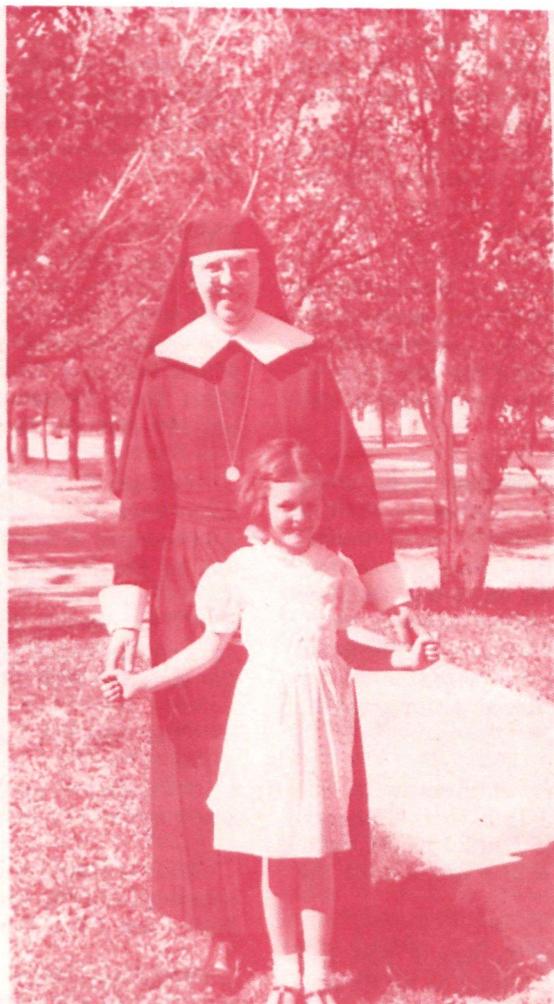
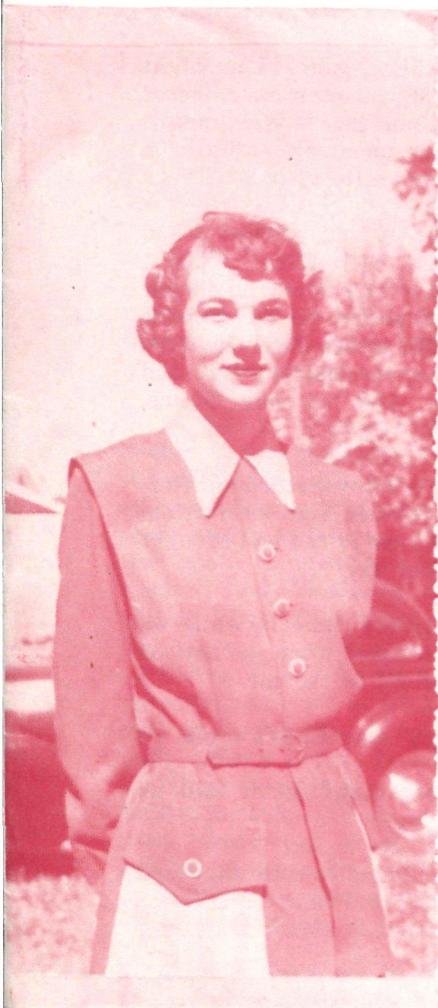


The Missionary Catechist



September 1950



The Bright Light of Future Glory

by Sister Martha Mary

SOME folks you have to learn to like. Some folks you like right away. I liked Ellen Thames from the first. You'd like her, too, from the moment you saw her smile. Ellen is always smiling. Hers is a big, broad, bright smile.

The first time I met Ellen Thames was in March of '48. We had a nice long chat. She told me she worked at the Negro Women's Club Day Nursery. We talked and laughed about the tiny tots. The subject matter turned to religion. "I'm not a Catholic," she said, "but I go to the Catholic Church all the time. I love the Catholic Church and I love the Sisters."

WE were separated for a year, during which time Ellen Thames had five operations. Before the sixth one, I had an opportunity to visit her at her home. She told me the story of her love for the Catholic Church and for the Sisters.

"You know, Sister," she began, "even when I was a tiny girl I always wanted to visit a Catholic church. Well, one day I went inside. It was *beautiful*, and very *different* from any other church I had ever been in. I was thrilled, but when I came out the other children said, 'Oh, now they will have to bless the church all over again.' The thought terrorized me. For thirty-four years I never dared enter another Catholic Church.

"When I saw the other children with the Sisters, I longed to go and talk to the Sisters, too, but I was afraid that if I did I would defile them even as the children said I had defiled the church.

"When my brother went to war I just had to go to a church to pray, so I went to an Episcopalian one. I thought that the nearest thing to a Catholic church.

"Finally, four years ago, I got up courage enough to go into a Catholic church. When no one put me out—as I had feared they would—I ventured to the Sorrowful Mother shrine in the

basement. There were lights lit all around the shrine, and someone who was praying there actually smiled and made room for me to kneel. Then I gathered more courage and went upstairs where Mass was being offered. Oh, how happy I felt!

"And do you know what, Sister? Last night I said to my friend, 'Did you ever have one of your childhood dreams come true? Well, one of my dreams is coming true tomorrow—a Catholic Sister is coming to *my* house to visit *me*.'"

DURING the remainder of that summer I had many delightful visits with Ellen. When I went back to my mission and could no longer visit her, Sister Noreen picked up the threads and began to weave them into a lovely pattern which included Ellen's conversion, baptism, and First Holy Communion. And not only Ellen's, but her friend's as well.

You see it had been a rainy Saturday afternoon when Ellen came for her first instruction. And because it was rainy, her friend had brought her to the convent in her car.

"Why doesn't your friend come in while we have class, Ellen?" Sister asked when she noticed the other woman sitting out in the car.

"Too bashful, I guess," was Ellen's reply.

"Oh, but we can't have that," Sister said, as she hurried out to the car.

Ellen's friend was delighted to come in, asked questions during the class, and came back faithfully each time Ellen came to class.

They were both baptized on the feast of the Annunciation and made their First Holy Communion the following day.

I'm looking forward to the day when I can see Ellen again. Her lovely smile will be shining more brightly now than ever with the "bright light of future glory."

The Missionary Catechist

Volume XXVI

September, 1950

Number 9

Brides of Christ

by Sister Aquina

SISTER EDITH MARIE settled herself comfortably in the pew, pulled her rosary from its black zipper case, and silently began the first decade. Above her head the sunlight streamed into the chapel, its shafts multi-hued from the stained glass windows. It touched the deep-piled burgundy rug in the sanctuary and sparkled on the golden candelabra and vases adorning the altar.

