

THE Missionary Catechist



October, 1949

I Taught Novices

by Reverend Ambrose DeGroot, O.F.M., Cap.

IT was with a feeling of misgiving that I entered the classroom at Victory Noll for the first time and faced that sea of white veils. The Sisters looked so serious. Their intelligent expressions, softened a bit by the hint of a smile, left me in a state bordering on worry. These people meant business. They wanted to learn—and I was to be the source of that knowledge.

HITHERTO in my experience with Sisters, it had always been the other way round. It was I who had been the inquiring pupil, while commanding, black-robed figures at the head of the class relayed to me a wholesome mixture of history, literature, mathematics (which I never did seem to grasp and which doubtless provided many a patient Sister with golden opportunity to lessen her time in Purgatory!), science, and above all, the consoling truths of our Holy Faith. It all seemed so easy then. It was obvious to me that the Sisters were experts in everything. They never had to prove their statements; sufficient for me to know that "Sister said so."

NOW the tables were turned. These Sisters before me, who seemed so holy, so out of this world, were here to learn—and from me! When I look back on that first class I wonder who felt sorrier, they or I.

IT took no more than a few classes for me to gather some rather deep impressions about my white-veiled pupils. I came to realize that I had before me a group of young ladies right out of American homes and American environment. They could laugh and laugh joyously. They had their problems, like the rest of us. They were human (and maybe not always just as holy as they appeared externally). But more than that. They were young women who had lived in a world of ease and comfort and pleasure for the most part, and who had tasted the refinements, the opportunities, and the lawful joys of that world. Their ideals were high. They had seen the vision of a higher life which called for a renunciation of the lower; they had heard the Master invite them into His service. With generous hearts they had flung everything aside—hurt though it might—in order to answer that invitation. They had tasted the joy that goes with sacrifice.



Reverend Ambrose DeGroot, O.F.M., Cap., who taught Religion at Victory Noll during the past three years, and who is now teaching Capuchin students at Marathon, Wis.

I TOLD myself that this was the reason why they could be so serious, and yet so happy. They were serious, because the sacrifice they had made had called for courage and thought. But they were happy, for they had tasted the peace which the world cannot give and which it will never be able to understand, since it does not know what it means to follow Christ.

NOVICES are interesting people. I know. I have worked with them over a period of many moons. Novices are usually the sincerest type of human being one can possibly encounter; yet they are very simple. Someone has defined a novice as a rational animal ever ready to laugh, who destroys everything he lays his hands on. That definition, of course, looks only to one little side of a novice's life. It does not consider the idealism and spirit of self-sacrifice, that dynamic force which inspires a young man or woman to bid farewell to the lawful pleasures of the world in order to embrace religious life with its renunciation. That is why it was always a pleasure and an inspiration for me to work with novices, whether bearded Capuchin youths, or young ladies aspiring to the life of a Missionary Sister.

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Volume XXV

October, 1949

Number 10

A Child of Mary

by Sister Mary Bernarda

I MET her somewhere in Texas a few years ago; a little Mexican girl with a lovely smile and the beautiful dark, expressive eyes of her race. In a short time, I discovered what had puzzled me in her regard. Her smile was constant, like the warm rays of the Texan sun on the adobe walls of her small home; her eyes were sad.

L OLITA was in the First Communion class and quite anxious to receive her Lord. She came regularly to class and learned the doctrine and the prayers required for the First Communicants in that parish. The child liked to help me put the classroom in order after each class. One day I gave her a miraculous medal when her tasks were finished. Lolita looked at the medal in rapture and then kissed it several times.

"O MADRE, I've been wanting and praying for a medal for such a long time . . . a medal all my own, to wear around my neck and sleep with at night. I do love the Madre Santisima so much . . . so very much."

BEFORE I realized what she intended to do, the child knelt on the floor, kissed my hand, flashed her lovely smile, and was gone. I turned again to my work. My own heart sang its measure of joy. Lolita's eyes had smiled!

AS the days went on, I became more aware of her great and tender devotion to the Mother of God. She always wore the medal on a string around her neck. She kissed it often when she thought no one was looking. Every day she brought flowers to the convent door. "For la Madre Santisima," she would say. Then when I gave her the privilege of arranging her flowers on our Blessed Mother's altar, Lolita smiled above her flowers and the smile deepened and seemed to play at hide and seek in the sudden mist of tears that filled her eyes.

I NOTICED that she frequently wore blue bows in her hair. One day, she explained, "I wear them because they are the Madre's color and I love her so much."

"Do you pray to her every morning and night?" I asked.

Lolita looked at me in surprise. "O Madre, all the time I talk to her. She is so good and beautiful. If I could only see her," she added softly. I wonder now, if this child of Mary knew how soon her wish was to be granted.

"WHAT are you doing to get ready for Jesus, Lolita?" I asked her one day. "You know that He will be coming into your heart next Sunday."

"I am not doing too much, Madre. I am asking her all the time to do it all . . . to get my heart ready for Him."

ON her happiest of days, Lolita was the most devout, the most attentive, and the happiest child of the group. I watched her return from the Communion rail. She walked slowly, her hands reverently clasped over her heart. Her whole demeanor radiated the love and joy that filled her soul. As she entered the pew, she glanced at me. I saw that there was no smile on her lips. The smile, like something from another world, was in her eyes.

TWO days later, Lolita fell from one of the swings on the school playground. She was rushed to the hospital. The doctor's verdict was final. "Serious internal injuries and no hope of recovery," he said. I went to the hospital to see her. The lovely smile was on her pale lips but pain darkened her eyes.

TWO hours later Lolita died. Her hand clasped the beloved miraculous medal.

