



Vocations

by Fr. William Doyle, S.J.



(Objections...continued)

12. Advantages of Religious Life: A. Its Happiness

Many caricatures have been painted of monks and nuns, depicting them as a merry, jovial crew, rejoicing in the good things of this world, but no artist has ever yet drawn a religious community as a collection of sad-faced, melancholy beings. The very atmosphere of a convent is joy and tranquility, its inmates bright and cheerful; for, safe from the storms and troubles of the world and the insatiable desire for wealth, free from the cares, the anxieties, of a home and family, protected by the mantle of a loving charity from the disputes, the quarrels and petty jealousies of life, they have at last found true happiness, which consists in peace of soul and contentment of heart.

The world may boast of many things, but it cannot claim to give happiness to its followers. One who had the means of gratifying every craving, Solomon, sadly exclaimed: "Whatsoever my heart desired, I refused it not, and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, but I saw in all things only vanity and vexation of spirit, except to love God and serve Him alone."

The life of a religious, like that of every other human being, must be a warfare to the end; they have their crosses and tribulations, and God, in order to sanctify them, often sends great trials and interior sufferings, yet through it all, deep down in the soul they feel the presence of Christ's most precious gift: "My peace I leave you, My peace I give you," that peace of heart, "a continual feast," which the world knows not of, nor

can earthly pleasures bestow.

Hence St. Lawrence Justinian says: "Almighty God has designedly concealed the happiness of religious life, because if it were known, all will relinquish the world and fly to religion."

"An earthly Paradise," says St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi and St. Scholastica, "If men knew the peace which religious enjoy in retirement, the entire world would become one great convent."

Secure in the possession of God, rejoicing in the promise of a glorious eternity, is it any wonder that those who left all to follow Christ should find "His yoke sweet and His burden light"? The writer of *Recit d'une Soeur* sums up well this picture of true religious life in these words: "Happiness in heaven purchased by happiness on earth."

B. Its Holiness

Spiritual writers say that life in religion surpasses all others, because it removes obstacles to perfection and consecrates one, in the most perfect manner, to God. The world, with its round of amusements and distractions is the deadly enemy of piety, and even the best disposed persons find it hard not to be influenced by the prevailing spirit of indifference to spiritual things, or unaffected by so much careless, if not downright evil, example around them. Many a holy soul hungers for prayer and recollection, only to find that the cares of a family, the calls of social duties, the unavoidable visits and entertainment, encroach far on the limited time they can give to God.

In religion, on the other hand,

care of the soul is the first and most important duty, its advancement and perfection the great business of life.

By a wise economy of time, religious, in spite of many other occupations, can devote four or five hours a day to meditation, prayer, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and the recitation of the Office, so well distributed that no burden is felt.

His Rules and the voice of Obedience make known to him the Will of God, which he could never be certain of in the world; they protect him from a multitude of dangerous temptations, shutting out in great measure the possibility of sin; the company of so many chosen souls, their generous example and saintly lives, spur him on to nobler things; saved from all worldly anxieties, he can give his whole heart to the service and love of God, leading a life which is an earnest, if humble, imitation of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

"O Lord," cries out holy David, "a single day in Thy house is worth a thousand in the courts of sinners."

"I hold it for certain," says St. Alphonsus, "that the greatest number of the vacant thrones of the fallen Seraphim will be occupied by souls sanctified in the religious state. Among the sixty persons canonized during the last century there were only five who did not belong to religious orders."

(to be continued...)

Mater Dei Convent
3715 286th St.
Persia, IA 51563
materdei431@aol.com



Stella Maris

"O Christ Jesus, when all is darkness and we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of Your presence, Your love and Your strength. Help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to You, we shall see Your hand, Your purpose, Your will through all things. Amen."

-St. Ignatius Loyola

Dear Family, Friends, and Benefactors,

During the Springtime the Sisters were busy with report cards, year books, and wrapping up the school year. At Mater Dei Convent in Persia, we have been blessed with an increase of livestock. We have our 9 Angus/Jersey for beef and dairy. We have been raising 30 turkeys, 9 ducks, and over 50 hens. On June 13, the feast of St. Anthony, our convent animals received a blessing. The Sisters have been taking care of our flowers and fruit trees, our fruit and vegetable gardens, and mowing the lawn.