The community Mass was long since over, and not many Sisters were in the chapel now. Indeed, if all had been there, there would have been no room for the many guests who had come to witness the profession and reception ceremonies about to take place.

But Sister Edith Marie's niece was to be professed that morning so Sister was present in the chapel and had, she reflected with considerable satisfaction, an excellent seat from which she would be able to see and hear her niece when the latter pronounced her vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, as a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Victory.

Sister Edith Marie was a well disciplined individual and not at all given to reverie, especially in chapel. But today she found it increasingly difficult to free herself from the persistent tuggings of memory. It was a morning very similar to this, she mused, when she made her vows twenty-two years ago—gloriously bright and sunny, promising to be a scorcher, yet still fresh with the memory of grass, dew laden in a night meadow.

SISTER stirred and began the first decade for the second time. To her right the postulants

were passing her, their floor length bridal veils moving gently in proportion to their careful steps. Following them were the novices who were to be professed. Sister looked attentively. There she was, Beth's oldest daughter, Sister Raquel, looking amazingly like her mother. The choir burst suddenly into the stirring "Ecce Sacerdos" which marked the entrance of the Bishop preceded by the clergy.

Sister sighed to herself and looked questioningly at the tabernacle. "Dear Lord," she said mentally, "this is too much for me. May I for just a few minutes think about the past?" The answer seemed to be in the affirmative and so, as Sister Raquel took her place, her aunt stepped into the land where memory is king.

It was a gray April afternoon, Sister recalled, when she called on her Pastor for the third time within a month to discuss with him her entrance into Religion. Father Haeger had known her all of her twenty-two years and had watched her change from Edie, the tomboy, into Edythe Winchester, campus belle. He had been surprised and a little dubious when she told him she wanted to be a nun.

"How long have you had this desire, Edythe?" came his even tones, as he faced her across his desk.

"About a year, Father," was Edythe's reply. Her tone reflected urgency. "I haven't said anything to anyone because—well, I guess I was just fighting it out with myself. But now I'm sure, Father, I'm certain it's the only thing I want to do with my life. I'm afraid you think this is just a passing fancy, but really I . . ."

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"Have you thought of any particular Order? There are many from which to choose, you know."

Her face relaxed some of its strain. "Yes, I have, Father. It's the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory. They do social and catechetical work here in this country and their novitiate is in Huntington, Indiana."

"Oh yes, I know of that community. A very good work they do, too. So you think you'd rather be a home missionary than teach school?"

"Father, it appeals more to me because it seems that in the work these Sisters do I could reach the really poor, those who might never hear of God or of His Church except through my efforts."

"Now there's one thing more, Edythe. Have you spoken to your parents of this desire?"

Her brown eyes met the gray ones of the priest. "No, I haven't, Father. And I'm not looking forward to the job, either."

Before Father terminated the interview, he advised her to make her intentions known to her parents as her next step. Edythe left the rectory parlor for the church, her spirits in complete accord with the mist which seemed to envelop the world.

SISTER was jerked back to sudden reality as the Bishop began to question the postulants, who were now kneeling at the Communion rail.

"Do you sincerely desire," came his solemn tones, "to be received as novices in this community of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters?"

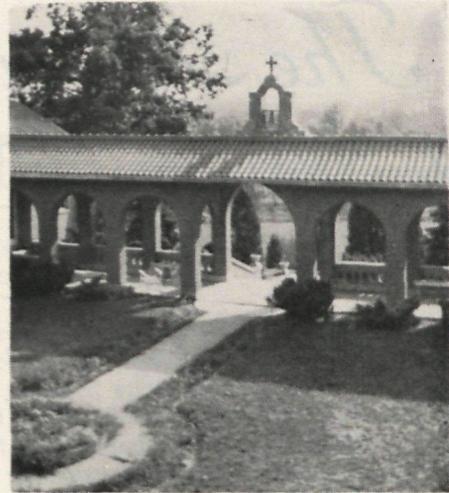
"Yes, Your Excellency, we so desire," they chorused in reply.

"Will you promise to observe faithfully. . . ."

SOMEHOW the questions reminded Sister of the ones she had heard that evening, long ago, when she had faced her father in their smartly furnished living room. But how different had been those questions.

"Edythe, this is nonsense," she could still hear her father saying. "I can't believe you intend to go through with this thing. You finished college just last June and you like your job. Why can't you tell me what is wrong? What is it that you are trying to escape?"

"Dad, it isn't that," she had tried to keep her voice calm. "I have nothing to run away from. It's just that I think I have a religious vocation and I want to follow it. I can't stay on in the world and do that."



View of cloister walk, taken from patio at Victory Noll.

"Nonsense, Edythe. In the first place you're too young. Twenty-two is no age to make up your mind to dispose of your life in this manner. Besides . . ."

"But, Dad, you've told me, yourself, you were in business in Manhattan when you were only twenty-one."

"That's beside the point. Circumstances in my case were different. My parents were dead and I had no home to leave. Your mother and I have given you everything—many things we didn't have. But it doesn't seem to have satisfied you. Now if it were Beth who wanted to do this I could understand."

They were both on the verge of tears. They had always been such pals, she and her dad. With him she had hiked, hunted, and fished, ridden horseback, or shot bull's eyes at targets with her shiny .22. Such sports had no interest for her gentle sister, Beth.

Edmund Winchester, practical Catholic though he was, had no desire and no intention of seeing his favorite daughter a nun. "I can't understand you, Edie," he continued, "you've always been happy, contented with life. Tell me, what is making you dissatisfied now?"

It had taken a lot of persuasion and considerable help from her mother before her dad could be convinced that his daughter's vocation was not a passing whim, one that had its source in some present unhappiness. Of course, he had given his permission at last—reluctantly to be sure—but long before his death he had become proud to be the father of a nun.

The last postulant, carrying the blue habit and white veil she had received from the Bishop, left the chapel, and the Litany of the Saints

began. As one after another the great ones of the Church were paged, Sister's memories turned to the days of her postulancy and novitiate.

OH, the heartaches of that first homesick week in the convent! She felt she had left all that meant anything to her for—she wasn't sure just what. Yet how quickly had this lost feeling given way to one of spiritual aliveness, of the worth of her calling, and then to one of happiness.

Although Edythe had found herself without many of the diversions on which she had formerly depended for pleasure, the enjoyment she experienced in the company of the other postulants began to compensate for this loss. She learned that her Mistress loved her as a child of predilection, not for what she was but for what she could become. Edythe found herself striving to be worthy of this trust and came gradually to return the love. This harmony of spirits constituted a genuine joy.

