

The Missionary Catechist



Volume II

Victory-Noll, Huntington, Indiana, August, 1926

Number 9

GUADALUPE

IN one of the suburbs three miles northeast of Mexico City, stands a shrine which has for the past four hundred years played a most important part in the Religious history of Mexico. This is the shrine of Guadalupe. Pilgrimages have been made to this shrine almost uninterruptedly during the past four centuries.

Guadalupe is, strictly speaking, the name of the miraculous picture, but it was extended to the Basilica containing this picture and to the town that has grown up around it. This miraculous picture or image really constitutes Guadalupe. It is the cause for the existence of the shrine. It is the occasion for the wonderful devotion manifested therein.

The historical fact contained in the story of Guadalupe is more interesting than any work of fiction. To a poor humble Indian, Juan Diego, hurrying up Tepeyac hill to hear early Mass in Mexico City, the Blessed Mother of God appeared on Saturday, December 9th, 1531, and sent him to the Bishop of the city with the command that he was to have a temple built on the spot where She stood. The Bishop did not immediately believe the messenger. He cross-examined him and finally bade him ask a sign from the Lady who had informed the Indian that She was the Mother of God. Juan readily agreed to ask for the desired sign.

On the following Monday he was occupied all day attending his uncle who seemed to be dying of fever. At daybreak on Tuesday, December 12th, Juan set out before dawn to St. James' convent in order to call a Priest to administer the Sacraments to his dying uncle. To avoid the apparition and the untimely message of the Bishop, and fearing lest the Blessed Mother might reproach him for not having returned as he promised, the Indian determined to choose another road, thinking, in his sim-

plicity that She would never see him. He said within himself:

"I will go first and get the Priest for my uncle and then on my way back I will return to receive orders from my beautiful Senora and to obtain the sign I am to bring back to the Bishop."

But hardly had he reached the brow of the hill when the Blessed Virgin crossed over to meet him and said:

"What road is this you are taking, my son?"

After some words of maternal affection and encouragement, Mary assured the Indian that at that very moment She would cure his uncle. Then She again bade him to go to the Bishop. Without hesitation he boldly asked for the required sign.

"Senora, mia," he said, "send me to the Bishop and give me the proof he requires, so that he may believe me."

She told him to go up to the rocks on the hill and there gather roses in his cloak. Although the Indian knew it was neither the time nor the place for roses, he nevertheless obeyed instantly. He ran to the place designated and to his amazement found a magnificent bed of the most beautiful, sweet-scented roses. He gathered as many roses as his coat would hold and then returned to

the Holy Mother.

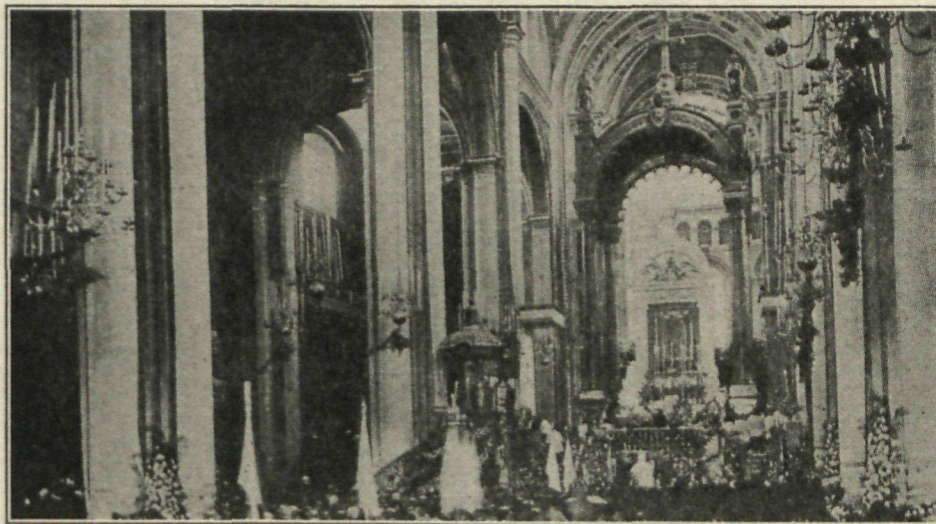
"Here, then, is the sign which you are to take to the Bishop," she said. She rearranged the roses with Her own hands and bade him keep them untouched and unseen until he reached the Bishop.

"Go tell the Bishop," She said in dismissing the Indian, "I have sent you with the sign he required and with this he will receive the courage necessary to take up the work of building a temple here in My honor."

Juan Diego immediately set out for the Bishop's palace. After some delay he was ushered into the presence of His Lordship. When he unfolded his cloak, the beautiful roses fell from it as a shower from heaven, and the whole apartment became redolent with celestial perfume. The poor Indian was startled to see the Bishop and his attendant fall down and kneel before him, for the life-sized figure of the Virgin Mother, just as he had described Her to the Bishop, was imprinted in all its beauty on the coarse mantle of Her messenger.

The Bishop, after reverently removing the cloak from the Indian's shoulders, had it placed in his private oratory and soon after it was carried in procession to the initial shrine erected at Guadalupe.

Juan related to the Bishop the promise made by the Blessed Mother to cure his uncle. By way of preliminary inquiry, Bishop Zumerraga sent two trustworthy messengers to Juan's home with orders to bring his uncle into his presence should they find him really cured. Before the messengers reached his home, the old man ran forward to meet them and recounted how at the very same hour when Mary had promised his nephew, Juan, that She would cure his uncle, She had at the same time appeared to him also, miraculously cured him, and commanded him to go to the Bishop and ask him to erect a temple in which to honor Her image under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



INTERIOR OF SHRINE

All Good Catholics Should Pray for Mexico

Guadalupe

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The term Guadalupe is a very significant term, for, according to some authorities, it signifies a river or stream of lights. And a light it has indeed been to the Mexican nation, for through the intercession of Mary, the radiant splendors of true Faith soon superseded the darkness of idolatry, so that in the incredibly short space of five years, the City of Mexico and its environs witnessed over a million baptisms, and in a short time the whole nation became Catholic.

