleful glare.



Souls by the hundreds are being lost while we live our comfortable lives, heedless, of the soul tragedies about us. This is not Christian charity. You will have this genuine charity only when you understand that as long as there remains one single soul to be rescued, one single human misery to be relieved, you have no right to seek comfort and repose.

Archbishop P. E. Leger



Why Rush ?

Recently a very sick young woman came to Holy Family Dispensary. She was accompanied by about half her village and they all camped outside, waiting anxiously for her recovery. When it was announced that she was well enough to go home, a member of the family arranged for a big lorry to take everyone at once. There were handshakes and "thank yous" and good-byes before the old lorry was given a running push-off, its sides bulging.

As Sr. Mary Paula turned to re-enter the house, she almost stumbled over the patient sitting on the dispensary steps. "Mame!!! Didn't you go?" — "No, Sistah there wasn't room for me. I'm waiting for the second trip!"

Sr. M. Raphael, S.C.M.M.,

Berekum, West Africa



Convent of the MISSIONARY SISTERS of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION Wakamatsu, Japan.
Standing in the rear are, Sr. of the Holy Name of Mary, (Rita Blais, Thetford Mines), English Teacher;
Sr. Marie Leonise (Rachel Gerin, Coaticook) Superior;
Sr. St. Adeline (Juliette Villeneuve, Quebec), Commercial Course Teacher.

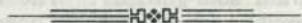
BON MATSURI

Sister St. ADELINE(1), M.I.C.

The dead are remembered here not in November but in the middle of August. According to ancient Japanese lore, the spirits of the ancestors then reintegrate their former haunts, to ascertain whether their descendants faithfully keep their memory. Early on the morning of August 13, the pagans set out for the cemeteries to invite the souls of the departed home for the Bon Festival. Lighted lanterns and fragrant flowers deck the houses. Delicious *go chiso* (banquets) are prepared where chiefly figure the favorite dishes of those who once lived within these walls. During three whole days, elaborate celebrations are held; some of the living eat so much in honor of the dead, that they risk joining them in the Valley of the Shadow.

All through the nights of the Bon Festival, one can hear the plaintive melody of the flute, or the staccato beating of the prayer drums. Even the darkest alleys are made bright with the soft mellow light diffused by myriad lanterns hanging in all the doorways. Not even the meanest hovels are without these spirit-beckoning lights. In the small wee hours of August 15, family processions are organized to escort the spirits back to the cemetery: flowers, incense, and food are placed on the graves. With profound salutations and respectful greetings, the living take leave of those who have gone on before.

How sad is the thought that all these exterior demonstrations are of little avail to the souls of those who have left for their eternal dwelling place. Help us to pray that truth may shine in all its brightness upon these deluded peoples. May the Japanese learn to really honor and succor their dear departed ones, in the truly effective Christian way.



BEANS FOR LUEK

Sister FRANCES of CARMEL(2), M.I.C.

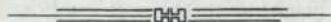
Lives there a single human being who does not crave happiness? The pagans who surround us have strange ways of trying to capture this elusive little fairy called joy.

Here is a custom particular to this ancient city of Wakamatsu (young pine). On a certain winter evening, Mamma cooks a specially appetizing

1. Juliette Villeneuve, Quebec.

2. Madeleine Coursol, Montreal.

pink rice with delicious beans to enhance its flavor. After supper, all the members of the family hold a meeting to chase the mischief-making devil away. The most important actor in this family sketch is the eldest son. To him is devolved the honor of scattering beans, "*mame maki*," in the four corners of the home while reciting the traditional, pious formula. After the beans have thus been scattered, each member of the family religiously picks up a number of these same beans corresponding to the number of his years; these tokens of happiness are then placed in a bag held open by the eldest son. When all the beans have been picked up, the bag is tied, and an outdoor procession takes place. Holding the precious bag the eldest son leads the way until a suitable place is found to bury it in the snow. Crossroads are considered lucky places for such "burials." The oftener these magic beans will be crushed under foot, the greater the happiness for the entire family circle. So believe the good people of Wakamatsu.