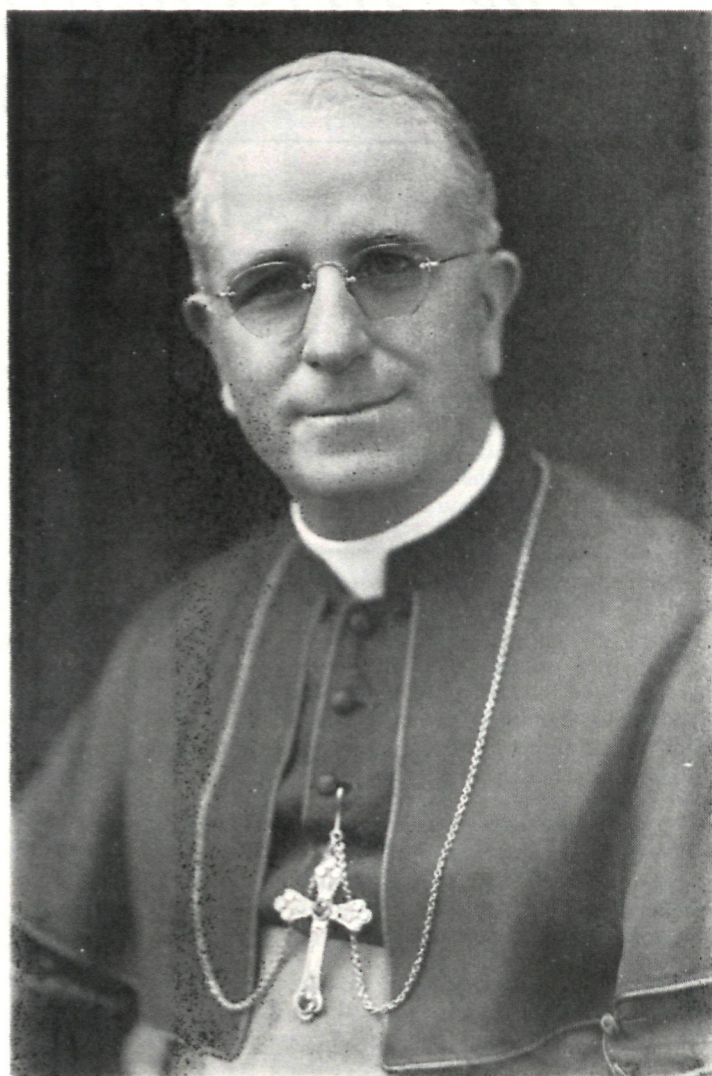
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In the Diocese of Trenton

by Sister Florentine

Bishop Griffin's goal is religious instruction for every Catholic child under his care. Ours is the fifteenth Catechetical Center to be opened in the diocese of Trenton for the religious instruction of Catholic children attending public schools.



His Excellency, the Most Reverend William A. Griffin, D.D.,
Bishop of Trenton.

OUR Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters rejoice exceedingly in the apostolate which is theirs; that is, the glorious privilege of participating in the fulfillment of Our Lord's own commission of His Apostles when He sent them forth to conquer the world and to make all men His disciples. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations," He said, "baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." (St. Matthew, 28, 18-20).

TRUE to our title of Missionary Sisters we both go and teach, and, since the work of missionaries is not only to spread the Faith to pagan nations but also to conserve the Faith of those who once became members of the Church through Baptism, ours is the blessed task of watering and cultivating the field of the Faith in our own country.

CONSEQUENTLY, when the Bishop of a diocese invites us to come to his assistance and our Superiors take the necessary steps to accept this invitation, we are happy in the

knowledge that the spiritually underprivileged and neglected little ones of another Home Mission field are to be the subjects of our services and ministrations. And this happiness was ours on the eve of October 1, 1948, when four of us began our journey from Victory Noll to New Jersey, where we were to establish the first foundation of our Community in the Diocese of Trenton.

NOW it is our pleasure to introduce to you the newest and eastern-most mission center of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters.

A SIXTY minute drive in one direction from our convent would bring you into the bustle and hum of New York City traffic. At the same distance in another direction the roar of the Atlantic breakers fills the air. But here in the valley, at the foot of the beautiful Watchung Mountains, all is comparatively peaceful and quiet. Only the shrill whistle of the huge factories, which look oddly out of place between numerous green houses, nurseries, and truck gardens, and the regularly recurring thunder of the trains racing toward the city, break in upon the calm and tranquillity of the lovely little villages nestled side by side against the mountains.

OURS is the fifteenth Catechetical Center to be established in the diocese. All of these pay a glorious tribute to the apostolic zeal of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop Griffin, who will not rest until he has provided for the religious instruction of every Catholic child



Sister Florentine and a Hungarian youngster whom she instructed for Baptism and First Communion.

under his care.

OUR region includes six parishes, three of which are still without a resident pastor; two are without churches. At one of these last mentioned places, Mass is offered each Sunday in the firehouse, and at the other, in the community hall. We also have the use of these buildings for Religion Classes during the week.

THE great melting pot of New York City has overflowed into New Jersey. Hence, there is a great mixture of nationalities here. Italian, Slavish, Hungarian, German, French, Irish, and "just plain Americans" predominate, with a sprinkling of various others. Most of these have been in the United States for a couple of generations so there is little difficulty with the English language.

THE majority of our people have lovely homes and adequate incomes, so we see very little of actual material poverty. Much more evident is the spiritual poverty, for many have long neglected God and their duties to Him. Of course, a great deal of this present apathy toward religious duties has resulted from a lack of sufficient religious instruction for many years past.

IT is hard to believe that in one of the oldest sections of our country, where Catholic Churches can be seen so close together on every side that there could possibly be so many souls in danger of being lost to the Faith. The Churches have been here, it is true, but not sufficient Priests and Sisters to preserve the knowledge and love of God. For example, in one of our parishes, the church is over ninety years old but the people have never had a resident pastor until a year ago. The neighboring parish, with a church almost as old, still remains a mission.

WE have been sad at seeing the negligence and indifference manifested by some of our people, but far exceeding this has been our joy and consolation in experiencing the truth of Our Lord's words, "The harvest, indeed, is ready." The return to the Sacraments of many of the parents of the children in the First Communion classes, the validation of a number of marriages, and, best of all, the baptism of several older children, whose rightful heritage, the Catholic Faith, had until now been denied them, have given us unceasing cause for thanksgiving to the great God of Mercy and Compassion, who will not suffer even the least of His little ones to perish and who, for this very purpose, has enabled us to go, teaching them to observe all that He has commanded.

Class in the Fire House

by Sister Mary Patrick

THE Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Victory usually has a great variety of classrooms. I have pleasant memories of teaching in garages in California, under a large mulberry tree deep in the heart of Texas (memories not so delightful when I think of the berries gently falling), or again of teaching in a tiny choir loft in the land of enchantment, beautiful New Mexico. In this particular choir loft one really risked losing her head if she moved too much.

BUT it took the East to add a little color to the picture by using the Fire House as the most appropriate place to endeavor to implant the Fire of Divine Love in the hearts of little ones.

WHEN we began our work in the *Garden State*, the popular name for New Jersey, some of us wondered just how much missionary work we would have. But as in so many other sections of our beloved Country, we have found here sheep who have strayed and lambs who needed special help and instruction in order to preserve the precious gift of Faith which was theirs.

ONE of our most interesting mission centers is South Bound Brook. This mission is under the care of Reverend Emmanuel Gauci, zealous Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Virgin Church, Middlesex, who offered the first Holy Mass in the Fire House four years ago on the feast of Our Lady of Mercy.

THIS historical village is divided from Bound Brook proper by the Raritan River. It is seven miles northwest of New Brunswick. It was here that the Battle of Bound Brook was fought on April 12, 1777, when the British force of about four thousand men marched from New Brunswick. Their aim was to reach Washington, who was then stationed at Morristown. Bound Brook was the site of Washington's winter quarters for two years during the Revolutionary War.