Such then is the history of the miraculous picture of Guadalupe, which gave rise to the beautiful devotion to the Blessed Mother of God under this glorious title.

Among the many famous pictures representing the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, none is more beautiful than that of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It represents a graceful maiden of fifteen years, whose exquisitely chiseled features mirror the immaculate purity of Her beautiful Soul.

Countless miracles have been wrought by Our Lady of Guadalupe. And this miraculous image, in its marvellously beautiful shrine on the hill of Tepeyac, is in itself a perpetual miracle. At different epochs during the past four centuries judicial inquiries and rigorous investigations have been made by the most renowned scientists, artists, and pigment makers in the world, and all have agreed that this image bears the indelible and undeniable impress of the supernatural. The coarsely woven material of Juan's coat, which bears the picture, is as thin and open as poor sacking. It consists of two strips about 70 inches long by 18 inches wide, held together by loose stitching. The seam is visible up the middle of the figure. Painters have declared that the background of woven stuff was not only unfit but unprepared for the picture. They have been baffled in their attempts at explaining the mixture and coloring in the picture—the flower-like tints, the layers of deep gold in the rays and stars, the blue-green in the mantle, the rose in the flowered tunic.

The clergy as well as the laity of Mexico have been remarkably faithful in devotion towards Our Lady of Guadalupe. Nineteen popes have accorded full recognition and complete confirmation to this miraculous image. Pope Benedict XIV decreed that Our Lady of Guadalupe should be the Patroness of Mexico and declared December 12th the national "fiesta."

About three years ago, some miscreant, intent upon destroying both the miraculous picture and its shrine, threw a bomb into the basilica. Again Our Blessed Mother showed Her power and preserved Her dearly cherished image from harm. The newspapers at the time, recording this outrage, declared that from all parts of Mexico hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Indians proceeded to the famous shrine and there offered solemn thanksgiving for its preservation.

May we not cherish the hope, and send forth our fervent prayers, that within a short time the fifteen million Catholic people of Mexico shall emerge triumphant from the fiery ordeal of religious persecution to which they are now subjected by their impious rulers, and may again assemble in their national shrine and there chant the Magnificat in honor of their glorious Heavenly Patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe, for their happy deliverance and for their preservation in the Faith of their fathers.



Why Not Adopt a Catechist as Your Own?

A short time ago we received a highly edifying letter from a grand old Catholic lady, one of the old-fashioned type, with Faith as deep as a well and with a heart filled to overflowing with truly Christian Charity. In this letter the good lady sent us \$25.00 for the support of one of our Catechists. She stated that she had heard about our bursar plan and was very much interested in supporting a Catechist in honor of the Souls in Purgatory in memory of her deceased daughter.

About the same time we heard of another good Christian mother who had prayed for many years that at least one of her sons might be called to the holy priesthood or that one of her daughters might enter a convent. Our Divine Lord, however, willed it otherwise, and none of her children received this high and holy vocation. So this good, practical mother has decided, out of her frugal means, to adopt as her own a Missionary who is to labor for God's glory and humanity's salvation, either in the home or foreign Mission field.

We have often thought that surely Our Blessed Lord will not fail to bestow most abundant blessings upon such generous souls. We feel quite certain that among our readers there are charitably disposed Christian mothers and fathers, who have had the same holy thought. They have not, however, carried out their pious designs because they have been under the impression that it would cost too much either to adopt or support a Missionary. Now, they will be pleased to hear that it costs but \$25.00 a month to support one of our devoted Missionary Catechists. By contributing any amount they can spare for this purpose, they will have the consolation of knowing that they are supporting as one of their very own, a missionary constantly praying and laboring to amass heavenly merits for them, who will take the place of the daughter whom they had fondly hoped would be engaged as a Missionary in the service of God's poor and neglected children in the missions.

EDITORIAL

During the past month Victory-Noll was honored by the visit of a highly cultured and well educated Catholic young lady and her refined, gentle old mother from the City of Mexico. Arriving just at a time when the Mexican persecution was the all-absorbing topic of conversation, the young lady was the center of interest on the part of all the Catechists. She had previously written from the City of Mexico, her home, expressing the desire to become a Missionary Catechist. But when we learned the story of the marvellous work she has undertaken among the children of her sorely oppressed people, of the hundreds of souls she is instrumental in saving to the Faith, we advised the young woman, by all means, to return to her native country and continue there her truly apostolic labors among her people.

This zealous, self-sacrificing young woman, who is a public school teacher, with five companions, is engaged in teaching Catechism to almost five hundred children after the close of school every afternoon. Of course, these heroines of the Faith must do their work secretly, for they realize that if they were discovered they would be faced with certain imprisonment, and perhaps dishonor and death.

As our readers, no doubt, have read in the daily press, tyrannical laws have been revived, and new ones enacted, which penalize the teaching of religion to little children. Neither priest nor lay person may presume to teach the Catechism unless they comply with the prohibitive regulations laid down by the worst clique of diabolically-inspired politicians that have ever ruled over a state in our western hemisphere. It is the aim of these atheistic and bolshevistic rulers of Mexico to annihilate, if possible, the Catholic church in Mexico. They will stop at nothing in their nefarious work of stamping out religion in the hearts of fifteen million Catholic people.

We know, of course, that they will inevitably fail. First, because the Mexican people are at heart thoroughly Catholic. They love their religion. They love their Church. They love Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. They have the greatest devotion to Our Divine Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. And now, since the Priests have been withdrawn from all the churches of Old Mexico by direct order of their Bishops, thus depriving the people of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of the Sacraments and of the services of religion, we may safely predict that these Catholic people will in a short time become thoroughly organized, and under the direction of capable, zealous, self-sacrificing leaders, will rise in their might and drive from the place of power, which they have usurped, those unmitigated scoundrels who have done so much to discredit Mexico in the sight of all nations and peoples.

