

Happy New Year!

A black and white photograph of a woman in a kimono, holding a parasol. The parasol is open and has a decorative pattern. The woman is looking towards the camera. The background is a light, textured surface.

THE PRECURSOR

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† L. P. Whelan, V. G., Aux. Montreal

Nihil Obstat, Nov. 19, 1955.

J. Chartiez, cens. dep.



OUR WISHES

FOR THE NEW YEAR

At the close of Our Lady's Year, "The Precursor" can think of no better wish to formulate than that its light may continue to brighten every day of the coming year.

In our modern world there is a dearth of that human happiness woven of peace and security, of harmony and simple joys. But the Church unfolding the splendor of her universal Marian pageants has insistently reminded her children that Mary, the Mother of God, is more than ever, our life, our sweetness, our hope, the Cause of our joy. Amid the anguished suspense of impending world tragedy, she decrees the institution of a consoling liturgical feast testifying to Mary's blessed regality.

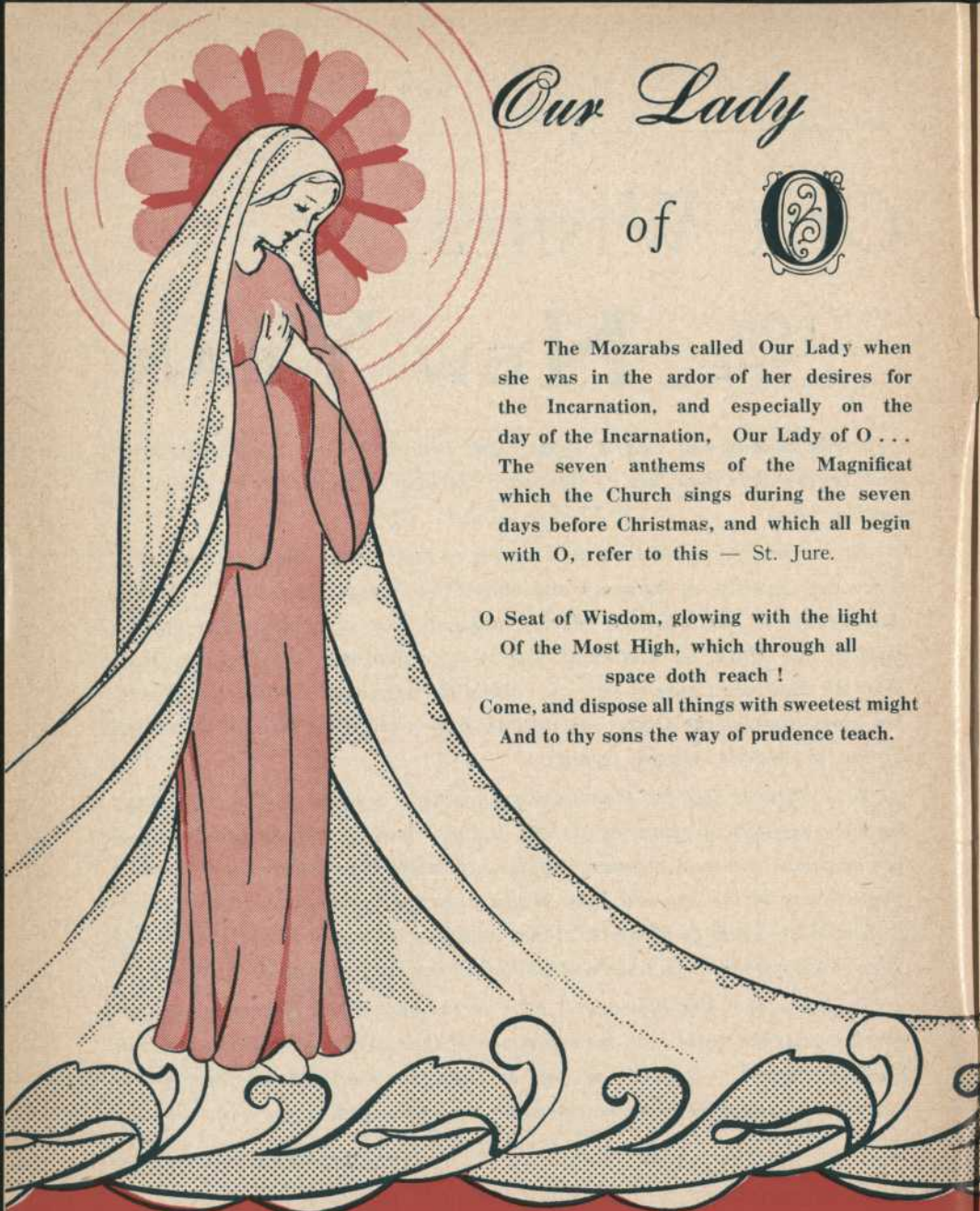
In a spirit of deep-felt thankfulness for benefits received, "The Precursor" sincerely desirous of obtaining for our friendly readers and the benefactors of our missions, the most genuine happiness possible here below, wishes them a greater share in the love and favor of our heavenly Queen and Mother, for according to St. Louis de Monfort "When once one has found Mary, and through Mary Jesus, and through Jesus God the Father, one has found all desirable good."

To this wish "The Precursor" adds on the part of our Sisters laboring in mission fields the world over, the expression of their profound gratitude for their generous succor — spiritual as well as material — and the assurance of a prayerful remembrance where remembrances are sacred.

THE PRECURSOR

Our Lady

of

A full-page illustration of the Virgin Mary, known as 'Our Lady'. She is depicted in a long, flowing red robe with a long, trailing white veil. Her hands are clasped in prayer, and she has a serene expression. Behind her head is a large, stylized red sunburst or flower-like halo. The background is a light beige color, and the bottom of the page features a decorative border of stylized, swirling waves in black and white.

The Mozarabs called Our Lady when she was in the ardor of her desires for the Incarnation, and especially on the day of the Incarnation, Our Lady of O . . . The seven anthems of the Magnificat which the Church sings during the seven days before Christmas, and which all begin with O, refer to this — St. Jure.

O Seat of Wisdom, glowing with the light
Of the Most High, which through all
space doth reach !

Come, and dispose all things with sweetest might
And to thy sons the way of prudence teach.

O Mother of the Chief of Israel's house,
Of the Adonai seen by Moses grave
In fiery bush and on the Mount of Laws !
Bid Him, with outstretch'd arm, His people save.

O Earth Immaculate, whence Jesse's Root
Brought forth its Flower, signal luminous !
To whom the Gentiles pray — while kings are mute —
Let Him delay not to deliver us.

O Keeper of thy father David's Key,
Which heaven's gate doth shat, at will or hope !
Guardian of Israel's sceptre, come and free
The imprison'd captive, flood death's gloom with hope.

O Morning Star, preceding with thy rays
The Orient brightness of Eternal Light,
Our Sun of Justice ! come, illumine the ways
Of all who sit in death and darkest night.

O Mother of the long-desired One,
The Gentiles' King, joining in God's good time
The two walls with His mighty corner-stone !
Pray Him save those He form'd from earthly slime.

O Mother of Emmanuel, our King !
Lawgiver, Expectation and Reward
Of Gentiles, and their Saviour, Mary, bring
The Son to save us: bring our God, our Lord.

Eleanor C. Donnelly.





Candles for Joseph



SR. JOSEPH OF THE HOLY FAMILY(1), M.I.C.

The door bell rang violently. On the threshold stood a pair of forlorn figures, a boy and a girl on whose peaked faces scurried a frightened look. As soon as he caught sight of me, the boy burst out in voluble Visayan, but the only words I could make out were "baby" and "come". I called two Junior Legionaries of Mary who spend most of their free time between classes at the Hall, to act as interpreters. "He says his mother wants somebody to come and baptize her baby," they reported. The boy could not tell whether his newborn brother was sick or not, but kept repeating, "Mamma wants you to come and baptize the baby."

1. Jeannette Delisle, Worcester, Mass.



Here was a splendid occasion for the Legionaries to take an active share in the apostolate, so after giving them the necessary instructions I sent them on their charitable errand. If they found the child in danger of death, they were to baptize him immediately; if not, they would report the case to Father Montenbeault, spiritual director of their Praesidium. Highly elated over their important mission, the two girls set out with the children as guides.

They soon arrived at the sick woman's one-room shack where poverty reigned supreme. In one corner she lay on the floor with her baby whose tiny limbs were twisted with convulsions. As the girls could not ascertain whether he was really going to die, they decided on getting a phone call through to Father Montenbeault. "Can you bring the baby over here?" the priest asked. "There are so many people at my office waiting for me, that I can barely suffice." The Legionaries replied that they would be over with the little one as soon as they could manage.

They wrapped the baby up in all the old rags they could find, called for a jeep, and in five minutes were at the rectory where their precious charge was baptized under the name of Joseph. As they rode back they thanked God who had granted them such a privilege.

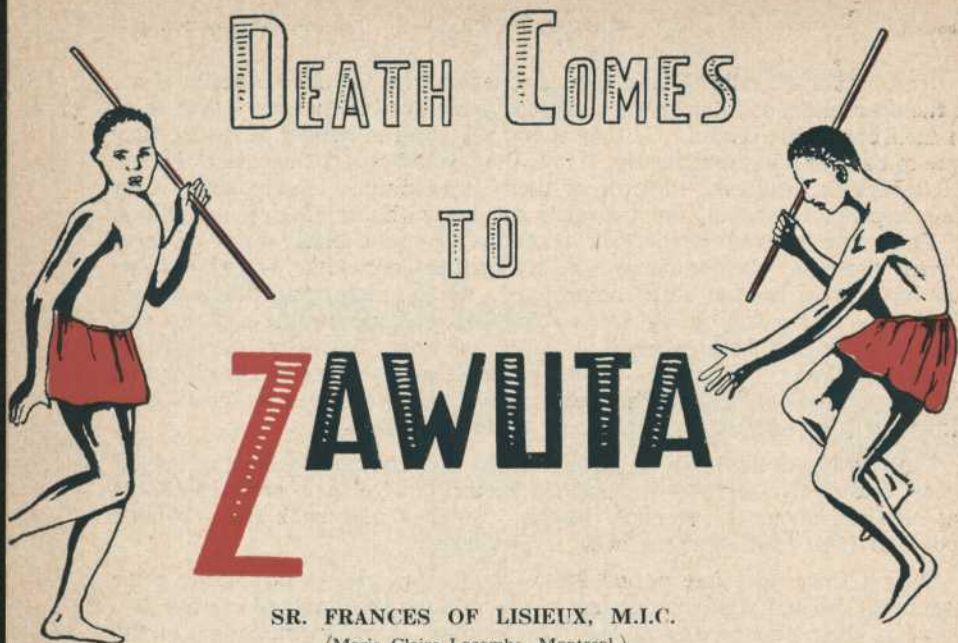
During their next free period after school, they ran in to inquire after Joseph but he had wisely made use of his visa for the Land of eternal joy. They did their best to console the poor mother. During the course of the conversation they found out that her marriage had never been blessed by the Church as her husband obstinately refused to give his consent. Our youthful apostles took note of this so as to later notify Senior members of the Legion who would have this matter taken care of. They afterwards called on the district leader to obtain help for this practically starving family. Finally, they decided to light some votive candles so as to solemnize their dear little Joseph's introduction into the celestial nurseries.