WHEN THEY LEAVE

Sister of THE HOLY NAME of MARY(1), M.I.C.

We cannot help feeling sad when our graduates of the English and Commercial Courses leave us definitely. Will the precious seed of Faith ever germinate in these youthful soul-gardens? The majority of these lovely and lovable girls must forcibly return to their pagan milieu, only too often hostile to the Catholic Church.

For a chosen few, their passage in our school has been a means of entering into their rightful heritage as children of God; others have learnt at least Christian principles and the rudiments of Catholic doctrine; but some there are for whom the light has not yet dawned. Confidentially, Miss Ishodo admitted to me the other day, "Sister, you know that I'm not a Catholic. I do not believe in God and I do not know the why and wherefore of my existence. Sometimes, I half envy those who do believe. They have at least an aim in life while I..." she left off sadly not daring to voice her inmost thoughts.

May our dear Lady guide this soul and all others to Jesus, the only Way that leads to life eternal.

1. Rita Blais, Thetford Mines.

HAITIAN

LANDSCAPES

Roche a Bateau, Sept. 20, 1952

Dear Benefactors,

For many years, while I worked in your midst as propagator of our missionary review, *The Precursor*, it was my privilege to benefit by your ever-recurring generosity. More than once, I was deeply touched by your many acts of genuine and disinterested charity towards the poorest of the poor — the non-Christians. I feel the need of thanking you once again in my own name and in the name of all our apostolic laborers for the good you so unsumingly accomplish. Indeed, to me, you are all angels unawares! We missionaries on the field would be helpless if we were deprived of your constant co-operation in our apostolate.

At Roche a Bateau, we conduct a school and a dispensary for the poor. Our two hundred and fifteen pupils, boys and girls, are the pride and joy of our hearts. The greater number keep on studying until they obtain their certificate. Their influence in the world is that of staunch apostles eager to spread, far and wide, the good teachings they have learnt at school. Meet Prelias, a wholehearted lay missionary. Thanks to his unflagging zeal, thirty-two children have been prepared for Confirmation, and seventeen made ready for their First Holy Communion; he has also arranged the rehabilitation of more than one marriage.

We are often witnesses to the marvels wrought by God's grace in souls of goodwill. Twelve-year-old Carmen belongs to a destitute family. In order to buy the books she needs, she bravely does without any breakfast at all. When she first entered our classes, this girl was of a difficult character, rendered still worse by an unhappy home life. Now that she knows how to pray, her dispositions have greatly changed for the better. Our Lady, whom she loves tenderly, has taken the child to her heart. Whenever flashes of her old temper threaten to flare up we need only say, "Carmen, try to please Our Blessed Mother"! She immediately calms down and readily forgives injuries.

These consoling results are due to your prayers, dear parents, benefactors, and friends. Thanks a million times and may God reward you according to His unfailing promises.

Your happy missionary,

Sister St. Bibiane⁽¹⁾, M.I.C.

1. Bibiane Filteau, Ste Emilie de Lotbiniere.

The Martyr of Futuna

By Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

By the evening of May fifth, all was ready for the Mass of the following day, feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph. In his journal Father Chanel wrote on the sixth, "I had the consolation of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the first time in this part of the island. The king's house was my church. The king was so much pleased that he invited all the people of the valley to be present. I was delighted with the silence that reigned during the whole of the Divine Sacrifice. There was no sound except the crying of the little children — which mattered little as I had no other choir!"

He had often deplored the unfair bargains made between the captains of vessels which stopped at the island and the unsophisticated natives; and writing to Father Bataillon on the twenty-second of May, he spoke sadly of the coming of an English whaler, the *Matilda*: "My poor people gave away, rather than sold, their goods. Many cocoanuts were exchanged for one pipe. Three big fat hogs and a hundred yams for a gun. I am happy to say they bought only one. I should be very sorry to see fire-arms and powder brought here. Our new-made peace would not last long.