What fun she had had, playing, working, and studying. How amazed she had been to find that Victory Noll postulants played softball and volley ball and games she hadn't played since childhood. She had really been surprised when informed she should regain the weight she had so painstakingly dieted away.

She came to love deeply her daily religious exercises, especially the august sacrifice of the Mass in which she took part each morning. She became closer to our Lord than ever before. He was the Lover of her soul in a very real sense. In possessing Him she realized she wanted for nothing.

OH, she had her troubles all right. There were times when her lightheartedness reached its capacity and bubbled over into ill-concealed giggles. It was especially trying to get these spells in chapel where even a slip in the prayers by a companion became funny. Then there had been some real struggles with self, a four letter word which represented plenty of opposition. It was grace alone, she realized, which had achieved the victory.

After her postulancy, she had begun the two years of novitiate. Life then became a little more serious, as the joyous abandon which had characterized her postulant days gave place to a more thoughtful realization of the life to which she had been called. Self-sanctification, she had concluded, was not exactly a leisure time occupation. Soon she learned to love the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception which she recited daily with the Community in

honor of the lovely Lady she had always regarded as her spiritual Mother. Her devotion to Mary was like a vine entwining its fruitful branches among her earliest remembrances.

THE Litany of the Saints ended and the new Novices, garbed in their blue habits and white veils returned to chapel. Once more they entered the sanctuary and received from the hands of the Bishop the rosary which they would recite daily for the rest of their lives; the small silver medal which would be replaced at profession by the larger medal and chain of the professed Sisters; and the crucifix, blessed with the indulgence of a happy death, which they would carry to the sick and the dying and which, please God, would be pressed to their own lips at that moment when they would render their souls to their Creator.

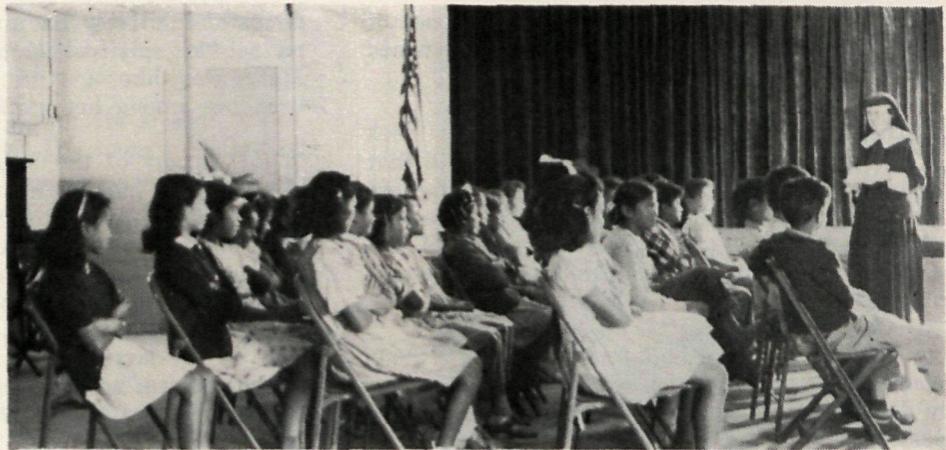
Now the last novice was entering her pew. The Bishop rose, and motioning the Sisters to sit down (Sister Edith Marie thought this was a good idea in view of what was coming), solemnly read the names by which the new novices would henceforth be known.

Then the Mass began and Sister collected her thoughts so that she might concentrate on the Holy Sacrifice, which, by the way, she was offering for the perseverance and sanctification of Sister Raquel. At the Communion of the Mass those who were to make their profession entered the sanctuary. The Bishop held the Sacred Host before each of them in turn. Presently Sister heard her niece pronounce in firm tones the formula of profession. Sister Edith Marie prayed fervently that Sister Raquel would prove a worthy spouse of Christ.

As Mass ended, the organ swelled in the recessional, "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," and the congregation followed the new Novices and Professed Sisters to the reception room.

Sister Edith Marie rose in her turn and stepped into the crowded aisle, the beauty that had been hers as a younger woman still clinging to her like a melody that defies oblivion. As she passed down the aisle she glanced up at the window on which was depicted a Sister of her Congregation, with an adobe mission church of the West behind her and two poorly dressed children at her feet. That was the role Sister herself had filled the past twenty years. Unforgettable years they had been, grace filled and of intense activity, years spent in "instructing the poor neglected little ones of the flock so dear to His Sacred Heart." She hoped many more years of service would follow . . . and then—home, Eternity.

When Will Others Come?



by Sister Mary Karl

PRIOR to her Silver Jubilee in 1947, Sister Marie Benes, one of our pioneer Missionary Sisters, was stationed for some years at Victory-Noll. Not many months before her death in May, 1948, I inquired one day whether I might ask her a personal question. Pleasantly she gave the permission.

"TELL me," I queried, "when you and Sister Julia went to the Southwest in 1922 to begin your work out there, how did you feel about it? Did you think more about what you personally were doing right then, that is, were you mainly thinking of it as your *own* work of helping the poor there? Or, did you really look ahead to what was going to happen, and know that *your* work was just the beginning, that some day we would be a whole community of Sisters following you and doing the same work? Did you really expect that, or were you then rather thinking only of fulfilling your personal vocation?"

"OH, no!" her answer was quick and definite. "We knew that *our* work was just the beginning. It was planned that way from the very first, and we expected it to grow as it has. We knew that *the plan was complete in the mind of God*, and though we were then only two to begin the work, in time with His help it would develop." Sister Marie did not know what a lifetime cameo of memory she was giving me as she paused momentarily and continued thoughtfully. "Sometimes, when we would be going in for prayers, and I was closing that big door of the church at Watrous behind me, I would look out for just a moment, and wonder: 'When will others come to help us?'"

THE remembrance made a charming picture. A slender young woman in the neat blue-and-white habit of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory, framed in the doorway of the

old mission church in New Mexico, gazing out to the far distance with a hope that was also a prayer: "When will others come to help us?" Bear in mind that she and Sister Julia were then the only Sisters in the field, that as yet only a few more young women were interested, that our infant community had no permanent home or means of support, and you will know what calm heroism of faith is contained in the question.

TODAY'S visitors to our Mother House here at Victory Noll find that the vision, the faith which went into the beginnings of our community have been fully ratified by Almighty God. Sometimes visitors ask questions which, years ago, were easy to answer. If we try to give a complete answer now, we find ourselves in a maze of descriptive details concerning one interesting missionary activity after another. That hope-filled "When?" has been partly fulfilled by the nearly three hundred religious of Our Lady of Victory who carry on today's missionary activities. The work has in consequence increased, not only in personnel and number of missions, but in the rich opportunities for the service of souls which have been presented to us during the years.