The death is recently recorded of Mr. Aw Boon Haw, of Hong Kong, a great Chinese philanthropist whose generosity succored numerous charitable undertakings.

To him our Society was indebted for the erection of Our Lady of Providence Foundling Home in Canton, whence our missionaries were expelled by the communists in 1951.

May the God of infinite mercy reward this noble friend of the poor who made it possible for our Sisters to introduce into Paradise, thousands of earth's unfortunate little castaways.



DEATH COMES TO ZAWUTA

SR. FRANCES OF LISIEUX, M.I.C.

(Marie Claire Lacombe, Montreal.)

With Sr. Jane of Lorraine recently arrived in Africa I have been on another round of the villages surrounding Pitara, to teach catechism to the children in view of preparing them for their First Holy Communion. I, moreover, conduct a modest dispensary, for there is no medical service in the bush.

On the very first day of my arrival, at Pitara, the people of the neighboring village came to ask that I visit Zawuta, their ailing chief. We found the patient squatting outside his hut in the sunshine. He appeared very happy to see us and tried to explain his sickness, but his tongue and throat were swollen in such a manner that he could hardly do more than mumble a few words. His symptoms pointed to advanced tuberculosis. Because he trusted the *Wamayi* (Sisters) he agreed to accept the medicine I offered much to the surprise of his familiars; for weeks he had refused all native remedies as he feared that his subjects might poison him. I must add that cases of poisoning are by no means rare in these parts. Before retiring I spoke a few words about God and His love for all His creatures. The old chief listened respectfully, and exclaimed, "Ah, I am so happy to have learned how to pray!"

On my way back to Pitara, after leaving Zawuta's hut, I felt perplexed. The man was so ill that he apparently would not last very long, but as he was a confirmed polygamist I would have to be very careful before bap-

tizing him. It would be wiser, I decided, to consult a missionary Father upon my return to the Mission Center.

The priest to whom I spoke about Zawuta, a few days later, advised, "I know that old rascal. At heart, he is a good fellow, so do not allow him to die without Baptism but you must make sure that he is really at the point of death. It would certainly be no easy task, if he recovered, to make him dismiss his many wives." Acting upon this advice, I often visited Zawuta and instructed him as well as his condition allowed.

One afternoon that I had stopped at this village to care for some persons who were dangerously ill, I suddenly made out some unusual commotion and shouting in the distance. The catechist who was helping me with the sick, cried out, "Zawuta is dead."

"How do you know?" I queried.

"Those shouts are lamentations used for a dead chief," replied the catechist.

I set out immediately for Zawuta's hut, praying all the while that he might still have a breath of life. As we neared his dwelling, the shouting and wailing grew so loud that Sr. Jane of Lorraine unfamiliar with such manifestations, grew perturbed: "Sister," she whispered, "Aren't you afraid that these people will accuse us of having poisoned the old chief?"



"Don't worry," I soothed, "This is merely their way of showing their sympathy to the family of the deceased."

When we arrived at the village compound, public desolation had reached its climax. Men, women, and children vied with one another in a series of blood-curdling howls and dismal wails. Some rolled about on the ground, gasping, choking, making strange guttural noises; others, their arms up-lifted, seemed writhing in intolerable pain. A group of official mourners had daubed their faces with red paint to simulate bleeding wounds inflicted out of sorrow. Others annoyed the children who had returned to their games, to make sure that they would not leave their elders bear the brunt of this laborious mourning display. Our arrival upon the scene stimulated the enthusiasm of all, causing them to shout all the louder. Ignorant of what should be the right procedure, we requested the catechist who accompanied us to present our sympathetic regrets to the people. Then, we entered the chief's hut. Zawuta, still warm and flexible, lay on a straw mat, his face uncovered, a woolen bonnet on his head. His wives hovered about his corpse, attentive and decently saddened; one held his mouth closed, another pulled at his shoulders, while a third chafed his hands. Seated with their back to the wall, a dozen relatives repeated on a high monotonous pitch, "*A Mdala Mafipa. A fumu yithu, Tikhalenga tikha* (our chief is dead, our lord is dead, we are left alone.)" In the midst of this uproariousness, the catechist tried to tell these people how extremely pained were the *Wamayi* (Sisters) because of the death of Zawuta, the great and beloved chief of this village. Then he added shouting to make himself heard above the din, "Did anyone here baptize Zawuta?" Without interrupting their mournful dirge, the assistants pointed to a Christian woman who came forward and explained timidly, "I thought it best to baptize him when I saw he had only a few minutes more to live." As if this detail were of supreme importance, the catechist gravely inquired, "What name did you give the chief?" "Ignasio."

Joy flooded our hearts, as we dropped to our knees beside the mortal remains of Zawuta who had become Ignasio for all eternity. How this old bush man must have blinked in speechless surprise when he found himself introduced into the Palace Beautiful! To whom is he indebted for the ultimate grace of regeneration? God alone knows, but I like to presume that some homefront missionary must, at the supreme moment of his passing, have offered some particularly painful sacrifice for the saving of pagan souls.



The idea of filial piety is so deep-rooted in the Chinese mind that when a Chinese becomes Christian he naturally would apply it to his relations with God. To him the imitation of Christ means the imitation of His supreme filial piety toward His Father Who is also our Father.

John C. H. Wu

CAP HAITIEN

Limbe's Hospital

SR. ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE(1), M.I.C.

In order to get some practical hints for the préparation of the course on child welfare which I was asked to teach at our Home Economics School, I decided to spend part of my holidays at the Limbe Hospital. To put it mildly, the equipment of this temporary establishment set up by Sr. St. John of the Redeemer(2) next door to her dispensary, is not quite up to the mark.

Just try to picture a large, ramshackle building with whitewashed walls, cement flooring, and a roof of corrugated iron — this is our Limbe hospital, sans electricity, sans running water, sans laundry facilities. Twice a day, some sturdy *mounes* (aides) fetch water from the neighboring river and pour it into vast reservoirs for daily uses. The laundry chores are assumed by a buxom, smiling Haitian woman who gaily carries on her head a huge bag of soiled clothing down to the river banks for a vigorous washing and rinsing in clear running water.

1. Laurence Tourigny, Becancourt.

2. Marcelle St. Arnaud, Ahuntsic.



The furniture consists of four venerable bedsteads, minus mattresses, piles of sleeping mats, a few baskets for the new-born babies, an ordinary table covered with a mat serving for surgery, and a few Haitian chairs. A corner of the room is reserved for our scanty medical supplies. In the one and only ward stands a cupboard where may be found a dozen sheets, some shirts, and a few — too few — layettes.

During my stay at Limbe Hospital, among other patients who endeared themselves to me were sixteen-year-old Virginie suffering from broncho pneumonia plus a serious infection; Elise who endured terrible pain from an abscess; Alice a miserable, unwed mother who lost her third child as she had lost the others soon after birth. But the one I found the most appealing because she was the most helpless, was tiny Yolande, a three-months-old baby with an ugly running sore covering most of her head. One of her ears had fallen off after a virulent infection treated with liberal applications of corn starch mixed with indigo! As she had received tayo gruel as sole nourishment since she was born her throat muscles seemed half paralyzed and she consequently had great difficulty in swallowing. Four times a day, it took me more than one hour getting her to absorb from two to three ounces of milk. Many other babies were brought in for treatment during my stay in Limbe, but unfortunately we could not hospitalize them all because of our inadequate installation.

The dispensary ministers to the needs of numerous patients from neighboring districts more especially of children suffering from avitaminosis. To provide for them all, we would need fabulous sums as their parents have no means of paying the expenses involved. If, when establishing your budget for the year, you happen to have a surplus, would it not be a worthy idea to put aside a certain sum to further the good work begun at Limbe? Even the most modest offerings will be received with overwhelming thankfulness. You might, for instance, contribute a sum towards the erection of a modern, airy building, or furnish the price of a bed or a baby crib, or again give a certain amount on the price of a Delco as candle lighting is not very convenient in a hospital. This alms offered with a view of relieving Christ's suffering members will at the same time help in the edification of your eternal mansion in the Father's Kingdom.

We are told that the Legion of Mary and its wonderful work was virtually unknown in Shizuoka. This is a province in Japan. However, when the Chinese Reds focused attention on the Legion of Mary by expelling missionaries who worked for the Legion, the Japanese province had to take notice. Mary, having been brought to their attention, they wanted to have a part in her work. They did, to the extent that, today, every parish in the province boasts of a Legion of Mary. And their main weapon of defense is Mary's Rosary.

Louise Parnell

Christmas Party

SR. ST. COLETTE(1), M.I.C.



Before eight on the day after Christmas, a noisy battalion of over one hundred and thirty children invaded the grounds and verandas surrounding our *convento*. Their bright eyes anxiously scanned the doors and windows in the hope

of glimpsing the figure of one or the other of the *Madres*. At a similar date last year, there had been a *reparto* (distribution of gifts). Would there be one again this year they wondered? Little brown hands held on tightly to the precious perforated cards testifying to unusual punctuality in attending the Saturday doctrine classes and Sunday Mass. So many perforations, so many chances! At long last, the eager watchers were rewarded by seeing a *Madre* setting the door ajar. A miniature tidal wave of excited youngsters immediately engulfed her, all trying to enter at once. But even on the day after Christmas, discipline is not to be flouted so the *Madre's* voice rose in calm protest, "Take your ranks, children dear. One by one . . . and no pushing, mind you! Once inside, sit down quietly on the benches placed on either side of the *patio*." Awed, solemn little faces looked up inquisitively but the smile lurking round the corners of the *Madre's* mouth belied the would-be sternness of her tones. There was no more cause to doubt; the *reparto* would indeed take place. "Ya esta!" (We're in luck) cried out the livelier ones. All that remained to do was to file in quietly, sit on the benches, and wait patiently for the arrival of the *Padre* in charge of the *centrale*.

The first grade classroom was gaily decked with red and green streamers, while all about, the walls were decorated with the gifts sent from Canada. There was an array of clothes in every shade of the rainbow: sweaters, dresses, skirts, socks and shoes. Over these, brimful of desire, wandered the children's sparkling brown eyes.