WHEN we Sisters began teaching here last October we wondered just which of us would teach in the Fire House. The lot fell to Sister Mary Adele and me.

HOW vividly we recall the first Sunday we assisted at Mass there. As we united with Christ the Eternal High Priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice, we prayed that the Fire of Love which we would be instrumental in spreading would reach not only the hearts of our little ones,

but also would spread its flames beyond the Fire House into the homes of the people.

AS soon as Mass was over, we met the children. They were friendly and delighted to meet the new Sisters. It was interesting to study their faces while they were passing judgment on their future teachers.

THE big question in their minds was when would they have their Religious Instruction classes. We assured them that class would be after school, and not Sundays as they were accustomed to having it. Telling them this piece of news was like proclaiming a free day, and all went home thinking that things did look rather bright and rosy.

AFTER the children were dismissed, Sister and I were taken back to the rear of the hall to see the beautiful, new, bright, red fire engine. There is something fascinating about fire engines.

WHILE we stood there, we recalled the story His Excellency, Bishop Griffin, had told us so enthusiastically about his confirmation class in the Fire House. Everything had been symbolic of the coming of the Holy Spirit, from the bright red fire engines to the girls wearing red beanies and the boys with their red ties and red carnations. The climax to that great day had come when His Excellency told the people and the children that in the near future South Bound Brook



Sister Florentine, Sister Adele, and Sister Mary Patrick ready to leave for the day's work. Sister Mary Jeanette snapped the picture.

would have a new church, dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy.

THEN our thoughts went back to the group of children we had met that morning. Realizing that only the children of good Catholic parents attended Religious Instructions on Sundays, we knew that there were many children missing. Our task was to go out into the highways and byways and find them. So we began Home Visiting—one of the most efficacious means, after prayer and sacrifice, of leading souls to Christ. It was not too long before we asked if we could have four extra rows of chairs for Mass at the Fire House.

THE School Board granted us a one-half hour released time period a week. As this period is the last hour before the children are dismissed, we can keep them as long as we desire.

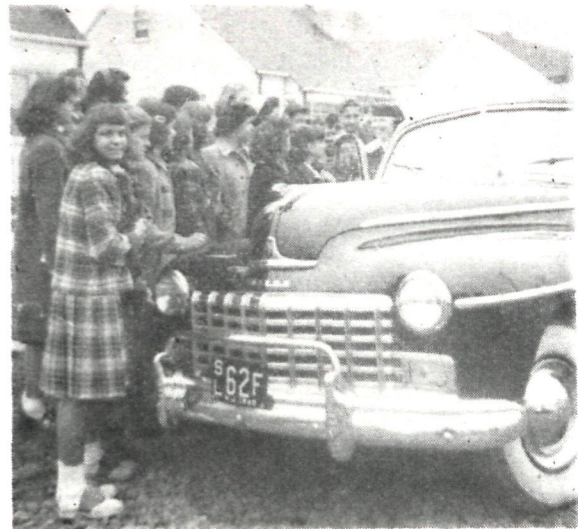
SOON the Fire House was filled to capacity. Each Monday brought an increase in attendance and, to make matters more complicated, all nine grades, from kindergarten through eighth grade, were released at the same time. Sister Mary Adele and I put our heads together and decided the only solution to our problem would be to get efficient help. So we sounded the alarm for Sister Florentine and Sister Mary Jeanette.

Would it be possible for them to answer the call? They were already teaching at Martinsville, having Released Time there from one-thirty to two-thirty. Could they possibly get to South Bound Brook by three o'clock? Sister Florentine, being an expert driver (the kind who can get places on time and still keep these well enforced New Jersey traffic laws), decided to try—and arrived on time.

THEN we thought our problems were solved and we could take things a little easier. It was only a thought. The Fire of Love was spreading, and we found ourselves knocking on doors asking if we might use private homes to hold classes once a week.

OFTEN our eyes roamed to the large *Reformed Church*, which was right across the narrow street from the Fire House. We could see the spacious classroom in the rear of the building and right next door their large club house. Oh, how we would have liked to use them! But we remembered, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors' goods," and looked the other way.

AT last, Sister Florentine found a home right across from the school where she teaches her 30 seventh and eighth grade pupils. Sister Mary Jeanette was the next one to move out of the Fire House. She found a classroom at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Konz. (Mrs. Konz, who graciously of-



Class over, Sister Mary Patrick bids good-bye to her group, as she gets into car for the return trip to the convent.

fered her beautiful living room for our use, has since become a Catholic. She made her first Holy Communion on Passion Sunday.) Sister Mary Adele and I are still teaching in the Fire House, and we are quite fortunate in having three splendid young women to assist us.

THERE is one room connected with the engine room which is used as a kitchen. This is considered, more or less, the Officers Quarters, but on Sundays it serves the purpose of sacristy and confessional. On Monday my class of about fifty takes possession of this prize room. The children are packed in somehow and are very much alive.

ONE Monday, after the children had been dismissed, Sister and I were deeply engrossed in checking names and attendance records. We were startled by a long, loud, mournful sound. The whole hall seemed to vibrate. We jumped, wondering what was happening, but quickly realized that it was the fire alarm in the next room.

AS fast as we could we went outdoors. Men were rushing, horns were honking, people were gathering. In less than five minutes men were off on their errand of mercy. We offered a fervent *Deo Gratias* that all this excitement had happened after the children were dismissed. So far we have not figured out just what we would do if the Fire Alarm rang during class time.

WE are becoming so much a part of the Fire House, we are presuming that before long we will be put on the Fire Board as honorary Members.



Our convent at Middlesex, N. J.



Grey Nuns and Missionary Sisters on steps of St. Peter's hospital, New Brunswick, N. J. During four months our Sisters enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the Grey Nuns.



Sister Mary Adele with a group of children at Basking, N. J.

My First Year in the Missions

by Sister Mary Adele

ON the 5th of August, 1948, the doors of reality opened for me for the first time. Yes, unknowingly, as I slowly walked up the aisle to the altar of God, knelt down, and began to read, "In the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . I vow to Almighty God, poverty, chastity, and obedience . . ." at that very moment of Profession reality opened its doors to me.

MY heart was pounding so loud, my eyes were so full, my joy so great, that I didn't realize the doors had been opened.

THE very next day, I found a brand new set of doors to investigate—a vacation! Several months before, I had tried, unsuccessfully, to imagine what it might be like to mix again with people in the world; to meet all kinds of people, known and unknown; relearn the art of saying "How do you do," "Good Morning," "Good Night," and other expressions that had been replaced during my novitiate days by the ejaculation, "All for Jesus through Mary."