During July, we will be holding our 25th annual Girls' Camp at Mater Dei Convent. If anyone would be wanting to sponsor a girl for the camp, please contact the Sisters at 402-290-5478.

With our prayers,
The Sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of God

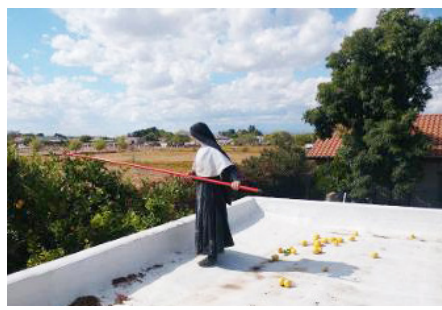




St. Patrick's Program at Our Lady of the Sun Academy



A Sister keeps watch at the altar of repose in the convent chapel



Picking lemons from the roof in Phoenix, Arizona



Sr. Maria Antonia and Sr. Noel Marie near Phoenix, AZ



Arranging flowers for Our Lady's Shrine



Sr. Mary Dominica taking care of yardwork in Burlington, Colorado



Sr. Maria Josepha with her class on a field trip in Kansas



Sr. Mary Catherine and the senior class of Sacred Heart Academy, Burlington, Colorado



Sr. Maria Franziska and Sr. Jeanne Marie



Some of our Sisters in Colorado walking near the Rocky Mountains



Walking in the Benedictine Cemetery at St. Benedict's Center, St. Joseph, MN



Preparing for Holy



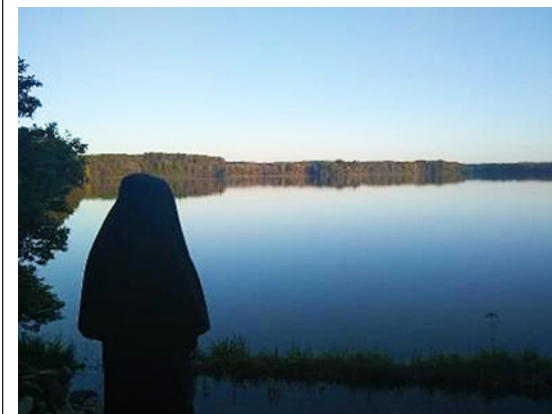
Sr. Anne Marie directing the choir in St. Cloud, Minnesota



Summer catechism at Immaculate Conception St. Cloud, Minnesota



Our ducklings in Persia, Iowa



Looking across Lake Sagatagan at the Stella Maris Chapel, St. Joseph, MN



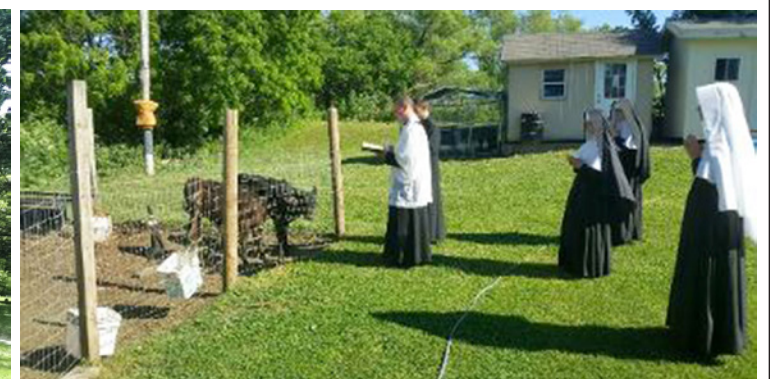
Sr. Rose Marie, Fr. Nino Molina with the First Communion class in Seneca, WI



Repainting the Cross at Mater Dei Convent



A walk in Mt. Carmel Cemetery Missouri Valley, Iowa



Our convent animals in Persia, Iowa, receive a blessing on the feast of St. Anthony