The second reason why we may safely predict that the efforts of the bolshevistic and atheistic rulers of Old Mexico will ultimately fail, is that this country has been placed under the powerful protection of the Blessed Mother of God. Now, history does not record a single instance where a country placed under Mary's protection has ever entirely lost its Faith. Witness the example of Catholic Ireland and of Catholic Spain,—two countries which have so gloriously kept their Faith in spite of the opposition of the strongest Protestant and Mohammedan nations this world has ever seen.

Our Holy Father has requested Catholic

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The Subscription Price of the Missionary Catechist is only 50c the Year.

The Spanish Argonauts

Spain is pre-eminently a nation of pioneers. "One nation practically had the glory of discovering and exploring America," says a prominent historian, "and of changing the whole world's ideas of geography—and that nation was Spain." Not only the discovery of America is credited to her, but centuries of pioneering are her distinctive glory, for no other nation ever paralleled or even approached Spain in the number and zeal of her pioneers. And it is because all the traits found in a pioneer are serviceable and necessary for a missionary that the Spanish people seem to have a peculiar fitness to serve as instruments of Jesus Christ in the sublime work of spreading His Gospel.

Love of adventure and romance supply the keynote to the Spanish character, and with such love we find the splendid natural virtues which define a pioneer—courage, indomitable will power, patience, industry, daring; all of which are the basic endowment of the missionary. But the Spanish people have another trait which more fully explains the phenomenal zeal with which they converted nations—they are intensely religious and attached to the true Faith. For centuries their sovereigns have been known by the title of "Catholic." France, Germany, England, and the other important nations of Europe have wavered in their spiritual allegiance—Spain, never. Her sovereigns deem it the first duty of the Crown to maintain the purity of the Catholic faith in their realms and to propagate it abroad.

Columbus came to the West with the express idea of financing a new crusade from the proceeds of his discoveries. He not only desired to disprove false geographical notions then in vogue, but more especially did he wish to extend the kingdom of Christ upon earth. Spanish ships, Spanish men, and Spanish money bore him across the Atlantic. Sixty years after the famous discovery by Columbus, Spanish colonies dotted the continent from northern Mexico as far south as Chile. Everywhere they settled along the coast, their first care was to build a church and install a priest; afterward to instruct the Indians. And these extraordinary achievements invite us to a still closer analysis of their character.

The Spanish are a much-mixed race, for, since the days of Roman domination, many invading peoples have occupied, at least for a time, parts of Spanish soil. Thus the Celts, Goths, Normans, Romans and Moors have left traces of their presence in language, custom, laws and organization. Seven centuries of continuous warfare stimulated the spirit of conquest and developed heroes of the sword and the battlefield. Much of that heroism was directed into religious channels, so that when heresy raised its horrid front on Spanish soil, the Spanish sword quickly laid the head of the monster in the dust. Protestantism never forgave the Spanish for using the knife. The apostates of Wittenberg, Geneva and Amsterdam got a rather warm reception from the Spanish knight fresh from his conquest of the unspeakable Turk. Heresy did not get a chance even to sprout, and Calvin, the arch-heretic, had to be satisfied with perverting the ignorant races of the North, unconscious of their great loss until too late to break the bonds.

A large part of the true glory of humanity rests with the Spanish people. We love manhood, and the Spanish pioneering on behalf of Church and State in the Americas was the largest, and longest, and most

marvellous feat of manhood in all history. Consider for a moment the exploits of Amerigo Vespucci, or Cortez, or Pizarro, or Cabeza de Vaca, or Ponce de Leon, not to mention the great discoverer himself. Half of the United States, all Mexico, all Central and South America, knew the Spanish missionary and pioneer fully a century before France or England woke to a recognition of the existence of the Western World, so that Spain takes precedence over all other nations in "pioneering" the New World. The Spanish cavalier, heroic, impetuous, always ready to pray or to fight, was everywhere conqueror.

Yet one of the wonderful things about Spanish conquest was the humane and progressive spirit which marked it from first to last. Histories inspired by British hate and prejudice, and long current in the American colonies, speak of Spain as being cruel to the Indians, but in truth the record of Spain puts France and England to shame. The legislation of Spain with respect to the Indians everywhere was incomparably more extensive, more comprehensive, more systematic, and more humane than that of Great Britain or any of her colonies. Spanish schools for Indians were opened in 1524. Books in twelve different Indian tongues were circulated and taught, whereas New England can boast of only one textbook by John Elliot, and that a very inferior product to those from the Spanish press. Three Spanish Universities flourished in the New World fully a hundred years before Harvard was dreamed of.

Here it is advisable to observe that, as Americans, we have been from earliest Colonial times the victims of British propaganda. When Britain put on the toga of full-blown manhood she came into collision with Spain. Ever since the day when Cardinal Wolsey plotted to drive Catharine of Aragon out of England, a political, commercial and religious rivalry ripened into deadly national hate. The British Government began a propaganda of defamation which lasted until an English Queen occupied the Spanish throne. All that was vile, all that was incriminating, all that was slanderous went into the foul channel streaming from the English press and from English mouths upon the noble race that saved Europe from the yoke of Mohammedanism and planted the cross around the globe. Gold was the chief motive. England never gave more than a half-hearted welcome to Protestantism. But because Spain was Catholic there was sufficient rea-

son in that fact alone to condemn Catholicism.

Americans, inheriting the prejudice fostered by England for centuries against everything Spanish, gave scant recognition to the heroic deeds of the Spaniards in the New World. Our textbooks either ignored, or slurred, or damned them with faint praise. The Spanish character was painted as something abhorrent, loathsome, venomous, with hardly a single redeeming trait—thus we were taught by British propaganda, and thus we believed. Only in the last score of years, when for political reasons England has permitted the Spanish propaganda to die, only in the last few years have our literary brass monkeys—taking their cue always from London—ceased to stand on their hind legs and make faces at Spain.