FOR many months I had tried to forget all the world in order to find God, and now I was in the midst of that very world. Why? Later I began to realize that the purpose of this vacation was not only the visit with my loved ones, but it was to be a valuable help to me in re-acustoming myself to meeting people and, in general, getting into shape for the home visiting to come.

EVEN during this time of vacation, reality prepared another door for me. For several days now, there had been in my possession an unopened envelope containing my mission assignment for the year. Relatives and friends were more nervous about it than I was. My companion and I spent several happy moments "placing" each one of our class. The two new missions, in New Jersey and Kentucky, were out of the question, as far as we were concerned. We were sure a newly-professed Sister just never would be assigned to a new mission, and that was that. Imagine my surprise, when on August 15, during the Offertory of the Mass, I opened that envelope and saw *Middlesex, New Jersey!* I had to look several times to make sure I really saw what I thought I saw.

THUS, on the feast of Our Lady's Assumption, another door was opened to me. But there was a long wait ahead, or so it seemed then. It was not until the first day of the month of the Holy Rosary and the first Friday of that month, that we arrived in New Jersey. Our convent home, which was being renovated, was not ready for use, so arrangements had been made for us to stay at St. Peter's Hospital in New Brunswick.

THE stay at St. Peter's was an easy one—there was no washing, no scrubbing, no cooking, or dusting. In a way, this was a real advantage in bringing missionary life to me in small doses. Then, too, with all the forms and blanks and cards that had to be filled out for each of the children under our care, we all uttered many a fervent *Deo Gratias!*

AS is usual for a person not having any actual experience, the first few months of mission life were full of thorns, thistles, and brambles. The roses were there also, but the thorns were a little more noticeable.

MY first opportunity to meet some of my future charges came the first week, when we met the children from Bound Brook. It was quite a reception. The huge crowd was divided into two groups. I went with Sister Florentine and the younger group of ninety or one hundred children. All went well as long as Sister Florentine was present. But soon she was called out of the room for a few minutes. I was busy registering the children and had no idea of what was going on. In less than a moment, I felt as though I was in the midst of a wild nightmare. I had never heard so much noise in all my life. I never knew until then just how weak my voice really was. I tried in vain to quiet the children. It hasn't been quite so bad since then, thanks be to God!

MY first real class came the following Sunday at South Bound Brook's famous Fire House. My heart felt like it was going to choke me, but somehow, with God's help, I managed to hide my feelings a little. I had the older boys and girls. Things were better and went much smoother than at Bound Brook, except for all the commotion and talk going on in all corners of the hall at one time.

THE first visit I made, as a companion to Sister Mary Patrick, was to a non-Catholic mother, who definitely would not send her children to us, even though they were baptized Catholics. The entire conversation was carried on by Sister and the lady through a screen door. Ever since,

I've realized how much one needs God's help constantly when doing this kind of work. One never knows what or how the other party is thinking, and no two visits are alike. Nor can one say to one person what one might have said to another. All that can be done is to say, "Come, Holy Ghost," and be consoled by the thought Our Lord gave us about the Holy Spirit giving us the correct words at that hour.

CHRISTMAS in the missions was very different, even though we spent it at the hospital with the Grey Nuns of Montreal, who are living examples of Christian Charity. First of all, there was the dollar that Sister Superior said we could spend on one whose name we drew. Fifty cents for that Sister and the rest for the other Sisters or for oneself. When we were all finished, we had many packages under our tree. What fifty cents will buy! Try it and see!

BY this time, we felt sure that we would be moving into our own home very soon. The day finally came on February 15. We loaded the car with all our baggage and things that had piled up in the past few months. It's amazing to discover what a person can collect in so short a time! We had the car brimming full with odds and ends, and just enough room for the four of us to squeeze in. We said our last good-bys to the Sisters, waved our handkerchiefs, and we were off to the next epoch in the first year of reality.

HOME! Oh, how good that word sounded. We had waited for it so long. We continued to live from our suitcases for a little longer, waiting for the express to bring our furniture. Being at home meant washing, scrubbing, cooking, dusting, ironing, cleaning, polishing, and various other jobs, but in a way it helped to bring variety and balanced the teaching, visiting, and studying program.

I'LL never forget my first week as cook. I was sure that the week had grown into a month. Either the food was too salty or saltless or burnt. But somehow I managed to live through that week, and my subsequent turns at cooking proved just a little easier.

NO sooner did we move into our own home, than our thoughts turned to First Communion. I had one class of ten up in the hill country of Mt. Bethel, where we taught on Sundays. On Saturdays I helped the others with their special classes. I was glad to be helping, because it was an opportunity to get ideas on just how to go

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Teen-Age First Communicants

by Sister Melita

"JERRY said he wouldn't come to class today or any other day," reported Ramon, Jerry's eighteen-year-old brother and his senior by just a year.

"Is he home now?" I asked.

Yes, Sister, he was when I left. But nobody can get Jerry to come to class."

I went to the phone and called the boys' home, while Ramon and the other boys in our special class for teen-age First Communicants waited eagerly for the outcome—though they *knew*, or thought they did, just what it would be.

Jerry himself answered the phone. When I told him that class was scheduled for ten o'clock, which gave him only ten minutes to reach the convent, he replied, "O. K., I'll be there."

"Jerry will be here in ten minutes," I said in response to the questioning glances of the three boys in the room.

"You don't know Jerry," said one boy, a note of certainty in his voice.

THIS was exactly the same response I had heard from a group of Jerry's pals, good Catholics, who had promised to pray for their wayward friend, even though they were certain that nothing short of a miracle could ever make Jerry attend instructions for First Communion. Even the fact that Ramon was coming seemed to have little effect on Jerry, who was evidently even less docile and religious minded than his older brother.

"Why Jerry will never come to class in a million years!" another of the trio stated emphatically, while the third added, "The only way you'd ever get him here is to drag him in and then chain him till class is over."

"Just pray and Jerry will come," I replied. But as the seconds ticked away, I found it hard to remain hopeful, when even these boys, who knew Jerry so well, were convinced that he never would be converted. Of course, these same boys little realized the numerous prayers and sacri-

In the Home Field



Some of the twenty-nine boys who were prepared for First Communion and Confirmation in special classes for teen-agers.

fices that had been offered for them before they themselves began their preparation for the reception of the Sacraments.

AT the end of ten long minutes, the doorbell rang.

"That's probably Jerry now," I said, as I went to answer it.

"But more probably it's not," they answered, refusing to share my confidence. When Jerry stepped into the room, more than one exclamation could be heard. Quietly he took his place among the rest, while his name was entered in our class-books for the first time since he had been a problem child in religion class many years before.