"We are living in the king's house," he continued, "but many marriage feasts have kept His Majesty away most of the time. I do not know how long this will last. There are always a good many people about us and we can do very little work. I cannot say Mass as often as I wish. I envy you the privacy of your house. God's will be done!

"I have not yet had the consolation of making any converts. After a dance in one of Niuliki's houses, chief Tolomea made an address to the people in which he said that the islands of Vavao, Haapi, Tonga, and many others which he mentioned have become Christian; Wallis and Futuna alone still hold to the old religion. The king of Wallis, Lavelua, had charged him to say to Niuliki that it would be unwise of these two islands to follow the example of the rest. I hear that the people agreed with him in this, as in everything else that he said. Whatever comes I ask only to know the language. God will do the rest."

Two days later, on Ascension Thursday, there was hardly any one present when he began his Mass, but a number of people came to watch before it was finished. "After Mass, we sang the *Laudate Dominum* and the *Regina Celi*, which were subjects of conversation for the remainder of the day.⁽¹⁾ Emboldened by this little success, on the vigil of Pentecost he spread the word, through all the adjoining valleys, that on the following day he would celebrate a great feast. He rose early, but the natives were early, too, and watched him and Brother Mary Nizier make the necessary preparations for the Holy Sacrifice. "As we put each thing in place there were exclamations of

1. Journal, May 24, 1838.

admiration on all sides. The king who had just gone out made haste to return. Fathers, mothers, and children crowded around us, all in a good humor. As soon as we began the *Veni Creator* there was absolute silence, and the people continued to be quiet and attentive throughout the whole of High Mass and while we sang the *Laudate Dominum* and the *Regina Celi*. We left the altar as it was for a little while to satisfy the natives, who had never seen anything like it and would have enjoyed looking at it all day long. It is the Crucifix that always impresses them most deeply.⁽¹⁾ While the *Veni Creator* was being sung a violent storm broke over the island, threatening to overturn the king's house. "I suppose that was the 'mighty wind' of Pentecost," Father Chanel said smilingly to Brother Mary Nizier, after the people had gone.

The king was delighted with all that Father Chanel did on Pentecost Sunday; in fact, he had lavished smiles and favors upon him ever since his return from Wallis and would gladly have granted his request for a cabin of his own if the natives had not been too busy to think of building one. He offered him a certain part of his own house which could be partitioned off from the rest, indicating exactly how much space he might have. Father Chanel accepted this offer gratefully and arranged his new home as quickly as possible. In it he had the quiet necessary for his prayers and his studies and the joy of saying Mass nearly every day.

He hung several large pictures on the walls of this room. The natives, who came in ever growing crowds to see his quarters, looked with awe and admiration at them, marvelling over the skill of the white people. It was an *Ecce Homo* which interested them most. Their curiosity to see a lamp burn attracted the children and even many grown people, and all these visits had a salutary influence. Father Chanel wrote in his journal, "Some who have seen us make the Sign of the Cross try to imitate us. A woman, related to the king, came to me and asked if she might take the name Blessed Mary, which she had heard us give to the Blessed Virgin. I told her that the word Blessed is reserved for the Mary whose picture she had seen, but that she might be called Mary. She was quite satisfied." Two young girls, relatives of Thomas Boog's first wife, had the happy idea of giving Father Chanel a wreath of flowers for the picture of the Blessed Virgin. He noted with joy this first gift ever offered to Mary in Futuna.

It grieved him deeply that the natives did not always tell him when any one was ill. "Just as we were going to dinner I had the sorrow of learning of the death of a young man on the other side of the island. God's will be done! But such things as this make my heart bleed. I have it in my power to save these poor souls, and he snatches them from me!" And a few days later he wrote in his journal, "About three o'clock this morning I overheard them say that some one was ill and the gods were going to eat him, meaning that he would die. I went at once to see him. Before I reached the end of the valley I heard cries and sobs that startled me. I hurried to the house and found there the body of a young man who had just died of consumption. He had been ill for two months and I had not known it." Many times he had occasion to make similar entries in his journal, though he was sometimes able to baptize dying children and even adults.