"WHAT do you do besides teaching public school children?" we were asked not long ago. Besides teaching religion to Catholic public school children, the work of our community as a whole includes every phase of missionary activity: home visiting, social service, the conducting of clinics, settlement houses, or youth centers, parish census-taking, the promotion of sodalities and recreational activities; in a word, any activities in which missionary religious can engage, which will promote the welfare of souls. Some of these are specialized works, and when necessary, special training is provided for the Sisters who will carry them on. The general

works of the community, for which the Novitiate studies at Victory-Noll especially prepare our Sisters, are catechetical teaching and social service activities.

"DOES the word, missionary, mean that you will be sent abroad? What are *home* missions?" The Constitutions which govern our community would permit us to establish foreign missions, but we were especially founded for work in the United States. At present missionary needs here are far from filled. Let me describe a typical "home mission" district, scarcely thirty miles from one of the largest cities in our country. There are a number of towns in this district, and in those which concern us there are seven parishes with a resident pastor. However, these seven pastors must care for *fourteen* parishes or missions in all. There are only two parochial schools among them. Yet, *each* pastor has the obligation of imparting a knowledge of Christian doctrine to *all* the children under his care, and seeing that they are prepared for the Sacraments.

DO you wonder that these good priests bless the work of the Missionary Sisters, who, living in a convent centrally located, can drive to one or more of these missions every day and gather the children for religious instruction after school hours? Classes are given regularly either once or twice a week during the school year in all fourteen localities, so that religious instruction is systematically imparted. Our classrooms are the church, some other available building, or a room in a private home, whatever facilities we can find near the school the children attend.

THE story of such work may lead to a question about cars. "Let me watch! I *never* saw a *Sister* driving a car before!" a visitor once ejaculated when she saw one of us driving off with a companion. True, teaching and nursing Sisterhoods would not have much use for a car, but any missionary community is grateful for the advantages of modern travel. (Our pioneer Sisters at first used horse and buggy.) The car represents to us what the well-equipped schoolroom means to the teaching Sister, or the scientifically-equipped hospital to the nursing Sister: the mechanical help through which a good part of our work for the salvation of souls is carried on. While it is not obligatory that all our Sisters drive, most of us do know how to handle a car.

A SERIES of questions about our spirit and community life can be answered as one. "Do you wear a rosary? a crucifix? Is your habit black? Do you say Office? What community prayers do you say?"

THE soul of all the active works of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory is our consecration to Our Blessed Mother. On the day we receive the habit we consecrate ourselves to her according to the method recommended by St. Louis de Montfort. This means we give ourselves to her, begging her to use us as she sees fit for the glory of her Divine Son, and to bless and purify all our works that they may be more pleasing to Him. Thus, these active works, which otherwise might be matter of distraction rather than recollection, are animated by the spirit of the Holy Mother of God; so that even in the midst of pressing missionary duties, we are spiritually sustained by our dependence on her for help in every need and the certitude that that help will not be wanting.

THEREFORE our habit is blue-and-white, to honor Mary. Practicality dictates a *navy* blue, which is sometimes mistaken for black by visitors. Our habit and veil are purposely of a very neat and simple design, due to the active work which takes us into the "highways and byways" day after day. As a religious symbol, we display the medal and chain received at profession. The chain is symbolic of our consecration to Mary; the medal bears on one side the image of Our Blessed Lady of Victory, and on the reverse our cherished motto, "All for Jesus through Mary," together with the symbols of the religious life, a cross and crown of thorns. We carry our rosary with us always; both rosary and crucifix are blessed by the Bishop and given to each Sister when she receives the habit.

OUR prayers, which reflect our motto and are offered in common, include the usual spiritual exercises of a religious community: morning and evening prayers, daily Mass, Holy Communion, meditation, rosary, examen. We recite daily the "Little Office of the Immaculate Conception." This is a collection of hymns and prayers somewhat in the form of the Divine Office. The hymns form a jewel-like crown of praise for the Holy Mother of God. They are composed of beautiful aspirations, mostly from scriptural sources. The prayer honors her Immaculate Conception. It seems very fitting that we, working in the United States, should daily honor the Patroness of the United States by using this particular Little Office.

AND so today, sharing the same spirit, wearing the same habit, doing the same deeds of love, nearly three hundred Missionary Sisters carry on the work for God envisioned by our pioneers a quarter of a century ago. Yet the needs of the home missions are far from filled, and therefore we also ask *the same question*: "WHEN will others come to help us?"



Left: Sister Teresita stops a moment to offer her petitions before the Sacred Heart statue in corridor at Victory Noll; Right, a group of Novices at Victory Noll; Below, Postulants wait while Mother Catherine adjusts camera.



Around Victory Noll



St. Joseph's building, Victory Noll, which houses offices and printing rooms where editing, printing, and mailing of this magazine goes on month after month. Dormitories are on second floor.



Postulants kneel at Communion rail, as His Excellency, the Most Reverend John F. Noll, D.D., Bishop of Fort Wayne, ascertains whether they desire to be received as Novices in the Community.

APOSTOLATE

by Sister Mary Frances

Let me reflect Thy beauty, God,
 In places where I'll be;
 Teach souls, through me, the peace and joy
 They'll have in loving Thee.

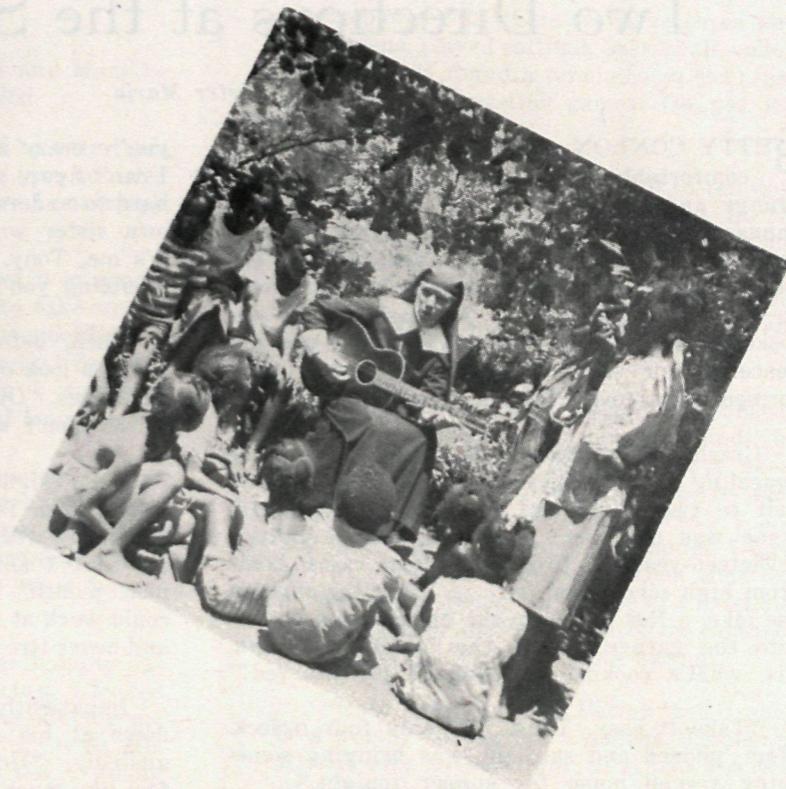
Through grace of union, day by day,
 Thine Own Self radiate
 To souls now sick with sins of pride,
 Of passion, greed, and hate.