Some moments later, Rev. Henry Landry, p.m.e. entered the room greeted by loud clappings of hands. Each child came forward to exchange his card against a Christmas gift and a bag of candy. O generous friends and benefactors of our missions, how I wish you might have been here to watch the expression of joy playing over the faces of these poor youngsters! Their joy was occasionally punctuated by naive expressions such

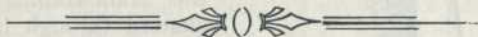
1. Lucienne Constantin, Montreal.

Sr. St. Mary Magdalen (Anne Marie Magnan, Berthier) giving out toys to Cuban children.



as, *O Madre esta, saya me encanta!* (Mother, this skirt really enchants me!) exclaimed a dainty little Miss; *Ay que preciosidad!* (What a treasure!) remarked a fastidious young lady. Two little sisters collided as they each examined their gifts in profound absorption. Seeing her younger sister's share, the older child forgot her own pleasure. "Darling", she cried out hugging the other close, "what perfectly beautiful things you got!" A tiny lad received his share, tears of thankfulness spilling from his eyes. He did not even think of tasting his sweets but ran straightway home to show his present to his mamma.

After taking care of our Mercedes flock, we prepared to visit the 150 children of the *campo* who also deserved to be rewarded for their assiduity to our doctrine classes. Boxes and parcels bulging with Christmas surprises were piled high into the *carro* put at our disposal by kind Mr. Matacena. All during the month of December the pupils of our Mercedes Colegio had spent their leisure hours repairing used toys to be distributed to their less fortunate comrades of Pedernalez, El Banco, La Pena, Cayo Palmar, and Nuevo Oriente. Accompanied by Rev. Henry Landry, our Sisters Marie Conrad, St. Evelyn, St. Andrew, and Marie Aurore set out for the joyful distribution of gifts. The *carro's* first stop was at Pedernalez where the children of two villages usually assemble. Among these also what happiness brought the generous gifts sent by our Canadian friends! Young ladies were delighted with gifts of shoes or handbags, while mothers with younger children kept on the lookout for baby's clothes. From Pedernalez, the *carro* went on to Nuevo Oriente. The demonstration here was a real triumph. A crowd of children from Cayo Palmar and La Pena joined those of the village in escorting the *Padre* and *Madres* to the hall where weekly doctrine lessons are taught. "God bless our kind Canadian friends," sang all these grateful ones. Yes, dear readers who have contributed in giving joy to the poor, God bless you we also repeat and Mary have you all in tender keeping.



After a long and fruitless effort to force something from him that would incriminate the Legion, the judges threatened the imprisoned Curia-President of the Legion of Mary at Taijuan, "Listen, if you don't confess the crimes of the Legion of Mary, we will have you shot!"

"I'm not afraid to die," said the President, Mr. Fan-lan-peng. "On the contrary, I welcome death and consider it a blessing, for it brings me freedom and everlasting union with my Lord and Savior."

Together with the secretary of the curia, they sentenced Mr. Fan-lan-peng to death and shot him on December 24, 1952. His last cry was, "Long live the Legion of Mary!"



Crispino's Home-Coming

SR. ST. EDMUND(1), M.I.C.

Crispino felt disgruntled. For days he had looked forward to spending the Christmas season with his family in the Philippines but now as he stepped ashore and strolled along the old familiar streets, a mood of baffled irritation clouded his happiness. It was Christmas Eve, and over the warm evening breezes floated snatches of carols accompanied by the strumming of guitars as the village folk joined in joyful processions. From doorways and windows swung huge, colorful, star-shaped lanterns which decked the shabby nipa huts with a touch of magic beauty.

"Superstitious rot!" grunted the home-coming sailor as he glanced through lighted windows at the crude illuminated *Belens* (cribs) around which the good people stood lost in fervent admiration. Years ago he also had taken part in these simple Christmas festivities. That was before he had liberated himself from the delusions that had been bred into him by his God-fearing parents. Since then, he had sailed the seven seas and had learned to see life

1. Irma La Durantaye, Cap St. Ignace.

under its true colours of a physico-chemico-biological mechanism. Aboard the merchant marine ship where he was employed, Red agents were busily at work infiltrating the crew with the ultra realistic doctrines of Karl Marx and Co. Matter — Evolution — Science — these were the only divinities to be acknowledged. Metaphysical fantasies were no longer to be allowed to hold sway over human intelligence, for they were the greatest enemy of man's higher development. God, man's dependence of His Creator, the future life and its eternal sanctions — all these were outmoded myths which modern science had long since exploded. Thanks to the efforts of the Moscow-directed propaganda, the evolution towards a truly human status would soon issue in tolerance, the reign of reason and the annihilation of all dark and aggressive instincts. This code of ethics Crispino pretended to profess with the candor of a man who thinks himself superior. How deeply he resented the fact that while the rest of the planet had turned with the great wheel of progress, his native *barrio* had remained at a standstill! How could people in this enlightened age cling tenaciously to silly practices savoring of superstition such as Midnight Mass and *Belens*?

* * *

As Crispino turned into the street that led to his home, two small figures came flying down the walk to meet him. He held out his arms wide while Nonita and her brother Celso flung themselves against him in an ecstasy of joy. "Merry Christmas, daddy!" their voices gaily chimed. The happy trio walked on, the little ones chattering of all the happenings of the day, how Mamma had lighted the huge star and hung it over their doorway, what delicious things she had cooked in view of his home-coming. . . Near the entrance of a shop where toys of all kinds were on display, Celso exclaimed, "Look, daddy, an electric train just like Ricardo's!"

"Oh, the lovely baby doll!" Nonita's eyes spoke her admiration.

"Which toys would my darlings like to have?" their father fondly asked. The children looked at each other, then "Daddy," Nonita declared, "We're not getting any Christmas presents this year. . . We've promised not to."

"What's the idea? No Christmas presents, you say. . ."

Seeing her father's perplexity Nonita gravely explained, "It's a sacrifice. Madre Victorina told us it was the surest way of obtaining important favors."

"Nonsense!" scornfully retorted the aroused father. "What do you and Madre Victorina mean by important favors, anyway?"

"It's. . . it's like this, daddy. . . We want you. . . to be a Catholic again like Mamma, Grandpa, Uncle Julio, and the others."



Emboldened by his sister's words and his father's embarrassment Celso added,

"We want you to come to church again as you used to. Then, Salvador and Serafin will no longer say that my dad is a pagan like Yu Sing the *Chino*, because he never prays and never goes to church." The two children looked up at their father with pleading, tear-filled eyes. Crispino frowned darkly. So this is what it had come to! His own children had to put up with the taunts of their classmates. They were ashamed of him. He had thought it smart to parade his rationalist views and

these youngsters pitied him and made sacrifices to obtain his conversion. With soul sorely pressed he tried to catch at the crumbling bulwarks of incredulity.

They had reached home at last. Big brother Benito was hanging huge scarlet stars to the garden acacias while inside Mamma Juana and Marita bustled about the reveillon table. Nonita and Celso piloted their father into the living room. They could hardly wait to show him the wonderful *Bambino* on his bed of straw, the angels, the shepherds with their flutes. Recollections of his happy childhood engulfed him in waves of tenderness. Beside the *Belen* on a small table, stood a bronze candlestick with a candle lighted all ready for the traditional reading of the Gospel.

"Daddy, do they have Christmas in Australia? In India?"

"Probably."

"Do the people over there go to Midnight Mass?"

"Some do."

"Do they put up *Belen*? Have they a *Bambino*?"

"Some of them have but many no longer believe in such silly doings."

Nonita stamped her foot. "They are bad people, then," she smugly declared. "They will go to hell. The Holy Child will surely punish them."

At this psychological moment the bells rang out in joyful peals from the adjoining parish church. Noel! Noel! Gloria in excelsis! Jesus, the Prince of Peace is born, Noel! Noel!

Mamma Juana entered the living room followed by Benito and Marita "The first bell for Midnight Mass has just sounded. It is time to read the Gospel before leaving for church." She snapped off the electric light. Nonita reverently taking up the Holy Book stood in the glow of the candle and read in her sweet childish treble the immortal story of the first Christmas. "Mary brought forth a son, her first-born, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. In the same country there were shepherds awake in the fields keeping night-watches over their flocks . . . An angel of the Lord came and stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them, so that they were overcome with fear. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; behold I bring you good news of a great rejoicing for the whole people. This day in the city of David, a Saviour has been born for you, the Lord Christ himself. This is the sign by which you are to know Him; you will find a child still in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' Then, on a sudden, a multitude of the heavenly army appeared to them at the angel's side, giving praise to God and saying 'Glory to God in high heaven, and peace on earth to men that are God's friends.'" The echo of the angelic hymn floated for a moment in the darkened room which was suddenly filled with the religious hush of a sanctuary.

The little group was startled by the sound of a sob. Mamma Juana turned on the light. The father had fallen to his knees beside the *Belen* and was sobbing like a frightened child lost in a dark forest who has suddenly found his way home again.



Tender arms helped him to his feet, tender hands wiped away the tears that coursed down his face. Nonita slipped her hand into his and the family procession went out into the brilliantly illuminated night to join the larger procession of villagers winding its way to the parish church.

Crispino sought out a confessional and made his peace with God. As he passed by the Crib, where the *Bambino* seemed to hold out his arms in a gesture of enfolding love, he fell to his knees. "Glory to God in the highest . . . peace on earth . . ." sang the choir, and in the starlit night the bells rang out, Noel! Noel!

The Martyr of Futuna

by Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

"Providence used what seems a little thing to prolong my life. We had owned a pig which had been stolen from us by one of Niuliki's friends. He had wished to keep it for himself, but the king had said that the animal should be killed and eaten at a funeral feast. The man was irritated, and to spite His Majesty, determined to save my life. He came to meet me and warned me that I should run into danger if I went to Poi. After giving me some hints as to what was passing there, he compelled me to turn back, offering to accompany me to Singave or wherever I wished to go." The Brother chose Singave, where Niuliki's power was not very secure and his life would be in less danger.

The next day Niuliki went to Singave and sent for Brother Mary Nizier. At first he pretended to bewail Father Chanel's murder. He told Brother to go back to Poi, assuring him that no one would harm him. "Kill me here, if you wish, but I will not go to Poi," the lay-brother said. Niuliki did not insist, and went away boasting that Father Chanel had been put to death by his order.

Fourteen days after the martyrdom an American ship anchored at Futuna. Brother Mary Nizier and all other white men living upon the island fled to it at once, begging shelter and protection. The captain received them kindly. They had been none too prompt to make their escape, for the king gave an order that they were to be prevented from embarking, even if it became necessary to kill them all in doing so. The ship set sail for Wallis on the eighteenth of May, 1841.