What was more astounding, once he began learning about religion he became very enthusiastic and never missed his weekly class. Furthermore, he was not going to be selfish in his newly-found interest, for after a few weeks he asked, "If Eddie, my pal, comes to class, can he make his First Communion and Confirmation, too?"

On receiving an affirmative answer, he lost no time in interesting his friend. This apostolic spirit seemed to be contagious, for questions from one or another member of the class concerning the spiritual betterment of some friend were almost a weekly occurrence.

SOON we found it necessary to divide the class into two groups, and, later on, we even had to

move to larger quarters in the church auditorium. One evening the ladies, who were preparing for the weekly parish social about the time we finished our class, complained that "those hoodlums made too much noise, especially with their heavy walking."

As soon as the boys arrived the following Wednesday evening, they asked, "Did the ladies tell you that we made too much noise when we left last week?"

"Yes."

Evidently they thought I didn't realize the extent of the complaints, for they continued, "They said they were going to tell you that we were the most awful boys they ever saw and that you shouldn't let us come anymore. Did they tell you all that?"

"Yes," I answered again. "But I told them that you were good boys."

"You did!" an amazed voice exclaimed.

"You told them we were *good* boys?" another questioned, as if to reassure himself that he had heard rightly.

As soon as the momentary shock of being *good* boys had abated, they began to laugh, but their laughter was only a screen to cover up something deeper, something caused by the idea that some one trusted them.

AS the weeks advanced, it was amusing to see the boys trying gallantly to live up to their new and treasured reputation. They competed with one another in learning their prayers and catechism lessons and often made surprise calls at the convent for a check-up, as they called it. It took no little amount of prayer and effort to get them into the habit of going to Sunday Mass, but finally grace triumphed, and in spite of a dire lack of example at home, they began to observe this all-important precept.

Throughout the year, as each boy became sufficiently prepared, he received the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. The largest group consisted of nine boys who received their First Holy Communion on Holy Thursday, bringing the total for the year up to twenty-nine.

When the bishop came for confirmation, all these boys were made soldiers of Christ.

AN IDEAL HOME AND MOTHER

MARYSDALE is Mary's own place, the Church is the Immaculate Conception, and the families have special devotion to the Mother of God. The family rosary is said in almost every home every evening, and in many of the homes the children lead the rosary.



No, this is not a catechism class, but the Singer family at Marysdeale, Ohio. Fortunately for Little Brother, the baby is a boy.

The Singer family, pictured above, is just one of these families. The four oldest girls are in school and in catechism class. They are all A pupils in religion, for their mother takes time each evening to help them with their catechism.

Besides the regular work which this large family entails, Mrs. Singer makes all the children's clothes and puts up several hundred quarts of fruit and vegetables during the summer.

It is a picture to see the family at Mass on Sunday. The two older girls sing in the children's choir; the others are in the seat with Mother at one end of the pew and Dad at the other.

If we were asked to pick out an ideal Catholic home and mother, the Singer home and Mrs. Singer would certainly be our choice.

Sister Mary

Paulding, Ohio

OUR COVER: Judith Ann Picard, of Kansas City, Mo. Judith Ann isn't old enough to go to school, but she likes to look at the pictures of Baby Jesus and His Mother in her book.



"Say the Rosary every day to obtain peace in the world and the end of wars."

Our Lady of Fatima.

Dear Associates:

AGAIN I urge the daily recitation of the *Family Rosary*, where possible, rather than private rosaries, as a devotion most pleasing to Our Blessed Lady, and extremely efficacious in drawing down the blessings of Heaven upon you and your dear ones.

THIS month, I am making a special plea for news about your club activities. Any information that would be of general interest is most welcome. In the case of big parties, you might tell us about special entertainment features, about table and door prizes, about the decorations used and table favors. In the case of small house parties, you might tell us how you devoted the period. Did you open the meeting with prayer—which prayer? Was a letter read from the Missionary Sister whom your group sponsors? If you make things for mission boxes, what did you make this month? You might also want to send us a cake or salad recipe which we could pass on, through our pages, to an Associate who plans to entertain soon.

WHETHER or not these two pages are to be interesting and mutually beneficial to our Associates, depends entirely on the material you furnish me in your letters.

Devotedly yours in Jesus and Mary,

SISTER SUPERVISOR, ACM.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART BAND

(Appleton, Wis.)

RECORDS show that the members of this Band sent us their first donation in 1933, and have aided us ever since. Only last month, we received a letter from *Miss Helen Arens*, the present Promoter, in which she enclosed a check for \$75.00. This Northern Wisconsin Band sponsor our Sister Marian Frances, who is also from that section of the country.

Associate Catechists

ST. ANTHONY BAND *(Chicago)*

OUR Chicago Associates all know *Mrs. Agnes Beck*, founder and promoter of this Band, as an indefatigable worker for our Sisters and the poor under our care. Mrs. Beck does not neglect a single opportunity to make our work known in her great metropolis, or to secure contributions for our cause.

Usually, the Promoter and her friends stage two large parties a year—one in the Spring and the other in the Fall. Together they net about five hundred dollars.

When one recalls that our Promoter is in poor health, the results obtained are the more surprising and the more appreciated, too.

VISIT VICTORY NOLL



Reading from left to right: Dorothy Spitzer, Catherine Lichter, Mrs. Mathias Lichter, and Florence Spitzer, all members of Infant of Prague Band, Chicago.

of Mary

HOLY GHOST BAND (Elkhart, Ind.)

A LETTER from the Promoter, *Miss Mary E. Nye*, informs us there are thirteen members in her Band. The latest member to join is Mrs. D. A. Peterson, mother of Sister Mary Christine, one of our second year novices. These ladies rate among our top ranking contributors. They are interested in our community as a whole, and in those Sisters, in particular, who entered our community from Elkhart and Goshen. In addition to Sister Mary Christine, these are: Sister Marie Vianney, Sister Noreen, and now Sister Mary Monica, one of our new novices, who received her white veil in August.

ST. JUDE BAND (W. Allis, Wis.)

In glancing through old copies of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST, we note that this Band was founded on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in 1935, and that the founder, Mrs. E. J. Polakowski, has served continuously as Promoter ever since. We hope the Band members have a little celebration this month, commemorating their fourteenth birthday. The Band has always sponsored Sister Mary Catherine (Brohman).



ST. JOSEPH'S BAND, CHICAGO, MOURNS A DEATH

Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of James Robinson, recently deceased. He leaves a widow, Harriet Robinson, and three grown daughters. He was the son of Mrs. Catherine Service.

Our Associates everywhere will recall that Mrs. Service founded St. Joseph's Band, in Chicago, and for many years served as Chief Promoter of all the Chicago Bands.