A fuller portion, I would beg,
 Of grace and blessings rare,
 For then of my abundance, Lord,
 With others I could share.

Let me diffuse Thy spirit, Lord,
 Along my path today,
 Imparting strength and hope and love
 To all You send my way.

Right, Sister Mary Martin, on her way to missions, bids good-bye to Sister Kathleen.





In the Home Field



ABOVE: Center, Before class at San Basilio Center, Los Angeles, children recite not only the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, but that pledge which will help them become good citizens and thus always remain true to their Flag and their Country—the Pledge of Allegiance to the Cross of Christ and the Church for which it stands, One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, with grace and salvation for all.

Left: Story hour—Sister Melita with children at San Pedro, Calif. Right: Sister Mary Evelyn, Grove Hill, Ala., entertains children while on picnic.

LOWER: Left, Sister Mary Veronica with class at Elkhart, Ind. Right, Sister Philomena with children from her Arts and Crafts class at Gary-Alerding Settlement House.



Two Directions at the Same Time

by Sister Marie

BETTY CONLON sighed as she reclined on a comfortable lawn chair and gazed up at the orange and green stripes decorating the huge canvas sun umbrella which cast a cool and welcome shadow in the little garden back of the Conlon home. It was all so peaceful, so serene, so delightfully luxurious. At least, to any on-looker it would seem that way. But all was not peaceful, nor serene. Betty's mind was in a tormenting turmoil. Oh . . . if only . . . !

Crash! Bang! Bump! Rattle and swish, the squealing sound of bicycle brakes calling a jerky halt to two mistreated tires and the peaceful scene was no more! Tony was home! Betty's seventeen-year-old brother always came home from high school that way . . . over the curb on the bike, a fast swish up the drive, and a bounce into the garage. Then, the inevitable, "Hya, Sis, what's cookin' for supper? I'm starved!"

"Take it easy, Tony. It's only four o'clock. Mom 'phoned and said she was bringing something special home for supper tonight."

"Lobsters, I hope." Tony said longingly, as he slumped into a lawn chair and plucked a piece of timothy. "Whatcha reading?"

"The Bible."

"Holy Smokes, Betty! Be serious . . . whatcha reading?"

"The Bible! Look—St. John, Chaper 15, verse 8."

"Hey, what's come over you lately? I never saw you spend your vacation like this before. Last year, you flew to Boston and came home with all kinds of new clothes. This year, you didn't go anywhere. You just sit around with a dumb look on your face. What's got into you, Betty? Are you sick?"

"No, Tony, I feel fine—physically."

Tony's eyes shone with that "oh-I-get-it" look as he said, "Oh, it's Tom Driscoll, huh?"

Betty looked annoyed. "No, it's not Tom Driscoll or Harry Dolan or Pete Tingley! And it's not that I'm not going to the Tommy Dorsey dance, either. Tom asked me to go and I said no. There! Are you satisfied?"

Tony gasped, "Not going to the Tommy Dorsey dance? The chance of a lifetime . . . and

you're crazy about his music! Honestly, Betty, I can't figure you out. Mom told me women were hard to understand, but I never thought that my own sister would be one of them. C'mon Sis, it's me, Tony, your brother, tell me . . . what's troubling you?"

Then, before Betty had an opportunity to reply, a look of understanding dawned in Tony's dark eyes, "Oh, now I see, getting tired of your work. Don't want to go back, huh?"

Betty sighed and made a gesture of impatience. "No, Tony, it's not that either. You know I love my work. And what's more the boss told me that I am due for a wonderful promotion next month. You know I love advertising. I could work at copy and layouts all day and night and never tire of it. No, it's not my work, Tony."

Impatiently, Tony Conlon stood up and looked down at his sister half imploringly, half disgustedly. "Holy Smokes, Betty, a guy doesn't feel like much when his own sister has troubles and won't let him help her."

He turned, as if to go into the house, and Betty called, "Tony . . . please . . . I'm sorry, honestly. But, well . . . oh, Tony, it's so hard to explain because I'm not sure myself. Here, let me read you this letter I received this afternoon, and perhaps you'll 'latch on to the affirmative,' as you say. Remember Mary Lou Mitton?"

"Remember her? How could I forget her? What a girl! She had all the girls in my class beat a mile. And to think she had to go and enter the convent! Women! I can't understand them."

"Well," Betty continued, "this letter is from Mary Lou. Her name is Sister Maria Louisa now."

"Sa-a-y! A letter from Mary Lou . . . let's hear it. Why didn't you tell me before?" Tony's face brightened as he cross-legged himself Indian-fashion on the grass at Virginia's feet. "I wonder if she's changed. Boy, could she play tennis, and skate, and dance! C'mon, make with the music, Sis . . . let's have some chatter on the matter."

"All right, but no comments until I finish." Betty smiled, and then began,

DEAR BETTY,

May the Hearts of Jesus and Mary be ever praised, loved, and consoled.

I suppose you are surprised to hear from me so soon after writing. Well, you sounded like someone in distress, so here I am trying to offer a wee bit of cheer.

It hardly seems possible that it is almost two years since I left home to take up an entirely new way of life—the wonderful life of a Missionary Sister. Honestly, Betty, I realize now that had I known I would be so happy, I would have entered long ago.

When I finally made my decision to enter the convent, I discovered that I was being pulled two ways at the same time, and being in the middle wasn't too comfortable. From the sound of your letter, you must be experiencing the same thing.

I looked at all the world was holding out to me and saw that it was enticing. I looked at what I thought our Lord was offering me and it seemed frightening. But, with His grace and our Mother Mary's aid, I finally did get on the train and terminated my trip at this beautiful Mother House. Surprise followed surprise! In my ignorance of convent life, I had expected dull, drab buildings and interior decorating, tiring, uninteresting work, and so on. Oh, how delightful it was to find that the opposite was true. I have been overwhelmed with exciting things to do, a grand group of companions, and best of all, I have begun to really realize what it means to be loved by the Sacred Heart and how glorious is it to love Him in return.