(To be continued)

1. Journal, June 3, 1838.

A native congregation, the first in northern Nyassa, was founded at Katete, one year ago. In these parts, where hostility to the religious ideal is rife even among our Christian families, this is nothing short of a miracle of grace. Marriage, in Nyasaland, is considered the only vocation open to women. Local prejudices notwithstanding, five fervent aspirants have gathered to form the nucleus of the Society *Wasisters wa Rozario Lituwa*, Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary. From the hands of Msgr. St. Denis, these five pioneers have received the royal blue habit and the medal which is to be their distinctive religious badge. The simple, stirring ceremony took place in our convent chapel. Except Anastazia, each girl in this group was privileged to offer her Lord, on this day of her initial oblation, rich presents of persecutions and trials suffered for His dear sake. Anastazia, however, was not to be left entirely empty-handed as she dedicated her young life to the divine Bridegroom. Her trials were to be of another kind. Two weeks after she had exchanged her home in Mzambazi, for our convent in Katete, she became ill with a virulent eczema which caused her excruciating pain. For days she could hardly open her eyes or her mouth. She had great difficulty in swallowing even a particle of the Host, at Holy Communion. Throughout her illness, however, she kept constantly cheerful and courageous; day and night her Rosary beads journeyed through her swollen fingers. One day she remarked, "Sister, the devil is furious because I want to enter the convent. Never mind — he won't be allowed to win. I feel sure that Our Blessed Mother will cure me and that I will be able to consecrate myself to God's service." Anastazia's faith won the day. She completely recovered from her illness and a bright future beckoned when another mishap came to try her mettle. Ten days before the Feast of Our Lady's Presentation, the aspirants were allowed to return to their home villages for the last time. Anastazia left for Mzambazi on the Mission lorry; she was to return

REMITTANCE

via the same route, on November 17 at the latest. November 18 dawned and neither Anastazia nor the lorry showed up at Katete. Three more days went by, and still we were left without any news of the girl. She later told us how she had wept on November 21, at the thought that her companions would take the holy habit in her absence. As the days went by and no lorry rumbled along the highway, Anastazia decided to walk the distance of 100 miles separating Mzambazi from Katete, although Sr. St. Yves⁽¹⁾ advised her to wait a few more days. On November 26, she left, walking the 17 miles from the Mission compound to the highway. There, she was lucky enough to meet the mail service car on which she traveled for a distance of over eighty miles. At last, after stopping at several outposts to deliver mail, Anastazia reached the last 10 miles that were still to be covered before Katete; she walked the rest of the way, arriving at the convent in the evening of November 29, after a voluntary fast of three days. If she had asked for

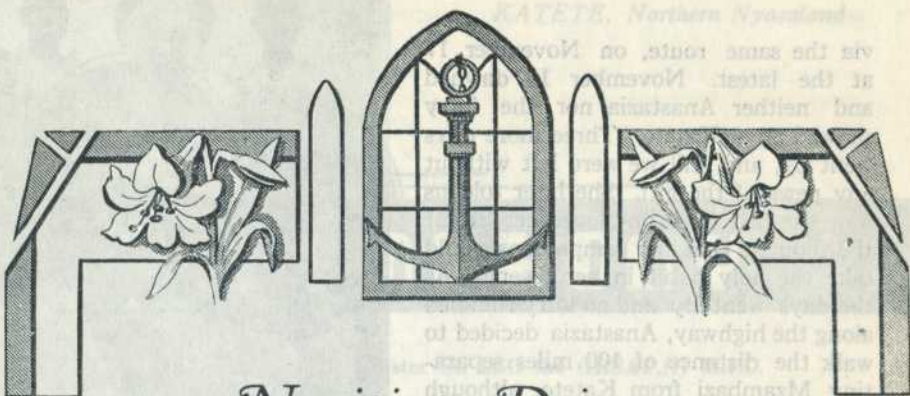
food along the way, she would certainly not have gone hungry for the Africans never refuse the *sima* to travelers. She preferred to offer this sacrifice to make sure of her perseverance. On November 30, Msgr. St. Denis clothed Anastazia in the blue liveries of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Her companions rejoiced, for her absence on the feast of the Presentation had saddened them all.