One of the characteristics of the Spaniard was his great physical strength and endurance. The student most familiar with history finds himself constantly astounded by the journeys of the Spanish Pioneers. If they had done nothing else in the New World, their long walks alone were enough to earn them fame. Such a number of similar trips over such a wilderness were never heard of elsewhere. To comprehend these rides, or tramps of thousands of miles by tiny bands or single heroes, one must be familiar with the country traversed, and know something of the times when these exploits were performed.

The Spanish chroniclers of the day do not dilate upon the difficulties and dangers. It is almost a pity, but however curt the narrative may be, the obstacles were there and had to be overcome. Those Spanish travelers and pioneers covered thousands of miles through trackless swamps and blazing deserts. The wilderness, stretching in all directions and tenanted only by savage beasts and still more savage men, seemed to have no terrors for them. The only record at all comparable to that of the Spanish pioneer is the story of the California Argonauts who crossed the Western Desert in 1849. Yet they had the advantage of big, well-armed wagon trains, and at least an Indian trail for a guide, whereas the Spanish pioneer often went alone and on foot, guided only by the compass or the stars. The longest tramp ever made in America covered twenty-four thousand miles. It required nine years, and the glory belongs to a Spanish soldier, Andres Docampo, who started from New Mexico in 1541, and, after visiting most of the territory included in all our Southwestern states, reached Old Mexico in 1550. The wanderings of Ulysses beside those of our Spanish soldier resemble the trips of a Chicago taxicab in comparison with those of a Union Pacific engine.

It cannot be denied that one great motive which induced the Spaniards to explore so much of the New World was gold.

We all know, and doubtless Columbus read about that strange yellow ram skin which hung dragon-guarded in the dark groves of Colchis, and how Jason and his Argonauts won the prize after many trials and wanderings. In the New World there was a far more dazzling Golden Fleece. And hundreds and thousands of Jasons came to our shores in quest thereof. The gold-myth caused thousands to pry into the mystery of the American wilderness and the American desert, and because Spain was most fortunate and her daring sons discovered mine after mine from which

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All Good Catholics Should Pray for Mexico

The Oldest Church in the United States

By Mary Stephen

Missionary zeal is as old as Christianity, and as enduring. The footprints of the friars may be traced in every explored land, and in almost every instance they follow hard upon the heels of the explorers. The injunction, "Go ye into every land" was evidently taken in serious earnest by the early Church, and when a new land was found, somebody at once decided it was his duty to set up there in the banner of the Faith. Quietly and earnestly, daring dangers unknown to us of this day, sacrificing worldly goods and prospects, homes, dear ones, and even in many cases going smiling to that last sacrifice of all, the giving up of life itself, these consecrated missionaries threaded our own wildernesses and left their imprint there forever.

Nearly 400 years ago, Coronado, in Mexico, heard great tales of the golden Seven Cities of Cibola. Spain could not let such rumors go unheeded, and the famous explorer was ordered by his sovereign to do some investigating. Northeast, the legends told him, ran the trails that led to great cities with towers and turquoise gates, and kings of great wealth.

So northeast Coronado led his motley army of adventurers. They were Spain's young nobility, for the most part, with a scattering of rough rascals let out of Spanish prisons on condition they would undertake the daring journey. They left Mexico City gaily in the spring.

Summer suns are full of terror for the desert wanderer. The gaiety soon disappeared, and by mid-season, a weary, drooping, dragged little company came panting over the burning sands to an unimposing adobe pueblo near the middle of what is now New Mexico. This was one of the Seven Cities of Gold—but the gold was still no more than a rumor. And where were the turquoise gates? Footsore and disgusted the expedition came to a halt. Most of them wanted to return. Some of them persisted in going on. But half a dozen men with calm, untroubled eyes, and brief, careful speech, asked permission to stay.

"Why should you want to remain here," asked Coronado in great wonder and some vexation. "Know you not that once we are gone there is never any return for you?"

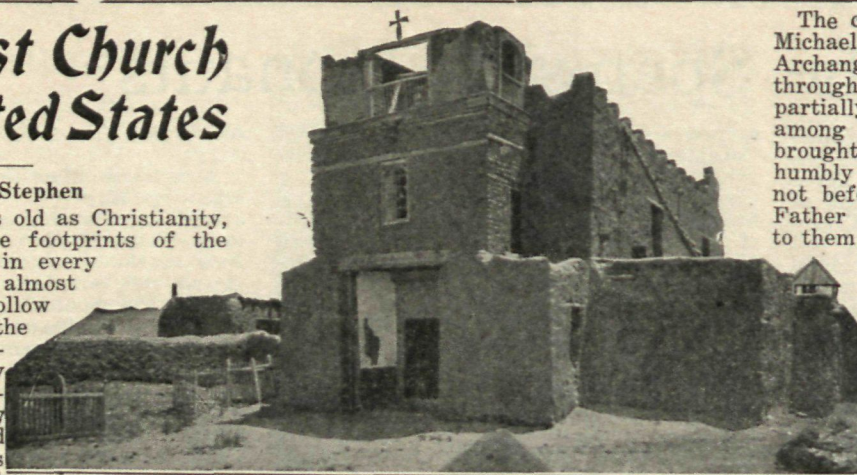
"We know it," said the quiet brown-robed men.

"There is no gold here," continued Coronado.

"There is better than gold—there are souls to be won for Christ our King," returned the Franciscan friars.

Coronado's army divided. One part went on to the great "Buffalo Plains," now Kansas; the other, after some impatient and desultory wanderings through the pueblo country, retraced its way into Old Mexico.

But the Franciscan priests took neither trail. Here was



CHURCH OF SAN MIGUEL
Santa Fe, N. Mex.

a virgin field, and the Indians who came to them listened eagerly, for their story was strange, and gentle, and satisfying. Their old, blood-thirsty gods gradually retreated before the advance of this new, kind God, and one after another the brown children of the desert knelt before the patient Fathers for baptism.

Then a church was built. There was no one to erect it but the Indians, under the direction of the priests from Spain. It grew up a strangely appealing mixture of Spanish and Indian architecture; with adobe walls as thick as those of a fort, and a square tower with shuttered Moorish windows, like the towers on many a Calabrian hillside. About 1541 it was finished, and the priests—the few who were left of them—blessed a congregation kneeling on the benchless clay floor.