O Betty, I fear to talk on this subject for my heart may run away with my pen. Just let me sincerely say that I've never known such happiness . . . such peace . . . such pure enjoyment of even the littlest things. I don't know exactly how to describe it to you because I know that two years ago, I wouldn't have understood at all. But now, it is all so beautifully clear.

Loving Jesus is my life, and I do all for Him in union with Mary, who offers my feeble efforts to Him for me. With Mary, I have prayed, studied many interesting subjects, gathered eggs in our chicken house (imagine me, but I really loved it), cooked in our bright new kitchen, even made our famous chocolate and peanut-butter cake once, laundered, sewed, picnicked out on our

breeze-blown hill where we have three outdoor ovens, played softball, basketball, volleyball (haven't found a tennis court yet), and many other interesting games. Oh, yes, lots of dramatics, too.

Each year, we spend a week to ten days vacationing on a beautiful island in the middle of a lake near the Limerlost land where we swim, fish, boatripe, and relax. From all this, you can see that He spoke truly when He said, "My yoke is sweet, and My burden is light."

Oh, my, I had better stop. I can answer all your questions with yes, yes, and yes. Yes! I am gloriously happy! I have never for a moment regretted entering, in fact, I regret not entering sooner. Yes! I love the life of a Missionary even though I have not as yet been professed. When that day comes, I shall become a Spouse of Christ and shall strive to imitate His life on earth by "going forth and teaching all nations."

Please pray for me, Betty, that I shall be a worthy spouse and a zealous Missionary Sister, ever grateful for this priceless gift of a vocation to do the same kind of work that Jesus did in Palestine . . . instructing the poor, the neglected little ones of His flock so dear to His Heart and bringing comfort and spiritual and temporal aid to those in need.

I shall remember your intentions in a very special way in a coming Novena to the Holy Spirit, begging Him to aid you to make this important decision.

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Maria Louisa

"THAT'S the end of the letter, Tony. Now . . . any questions?"

At last the secret was out! Tony was silent for a long time. Then, he looked at Betty, awkwardly took her hand, and gulped, "Gosh, Betty . . . gosh . . . is that what has been on your mind, honest to Pete?"

"Yes, brother mine, that is what is 'pulling me in both directions at the same time.' Tony, ever since we had the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart, ever since my first Hour of Adoration . . . it began then . . . that's over six months ago . . ."

Betty's soft voice trailed off and two uninvited tears welled in her eyes. Tony squeezed her

hand, swallowed a lump in his throat, made an awkward attempt to laugh, and said, "Aw . . . c'mon, Sis, it's nothing to cry about. If that's what you want to be, I'll be the first one to ask the Sacred Heart to bless you. You know, it makes a guy kinda proud to think that his own sister would be called by our Lord to be His Missionary. And, gee whiz, Betty, if a girl like Mary Lou could be as happy as that letter sounded, then I'm sure you could, too."

Tony suddenly realized that he wasn't being heard. Betty's eyes told a secret. She was

staring straight into the sun without seeing it. She was talking to Someone else just then—Someone to Whom she was about to give her heart. The awareness of His Presence gave her courage and strength, and in that sweet moment He heard her whisper, "Yes, Jesus, I do desire with all my heart to be all Yours forever."

A marvelous, all-consuming peace flooded Betty's entire being and suddenly she knew that she was not being pulled in two directions at the same time any longer. The way was clear. The truth was sublime. The light was in her heart.

We Visited Panama

by Sister Helen

ONE of the first things I noticed when looking out the window of my room in Miraculous Medal Convent, Panama City, was a sign on the opposite side of the street which read, "No se estacione."

Mentally I repeated the phrase over and over again. "Don't be stationary," it seemed to say. Finally the light dawned—it must mean "No Parking." I glanced out the window and, sure

enough, not a car was parked up or down the narrow street. Then my eye caught the sign once more, and I saw that directly beneath the Spanish phrase I had so laboriously and, at last, triumphantly figured out was the English translation—"No Parking."

IT was when telling about this that we learned that all signs in Panama must be printed in Spanish and that, while the English translation



Some of our little Panamanian friends. Left, a little girl from the neighborhood; center, nieces and nephew of Sister Mercedes Maria; right, Sister Catalina's nephew, with bottle of Pepsi-Cola. Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, and Orange Crush were popular drinks in Panama City.

is permissible, it must be smaller in size and placed below the Spanish wording. This is done in an effort to preserve the Spanish language as the official language of the country. To this end, too, it is required by law that newspapers having both Spanish and English sections must be folded with the Spanish section outwards.

WE spent a very interesting morning visiting the churches in Panama City. The Cathedral, completed in 1760, is badly in need of repair and redecorating, and in his pastoral letter for Lent, the Archbishop told the people that repairs on that historic edifice would soon be undertaken.

WE visited the Church of Christ the King and the new National Shrine in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The shrine, which was still under construction, is beautiful, yet we did not think it could compare with the architectural grandeur of the older churches in Panama City. We visited the church of San Francisco de Asis, which is diagonally across from the convent. This church is now under the care of the Jesuits, and we thought the little Poor Man of Assisi looked somewhat out of place among all the learned Jesuits in the beautiful mosaic above the main altar.

WE also visited the churches of La Merced, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo, and San Jose, all of which are within walking distance of the convent. The church that I liked best is the Augustinian Church of San Jose, or the "Church of the Golden Altar," as it is commonly called.

THE golden altar is magnificent. It was saved, so we are told, from the old Cathedral, when Panama la Vieja was sacked and burned by the pirate Morgan in 1671. There is a story that the altar was painted black by the friars so that the pirates would not bother to take it away. Another story has it that the altar was buried before the arrival of the pirates, while still another story says that the friars, dressed as laborers, were pulling the altar down when Morgan's men arrived. The latter, thinking the "laborers" were working for the pirates, left them unmolested. However these stories may be, it seems certain that the altar is the one removed from the old Cathedral.

WE visited Panama la Vieja one afternoon and explored the ruins. The most interesting to us was the old Cathedral, whose walls still stand. How well the people of those days built—without aid of modern machinery. We walked in what was the sanctuary and thought of the brave priests who had left the safety of Spain to accompany the explorers and bring religion to

the inhabitants of this new and dangerous country.

THEY worked well, those padres of old, for practically all of Central and South America is at least nominally Catholic, even though, because of lack of priests and Sisters, and often enough of hostile Governments, the people in many places have little practical knowledge of their Faith. There is an urgent need for missionary work in those countries if the people are to be saved to the Church.