It was undoubtedly through hatred of the Faith and by order of Niuliki that Father Chanel was murdered. In the formal inquiry of 1845, and again in 1861, every witness testified that no one in Futuna had ever said anything but that Father Chanel was put to death solely through hatred of the religion he preached. "What other motive could his murderers have had?" Father Bataillon said in his deposition. "They could not have acted as they did through a desire for the effects of the missionary,

for he was poor; besides, they would not have waited so long to pillage his house and could have done so without killing him. It could not have been personal hatred: Father Chanel was the best of men. All the Futunians confessed this, and many of those who had a hand in his murder wept for him. It is certain, then, that he was beloved; it was the religion he so zealously preached that many detested. They wished to check its progress and believed that the only means of doing so was to put him out of the way."

By killing Father Chanel the enemies of Christianity thought they had attained their end. "The priest is dead, and his religion died with him," they said exultingly. They were mistaken. At Futuna history repeated itself; the old, old story was to be told again: the blood of the martyr became the seed of Christians.

Trusting to the fulfillment of Father Chanel's words, "Christianity will not perish in Futuna; after me, other priests will come to continue my work," the brave catechumens guarded their faith with loving care and cherished every remembered word of the teacher whom they had loved and venerated. For a time they dared to hold no reunions, but morning and evening all said their prayers in private, and on Sundays rested from servile work. Three of their number placed themselves under the protection of Maatala, a chief of the conquered part of the island. Niuliki and his friends were irritated and made savage threats, but the men were not greatly alarmed, for they knew they could count on the help of Maatala, pagan though he was, but related to one of them, and no friend of the king's.

The murderers feared nothing from a handful of catechumens, timid and leaderless. At public festivities they ostentatiously displayed what they had stolen from the missionaries' cabin, not respecting even the sacred vessels. Many of the natives, though still pagan to the core, had loved Father Chanel, and they were indignant over this, but fearing the persecutors, contented themselves with murmuring in secret. Providence dared to proclaim more than the timorous natives whispered. First, the violent thunder-clap, heard at the moment of the martyr's death, was plainly miraculous, and had awed and terrified hundreds of the islanders; soon, Fonoti, a brother of the king, died suddenly; he had been one of his counsellors and had played an important part in Father Chanel's martyrdom. Niuliki himself was stricken with a loathsome disease. His body fell into corruption, and from being enormously stout he became a mere skeleton. His friends carried him from place to place that the different gods might see his condition and cure him. He grew worse steadily and suffered excruciating torment: the hand of the Lord had indeed touched him. Several others among the persecutors died miserably. The Futunians began to believe that the Almighty was avenging His apostle.

The day soon came when the catechumens were no longer obliged to hide when they wished to pray. They began to talk openly of the Faith. Above all the rest, Meitala distinguished himself by his attachment to Christianity and zeal for its propagation. So great was the change that came over the minds of the people that hundreds of them were willing, even eager, to be Christians when the *Allier*, a small French warship, accompanied by a schooner belonging to the mission of western Oceania, reached Singave in January, 1842.

(To be continued)

Spokes

in the Wheel

SR. AGNES OF ASSISI(1), M.I.C.

While we continually cast about in our minds for novel means of spreading the true Faith, numerous religions with strange practices and bizarre creeds seem to mushroom all over the place. Sad to say none of them are minus adepts. Satan's age-old tactics are ever the same — to wrest from human souls the eternal happiness he has gambled away.

Among these sham religions one of the most popular at the Sukagawa Sanatorium, where we hold weekly doctrine classes, is called, religion of the "House of Grace". Conditions of salvation are ultra easy according to its teachings. The Creator alone is good and noble. All creatures are vile; being born and bred in sinful conditions, they are utterly powerless to attain rehabilitation. Therefore, they are dispensed of any efforts whatever and may sin without the least regret. Aware of their weakness and depravity, the Creator continues to love them because he understands their nature. They have no need of either contrition nor confession. Why should marriage, under such conditions, be considered as a binding contract? Far better repudiate a partner who no longer pleases and give free rein to one's lusts and fancies. But the height of these aberrations is that in the "House of Grace" Our Lady "our tainted nature's solitary boast" is reviled and insulted.

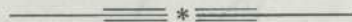
Another Buddhist sect of recent origin, teaches that one need only spend ten days each year on a pleasant outing with one's friends at a renowned Buddhist shrine, to ensure one's salvation. The only requirement is to wear a distinctive pilgrim garb; there are no articles of faith to be believed. *Odoru Shukyo* (the dancing religion) seems to have originated in India. It was introduced into the capital in the wake of the disturbances following the war. Its chief obligations consist in extravagant choreographic exercises; adepts must dance while chanting rhythmic psalms accompanied by the frenzied tempo of sacred drums. Three years ago appeared a religion whose exact origin is unknown. It is called *Ko Sei Kai* (universal religion). Emissaries of this sect arrived in Koriyama in October 1953; one month later they already had one thousand followers. Their religious creed consists in denying the existence of a *Kami* (god) and in proclaiming the necessity of examining one's conscience in order to obtain interior tranquility.

1. Lucienne Renaud, Montreal.

Nichiren Shu is another Buddhist sect which finds favor with certain classes. Its disciples hold the founder of this particular sect in great veneration, and they strive to pattern their lives after his. They are the ascetics of Buddhism. During the coldest winter nights, they may be seen walking about the streets barefoot. They also make eight-day pilgrimages during which they practice cold ablutions as a purificatory rite for both soul and body. During this eight-day retreat, the faithful must wear certain specified clothing in accordance with the penitential spirit of the sect. They are also obliged to climb up a mountain slope. Before doing so, however, they must be very attentive in purifying themselves as the god residing on the mountain top might otherwise be offended and wreak his vengeance upon them. The founder of *Nichiren Shu* very insistently recommended penitential practices to his followers. Need we be surprised that his religion is not as popular as that of the "House of Grace"?

This list of religious sects which flourish in Koriyama and whose agents are found actively at work among the patients of Sukagawa Sanatorium justifies the title of this paper — "Spokes in the Wheel". Nevertheless, these spokes instead of hampering our zeal, encourage us to greater endeavors in favor of the true Faith. Since the sects mentioned are all allowed to hold religious services for the T. B. patients, we obtained permission to have the pastor of Koriyama offer Holy Mass at the hospital twice a week. A Japanese catechist is also permitted to teach doctrine classes to about sixty catechumens whom we visit regularly.

Notwithstanding the anti-Marian propaganda launched by the "House of Grace", the patients of the San held their own Marian Day during the Jubilee Year 1954. What a pleasant surprise it was for us to see 250 patients crowding the hall on that day to assist at the presentation of a film on the Joyous and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary! Usually only about fifty patients or so consent to assist at movies of this sort. It was doubtless the maternal revenge of Mary, Full of Grace, over the "House of Grace", spokes laid by the Queen of Heaven in the wheel of erroneous propaganda.

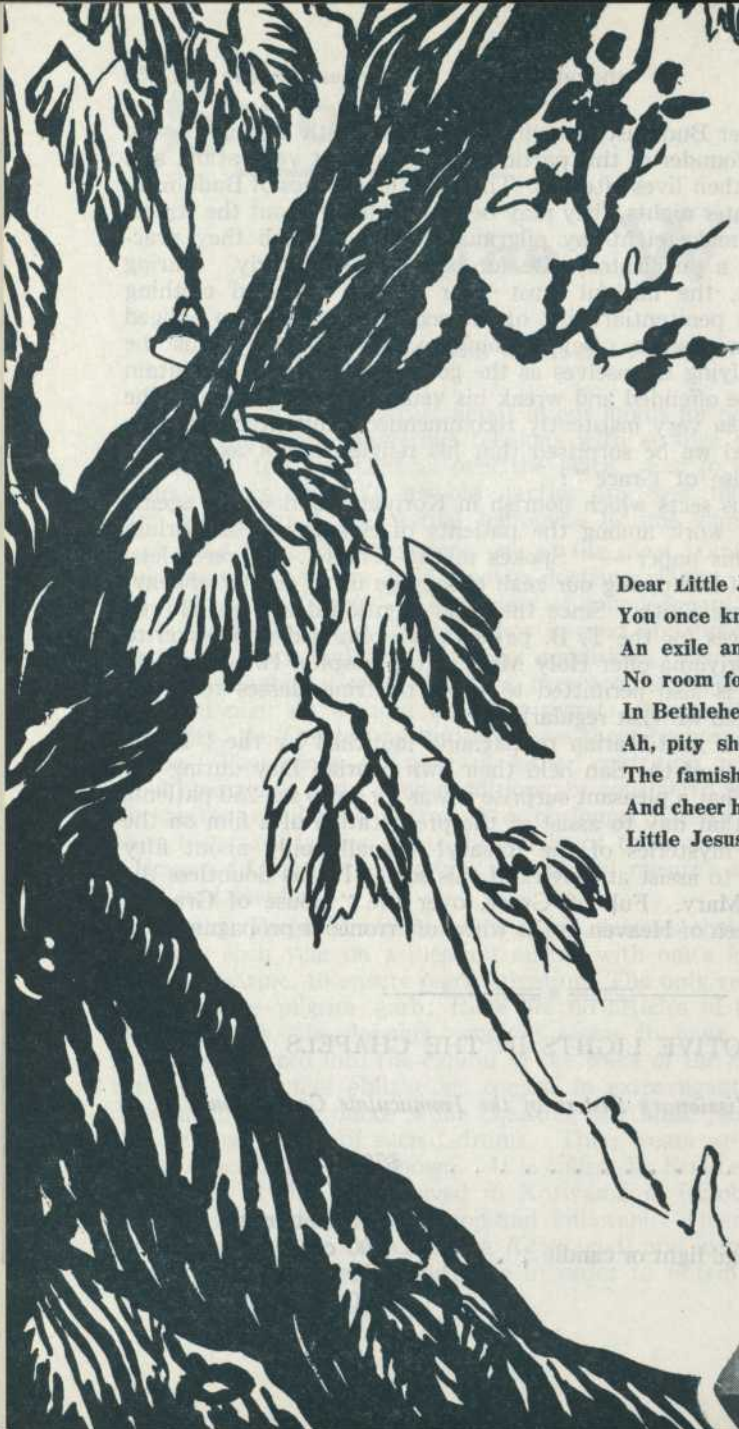


VOTIVE LIGHTS IN THE CHAPELS

of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Sanctuary lamp. \$50.00

Vigil light or candle . . .	{	10 cents each 90 cents for a novena \$ 3.00 for a month 35.00 for a year
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Prayer for

1

Dear Little Jesus, heav'nly Boy,
You once knew what it meant to be
An exile and a refugee.
No room for you, Incarnate Joy,
In Bethlehem when You were born.
Ah, pity show to poor King Sing
The famished, frightened, fledgeling,
And cheer his wee heart sad and sore,
Little Jesus on this day.

for a Refugee

2

Remember how your Mother wept
To see You shiver with the cold
When You were but one hour old.
Ah, give to this poor babe bereft
Of home and food, and everything,
Some milk and rice, a cosy bed
With downy pillow for his head.
Console the mother of King Sing,
Little Jesus on this day.