Somehow, no one can tell quite how, the Church thus built was supplied with pasters for more than a hundred years. The builders died, some of them lying down to rest even before the church was done; but one by one, or two by two, other missionary priests came across the desert to fill the vacant places. Sometimes there would be a time when the silver-cast Spanish bell, so carefully brought out of Mexico on a pilgrimage undertaken for the purpose, was silent; but always the time came again when it called the Pueblo Indians back to the prayers they were fast forgetting.



Interior of Church of San Miguel

The church was called San Miguel. (St. Michael.) Surely no less than the great Archangel himself must have guarded it through all its vicissitudes. In 1680 it was partially destroyed by a forced uprising among the Indians. De Vargas quietly brought them back to peace, and they came humbly to rebuild the ancient walls. But not before they had killed among others, Father Juan de Jesus, who had ministered to them long and faithfully. He was buried in the little enclosed yard in front of the church.

In 1710 one of the brief, terrifying storms that sometimes sweep New Mexico nearly wrecked it. This time a noble Spaniard, Marquez de Penuela, came to the rescue, and with his ensign Senor Varaga, directed and paid for the rebuilding. In 1830 other storms destroyed the old tower, and only by a miracle was silver-voiced St. Joseph, the ancient Spanish bell, saved from destruction. It was never again hung in the tower, but is suspended to this day under the quaint, carved staircase, where the curious may touch its sensitive metal and hear again the lovely graded tones—four of them—which run up the side from lip to crown.

There is a rare old altar in the church dating back nobody knows how far. Two paintings, by Cimabue, the Annunciation and the Nativity, have grown dim on the walls at either side of the high altar. Other Spanish and Italian masterpieces still hang in medallioned frames above and about that sacred place. Rugs and panels of rarest Indian workmanship take the places of the usual altar linens. The whole is a unique blend of the Old World and the New, of the highest refinement of civilization, and the crudest simplicity of the wilderness.

Brother Charlemagne, soft-voiced, slender and silver-haired, tells visitors, as well as his halting Castilian-English will allow, some such story as the foregoing, as he asks of the casual visitor an alms for his young Indian pupils. He runs his hands lovingly over the queer, carved railings, and calls attention to the crude beams overhead, all Indian workmanship, and reminiscent of Mayan rather than Spanish tradition.

"What did it matter—they did it for their Lord," he says, sensibly, when one remarks upon the un-Christian appearance of those pagan carvings.

It did not matter. What did matter was the devotion of the Franciscan Fathers who could thus permanently plant the seed of a great Faith in a land and among a people so entirely alien to even the crudest civilization. To the memory of these devoted friars San Miguel still stands, after almost 400 years, an enduring monument.

HAVE
YOU
RENEWED
YOUR
SUBSCRIPTION?

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Letters To Mary

By Catechist Blanche Richardson

My dear Mary:

Last week Senor Garcia deposited two large golden calabazas (pumpkins) on our porch, and a bag of frioles, grinning broadly as he did so and announcing that his mujer had sent them to the hermanas who had nursed their little son Ramon through a long and dangerous fever.

They are dreadfully poor, Mary, but that is the way with our poor people—willing to share their last crust of bread, and regarding nothing so criminal a lack of gratitude for a favor received.

All during these hot summer months, we have been kept busy nursing sick babies. Their weak little moans, as they tossed to and fro on the poor little cots, the anxious looks of the mothers, the gleam of hope that came to their eyes at our approach, all form distinct parts of memories never to be forgotten. Tears of gratitude for having saved little "Juan" from the grave, mean more to us than a purse of gold, and no jewel could seem so brilliant to us as the smile of contentment replacing the anxious expression of Concepcion's mother as she watches her little daughter, who escaped the ravages of the fever, turn the pages of an old Sears-Roebuck Catalog with chuckles of glee.

Senora Martinez waited too long before sending for us. Her tear-dimmed eyes as she met us at the door this afternoon told us what had happened. Stooping in order to pass through the low doorway, we walked to the center of the room where there rested on a rude table a tiny home-made coffin, covered with pink sateen and white braid, and containing the mortal remains of the little sufferer. A small crucifix at the head, two lighted candles on either side, and a cluster of hollyhocks with a nasturtium or two placed at the foot, completed the pathetic picture. Upturned boxes with boards laid across them served as seats for the sad-faced women, draped in long black Spanish mantles, neighbors who had come to condole with the bereaved mother and pay their respects to the earthly remains of the little Christian.

Do you ever pray for vocations? If not, I would beg you to do so, for there is such a dearth of them. Only last week this doleful truth was thrust upon us when we paid a visit to a neighboring town which is few located on a railroad and which appears to be a thriving, busy center of population and enterprise. It is the county seat of our county and has quite a nice, large church—but no school. There is a school building, but no Sisters can be procured to teach in it. This is but one instance. There are numerous similar situations in the Southwest.

So, dear Mary, pray as you have never prayed before that the dear Lord may find workers for His vast vineyard of souls. He has mercifully provided a variety of occupations to suit every talent and inclination in the religious life, from teaching the little ones their three R's,

down to our own line of acting as "substitutes" for the teaching and nursing Sisters. It is something to be extremely grateful for that as Missionary Catechists we are even now penetrating regions where the



children have never seen a Sister. It is consoling to know that we are doing a work which never would nor could be done by anyone save ourselves. The teaching Sisters must depend upon the parish for support, just as the nursing Sisters must conduct hospitals for the sick to derive the necessary means of livelihood and to enable them to carry on their work. We, on the contrary, derive no support whatever from the people among whom we work. If we were to attempt to do so, we should have to seek more prosperous communities to keep the wolf of starvation from our doors.

Our needs are few since we strive to live as simply and unostentatiously as the Three Holy Inhabitants of the House of Nazareth. Our house is but one of the many adobe huts you see scattered along the railroad tracks in the Southwest. Nor does the interior differ greatly from the others. A few camp-chairs, cots, home-made tables

and wash-stands constitute our "furniture." One must be in the Carnegie and Rockefeller class to endow hospitals and schools, but anyone of humble means can, without much effort, provide the maintenance of one Catechist for one month.