AMONG the many pleasant experiences we had in Panama was that of meeting the various communities of Sisters working there. We were delighted with the spirit of comradeship and hospitality among them. The Sisters called at the convent to welcome us to Panama, they sent in their most tempting dishes, they invited us to their convents to see their particular work.



Mother Catherine, left, and Sister Helen, right, with group of Maryknoll Sisters, in patio at Miraculous Medal Convent, Panama City.

Only the new Panamanian Community of the Miraculous Medal and the Visitation Sisters, a strictly cloistered community who came to Panama from Colombia some twenty years ago, have novitiates in Panama. The others are missionary congregations. Some have come from Spain, others from the various countries in Central and South America, while the Maryknoll Sisters have, within the past few years, made two or three foundations in the Canal Zone. It was edifying to note the unity existing between the different congregations, each interested in the work, the problems, the joys, the sorrows, of the others.

AT the convent of the Siervas de Maria we found that the superior was on her way to Rome to attend the beatification of their Foundress, the Venerable Maria Soledad Torres y

(Continued on page 18)



Associate Catechists

Dear Associates:

WE hope that each one of you had an opportunity for a pleasant vacation, either restful or of the more active kind, according to your needs or inclination. At least four Promoters were among the favored few of our Associates who were able to make a pilgrimage to Rome. We appreciate the prayers they offered for us in the Eternal City.

NO doubt each Band member will have much to tell the others about where and how she spent her summer vacation. After a lapse of two or three months, it will seem good to get out the cards, open up the card tables and play again

CHARITINA CLUB (Paris, Illinois)

In the accompanying photograph is pictured *Miss Mary Gibbons* (seated second from left), *Promoter of Charitina Mission Club, Paris, Illinois*, and some of the members of her Mission band.

Through socials and personal donations these ladies have raised nearly \$1,000.00 for our Missionary Sisters during the past twelve years.

Miss Gibbons took part in a pilgrimage to Rome this summer. She remembered to pray for our Sisters at the principal shrines of Europe.

NOTICE

On the last Monday in September, there will be a Bowman Dairy party, sponsored by Our Lady of Sorrows Band, Chicago. All Chicago Associates are cordially invited.

for prizes—those of a temporal and even of a *lasting* kind. "All things work together unto good to such as love God." Even your evenings of recreation, when undertaken with a supernatural intention, can help save souls.

MAY I ask that each Promoter write us oftener in the future, furnishing us with all those little details regarding these monthly parties which the other ladies like to hear about through these pages? What new kinds of inexpensive prizes were provided by the hostess last month? What new methods were suggested for raising money for the missions? Perhaps we can be more helpful to you through this interchange of ideas and suggestions.

SISTER SUPERVISOR, ACM.

Miss Catherine Lichter of the Infant of Prague Band, Chicago, became Mrs. Frederick Hansen on the first day of July. Congratulations!



of Mary

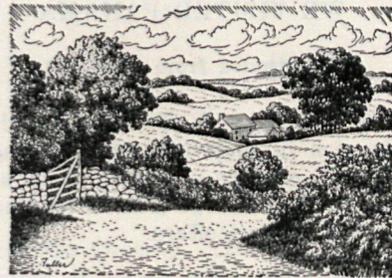
SRILLIANS OF OUR LADY

(Cincinnati, Ohio)

THESE mission helpers, headed by *Miss Marie Gouy*, sponsor the mission work of one of our Srill Sisters. We have three of them in our community. Out of the name *Srill* evolved the name of this small mission band.

For a good many years now, Sister Marguerite has received donations and mission boxes from the Srillians to aid her in working for God's poor. The Band members also send monthly donations, by way of dues, to Victory Noll.

In June, these good ladies sent a large shipment of used but very good clothing to Grove Hill, Alabama, where Sister Marguerite heads a group of our Sisters working in the Southland.



ACM BAND CONTRIBUTIONS

May 18, 1950 to July 5, 1950

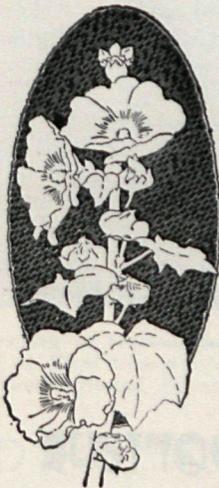
Charitina Club, Chicago, Miss Katherine Henigan	12.00
Child Jesus Band, St. Louis, Mrs. J. Butler	40.00
Florentine Band, St. Louis, Mrs. Katherine Krueger	12.75
Good Shepherd Mission Club, Chicago, Mrs. H. F. Staley	87.00
Holy Family Band, Chicago, Joseph Walz	19.00
Holy Ghost Band, Elkhart, Indiana, Miss Mary Nye	100.00
Immaculate Conception Band, Chicago, Miss Mary A. Perkins	10.00
Les Petites Fleurs, Chicago, Miss Elsie Jachmann	25.00
Little Flower Mission Circle, Chicago, Miss Veronica Foretsch	10.00
Our Lady of Fatima Group, Huntington, Ind., Mrs. Dan Herzog	4.80
Our Lady of Fatima Band, San Antonio, Tex., Mrs. E. G. Walsh	25.00
Our Lady, Queen of Angels Band, Los Angeles, Mrs. C. J. Sauthier	10.00
Poor Souls Band, Berwyn, Ill., Mrs. J. V. McGovern	13.00
St. Ann's Band, Ft. Wayne, Mrs. George M. Deininger	4.75
St. Anthony Band, Chicago, Mrs. Agnes A. Beck	58.10
St. Bridget Band, Covington, Ky., Mrs. John Busse	6.50
St. Catherine Band, Los Angeles, Mrs. M. McMannamy	22.50
St. Clare Band, Omaha, Neb., Mrs. Ann Igel	15.00
St. Irene Band, Chicago, Miss May Walsh	9.00
St. John Mission Guild, Chicago, Mrs. A. Bechtold	2.00
St. Joseph Band No. 2, Chicago, Mrs. William Schultz	7.00
St. Jude Mission Club, Chicago, Mrs. C. J. Fiala	25.00
St. Katherine Band, Chicago, Mrs. Katherine Hammer	15.00
St. Margaret Mary Band, Omaha, Neb., Mrs. Fred Shields	105.00
St. Martin of Tours Band, Omaha, Nebr., Miss Lucille Murphv	20.00
St. Philomena Band, Chicago, Miss Mary Schaefer	26.00
St. Raymond Band, Chicago, Mrs. Kathrynne Quinlan	8.00
St. Sabina Band, Chicago, Miss Marie V. Dwyer	25.00
Seven Dolores Band, Chicago, Mrs. John J. Murphv	5.00
Srillians of Our Lady, Cincinnati, O., Miss Marie Gouy	3.00
Via Matris Band, Chicago, Miss Mary Nash	15.00

ADRIAN BAND

(Chicago, Ill.)