ACM BAND CONTRIBUTIONS

July 8, 1949 to August 17, 1949

Charitina Club No. 1, Chicago, Katherine Hennigan	6.00
Dolores Mission Guild, Chicago, Mrs. C. J. Klingel	83.00
Immaculate Conception Band, Chicago, Mary Perkins	17.00
Immaculate Conception Band, Detroit, Lillian Dunn	17.45
Mother of Perpetual Help Band, St. Louis, Mrs. K. Krueger	8.00
Our Lady of Fatima No. 1, San Antonio, Tex., Mrs. E. G. Walsh	25.00
Our Lady of Fatima No. 2, Huntington, Ind., Mrs. Dan Herzog	3.00
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Band, Appleton, Wis., Helen Arens	75.00
Poor Souls Band, Berwyn, Ill., Mrs. J. V. McGovern	12.00
Sacred Heart Mission Soc., Newark, N. J., Mrs. M. DeVito	190.00
St. Ann Mission Circle, Fort Wayne, Ann Brink	3.60
St. Catherine Band, Los Angeles, Mrs. M. McMannamy	32.50
St. George Band, Chicago, Marie Vaughn	27.50
St. Joseph Mission Club, Baldwinsville, N. Y., Mrs. M. Gosiore	10.00
St. Jude Mission Club, Chicago, Mrs. C. J. Fiala	10.00
St. Luke Band, Chicago, Mrs. Edward Vaughn	65.00
St. Margaret Mary Band, Omaha, Nebr., Mrs. Kate Shields	15.00
St. Mary Sod. Band, Detroit, Ann Huhn	13.00
St. Philomena Band, Chicago, Mary Schaefer	20.00
St. Raymond Band, Chicago, Mrs. K. Quinlan	9.20

ST. LUKE'S BAND PROMOTER DIES

IT grieved us to learn of the death of Mrs. Edward Vaughn, Promoter for the past three years of St. Luke's Band, Chicago. One of her daughters, Mrs. Gertrude V. Schenk, had just written us that she seemed a bit better and had attended the June meeting. St. Luke's Band has been in existence for at least fifteen years. We believe Mrs. Vaughn was a charter member. We are certain she has gone to a rich reward. R.I.P.

Jottings from Panama

A Jesus por Maria

Medalla Milagrosa Convento
Ciudad de Panama
August 5, 1949

DEAR Sisters,

MAY Our Lady of the Snows shower upon you the graces and blessings you desire! We are thinking of you today. In fact, we have been thinking of you during the past eight days of your retreat.

YESTERDAY we joined, in spirit, in the quiet hustle and bustle of the preparations for today's feast. This morning, also in spirit, we were present at the beautiful and inspiring ceremonies of Investiture and Profession. We heard the sweet strains of the organ and the stirring words, "Veni, Sponsa Christi," and our prayers doubled in fervor and tenderness for those making vows.

OUR hearts beat in unison with those of our three Silver Jubilarians, as we knelt with them in spirit and thought of the years they have spent for Christ in generous self-giving. With them we offered thanks for His mercy and goodness to them. "Accipe coronam,"—yes, accept the crown which has been prepared for you . . . May that crown shine with ever-increasing luster for all eternity. We have joined with heart and soul in singing the exultant Magnificat and the majestic Te Deum.

AND while thinking of our Sisters at Victory Noll, we have not forgotten those in the missions, who gathered together at our central houses for retreat, study, and rest. We have prayed for them that they may return to their mission convents refreshed in body and soul so that their labors for the coming year may bear much fruit for the salvation of the souls committed to their care.

WHILE you have been on retreat, we have been enjoying a week's vacation in Juan Diaz, a little village ten miles from Panama City. "La Cueva" is the name of the *finca* at which we are staying, and "La Cueva" is, indeed, an appropriate name for it, as it is like a little cave tucked away, not too far from the highway, but hidden among coconut, mango, lemon, grapefruit, orange, and banana trees. The house is large enough to take care of at least twelve persons

comfortably, has all modern conveniences, and outside are a fireplace and picnic table. The large, beautiful grounds, with their peaceful quiet and privacy, have made it an ideal novitiate.

WE have permission to have the Blessed Sacrament during our stay at La Cueva, so we made a lovely little chapel out of one of the rooms and have been having daily Mass. A Jesuit drives out each day from the city to offer the Mass.

PANAMA has a new President. He is none other than Dr. Daniel Chanis, husband of our good friend and benefactress, Isabel de Chanis. President Diaz, who was inaugurated in October, 1948, has had to take a six months' leave of absence on account of serious illness. Since Dr. Chanis was Vice President, he assumed the Presidency on July 29. We are sorry Dr. and Mrs. Chanis were unable to visit Victory Noll, as they had planned, when they were in the States a month ago.

August 6—Feast of the Transfiguration

THIS morning we saw how the coconuts are brought down from the palm trees. A boy, as agile as a monkey, climbed the tree. He had a machete, a long sharp knife, tied at his waist and a coiled rope around his shoulders. When he reached the coconuts, he tied the bunch with the rope and with one stroke of the machete cut and let it slide down to the ground. The bunches we saw had from twelve to fifteen pipas. A pipa is a green coconut at the stage where the water from it makes a cooling and delicious beverage, and the soft white meat of the coconut is eaten with a spoon.

August 7—Sunday

WE slept late this morning as Mass was not to be until nine o'clock at the little mission church. We were awakened about seven-thirty by the crowing of the roosters and the songs of the birds. Of all the birds, Sister Monica's pet Panamanian canary had the loudest song. A Panamanian canary is black with a yellow breast and specks of white on its tail feathers. Our little *Monjito*, as Sister has named the canary, happens to be blue, too, just now. A few weeks ago he was sick and we took him to the veterinarian and he painted him with some blue medicine which hasn't come off yet, in spite of all

the baths the canary takes. Monjito sings beautifully, seems to understand everything, calls for his seeds and water, eats and drinks out of our hands, and makes a real pet.

THIS evening the novices enjoyed their first steak-fry at the outside fireplace. We also had yucca fried like French-fried potatoes and equal to them in taste. Yucca roasted in hot coals is also very tasty. For a beverage we had a *chicha* made from the milky juice of the guanabana.

WE shall always cherish the memory of the days spent with the novices at "La Cuevita" in the jungles of the Republic of Panama. Had

our dear Archbishop been with us to say Mass and enjoy the beauty of the place, our joy would have been complete. We are looking forward eagerly to His Excellency's return from Holland next month.

THE novices join with us in asking God's blessing and graces upon you and your labors. In return, we ask your prayers for the novices that they may make a good, holy retreat in preparation for Profession in the very near future.

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Sister Monica and Sister Mary Bernarda

MY FIRST YEAR IN THE MISSIONS

(Continued from Page 9)

about teaching the little ones about Holy Communion and Confession. It had seemed such a tremendous responsibility to be teaching Christ's little ones about the Sacraments they were about to receive. After helping and observing the other Sisters, it was fairly easy.