Please pray for these young girls, the flower of African womanhood, that they may be true to the end. Dayi, the pearl of my dispensary, also wants to don the blue habit. Although she had been a catechumen since 1945, she was baptized only last August. Her father, a fanatic minister of the Free Church, had always refused to give his consent. What would he say if he knew Dayi now wants to become a nun? I am afraid his words would become unprintable; but Dayi will never give in, I know for, as she often says, "God comes before my father."



*Sr. Madeleine Marie
(Madeleine Loranger, Westmount)
With the First Native Postulants
of our Katete Mission.*

1. Yvette Ricard, Grand'Mere, P. Q.



Novitiate Doings

CEREMONY OF INVESTITURE AND OF PERPETUAL VOWS

Presided by His Excellency Most Rev. A. Cousineau, Coadjutor Bishop of Cap Haitien, our annual feast of August 5, was this year highlighted by the presence of His Excellency Most Rev. Alberto Martin, Bishop of Matanzas, Cuba, and of numerous members of the clergy.

His Excellency Most Rev. Albert Cousineau delivered a stirring allocution, filled with supernatural consolations for the parents whose day of sacrifice had come. "God bless you, Christian parents, you who are today offering yourselves with your children, like Mary and John at the foot of the Cross. Already you have sampled the joy of sacrifice; you have somehow had a foretaste of the reward to come; you also have a right to the apostle's crown which will one day circle the heads of your missionary daughters."

Turning to the day's elect, His Excellency remarked that this, the feast of their oblation to the Lord, brought them at once sorrow and happiness. Sorrow at having to say to their beloved parents, "I no longer belong to you, but to God alone"; sorrow at the continual renunciation involved by the common life; sorrow deep-felt and harrowing at the dearth of apostolic laborers and the consequent loss of souls; sorrow because Christ's kingdom has not yet come to heathendom.

"I would like to assure you," went on the eloquent preacher "that sorrows will fill your life, for then you would feel that you were indeed proving your love in a practical way; but Jesus Himself would object as He did one day in favor of a soul submerged in anguish and severely rebuked by her spiritual director. The compassionate Savior let down one of His arms nailed to the crucifix and thus upbraided the latter, 'Ah, you do not know what I have suffered for the sake of this soul! You did not give up your life as I did for its salvation!' Our Lord might reprove me also saying, 'Do you not know

that I have taken upon myself all sorrows and sufferings so as to leave only happiness to the souls who follow more closely in my footsteps?' Joys you will have, dear missionary Sisters. Christ promised you the hundredfold in His Gospel; the hundredfold and life eternal . . .

"Your hundredfold will especially be found in your religious family, dear Novices, and you professed Sisters who have made your final oblation. Your Superiors will surround you with tender, motherly solicitude. You will be privileged to live with an elite, from a spiritual and intellectual point of view. What is the goal of every member of your religious family? To understand better and put more fully into practice, the Gospel message of love. The hundredfold you will also enjoy in the frequent participation in the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, and in the facility to lead a life of true intimacy with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Even here below, you will enjoy the hundredfold promised you in the very measure of your faithfulness to your religious ideal. Who could fail to be thrilled at God's tender appellations of the religious soul? He calls you His elect, His sister, His bride, His beloved. He allows you to do your share in the noblest of all works, the saving of immortal souls. It has been affirmed that St. Teresa of the Child Jesus converted more souls in the shadow of her cloister, than many missionaries active on the field of foreign missions. On our part, we assert that the prayer and love informing our least actions are the best means of winning the world for the Sacred Heart."