Tragic 1953 Christmas in Hong Kong

While the western world re-echoed with joyful Christmas carols, crowds of panic-stricken people cried out in their distress, Fire! Fire! The refugees of Pak Tin, Shek Kip Mei, and Was Tsai were being driven out of their camping grounds, on the mountain slope, by a disastrous conflagration which soon reduced to

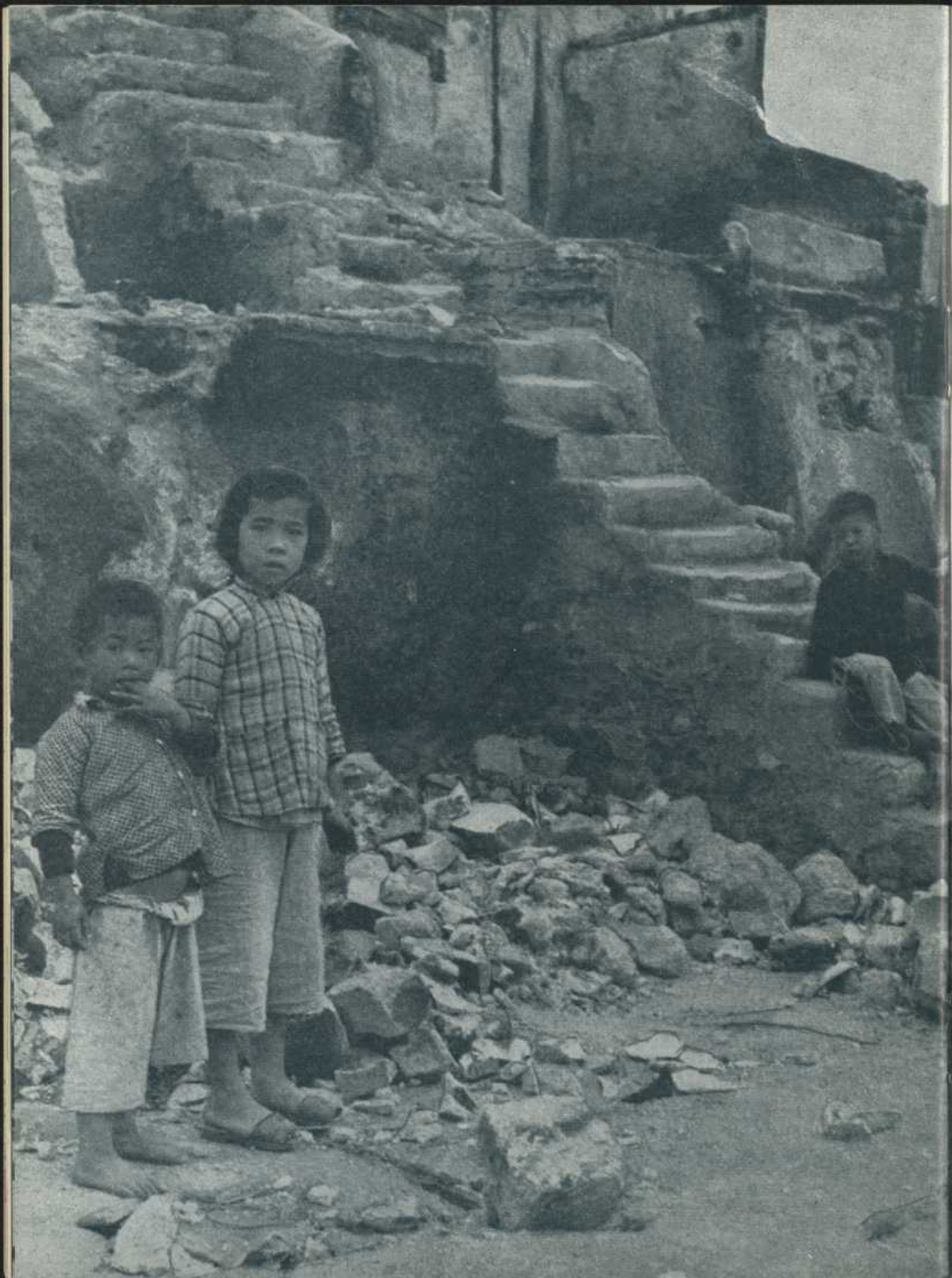


ashes their flimsy shacks built of bamboo strips, straw mats, empty cases, and sheets of rusted tin or corrugated iron. About 20,000 families, the greater part refugees from Red China, were thus rendered completely homeless.

The city of Hong Kong nobly rose to the emergency. Without losing time, the civil authorities arranged a systemized distribution of food and had temporary shelters constructed beside the sidewalks.

Our Holy Father the Pope, learning of the catastrophe, immediately sent the magnificent alms of \$10,000.00 gold. His Excellency The Most Rev-





erend Lawrence Bianchi, revered Pastor of the Diocese, also contributed \$5,000.00 H. K. to the relief of the unfortunate victims.

As our makeshift distribution office in Pak Tin had been fortunately spared by the flames, all the provisions of food, powdered milk, clothing, and medicine we had there were put at the disposal of those who were now so utterly destitute. The Communists did not fail to twist this Christmas disaster into their usual propaganda pattern. While distributing succor, they hinted, "See, while you are in such terrible straits, the Catholics are celebrating their Christmas festival. That's why we are out here to help you." But those who had fled from the delights of the Red Paradise knew what to believe.

A non-Christian refugee whose wife was bedridden when the fire broke out, received help from two young men who carried the sick woman to safety. He afterwards remarked to one of the Sisters, "How was it that those kind gentlemen *happened* to be in Pak Tin just when I desperately needed their assistance to save my wife? How could they know that she was completely helpless? Oh, I am sure that we owe all this to God's protection."

(Alexandrine Surprenant, St-Alexandre d'Iberville,)

SR. ST. ALEXANDER, M.I.C.



Valiant Chinese Sisters

*Excerpt from a letter received by Mother Julianne of the Blessed Sacrament(1)
from Sr. Marie Emmanuel(2), M.I.C.*

During the month of July, we were privileged to welcome as honored guest at Tak Sun, Rev. Joseph Guntern, a missionary of Swiss nationality, the last foreign priest to be expelled from the Szeping kai diocese, and consequently the last witness of the unshakable loyalty to the Faith manifested by our beloved little Sisters of the Holy Rosary.

How I wish you could have heard Father Guntern praise the courage of those Chinese Sisters whom you trained to be truly valiant women! I am sure you would have wept, but yours would have been tears of joy and admiration. Your novices of days gone by, have become pillars of strength for the harassed and persecuted Christians, thanks to the contagious example of their heroic faithfulness and of their inspiring intrepidity. Our guest asserted, "I can make bold to assure that, at present, those seventeen heroic Sisters would be ready to endure martyrdom rather than to deny their religion." And he went on recounting what had taken place after the departure of the Cana-

1. Beatrice Lareau, Chambly, P.Q.

2. Berthe Crevier, St. Ann of Bellevue.

On the right, Sr. Lee Louisa, Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Szeping kai, with Sr. T'sien Margarita, one of her first companions.



dian Sisters from Szepingkai. The walls of the Bishop's house had been placarded with offensive posters and odious caricatures bearing the slogans "Down with Riberi! Down with the Pope! Down with the Legion of Mary. Death to the Canadian imperialists, etc." As soon as the Superior, Lee Louisa, and the other Chinese Sisters learned of this, they called on Rev. Father Ting, the only Chinese priest still at liberty, requesting him to present in their name indignant protests to the Communist Authorities. The posters were removed, but the Sisters payed for their courageous audacity by being ordered to close their sewing workshop — their only means of support. Ever since this incident, the Reds have ordered their little convent to be closely watched by armed guards who must report on all comings and goings. If they hoped thus to intimidate these heroic women, the Reds have lost their time. When urged to attend popular meetings the Sisters agreed to do so only upon the promise that their religion would not be attacked. Whenever this promise was violated, they loudly and fearlessly entered their protest.

One of the principal reasons put forward for Reverend Joseph Guntern's expulsion, was the indirect cooperation he had taken in the training of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. He was accused of having collaborated with the Canadian missionaries in imbuing them with a reactionary mentality thoroughly in opposition with the ideology of the Peking regime.

Indeed our Szepingkai Chinese Sisters have received from the Communist Government in China, the following honorable mention, "These women are the most headstrong persons we have met in China." Reverend Father Guntern is not a man given to passing out compliments. On the contrary, the difficulties and tribulations he has been through these last few years, have contributed in strengthening his realistic views on people and events at large. Nevertheless, he does not hesitate in proclaiming that the more than heroic attitude of these Chinese Sisters is akin to the miraculous and that it is evident that they are upheld by divine assistance. When Lee Louisa was advised that she would only be acting according to the dictates of human prudence in sending her Sisters back to their respective families, she refused. "God will not abandon us if we remain together. He owes it to His Providence to protect us. Anyway, all of us would rather die than expose ourselves to the danger of losing our religious vocation."

* * *

What golden pages of the history of the Church in China, these Chinese Sisters are writing today! They have indeed proved their worth and the solidity of their convictions although their Society has been founded a mere twenty years ago. Lee Louisa we knew and trusted as a fervent level-headed subject. Today, confronted as she is with continual suffering and in a certain way with impending martyrdom, she has showed all the nobility of her character. Hers is the great and noble *patriotism of the Faith*.

Why not Make a Closed Retreat?

MISS WINIFRED MCCARTHY, MARLBORO, MASS.

It is pretty hard for a high school girl to give up a whole weekend of fun to go on a Retreat, but since I rather enjoy doing things the hard way, that is exactly what I did, and much to the amazement of some of my friends, I returned just as happy if not happier than when I left. Of course, I must admit that I certainly did not relish getting up at 6.30 A.M. ! Well, I did get up anyway. I was hardly fully dressed when back a Sister came ringing that "awful" bell. I am sure that even if she had rung it outside on the nearest street corner, I would have heard it just as well. Picking up my veil and prayer book and trying to walk as quietly as I could, I entered the chapel. It was small and it had the warmth of one of those friendly sanctuaries in the wilderness you only read about in books.

After everyone had gathered, we said the prayers and heard Holy Mass. We had met the priest the night before and we were all looking forward to his next conference. After Mass, we had breakfast. There was enough on the table or so I thought for the whole United States Army, but either my computations were wrong or else, growing girls just eat as much as soldiers because there was little food left on the table when we were through.