THIS BAND, under the leadership of *Miss Florence Dietz*, sent us \$125.00 in 1949, which we think is very fine, considering the small number of ladies who comprise it.

The Promoter has not only sponsored benefit card parties for us for more than twenty years but has helped other ladies organize mission bands to sponsor our work. God bless and reward her and her co-workers a thousandfold!



ST. GEORGE BAND (Chicago, Ill.)

AT the last election of officers, Mrs. Ita Walters was chosen President of St. George Band, Mrs. Catherine Fleming was made Secretary, and Mrs. Marie Zender, Treasurer.

The Band sponsors Sister Mary Genrose Sullivan and Sister Mary Patrick O'Sullivan, both of whom resided in Chicago before entering our community.

WE VISITED PANAMA

(Continued from page 15)

Acosta, on February 5. The Siervas de Maria nurse the sick in their own homes. They make no distinction of race or creed when accepting cases, nor do they charge a fixed fee, but accept whatever the patient offers.

AT the convent of the Visitation we had the privilege of meeting Sister Catalina's sister. As soon as this Sister entered the room, we sensed we were in the presence of one of God's chosen souls. Blind for almost twenty years, Sister nevertheless attends all the common exercises, finds her way about the convent and grounds unassisted, and has charge of the linens for the community.

ANOTHER interesting visit was the one to the orphanage, grade, and secondary schools, conducted by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. This convent and school is beautifully situated, overlooking the ocean and so close to it that when the tide comes in, sprays of water often reach the porches, even on the third floor.

IT was the close of the school year and the girls from the secondary school had an exhibition of their needle work. This seems to be a very important part of the curriculum in the secondary schools, and we were glad that it was so, for it seems to fit in well with the cultural background of the Panamanian girl.

THE girls' work was exquisite. They had made every item of wearing apparel from beautifully embroidered infants' dresses to matchless evening gowns. There were little boys' suits and men's shirts. There were gorgeous linens—from ladies' dainty handkerchiefs to priceless tablecloths, all with fine drawnwork, beautiful embroidery, or other intricate stitches of which we knew nothing.

AS we looked at the girls' work, we were somehow saddened at the thought that this art has been all but lost in our day when machines can produce practically the same results at a small fraction of the cost. Perhaps we are old fashioned, but we like to see girls engaged in work which is so definitely and essentially woman's work.

WE liked the Panamanian girl. Again, this may have some relation to our antiquated ideals, but we like to see girls attired as girls—and we never saw a Panamanian girl dressed otherwise; we appreciated the fact that we never

saw a girl (or woman, for that matter) smoking in public; and we were happy to know that no Panamanian girl—at least no girl from a good, respectable home—goes out unchaperoned.

DURING our stay in Panama we were very much edified when a group of thirty-five girls from a Government secondary school came to make a retreat. These girls, most of whom ranged from thirteen to sixteen years, attended religious instruction classes, taught by one of the lay Confraternity teachers, once a week. Now, under the supervision of this teacher, they were to make a closed retreat.

THEY came shortly before the opening conference, and from the moment the bell rang for the conference, about seven o'clock that Wednesday evening, until the close of the retreat on Sunday morning, we never heard a word from any of the girls. They had three conferences a day, given by a Jesuit; they had set times for spiritual reading and meditation; they said morning and night prayers in common, attended daily Mass, and had spiritual reading at meals. During free time, they would walk up and down the patio, rosary in hand, or sit quietly with a book in chapel or patio. Not even the most fervent novice could make a stricter retreat. From such fervor we felt religious vocations for Panama must eventually develop.

Our Cover: Mother Catherine and potential Missionary Sisters. Left to right, the girls are: Eileen Olberding, Colby, Kansas; Catherine Olberding (with Mother Catherine), Seneca, Kansas; and Anna Marie Olberding, Seneca. Anna Marie and Catherine are sisters and are first cousins of Eileen's.



Mrs. Philip Zhalke, Santa Barbara, California, sister of Sister Rosario, O.L.V.M.

Frank S. Heim, Philadelphia, Pa., brother of Sister Mary Magdalen, O.L.V.M.

Mrs. J. P. Welling, Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. Gregoria Israel, Burlington, Iowa.

Mrs. Joseph Mehring, Huntington, Ind.

Herbert Young, Chicago, Ill.

Mary Engelhart, Philadelphia, Pa.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

Parental Blessing³

by Sister Mary Patrick



Kneeling to receive the blessing of his mother and dad on First Communion morning is Phillip Malone, of South Bound Brook, New Jersey.

"DADDY, Mother, may I please have your blessing?"

THE fresh young voice was that of Philip Malone, who was to receive Jesus into his soul in Holy Communion for the first time that morning. As his dad and mother responded to his request, Philip knelt quietly to receive their blessing.

THE scene was most impressive. The father placed both hands on the head of his child, as he said, slowly and distinctly, "May the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost descend upon you and remain with you forever." The mother then stepped up

and repeated the blessing. Then Philip rose and with a feeling of love and respect thanked his parents.

IN Our Lady of Mercy Parish, South Bound Brook, New Jersey, forty-one little ones, in the privacy of their own homes, knelt and received this parental blessing on their First Communion morning. The bestowing of the blessing had been explained previously to parents and children by the zealous Pastor, Reverend Francis X. McGuinness. Father told them that the parental blessing would not only bring blessings to the little ones, but would foster happiness, obedience, and love, and would make their homes models of the perfect home at Nazareth.

THE parental blessing dates back to the Old Testament. In the New Testament we read of how the Hands of Our Blessed Saviour were constantly raised in blessing. We know from Scripture, too, that little children were often the happy recipients of such blessings.

HOW beautiful to see a mother blessing her infant child, or an aged parent blessing his son. We are told that St. Thomas More, even when advanced in years, never left his father's house without receiving his aged parent's blessing.

MANY of us recall reading in the Catholic papers a few years ago, of how the Most Reverend F. T. Roch, D.D., Bishop of Tuticurin, India, met his mother at the railroad station, and in the presence of a multitude of people, knelt to receive her blessing.

MAY not this be what is lacking in our homes today? Perhaps if more parents would put into practice this beautiful Catholic custom of giving the parental blessing, they would become more conscious of their responsibility and dignity, and their children would grow more reverent and respectful.

HOW we would like to see more parents using this beautiful custom! Abbot Ignatius Esser, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad, Indiana, does not hesitate to call the parental blessing the "Sacramental of the Domestic Hearth."

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