Were invested with the Marian liveries: Miss Teresa Trujillo, Matanzas, Cuba, (Sr. Marie Teresa of Jesus); Miss Noella Frechette, Quebec, (Sr. Marie Noella); Miss Lorraine Levesque, Limoilou, (Sr. Alain de la Roche); Miss Suzanne Labelle, Hull, (Sr. St. Mary); Miss Estelle Messier, St. Charles sur Richelieu, (Sr. Ann of the Presentation); Miss Gisele Picard, Village des Aulnais de L'Islet, (Sr. Gisele of the Sacred Heart); Miss Virginie Lapierre, Sainte Marie de Beauce, (Sr. Mary of the Visitation); Miss Pierrette Quevillon, Montreal, (Sr. Frances of Chantal); Miss Doris Trottier, Notre Dame du Ham, (Sr. Blanche Helene); Miss Gabrielle Fontaine, Granby, (Sr. St. Donat); Miss Yvonne Casault, Montmagny, (Sr. Claude of Jesus).

Pronounced their perpetual vows: Sr. Louis d'Anjou, (Francoise Desilets, St. Clement de Viauville); Sr. Marie Laurentia, (Yvette Belanger, Ottawa); Sr. St. Aurelie (Germaine Roy, Nicolet); Sr. St. Hubert, (Gertrude Pare, Chateauguay); Sr. St. Jerome (Therese Renaud, Loretteville); Sr. Marie Herman, (Claire Chapdelaine, Sorel); Sr. St. Daniel, (Celine Bourbeau, Longueuil); Sr. St. Elias, (Therese Godbout, Grand Sault, N. B.); Sr. St. Bonaventure, (Hedwidge Lapierre, St. Marie de Beauce); Sr. St. Athanase, (Therese Bergeron, St. Sophie de Megantic); Sr. Marie Sylvia, (Gisele Ville-mure, Yamachiche); Sr. St. Alberic, (Genevieve Paquin, Montreal); Sr. St. Fabien, (Jacqueline Michaud, Rougemont); Sr. St. Fernand, (Fernande Gouge, Quebec).

Happy Postulants.