Breakfast over we made our beds and waited for the next bell. (Perish the thought !) Then we said the Rosary together and walked about the beautiful convent grounds. After this came the first conference of the day, and I listened to Father almost spellbound. It ended all too soon. At first, I had thought the time would hang heavily on my hands, but reading the spiritual books put at our disposal in the small, cosy recreation house, I found the hours flew by all too quickly. At dinner time I found it hard to believe that so many young girls could sit together and still keep such religious silence. I guess this silence made us feel closer to God, and so everyone was anxious to let the peaceful atmosphere that dwelt around us remain undisturbed.

We rested until two o'clock. Then came the recitation of the Rosary, followed by another conference which I thought even more interesting than the two preceding ones. Afterwards we strolled in silence through the grounds to meditate deeply upon the priest's instructions. At four o'clock we made the stations of the Cross and after the stations we had the ceremony I love best of all — Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I have no words to describe the mysterious joy that wells up in my heart each time I attend Benediction and see my true God before my eyes.

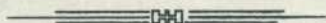
At six o'clock we had supper and more silence and more of the same friendly smiles that spoke no words aloud. During the recreation which followed I talked with girls I had never met before, and yet it seemed that we were like sisters.

At 7.30, Father answered our questions and helped to solve our problems. I certainly learned a great many things I had been ignorant of. The Retreat was a huge success not only because of Father's talks but also because of the kindness of all the Nuns which played an important part in making our stay as enjoyable as it was beneficial.

At nine we recited night prayers and climbed upstairs to bed to wait for another 'perfect day'.

The second day, the schedule was almost the same until noon when we had more recreation. The last day was highlighted by an hour of adoration spent before the Blessed Sacrament. What a wonderful and holy way to end a Retreat! I could not help reflecting that if everybody in the world would begin and end their day with God, what a difference it would make.

I went on this my first Retreat alone, but on the next one I made, I brought along two friends. I hope to bring more on subsequent Retreats, for I am convinced that every teen-ager should make a Retreat.



Our Merry Mail

MORONDAVA, MADAGASCAR

My first impression upon arriving in Morondava was that I had stumbled into topsy-turvydom. Here, summer corresponds to winter back home, the noonday sun glares down from the north, the quarters of the moon tilt upward. Doors open on the right and close on the left, while hinges and doorknobs are screwed on upside down. Family names are unknown in these parts and many among the Malagasy have no idea of the date on which they were born, patronal feast days being kept instead of birthdays. Those whose feast it happens to be, offer presents instead of receiving any and deliver appropriate little speeches usually with a didactic flourish to close with. Malagasy courtship is not very romantic. When a young man decides to take unto himself a wife he first makes his proposal to the fair damsel's mother. She it is who decides, after consulting her daughter, whether the prospective bridegroom's suit is to be accepted. If he is looked upon favorably, he may be allowed to visit his fiancée two or three times before the marriage ceremony takes place; on such occasions, it is considered proper for the young lady to turn her back to him and to keep a respectful silence in his presence.

The most lovable trait of the Malagasy character is bighearted generosity. Our good people may be as poor as the proverbial church mice, but you will always find them ready to share with someone poorer than themselves. When, on feast days, our boarders receive gifts of fruit or money they never fail to put something aside for the "Mothers." Is anyone in trouble, all gather around to give practical help or at least to show sympathetic interest. The first time I saw a gathering of this sort in the girls' dormitory, I drew near uncertain on what course should be taken to restore discipline. One of the older pupils then gravely explained that as So and So was feeling depressed, they were trying to cheer her up with kind words and loving caresses. Nothing remained for me to do but to present my quota of sympathy to the drooping lassie before sending her companions back to their respective cubicles.

When one of the Sisters happens to be sick, the children inquire after her health about a hundred times a day. On Christmas Eve, a large spider bit me on the ankle. At first I did not feel any the worse for this delicate attention, but a few days later I became incapacitated by a considerable swelling of the injured limb. During my illness one of my pupils, who habitually is nothing short of an angel as far as good behavior is concerned, suddenly became the model of the classroom. She wanted to obtain my recovery at any cost, she assured.

SR. S. ELOI(1), M.I.C.

1. Cecile Desjardins, St. Eloi, P.Q.

* * *

KATETE. — It will not be surprising for you to learn that I am growing more and more in love with Africa and the Africans. The greater part of my time is spent at our dispensary trying to cure or at least to relieve the sick and the maimed. Terrible burns are among the worst cases I had to cope with this year. A tiny infant, literally roasted from the waist down, was brought here from a distant mountain village some time ago; one little foot, then the other, dropped off during the dressings. The poor mite died a few days after his arrival. Sad to tell, his parents had left him, unattended, beside the hearth in the family hut while they went out on a beer drinking spree. Not the least regret was manifested by the father who had brought him to us. He left the hospital on the day preceding the child's death, pre-texting that he could not wait any longer as more beer was being brewed in his home village, and he did not want to miss the merriment. Such heartless conduct sets my blood boiling with indignation, but we must be patient with these primitives and not try to teach them everything at once.

The highlight of the year 1953 in Katete, has been the inauguration of a baby clinic. The children born at our hospital are now brought in, every Wednesday afternoon, to be weighed, examined, and treated according to their needs. From thirty-five to fifty are thus presented weekly. Their fond mammas are given lessons in hygiene and infant care followed by simple

religious instructions in story form. It seems to me that much good will be accomplished through this timely innovation. Since January, over one hundred black babies have seen the light of day within the walls of our maternity. I even fondled hopes of winning a government award upon the birth of triplets each weighing a good three pounds. The mother felt discouraged while the father was elated. Ephrem and Jacob, the two boys, decided on moving right away into the heavenly nurseries leaving their sister Jacqueline to contend alone with the complications of life here below. She shows every promise of being able to manage for herself. Thanks to the maternity many lives, those of mothers and those of babies are spared. Measures of hygiene and artificial respiration being still practically unknown in Northern Nyassa, infants who are born merely asphyxiated, often run the risk of being buried alive, for people believe them to be dead. As for the tiny ones who really have no chances to live they are provided with a safe-conduct for heaven.

SR. ST. LEO THE GREAT(1), M.I.C.

1. Pauline Longtin, Montreal.

* * *

MANILA, P. I. — For a whole year, Felipe Lu has courageously attended the catechism classes given to catechumens. This sixteen-year-old lad is very studious but, alas, he hardly remembers today what he has learned yesterday. Is it any fault of his if facts will not stay in his memory? Enrolled at our Anglo-Chinese school, this is his third year in Grade Four. He has wistfully looked on while one group of catechumens, then two, and finally three made their First Communion while he was not able to pass the preliminary tests. Reflecting that goodwill alone would never lead my poor Felipe anywhere, I decided to plead in his favor and took him to see Father Garcia.

The exams on catechism lasted two hours. As long as Father questioned him on the principal prayers and on the elements of Christian doctrine, things went smoothly enough. But as soon as more difficult questions were asked Felipe stuttered, and sweated, and sighed. The waters of orthodoxy were getting too deep for him. At last, he could stand it no longer. Looking pleadingly at his pastor, he exclaimed, "Listen, Father, you have put so many questions to me, that there is only one clear thought left in my head. I want to be baptized in order to remain good always and thus be sure to reach heaven one day. That is the only thing I'm sure of." Father Garcia had an amused smile at this outburst. Turning to me, he declared "The boy can be admitted to Baptism." He kept on in a lower tone, "As for making his First Communion, we will have to wait."

But what Felipe lacked in memory, he more than made up for in tenacity. During the two weeks that followed, I gave him daily private lessons and he did his very best to learn all that he needed to know to receive Jesus into his heart. His efforts deserved not to go unrewarded.

On Holy Saturday, he was among the 37 Chinese baptized by Father Garcia. He may not be strong on dogma but he loves God with his whole heart and that is all that really matters after all.

Sr. St. John of Calvary(1), M.I.C.

1. Doris Hagues, Montreal

* * *

NKATA BAY, NYASSALAND — Hearing about the antics of the monkey clan in my vegetable garden (Precursor, March-April 1951), a Canadian reader sent me the composition of a poison which she believed might help in keeping the interlopers at distance. Acting upon her suggestion, I made use of it twice. The first time, I ground some peanuts, mixed them with quick lime, and placed the platter near the vegetable patch. On their next raid the monkeys furiously fought over it and it was finally overturned by the huskiest of the tribe without anyone getting even a taste of its contents. The second time, the enemy delayed so long in visiting the premises, that dampness destroyed the potency of the lime. Other suggested means of keeping these interfering simians at bay having also failed to produce any effect, we were forced to hire guardians to protect what remained of our harvest.

I am beginning to suspect that the monkeys have found out about my new assignment to Nkata Bay. The other day, as I was examining rows of ripening corn in the garden over here, I suddenly noticed at the other end, one of the abhorred tribe expertly helping himself to the largest ears. Someone advised me to hang a medal of Our Blessed Mother at the edge of the field but the monkeys boldly continued their depredations. A saucy old fellow dawdled right up to our doorway contentedly munching the stolen corn. This was more than I could stand. I called on Brother Jean Marie who promptly dispatched him to the monkey paradise with a shot of his trusty gun. The natives hearing the noise, ran into the Mission compound to ask for the capture. Many in Nkata Bay relish monkey stew. Others, however, will never touch the meat because they fear they might risk eating one or other of their ancestors!

Personally, I feel stronger opposition than ever to the theory that man might be of monkey ancestry. We are irreducible enemies.

Sr. Leo Marie(1), M.I.C.

1. Lucille Fontaine, St. Ephrem of Upton, P.Q.

* * *

RUMPHI, NYSSALAND — It happened during a solemn ceremony of baptism presided by Msgr. St. Denis, Prefect Apostolic of Nyassaland. I was kneeling in one of the front rows when I suddenly felt an old woman

tugging at my veil from behind to draw my attention. As I turned to see what she wanted, she joined her hands according to African rules of etiquette when addressing people whom one respects, and presented the following request, "Please ask the priest to baptize me and my daughter also." I replied as briefly as possible pointing out that this was neither the place nor the time to discuss her problem. But she kept on talking all the louder at the same time giving me friendly little shoves doubtless to aid my determination to oblige her in this matter. She quieted down only after much coaxing and the promise that right after the ceremony, her plea would be taken into consideration. I have not yet got used to such incidents; they never fail to move me to my heart depths.

Sr. St. Bonaventure(1), M.I.C.

1. Hedwidge Lapierre, St. Marie de Beauce, P.Q.

* * *

LOS ARABOS, CUBA.— Last Sunday Rev. Father Jean Paul offered holy Mass, first at Jacan, then at Aguedita, and finally at Macagua. When asked permission for this third Mass, the Bishop had replied, "Dale chico (on a small scale)". We had prepared a simple crib in which we laid the Holy Child. The wonder of wonders in decorations consisted in an altar piece of gold lace made up of samples received in one of the cases sent from the Motherhouse. It was comical to see the Blacks approach and finger it wonderingly. They did not seem to notice the different patterns and thought it very beautiful.