ONE day I was talking to a little boy, who said he was going to receive Holy Communion on that particular morning. He had a bad cold and cough, and he mentioned he had taken a spoonful of cough medicine that morning. When I told him that he could not receive Holy Communion, he looked up at me, smiled very broadly, shook his head, and said, "Oh, yes, I can. I went to confession yesterday, and I didn't eat or drink anything this morning." I knew I couldn't convince the youngster, so I sent him over to Sister Mary Patrick. He returned, still smiling, but disappointed, because he could not receive Our Lord after having fasted. You never know what's going to happen next!

SOME time ago, I was teaching my Kindergarten and First Grade classes about how we should bow our head at the Holy Name of Jesus. During that class and several times afterwards, Jack and Carol reminded me to bow my head when, in the middle of correcting someone's manners or in trying to remember what was coming next in my story, I had forgotten to do so. After a few reminders, I was practically forced to remember, distraction or no distraction.

THE school year came to an end. It had been a most exciting year.

THE next surprise in store for me along this first year of reality was Religious Vacation School. For weeks before, all I associated with it was fear. I could not, for a second, imagine how I would be able to handle any number of children for three hours, when I could hardly keep ahead of them for a half hour. I was not long in finding out how interesting and enjoyable a Vacation School can be.

THE first year is practically at an end, and I sit wondering what's going to happen next. Suddenly, I look down at myself and realize that I have been so busy working for Christ, that I haven't stopped to notice how worn my clothes have become. I must hurry and patch these old clothes of mine so that they will be ready for another year.

AND, come to think of it, if exteriorly I'm so banged up, what must my soul be like? All those thorns, thistles, and brambles must have marred my soul a little too. Thank God our annual retreat is coming to repair that damage also. Oh, happy retreat, which will give me the graces flowing from God's merciful goodness to heal the bruises and patch up the scratches made by all the thistles and thorns along the past year's way. May it give me the strength and courage to love God more and allow that love to overflow, so that others, less fortunate than I, may also taste of His wonderful sweetness and goodness.



Mary's Loyal

MISSOURI HELPER

Dear Loyal Helpers:

It is good to be with you again, after our long vacation. Were you disappointed last month when our vocation issue crowded out our page? I like to believe you missed it.

At the bottom of this page you will find a picture of a group of Helpers from Chicago, who came to visit Sunshine Secretary in June. Reading from left to right, they are: Anne Williams, Barbara Southard, Mary Southard, Janet Peternel, and Sunshine Secretary.

If you were a bit careless this past summer in saying your daily Hail Mary for our Missionaries and the poor children under our care, please begin again to say it faithfully. We need your prayers. Also make little sacrifices from time to time—of candy, chewing gum, or a trip to your neighborhood movie—and drop the pennies saved into your Sunshine Bag. When you have one hundred pennies, convert them into dimes and send them in your dime card to Victory Noll. Do you need a dime card? Just say the word, and we will send you one. God bless you!

Mary-ly yours,

SUNSHINE SECRETARY



ABOVE is Geraldine Joyce Wolf, aged one year and ten months when this picture was snapped. She lives in Chamois, Missouri. Little Geraldine, in spite of appearances, is a delicate child. Perhaps if all of our Helpers offer one Hail Mary for her, she'll grow up so she can be a real Victory Noll Sister, if God should choose her for His bride. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Her mother made the little altar before which she poses.

Do you need a Sunshine Bag or a dime card? Write to Sunshine Secretary and she will send you either or both.

The Missionary Catechist

Helpers Pages



Are you good at geography? This puzzle is easy for those who know the forty-eight States which comprise our Nation. The gay fellow down in the right hand corner has covered all these States as a traveling salesman.

Work the puzzle as best you can and send it to Sunshine Secretary with your name and address. She will send you a holy card.

NEWS O' THE MONTH

AT the right of this column, you will find a trio of ardent workers for their parish and the Missions. They are *Hortense Elorza*, *Mary Porras* and *Maria Louisa Elorza*, of St. Agnes Sodality, Our Lady of Soledad Church, in *Coachella, California*.

Last winter they stuffed a Sunshine Bag until it held five hundred and fourteen pennies! Afterwards, they had one of our Sisters make out a check for that amount and send it to us. A short time later, Mary Porras had saved another dollar for our Missions.

We feel that these little Helpers have done exceedingly well, yet they hope to do even better next year.

October, 1949



MORE LETTERS PLEASE!

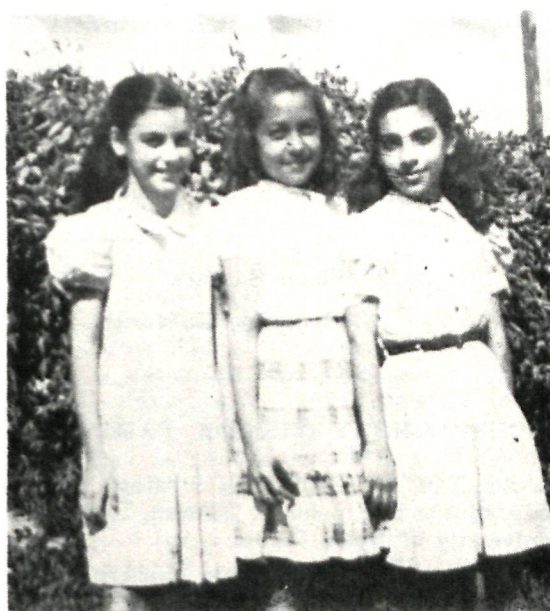
We are eager to get letters from our Loyal Helpers. Anything and everything that concerns you, home news, school news, outings, parties, hobbies, are of great interest to us.

The best letters will be published in our "Letter O' the Month" column.

Let's be hearing from you—soon!

YOUR DAILY HAIL MARY MAY—

Spur the feet of lagging children from the public schools to the center where our Sisters await them to teach them the saving truths of our holy religion.



POST CARD DE LUXE

Last Tuesday Sister brought me a post card that had just arrived. Its cryptic message scrawled in pencil and very original spelling afforded, to one who did not understand, no little amusement. To me, however, it meant something so wonderful that I still feel a quiet thrill of thankful exultation every time I think of it, like that of the angels rejoicing over the "the one sinner that doth penance."

All the boys and girls in my Post Confirmation class had made their Easter duty in due season except Tony. Some time before class ended, I was checking up on prayers and discovered that he had forgotten his Act of Contrition. Thinking that perhaps that was the main reason why he was not going to confession, I told him to study it for the next time.