And think of the vast amount of good he is doing. He is providing people who have not the advantages of parochial schools for the education of their children, and hospitals for the care of their sick, with the nearest "substitute" obtainable in this vast territory. Every good Catholic mother likes to see her children being reared by the pious Sisters. She even shudders to think what would become of her children, in this present carnal and worldly age, if they were obliged to attend public schools without religious instruction. This is the plight of our Spanish-speaking children. They are forced to attend the public schools because there are no parochial schools, and until the arrival of our Catechists, there had been no one to conduct Sunday-School for them even once a week.

Indications do not forecast any immediate improvement in present conditions. Our poor Mexicans could not support Sisters even if they were obtainable. How can people too poor to support a resident priest or two Catechists, maintain a Catholic school? Or what can the girls of our remote Spanish villages know about religious vocations when they have never seen a Sister? There is only one solution to the problem, Mary. We must redouble our prayers for vocations. When the good Sisters have enough vocations to fill the needs of the parishes back East, and an over-measure of them, they will be in a position to send their members out to this desert region as missionaries supported by their own communities. In the meantime, if only there are more vocations for our own dear Society, we can continue to reach the poor little ones who have not the advantages of a parochial school system, until that happy day arrives when our country is filled with Catholic schools for Catholic children.

This is a long letter, and a serious one, but I should like to impress you with the supreme importance of praying for and encouraging vocations in our young people to the extent of your ability.

When you will have read it thro, dear Mary, I suppose you will be teeming with zeal and will feel entirely too enthusiastic to take out your Rosary and quietly say a few decades for vocations. You will say to yourself that that is too tame, and how can my poor prayers be so powerful. Just the same, don't hesitate to do so and then, if the desire to do more is still strong within you, after you have finished your Rosary why not ask Sister Mary Alice to have the school children at St. Joseph's say an extra Hail Mary every day during the first month of school, at the close of the classes, "for poor Catholic children who cannot attend a Sister's school, like we do, and for more Sisters and Catechists to reach them all."



First Communion Class at Anton Chico, New Mexico.

All Good Catholics Should Pray for Mexico

Behind Powder Puffs

By Catechist Blanche Richardson

Hortense and Mildred were putting on the finishing touches of their toilet. Mildred was viewing her plucked eyebrows with an air of deep satisfaction—they gave her face a classical turn. Hortense was laboring at a curl over the left temple which just wouldn't stay put. There was to be a little theatre party that night made up of several of the girls in the office in which Mildred was employed. Hortense, as her friend, was known to most of the girls in the crowd and was therefore included in the party. Although both girls had formed an acquaintance three years ago and were now sharing a small apartment in New York—for each girl's parents were living some miles out of the city—each had her own circle of friends, so that they seldom saw each other except on Sundays when both rested after their strenuous week of work and pleasure.

Although extremely worldly, adopting the latest fashions and thoroughly enjoying such diversions as shows, dinners, and the like, they each possessed a natural and innate nobility of character and aspired to the higher order of things. Their parents were respected people in the small communities of which they formed a part. Neither Hortense nor Mildred pretended to be church members. If you had asked Mildred why she did not go to church on Sundays, she would have told you that she always attended the First Reformed Evangelical Church at home, but since coming to this great metropolis had not yet decided with which church to affiliate. Asked the same question, Hortense would probably look at you languidly and say that she needed a rest on Sundays after working all week. Besides, it was the only day open for long auto trips, and if she waited to attend church services half the day would be gone—also the crowd who invited her to go along.

Hortense, giving the last pat to her fair cheek with a dainty powder puff, sat down to look over her mail while Mildred finished her preparations. Having read her letters, she removed the wrapping from a small circular.

"This must be the paper Madge asked me to subscribe for," she said. "Listen, Mildred, isn't this perfectly beautiful?" and she proceeded to read a poem which was filled with pretty religious sentiment.

"M-m-hm," responded Mildred absent-mindedly, while she adjusted her Marcelle with the tip of her comb, "What kind of a paper do you have there?"

"Oh, it's a little religious weekly put out by a Western publishing company, which is non-denominational but advocates church unity," and she continued to read aloud other articles written in a similar vein until Mildred was ready.

During the weeks that followed, Mildred observed to their mutual friends that Hortense must be "getting religion," or something of that sort. At any rate she never before talked so much on one topic. She (Mildred) was getting sick of it. Life was made up of quotations from this beautiful poem or that. And yet, she reflected gloomily, all of this did not seem to be benefitting her friend spiritually. She was as fond of shows as ever, even going to them on Sundays, which was strictly against a true Protestant church-goer's standard of conduct. She painted and powdered as much as she formerly did, and never forfeited a Sunday's auto ride for church attendance.

Perplexed, Mildred decided she would not become a religious enthusiast, but continue in her old ways.

That week, Agnes Ryan at the office, whom she knew only through business association, but whom she had long admired for her strength of character and sweet acts of friendliness and of charity, came to tell her goodbye. Mildred was very much surprised to learn that Agnes was leaving since she had been with the large Holliday and Hollweg Company for eight years and was secretary to the manager. There could be only one solution.

"I presume the wedding-gown has already been chosen?" she inquired roughly. "I'm sure you will make a charming looking bride."

Agnes smiled. She, in turn, had grown to love this worldly little girl for her promptness in obliging others. Looking into her face she saw something besides the heavy coating of pink and white, something besides the red lips and "boy-shingle."



"A Little Boy With a Tall Sombrero, Mounted on a Burro."

"If you will come out this evening to my house for supper, I will show it to you," she answered mysteriously. "But please do not speak of it to anyone else."

Delighted beyond measure at being so privileged she heartily promised. Visions of yards of lustrous silk and heavy lace obscured her notes that afternoon and nearly made Mildred lose her reputation as an expert and rapid stenographer.