The Mission school at Macagua has an enrollment of only eleven pupils this year. There is much unemployment around here and the villagers are very poor. In November, the teacher made up her mind to retire. How could she be expected to live on a salary of \$2.00 a month? To encourage her to stay on, Father gave her an increase of \$10.00.

The doctrine classes are well attended; in November we had one hundred youngsters on our roster. Perfection has not yet been attained. The children still forget themselves and chat during Mass. Gradually, however, their behavior is improving. It is very consoling to see these little ones whom we have prepared continue going to confession and receiving Holy Communion once a week. We feel that we are not wasting our time in the campos.

Sr. St. EDWARD(1), M.I.C.

1. Rosee Allaire, Quebec.

The task of the missions is to make the whole world a Holy Land; to extend the Redeemer's reign over the souls of the last rampart and to every man.

HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XII

LOYALTY

of Chinese Christians

The courageous, devoted loyalty of Chinese laity to their persecuted Church is illustrated in a letter from the last remaining house of the Salesian Sisters still open behind the Iron Curtain — a convent in China.

"Last night was extremely sad but yet glorious for the Church," says the writer. "Twenty-three priests were arrested in the various religious houses.

"The church that suffered most was that of Christ the King, for all the priests, including the Chinese, were taken to prison and not one remained for Holy Mass this morning.

"The people, however, filled the church for the early morning Mass and when they discovered that no priest had been left they went in a solid body to the police headquarters and demanded that at least one priest be released.

"Their demand was granted, but on condition that he remained under day and night guard by two policemen.

"As soon as the priest entered the church he was surrounded by the devout congregation who feared that the priest might have been forced to sign a declaration in support of the 'National Church' and they asked: 'Father, have you changed in favour of the reform? If so, we will not assist at your Mass.'

"There was a moment of dramatic silence and then came the clear and definite 'No' of the priest, followed at once by an exultant 'Deo Gratias' from all the faithful.

"After the Mass, the faithful again gathered around the guarded priest begging: 'Father, bless us'.

"The priest raised his hand and blessed these devout and faithful children, and that congregation included the priest's own mother, who wept silent tears as her priest son was led away once again by his guards."

In another part of the letter the writer says:

"During the spiritual exercises two of our former pupils, children of Mary and now probationers at a hospital situated at some distance from us told the Mother Superior that they were forced to go to a cinema every Sunday, together with the other members of the hospital staff.

"Thanks be to Our Lady, however, during the whole eight months they have been following their training course, they never once raised their eyes to the screen during the showing of the film, and with eyes cast down during the whole programme they recited the Rosary, imploring the Blessed Virgin to preserve them from whatever might taint the purity of their souls."

Our Australian Sunday Visitor

AN HISTORIC ORDINATION

In 1614 a ruthless foe of the Church in Japan issued an edict proscribing Christianity under penalty of death. Today, a direct descendant of his stands at the altar, a priest.

Tokyo Catholic Seminary, directed by the Jesuits, numbers among its newly ordained priests a member of the Tokugawa clan, which ruled Japan for almost 250 years. Ieyasu, the founder of this extraordinary line of Shôguns, outlawed Christianity and was responsible for the violent death of thousands of the faithful. Under his grandson, Iemitsu, the last priests were exiled or martyred, leaving the crypto-Christians of Japan priestless for two-and-a-half centuries.

But God's grace is limitless. A scion of these persecutors is now a priest. And another member of the Tokugawa clan is in studies at the Tokyo Seminary, looking forward to ordination.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

Mrs. Vaughan had brought thirteen children into the world. Each day for almost 20 years she spent an hour before the Blessed Sacrament asking that God would call every one of her children either to the altar or to the Religious Life. She used to say that she received all from God and therefore she must be ready to give all back to God. The most precious possessions she received were her children. Gladly would she hand them back to God.

Her prayers must have touched God's heart, because her five daughters became nuns and six of her eight sons were priests.

The Church today needs priests and Religious. Our present day mothers could very well imitate Mrs. Vaughan and pray each day that at least one of their children be called to the service of God.

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TRYING

OUR

WINGS



SR. MARIE BEATA, R.S.

As it had been decided that the Mothers were going out to the neighboring villages in order to prepare the children for their First Holy Communion, we Novices were assigned to accompany them. We would be able to "try our wings." How pleased we were when Mother Mistress⁽¹⁾ told us

1. Sr. Bernadette of France, Bernadette Dumas, St. Anselme of Dorchester, P.Q.

Sr. Jeanne of Lorraine
(Carmelle Delisle, Pont Rouge)
on a bush visitation, Africa.

this good news! In fact, so great was our joy that, at first we pinched ourselves to make sure we were not dreaming.

But, no, it was not a dream — it was a blessed reality. On Wednesday morning, April 20, Reverend Father Magloire Riopel, W.F., Superior of the Katete Mission, called for us in his jeep. We left at half past five. As the wind carries the little grains of dust in the air, so were we carried down to Pitara Central School. Father Superior drove the jeep so very fast that we hardly realized we were already at destination. Pitara being only ten miles from the Mission it was really no wonder that we reached it as early as six o'clock.

The sun had not yet peeped over the horizon but our eyes quickly made out two Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters Franciska and Lorena, who welcomed us happily. After a short delay it was time to hear Mass. Father Superior gave a signal on his whistle and in a few moments, the people gathered in front of the church. How surprised they were to see the three white Mothers and the five Black Novices! One grandmother inquired, "Were you not like our village girls before?"

"Why, yes, Granny," we answered. "We were born and reared like the other girls of this village."

"But why leave your parents? That is not a good thing for you to do. You put an end to our generation by refusing to get married."

This rebuke did not take us by surprise, for we expected to be thus taken to account by our people, more especially by our old women, who know nothing about the religious life. We tried to talk to them gently, explaining what a great advantage it would be to have native Sisters, their own grandchildren. They seemed to understand at least a little.

We finally entered the church to assist at Holy Mass. All the people present sang together. After Mass, they surrounded the Sisters asking for medicine and we helped to take care of them. One woman holding a tiny baby in her arms came forward and exclaimed, "Mama ine! (oh, my!) How lucky you are to be admitted to a convent! I wish I were a child again so I could join you. But now, what can I do? I am married as you can see. Of course, married life can be very pleasant, but it can also be quite troublesome, I assure you." We tried our best to comfort her, telling her that since it was God's Will in her regard, she would receive a great reward in heaven if she offered up her troubles and sufferings for His love.

And now it was time for school to begin. We novices each took our turn teaching the dear little Blackies. In one of the classes, Lusua a tiny maid draped in a torn blanket, amused us a great deal. A novice asked, "Lusua, what would you do if one of your classmates, accidentally broke your gourd?"

"I'd make her pay for it."

"But, would it not be better for you to forgive her?"

"No, no. She must give me another gourd..."

"Supposing she did not have any, what would you expect her to do?"

"Let her find one..." Lusia was apparently determined not to let anybody get the better of her.

"If you broke someone's gourd, what would *you* do?"

"Oh, that's different. I would not bother much about it."

Her teacher tried to impress this youthful egotist with some sense of justice. She did not have much success. At that very moment, the child's mother passed by and Lusia called out to her in a loud voice, "Mamma, tell Granny to leave some beans for me because I am hungry." Sister tried once again to draw her attention to the catechism lesson. "Lusia, who made you?" she asked. But Lusia had other problems than worrying over where she came from. "Excuse me, Sister," she saucily replied, "I would like you to let me rest a little, for when I have to stand up my blanket does not warm my stomach as it should and that is bad for me." The little imp refused to do any more talking.

After dinner, we left for Pitara's surrounding villages. In the first we met a woman pounding maize. She looked us up and down and remarked, "Since you are Sisters, I suppose you do not remember how to use the mortar..." To prove that we had not forgotten any of the tribal customs, we removed the mortar from her hands and pounded the maize, gaily singing at the same time an old familiar ditty. The villagers were pleased. "Now, we know that entering the convent has not made you forget your own people. You will help us much in the future."

In another village we found the people in mourning for a man who had died just a few days ago. As is the custom in Africa, we entered the dead man's house to present our sympathy to his wives. Coming out of the hut, we found a crowd of people who wanted to see what we were like. One woman led her little one by the hand saying to her, "Hurry up and grow tall and strong so as to become a Sister like these..." But the girlie burst out crying because she was frightened by our white habits contrasting with our black skin. Another child with a keen business sense, pulled at our skirts, "Have you any salt?" she queried, "I would like to sell my bananas..." Salt is often used here as currency. "Where are the bananas you want to sell?" one of the novices asked. The little girl grinned sheepishly and pressed the hand of the novice to her cheek. "I... I don't know... I thought I had some... Haven't you any salt to give me? My grandmother is so poor that we have to eat our *sima* (corn mush) plain." Poor baby! She did so want to get some salt but we did not have any to give her.

An old woman asked, "Do you eat *sima* or do you use the food of the white people?"

"Of course we eat our own African food."

"But, tell me how you eat the *sima*? Do you use your fingers as we do or do you eat it with a spoon?" she questioned anxiously.

We could not help laughing as we answered that we ate with a spoon, her surprise was so comical to see. She shook her head dubiously and exclaimed, "What? How do you ever manage to eat *sima* with a spoon?" To her, this was one of those things that simply cannot be done!

But already the sun was going down, and it was time to return home. We said goodbye to all the good people we had met. They invited us to visit them again. On our way back to the school in Pitara, one of the novices remarked, "How restful it is to find ourselves among our own people after being away from them for a time?" We all felt this to be true.

When we reached Pitara, we found that Father Superior had arrived to take us home in his jeep. As we started on the road to Katete, the children of Pitara, especially the little boys ran after the jeep, shouting gleefully, "Mukawereso Wamayi Wafipa!" (Come back again to us, Black Sisters.)

Our visit to our own people in their villages was at an end. What a deep impression it left in our minds! May God be merciful to all our Nyasalanders who still remain in the darkness of paganism.