The last class of the season came and still Tony hadn't recited the Act of Contrition. But I was determined that he should not escape with that assignment unfinished. Tony was invited to remain a few moments after class. No, he hadn't studied it. Thereupon we conducted a private drill class, repeating the prayer phrase by phrase, over and over, with interpolations here and there to explain motives and word-meanings.

Progress was not too rapid but as long as he was willing, we stuck to the job. Finally he was getting every word correct. I dismissed him with honor, urging him to go to confession the very next Saturday before he forgot the Act of Contrition again. I told him that my summer would be a much happier one if he would let me know that he had gone to confession. Thus we parted, I scarcely daring to hope that my ardent wish would be fulfilled.

The post card did it! On the front was a glossy print of Our Lady of Refuge Church. On the back was written the brief but telling statement, "I went to confession June 4. Signed Tony."

Sister Barbara
Monterey, California

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR PAMPHLETS

SO, YOU'RE IN LOVE! Strategy in Courtship, by the Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., of the University of Notre Dame.

DON'T KID YOURSELF ABOUT DRINK, By Rev. Hyacinth Blocker, O.F.M.

CRIMINALITY AMONG TEEN-AGERS: WHY? by the Rev. Frederick A. Houck. Price of above pamphlets, 10c each postpaid; \$4.00 per 100, plus transportation charges.

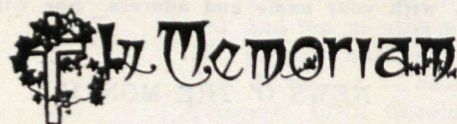
PRAY LIKE THAT, prayers before and after Holy Communion, by Chanoine J. Bouchat, translated and adapted from the French by J. Robert Charette, Windsor, Ontario. Price 25c.

I TAUGHT NOVICES

(Continued from Inside Cover)

AND so I conducted my classes. The good Sisters before me, always ready to laugh, were just as prepared to throw difficult questions my way. They wished to know their Faith, and know it well. They were preparing themselves for a great work—the task of passing on these truths to a people long neglected, a people whose souls are as priceless as those of any other human being.

I SHALL always be grateful for the grace God gave me in allowing me to spend the first three years of my priestly life working with novices, with people of such lofty ideals. It is my fondest hope that I may have been the channel for at least some of the knowledge and grace for which these chosen ones were seeking.



Rev. J. F. McGillicuddy, Holyoke, Mass.
Mrs. Anne E. Wade, Montgomery, Indiana, mother of Sister Mary Bernadette.
William E. McCoy, Hastings, Minnesota, father of Sister Mary William.
Mrs. Mary Twomey, County Kerry, Ireland, grandmother of Sister Jean Marie.
Michael Bosko, Nokomis, Ill., stepfather of Sister Veronica
Mrs. Edward Vaughn, Chicago, Illinois.
Frank T. Halloran, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Mrs. Mary Bramante, Newark, N. Y.
Josephine Westendorf, Dayton, Ohio.
John P. Goergen, Marshfield, Mass.

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

After Twenty-Five Years



Pictured above are the Sisters from Northern Indiana missions, who gathered at Gary to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first public reception of the community. Left to right, the Sisters are: (1st row) Sister Bridget, Sister Margaret Mary, Sister Helen, Mother Catherine, Sister Benigna, Sister Margaret; (2nd row) Sister Bernadette, Sister Mary Veronica, Sister Marian Frances, Sister Mary Magdalen, Sister Roselene, Sister Alice Marie, Sister Mary Rita, Sister Rosella; (last row) Sister Josephine, Sister Ann Joachim, Sister Effie, Sister Mary Agnes, Sister Viola, Sister Mary Louise, Sister Mary Irmina, Sister Marion, and Sister Mary Imelda.

THE feast of Our Lady of Victory, patronal feast of the community, has always been a favorite one with Mother Catherine and Sister Helen, but that particular feast in the years 1924 and 1949 will forever remain especially dear to them.

Wasn't it on that day in the year 1924 that they received their habits in the first public reception of the young community? The ceremonies, simple but impressive, took place at a solemn High Mass in St. Anthony's Chapel of the Gary-Alderding Settlement House.

And wasn't it on the same day in the year 1949 that Mother Catherine and Sister Helen knelt again, side by side, in that same devotional chapel to assist at the High Mass offered for them on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their

clothing?

The same scene, the same characters now as then, but, oh, the progress the little community made during that time! We can well imagine the prayers of humble gratitude that ascended to heaven that morning last May when Mother Catherine and Sister Helen glanced back over twenty-five years and saw the six-room apartment at the Settlement House, which served as the Mother House for the infant community, change into the beautiful buildings of Victory Noll; the ten Sisters, who made up the community in 1924, increase to the three hundred and six who now comprise the community, the one mission center at Ocate, New Mexico, expand to the forty-one mission convents now located from Coast-to-Coast in our own country. Te Deum laudamus.

Special Notice

to

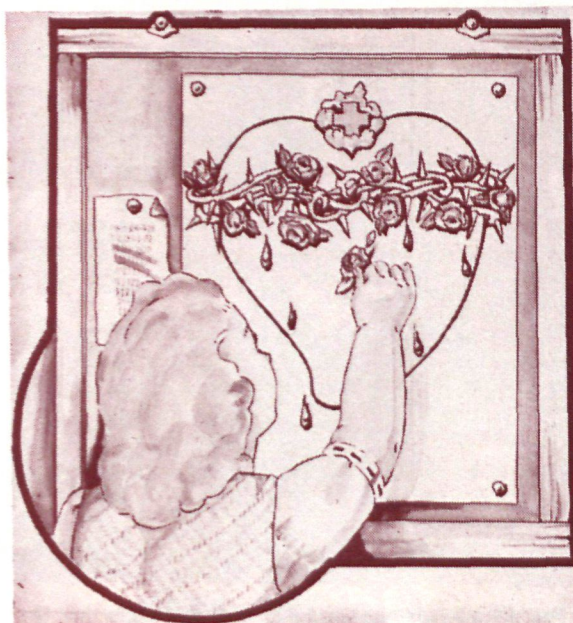
Priests

Religious

Confraternity Teachers

*Every Boy and Girl
An Apostle
of the
Sacred Heart*

ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM!



Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters have prepared a simple mimeographed teacher's outline which gives a practical method for introducing the L'ARCISIAN PROGRAM—the children's apostolate of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart—into catechetical classes for public school children.

Drawings of actual charts used in such classes are included, as well as a list of source material which may likewise be useful to Sisters teaching in parochial schools.

Sister Secretary

Enthronement of the Sacred Heart

Victory-Noll Regional Secretariate

Box 109, Huntington, Indiana

Dear Sister:

Kindly send me a copy of your booklet, "Oil for the Lamps of Religion Teachers." I enclose 10c to help cover cost.

Name Address

City Zone State