Monks

that I have taken upon myself all sorrow and suffering so as to leave only

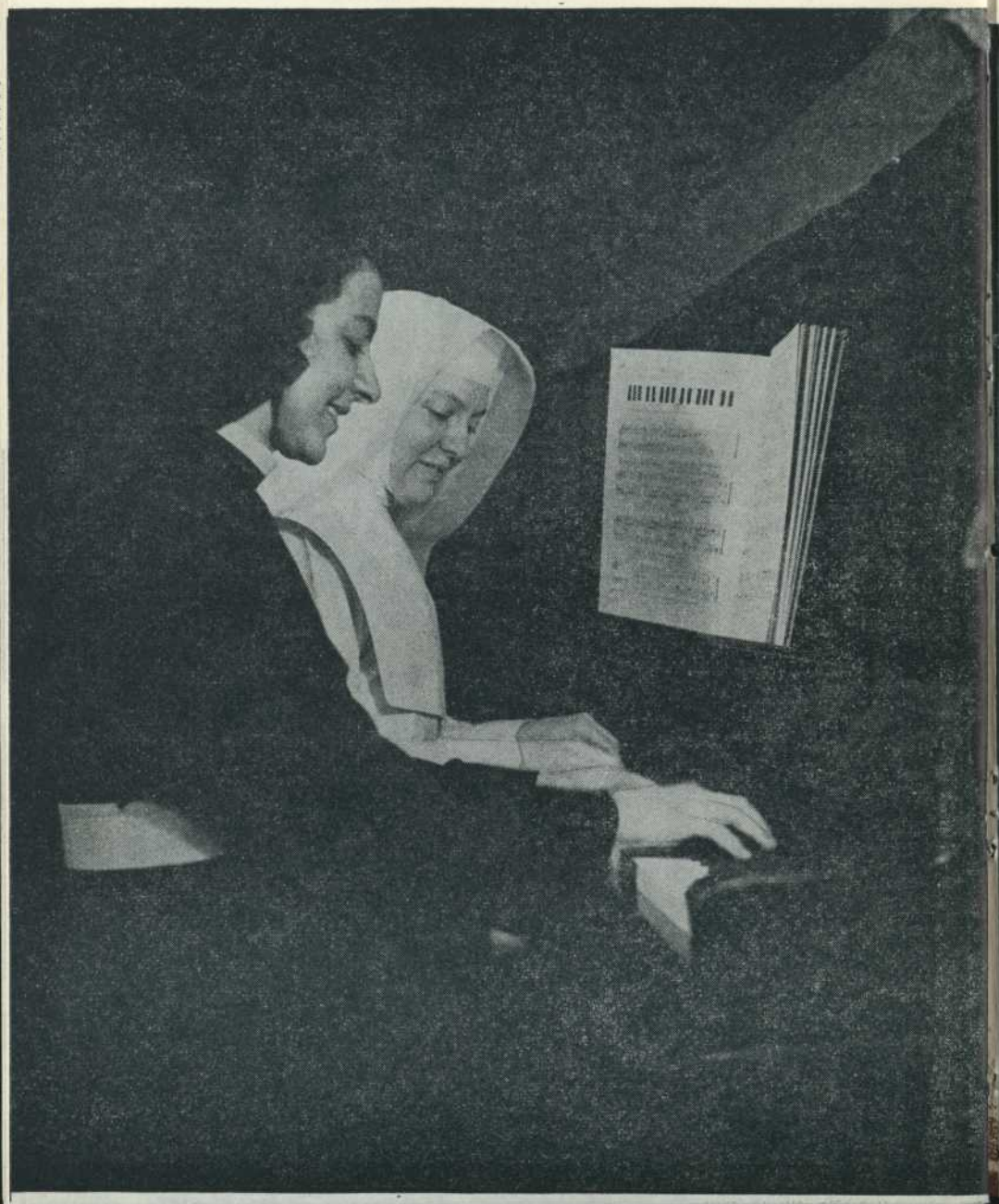


What happiness for the Novices to read the Sacred Scriptures

At the Novitiate much time is given to study.



"Music hath charms" at the Novitiate also.



*What happiness for the Novice to sew the Marian liveries
she will don on her day of days!*



Our Beloved Dead



Rev. Gerard Lambert, Pont Viau Foreign Missions;
 Rev. Sisters Marie Cyprien and Marie Joseph Albert,
 Sisters of St. Ann, **Montreal**; Mr. J. Oselias Laporte,
St. Gabriel of Brandon, father of Sr. Clare of the Blessed
 Sacrament; Mrs. A. Derome, **Montreal**, mother of Sr.
 Frances of Rome; Mr. Anthime Allaire, **Montreal**, brother
 of Sr. Marie Majella; Mr. Henry Coulombe, **Pointe Claire**,
 brother of Sr. St. Justinian; Mr. A. Dupont, **Montreal**,
 grand father of Sr. Marie Lydia; Mrs. Mary B. Coady,
Verdun; Miss Rose O'Boyle, **Kemptville, Ont.**; Mr. Mc
 Ihhone, **Cote des Neiges**; Mrs. Ed. Sheehan, Mrs. C.
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 C. B. Pratte, Mrs. Andre Blanchard, Mrs. Charles
 Gravel, Mr. Pierre Boucher, Mrs. J. O. Gagnon, Mrs. J.
 Duranleau, Mr. Henry Jany, Mr. Stanislas Desjardins,
 Mr. Georges Noel, Mr. A. Leveille, Mrs. Georges Leblanc,
 Mrs. Sylvio Rouleau, Mrs. Adelard Boucher, Mr. Ed. Baillargeon,
 Mr. E. Lalonde, Mr. Albert Lauziere, Mr. Amedee Lecavalier, Mrs.
 Alfred Champagne, Mr. Arthur Prince, Mrs. J. N. Chabot, Mrs. Louis Tetreault,
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When you are blue or discouraged, think of the missionaries, and try to help them. One of the best ways of lessening our own sorrows is to share in the anxieties and sorrows of others, and to help relieve them.

MASS is celebrated every week in the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for the deceased subscribers to **The Precursor** and all deceased benefactors.

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