OUR LADY

IN AFRICA

ANTONIA LOZZA

Almost at the dawn of humanity, the paternal malediction brought sorrow to irreverent Cham and to his posterity. But this curse was lifted and changed into a blessing when came at last the Emmanuel in whom all tribes and all nations were to be blessed. This is perhaps the reason why Mary has been honored in Africa more than in any other country. Already, in the first part of the third century, A.D., Tertullian called attention to this fact. Fifty years ago, Father Delattre, W.F., confirmed the truth of this assumption through the precious archeological discoveries he made thanks to the excavation conducted in the vicinity of Carthage. The small statues of Our Lady (not to be confounded with representations of Isis, the work of an earlier epoch) represent her sitting on a throne and holding the divine Child on her knees. Her head is surrounded with a halo while in her hand she holds a scepter in the shape of a cross. Like the pottery of this period (third and fourth century A.D.) bearing images of the Virgin and invocations addressed to her, these small statues also derive their inspiration from her divine maternity which had been proclaimed in Ephesus in the year 431, and reveal the development of Marian devotion in Africa before the Mohammedan invasion.

AFRICAN ECHOES OF THE MARIAN YEAR

At Hebo, near the tomb of Ethiopia's renowned apostle, Blessed Justin de Jacobis, noted for his tender love of the Immaculate Virgin, 140 missionaries of both sexes gathered to proffer the homage of their piety to Mary and to discuss problems of modern apostolate.

At Agordat in Erythrea, has been inaugurated a sanctuary built in Arabic Christian architecture, to be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

In Somaliland, the centenary of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception dogma coincides with the Mission's Golden Jubilee. The first church erected in this area was placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception, the second and third respectively under that of Our Lady of Lourdes and of the Most Pure Heart of Mary.

In Egypt, the Muski parish church situated in one of Cairo's most popular quarters and dating from the 17th century, is consecrated to Our Lady of Grace.

Sudan has welcomed the Pilgrim Virgin with incredible enthusiasm and her passage has been marked everywhere with a resurgence of fervor. Numerous miraculous cures as well as remarkable conversions have been noted.

The Apostolic Delegate personally presided the manifestations marking the opening of Our Lady's Year in Rubaga Cathedral. In this region where are to be found a great number of chapels consecrated to the Mother of God under various titles, the daily recitation of the Rosary is a firmly established custom.

Throughout Northern Rhodesia, from May 1 to 15, the *Peregrinatio Mariae* was borne in triumph much to the discomfiture of the Jehovah Witnesses who affirm that devotion to Our Lady must be regarded as flavoring of superstition. Their insolence and their attempts at violence merely served to enhance the Pilgrim Virgin's apotheosis. In spite of their maneuvers to the contrary she obtained numerous conversions among those sincerely seeking after the truth.

In Tanganyika and in the Gold Coast region, in Belgian Congo and in Yaudne, in Egypt and in Uganda, the Legion of Mary, defined as the most modern technique of apostolate, is reported to be making rapid and constant progress.

The village of Poponguine, near Dakar, Senegal, possesses a celebrated shrine of Our Lady of Deliverance; a center of devotion from the very inception of the mission (1886) it has taken on greater importance still since the opening of a seminary in this region (1933).

MARY'S REALM

A pious legend recounts that when the Holy Family fled into Egypt, the divine Child once said to His Mother, "There is a people living in this neighborhood who loves me dearly and who calls you Lady Mary." Our Blessed Mother is said to have replied, "Give me this people as a dower,

I pray thee, beloved Son." Jesus then made a *kidane* (pact) according to which He gave her Ethiopia as her very own realm. Notwithstanding schism and heresy, her cult continues to flourish throughout this land where many still glory in bearing the legendary name *Kidane Mariam*.

When, in 1508, the Mohammedan armies under the leadership of the ferocious Gagn invaded Ethiopia, King Lebne Denghel (gift of Mary) had recourse to her intercession. She immediately answered his trusting prayer and saved the country through the unforeseen intervention of Portuguese soldiers. During the reign of Johannes IV (1868 - 1889) when the national synod was assembled, the royal dignity attributed by the people to Mary, Mother of Christ, was once again solemnly affirmed. Whenever Abyssinians mention the names of Jesus or Mary they never fail to prefix the titles *Egzi'e* and *Egze't*. Their Hail Mary begins with the words "O my Queen Mary, Hail!"

In the litany of Loreto, the Latin Church magnifies Mary as a Queen above all other dignitaries in heaven or on earth. The Coptic liturgy assigns royal dignity to her who, in her quality of Co-Redemptrix participates in the sovereignty of Christ over mankind. "The greatness of all the Angels is as a coronet adorning your hair... All the riches and all the graces of the Saints put together are as the traces of your feet..."

The Protestants who refuse to do Our Lady homage, have little chance to succeed in a country such as this. It is related that the members of a certain sect tried to instruct in their erroneous creed a little Abyssinian lad. To this effect they took him to their church with promises of a rich reward if he adopted their religion. All they got out of the child was, "Thank you, but I do not like the enemies of Our Blessed Mother."

After the battle of Adoua, the Italian prisoners were led to the Imperial Palace every Sunday in order to attend a meeting. Once, a letter coming from Italy was shown to the Emperor. A sorrowing mother wrote to Menelik II, "My grief is extreme at the thought that my son is a prisoner. I have offered a votive candle to Mary and here is what she said to me 'Do not grieve so! Be of good heart! Menelik is kind. He will release your son.'" Upon reading this message, the Emperor deeply moved, ordered the soldier to be brought before him and declared, "You are free! You may leave to-morrow. A military escort will accompany you across the desert; but you must tell your mother 'It is not Menelik who has set me at liberty, it is Mary.'"

in the Observatore Romano.

IN A HUNDRED SPHERES TODAY we find that God has been exiled. God is present everywhere. Modern paganism, however, ignores His presence. Let us pray that God be soon restored to His rightful place: GOD in the hearts of men. — GOD in the intellect. — GOD in the will. — GOD in the imagination. — GOD in the memory. — GOD in the home. — GOD in government. — GOD in the school. — GOD in business.

OUR BELOVED DEAD



Canon J. Dufour, **Metabetchouan**; Rev. G. E. Cote, **Laterriere**; Rev. Sister Marie Aurelienne, SS. of St. Ann, **Lachine**, sister to our Sr. St. Matthew; Rev. Sister Anthony of the Child Jesus, Little Sisters of the Holy Family, **Lennoxville**; Mr. Wilfrid Auger, **Les Ecureuils**, father of our Sisters St. Pius X and St. Gabriel; Mrs. Alexander Chouinard, **Montreal**, mother to our regretted Sr. Marie Philip; Mr. A. Michaud, **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Rimouski**, father to our Sisters St. Thomas Apostle and St. Antoinette; Mr. Edward Drolet, **Cap de la Madeleine**, father to our Sister Catherine of Jesus; Mrs. Omer Blais, **Sherbrooke**, mother to our Sisters Cecilia of the Trinity and Marie Christine; Mr. Adelard Begin, **St. Louis of Pintendre**, father to our Sister Rachel Marie; Mr. Jean Baptiste Larocque, **Rawdon**, father to our Sister Marie Aline; Mr. Gabriel Raymond, **Kenogami**, father to our Sister Pauline Raymond, postulant; Mr. J. P. Bellavance, **Rimouski**, brother to our Sr. Therese of Jesus; Mr. Joseph Parrot, **Montreal**, brother to our Sister St. Monica; Mr. Joseph Allaire, **Pont Viau**, brother to our Sister Marie Majella; Mrs. A. Hetu, **L'Assomption**, grandmother to our Sisters Jeanne of Rouen, John Berchmans, St. Irene, Helen of the Sacred Heart and Frances of Lisieux; Mr. Frederick Garipey, **Granby**, grandfather to our Sr. Rose of the Eucharist; Mrs. Sarah McGuire, **Westmount**; Mr. P. L. O'Connor, **Kenogami**; Mr. Arthur F. Gauthier, **Salem, Mass.**; Mrs. Antonia Touchette **Putnam, Conn.**; Mrs. Amedee Aucoin, Mrs. Edouard Julien Chartier, Mrs. Achille Lemay, Mrs. R. Desorcy, Mr. T. J. Cousins, Mr. J. U. Berube, Mrs. Leo Demontigny, Mr. Napoleon Delorme, Mr. Ernest Cayer, Mr. Romain Cyr, Miss Louise David, Mrs. Marcellin Wilson, **Montreal**; Mr. Aime De Ladurantaye, **Verdun**; Miss. C. Charbonneau, **Rosemont**; Mrs. Oscar Prud'homme, **Pointe St. Charles**; Mr. Lucien Favreau, **Longueuil**; Mrs. Valerie Daoust, **Pointe Claire**; Mrs. Emery Benoit, Mr. Marcel Gauthier, Mrs. Arthur Lemieux, **Ville Jacques Cartier**; Mrs. Hector Gauthier, **St. Eustache**; Mrs. Philippe Longpre, Mrs. Henri Hall, **Charlemagne**; Mrs. Pierre Deneault, **St. Philippe**; Mrs. Olivier Perras, Mrs. Wilfrid Garand, **Sherrington**; Mrs. Joseph Desgens, **St. Isidore**; Mrs. Gabriel Deneau, Mr. Aime Langlois, **Varennnes**; Miss Georgiana Bissonnette, Mr. Wellie Gagnon, **Napierville**; Mrs. Thomas Barthe, Mrs. Joseph Malo, Mrs. Louis Denomme, Joliette; Mr. Paul Payette, **St. Paul l'Ermite**; Mrs. Modeste Marcell, **St. Paul de Joliette**; Mr. Lucien Hogue, Mr. Henri Lanthier, Mrs. Valmore Campeau, **Mont Laurier**; Mr. Georges Lussier, Mr. Irene Beauregard, Mrs. Jean Marie Malo, **St. Damase de St. Hyacinthe**; Mrs. Ernest Brunelle, **Beloil**; Mrs. Edouard Bienvenue, **Rougemont**; Mrs. Joseph Larocque, **Farnham**; Mrs. Alfred Houle, **Arthabaska**; Mrs. Alex. Desbiens, **St. Ambroise**; Mrs. Andre Chatigny, **St. Petronille**; Mrs. A. Desjardins, **Montebello**; Mr. Philippe St. Laurent, **Lac au Saumon**; Mr. Ernest Bellemare, **St. Ursule**; Mr. Jean Baptiste St. Germain, **Sorel**; Mrs. Achille Piette, **Shawinigan Falls**; Mr. Wellie Lachaine, **Kiamika**; Mrs. Israel Rivet, **St. Famille d'Aumont**; Mrs. Benjamin Bourque, **St. Jean sur Lac**; Mrs. Eddy Larocque, **Notre Dame du Laus**; Mr. et Mrs. Edmond Bigras, **St. Anne du Lac**; Mr. J.P. Letourneau, **St. Paul de Montmagny**; Mrs. Leopold Couture, Mrs. Louis Leclerc, Mr. Ernest Boucher, **Quebec**; Mr. and Mrs. Fortunat Dionne, **Theftford Mines**; Mr. Gaudiose Cambray, Mr. Francis Bedard, **Beauport**; Mr. Severin Tessier, **St. Casimir**.

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