They left the office together, boarding an up-town train which brought them almost to the very door of the Ryan home. It was not pretentious, but one could see at a glance that it was a well-ordered household. Mrs. Ryan, a motherly woman of some fifty years, made her feel very welcome.

"It will be a half hour before we have supper. We always wait for Ted," Agnes explained. "Perhaps we could go up to my room now and I will show you a few things."

To Mildred's disappointment, Agnes took down a photo album and showed her a few photographs of some mutual friends. Finally she turned toward the last pages which were filled with pictures of a strange-look-

ing people. There were dark, swarthy women whose heads and shoulders were enveloped in long black mantles, exposing to view only sad-looking faces and piercing black eyes; there was a little boy, with a tall sombrero, mounted on a burro; there was a conical bee-hive oven.

"Gracious" gasped Mildred. "What are these pictures and where did you get them?"

"They are pictures of the Mexican people living in the Border States. I have a cousin Amy who is a *Missionary Catechist* down there. That is, she does religious and social service work among these poor neglected people. See this tall, thin, man standing at the door of that tumbled-down hut? Amy and her sister-Catechists nursed him through a long, dangerous fever last spring. See the smile on this happy mother's face, who tenderly clasps her baby to her breast? She has just come from the clinic where the Catechists have given first-aid treatment to the little one's badly scalded arm. This boy and his little sister can hardly carry that big bundle, but they will rest by the roadside when they are tired. They are carrying home clothing which the good Catechists gave them for their mother and brothers and sisters. These children are playing a game of "Drop the Hankerchief", or "Panuelito", as it is called in Spanish. They are always as light-hearted and happy as you see them in the picture. It is because the Catechists teach them to be good to one another, and obedient to their parents. And what child is not happy when it is good? And here is dear Amy herself, with some altar linens which she has just finished mending for the tiny chapel."

"What a wonderful work your cousin Amy is doing!" cried Mildred. "Does she get much of a salary?"

"Amy gets nothing for her services," answered Agnes. "She has dedicated her life to the service of the poor, and beyond a humble adobe house which shelters herself and her two sister-Catechists, plain food, and the simple uniform she wears, she neither asks nor receives anything."

"Supper's ready!" came the shrill cry of Tom, the youngest, from the base of the stairs.

"Oh, Agnes," cried Mildred disappointedly, "you were going to show me your wedding dress!"

Agnes smiled quizzically. "You have seen it," she answered. "I am going to become the bride of Christ."

"What do you mean? Explain yourself!" asked the mystified Mildred.

"You saw Amy's picture. I, too, am going to join her in her great work. I am going to consecrate my life to the service of the poor as she has done. I am going to adopt that neat little uniform that she wears. You see," she confessed candidly, "there is no wedding gown to show you."

On her way home on the train that night, Mildred's mind was filled with many thoughts. She was thinking of Hortense and she was thinking of Agnes, and making comparisons. "Humph," she concluded in her matter-of-fact way. "I guess if Mildred gets any real religion it will be of the Agnes Ryan stamp. At least there is something practical about that."

Mexico, in proportion to the number of her people, has more churches than any other country in the world.

The Subscription Price of the Missionary Catechist is only 50c the Year.

My Impressions of Victory-Noll

By Estelle Bonner

When the cabman deposited my luggage and me on the front terrace at Victory-Noll, I stood for a moment in amazed wonder, for the drive, winding through the grounds and circling the building, had given no hint of the beautiful picture so suddenly unfolded before me. Far down below and stretching on for miles to the far horizon, was the famously beautiful Wabash Valley. Behind me, built about a central patio, were the hospitably extended wings of the building.

To its invitingly open front door I turned somewhat reluctantly from the panorama outstretched before me. But the hand up-lifted to press the bell dropped to my side at sight of many blue-clad figures kneeling in the beautiful chapel just across the corridor. I was in something of a quandary for I felt it would be an intrusion to make my entrance just there and then, but possessing the Irish habit of not being entirely lost in a situation, I decided to try another door. After a short time a figure in smiles and blue opened this door for me. Her first words, "I'm sorry I didn't heah you soonah, but we were at prayahs!" put me entirely at ease, for I knew she and I shared the same Southland for our home.

Having had it thoroughly impressed upon me by the Spiritual Director of the Society and the Catechist-Directress of the Institute that I was to enjoy every minute of my stay, I was shown to my room—a cool, cozy apartment—and in a short time another smiling person appeared bearing a tray to refresh the inner woman. Then I was left to rest until supper time.

I shall never forget my first meal at Victory-Noll. Being a convert of less than two years, with little knowledge of what goes to make up the life of religious, and having had no associations or contacts with community life, I had rather expected to find myself in an atmosphere of stiffness and formality. On the contrary, the low-toned laughter and the well-modulated voices coming from the adjoining room where the Catechists were supping to the accompaniment of lively conversation, reminded me very much of those social meals I had known in my school days, and I wished that I could have been permitted to sit with the "family."

My advent coincided with a vacation period when the usual routine was suspended and recreative pursuits were in order. During these days I was afforded an exceptional opportunity to become acquainted with the Catechists and with their community life. I noted the serenity and contentment which radiated from their faces; the smile which they gave each other and me at chance meetings in hurried transit through the corridors; the joy with which each homely task was performed.

The ease with which the household duties moved were an inspiration to me. For among the group were young women whose occupations in the world had been far removed from the simple, homely tasks with which they were now engaged. The magazine writer plied pen or broom with equal readiness and alacrity; the musician turned from her instrument to an expert manipulation of the washing-machine; the teacher laid down her text-book to take up a dish-towel; and so on through the gamut of talents with which the Catechists seemed to be endowed in a singular diversity.

All accepted their tasks as stepping stones in a life of humility and loving service. I learned many lessons by beautiful example during those summer days, and not the least



important was that of making a divine offering out of a simple task.

Each successive hour brought its attendant joys and experiences. The Catechists seemed bent upon making this summer a red-letter day in my calendar of happiness. The summer days were fair and beautiful, and there were many opportunities for wholesome relaxation. Sometimes there was a picnic supper under the trees; at other times a walk over the hills and far away through the woods; again impromptu programs, by "home talent," of surprising scope and originality.

Then there were the supper-parties in the cottage in the woods. These were usually secret affairs, the particulars not being divulged by the social committee until the last moment. I recall one occasion when the Catechists had planned a surprise party for me. I was always a good subject for surprises, reacting to them in the most orthodox fashion, for though not English, I can seldom "smell a mouse." On this particular afternoon I was possessed with a desire to take pictures. So, taking my Brownie, I sauntered out in quest of suitable subjects. The cottage was always a favorite haunt of mine, and through pure force of habit, my feet took me there. To my happy surprise it was evident that some of the Catechists had preceded me, for, simultaneously with my appearance on the scene, a number of them emerged from the cottage and begged to be of service. I never had more willing subjects for models in my life and I was elated—all the more so because I had been trying for three weeks to get certain of these Catechists to pose for me. But I learned afterwards—to my utter chagrin—that it was not willingness on their part to be photographed which was responsible for their cheerful and seemingly innocent acquiescence, but a clever subterfuge to engross my attention and divert it from the festive preparations going on indoors.

At the conclusion of my work I was so unwilling to leave Victory Noll that I decided to remain a week longer, but even then my departure was not easy, and standing on the platform of the Erie train on that August day, waving my farewells to the Catechists who had come down to see me on my way, I prayed that I might be allowed to return at some time, if only for a few days.

My prayers were answered. There came to me in December a special delivery letter asking me to come to Victory-Noll for my Christmas vacation. This time it was like going back home, and upon my arrival at Huntington I even so much as telephoned

"out home" to say I'd "be right out."

This visit was very different from that extended one of the previous summer. In the first place, the temperature of Indiana at that time was below zero, and most of our time was spent indoors. But brisk walks, followed by hot chocolate and crackers, were even then in order. Then there were the Christmas festivities and celebrations which were so interesting to me. The Crib was lovingly arranged, the Christmas tree decorated, and the dining-room festooned. Everything was done to make this Christmas away from home—the first for many of the Catechists—a joyful and holy season.

During the Christmas holidays I enjoyed three entirely new experiences. I was privileged to attend my first Midnight Mass; to spend the hour ushering in the New Year, with the community, in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; and to enjoy a Christmas Tree and the visit of Santa Claus at one o'clock on Christmas morning. These three adventures would have been enough to make anyone's holiday a happy one, but my measure of holiday joys and pleasures was heaped up and running over.

These intimate glimpses are only a few of the homelike details of Victory-Noll which I saw when I wintered and summered with the Catechists there, to find them in December, as well as in June, "Gardening the earth with the roses of Heaven." When I offered my services to conduct a short course in pedagogy and child psychology at the Institute during that first summer season, I felt perfectly sure that I would learn more than I had to impart, and I was not disappointed. The lessons I took away with me could never be classed with the petty lessons found in books. And though they were many, the one that stands out in highest relief, is the realization they brought to me that true happiness does not come from worldly gifts and possessions, but from service and usefulness, the like of which is being demonstrated by these generous young women at every moment of their daily lives.

Those recently received at Victory-Noll as candidates to the Society of Missionary Catechists are: Miss Margaret Campbell, Stevens Point, Wis.; Catherine Brohman, Grand Forks, N. Dak.; Cecelia Enz, Evansville, Ind.; Dorothy Leahy, Davenport, Ia.; Mary Ann Seewalt, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Elizabeth Ayers, Lima, Ohio.

THE SPANISH ARGONAUTS.

(Continued from page two)

tons of gold and silver were shipped home, she became, within a century, the richest country in the world.

It is our purpose here to trace only the immediate effect of so much wealth upon the Spanish character. And that effect was to stimulate to the fullest extent the adventurous spirit. Whoever had any means or could sail a ship suddenly became an Argonaut. El Dorado beckoned to Spain, and England, and France—El Dorado with mountains of solid gold and silver where every man was a millionaire and where the fountain of perpetual youth sparkled in the sunlight. To this "gilded" land expedition after expedition sailed away from Europe in the 16th century. History records the partial success of many, but the whitened bones of many more, unknown and forgotten, are bleaching on American deserts where the lone and level sands stretch far away.

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EDITORIAL.

Continued From Page Two

lies throughout the United States, especially, to pray that the Mexican Catholic people may persevere in keeping their Faith and in overcoming by peaceful but firm means, the powerful opposition with which they are confronted. Our good Bishop Noll has made a timely request that the Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico, should be offered up in all the churches of the diocese of Fort Wayne on Sunday, August 1st.

No one realizes better than Bishop Noll how vitally interested the Holy Father is in saving the Faith of the Mexican people. Only a short time ago the Apostolic Delegate informed him that the Holy Father has set himself to accomplish as one of the important works of his pontificate the saving of the Faith of the Spanish-speaking Catholic people of America.

Our devoted Catechists are aiding in giving Religious Instruction to the destitute children of this race and in ministering to their corporal as well as their spiritual needs. In addition to the missionary labors in which they are constantly engaged, our Catechists have pledged themselves to offer every day their heartfelt prayers, their sacrifices and their good works in honor of Our Blessed Mother under Her glorious title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, begging Her to protect and save an entire race of people devoted for centuries to Her honor.

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST
Huntington, Ind.

Published monthly with ecclesiastical
approbation by The Missionary Catechist
Publishing Co.

Subscription Rate: In U. S. 50c per year
for single copies: 10 copies or more to one
address, 40c each per year. Life Subscrip-
tion \$10.00. Canada and Foreign, 75c per
year. Payable in advance.

Entered as second-class matter Decem-
ber 30, 1924, at the postoffice at Hunt-
ington, Indiana, under the Act of March
3, 1879.

Rev. J. J. Sigstein, Spiritual Director of
The Society of Missionary Catechists
Editor

Printed by Our Sunday Visitor Press,
Huntington, Indiana.

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