

A STORY OF ST. ANTHONY.

Charles Warren Stoddard's little book, "The Wonder Worker of Padua," recently published by the Ave Maria, of Notre Dame, Indiana, contains accounts of many of St. Anthony's miracles. One of the most interesting of these stories is given below. That miracles have occurred and are occurring even in our own day there is no shadow of doubt, says Mr. Stoddard. What is a miracle? According to Worcester, a miracle is "an effect of which the antecedent cannot be referred to any secondary cause; an event or occurrence which cannot be explained by any known law of nature; a deviation from the established law of nature; something not only superhuman, but preternatural; a prodigy, a wonder, a marvel."

Thousands of eye-witnesses bore testimony in their day to the wonders worked by St. Anthony in France and Italy. It would seem that his fame must have preceded him, and that wherever he went his approach must have been heralded and his appearance hailed with enthusiasm by expected and animated throngs. This was not the case. Obedient to the voice of his superiors, he went wheresoever he was bidden; went alone and unannounced, a stranger in a strange land, unrecognized of any until he had lifted that voice whose persuasive eloquence no one was long able to withstand. Then came his triumph, complete and overwhelming. Triumph followed upon triumph, until at last the land rang with his praises. On every hand he gave abundant proof of the divine power which he was called upon to exercise. Following in the footsteps of his blessed Master, he healed the sick, raised the dead and wakened the living to life everlasting.

There dwelt in Bourges, the capital of Berry, in France, an Israelite, who was of all Israelites the most bitter foe of the Catholic Church. He was the leader of the anti-Christian movement, an earnest worker in opposition to every doctrine that Anthony taught. Guillard the Jew was not an ignorant and blind bigot; he was a man of intelligence, an honest doubter. Often he had listened to the preaching of Anthony, yet he was not convinced. Shall we not say that it was his misfortune rather than his fault that he remained without the fold and persistently assumed an attitude of antagonism?

The dogma of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament was naturally his chief stumbling block. Much he could accept and much consider in a calm spirit of philosophical inquiry, but the Eucharist, Transubstantiation—the perpetual miracle—was in his estimation past belief. For this miracle he denominated miraculous proof.

"The Turk does not question the word of Mohammed," observed Anthony to this follower of Didimus the Doubter; "the philosopher accepts the philosophy of Aristotle; but you who pride yourself upon being a worthy Israelite, will not accept the testimony of the Son of God."

"I must see for myself with these very eyes before I can believe," replied the doubting Thomas. There are many who, like him, must put their finger in the wounds before they are convinced of the living truth.

One day Guillard said to Anthony: "Brother Anthony, if by some tangible, outward sign you can confirm the truth you have demonstrated by reasoning, I will abjure my ancient creed and embrace yours. Do you consent?"

"In order to save a soul one may make great concessions, nor was it beneath the dignity of Anthony to offer visible proof to an anxious and inquiring eye."

"I consent," said he. "I have a mule," added the Jew. "I will keep him for three days under lock and key, and in all that time feed him nothing. At the end of the third day I will bring him to the largest public square in the city, and there in the presence of all the assembled people I will offer him a feed of oats. You, on the other hand, will come carrying the best, which, as you believe, is the true Body of the Son of God. If the mule refuses the proffered food in order to prostrate himself before the monstrance, I will become a Catholic and no longer question the truth of the doctrine taught by the Catholic Church."

Here was a direct challenge, and it was not declined. Anthony felt that his victory was assured. The reward of that victory was an immortal soul. For three days the young apostle devoted himself to fasting and prayer. Not for one moment did he lose faith in the success of the miracle he was about to work, but he dared not attempt it without solemn preparation. Meanwhile Guillard and his companions were so sure of Anthony's total defeat and discomfort that there was much merriment at the wonder-worker's expense; and the interest in the approaching test increased from hour to hour.

The eventful day arrived. Guillard and his friend trooped into the public square with smiles and laughter, so confident were they that the famishing mule would instantly abandon himself to his oats. The immense throngs who had gathered to witness the impending spectacle were consumed with curiosity. As Anthony slowly approached, bearing reverently the Sacred Host, his eyes cast down, his air devotional, a great hush fell upon the multitude. He was followed by a large crowd of the faithful, singing canticles and whispering prayers.

The mule was then led forward, and the oats laid temptingly before him. At that moment Anthony drew near, bearing the monstrance. Turning towards the dumb brute, he exclaimed: "In the name of thy Creator, whose body I, though unworthy hold in my hands, I enjoin and command thee, O being, deprived of reason, to come hither instantly and prostrate thyself before thy God, so that by this sign unbelievers may know that all creation is subject to the Lamb who is daily immolated upon our altars." In the same moment Guillard and his friends presented the oats to the famished beast. Without taking the smallest notice of the food, the mule, turning away, walked to the feet of Anthony, and bending his knees knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and remained there in an attitude of adoration.

Great was the enthusiasm among the faithful. The heretics fled away in fright and hid themselves for shame; they dared not face the one who had proved that prayer is more powerful than the laws of nature. Many were so moved by the wondrous spectacle that though they had long wandered from the path of duty they returned into the fold. Guillard likewise sought admission, for he could no longer doubt, and with him came his household. He publicly attested his faith, and in gratitude erected a church upon the spot where the miracle had taken place, and that monument endures to this hour. As late as 1850 a block of marble, carved to represent a mule in the attitude of devotion, was discovered in the wall of the facade of the church built by Guillard and consecrated in 1231 by Archbishop Simon de Sully.

VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

We reproduce from the English Messenger of the Sacred Heart, published by the Jesuit Fathers at Wimbledon, Surrey, England, an highly interesting article (by Canon Akers) on Vocations to the Priesthood. The article is timely, since such is the January in Lenten blessed by the Pope for the Associates of the League of the Sacred Heart.

We stand much in need of more vocations to the priesthood, to carry on the great missionary work of this country. The fields seem white for the harvest, but how few are the reapers! What is to be done to supply the want? If there is a lack of men for any secular profession, it is generally easy to supply it. Certain premiums and advantages are held out, technical teaching provided at little or no expense, and a stream of volunteers present themselves. Youths choose it as their profession for the advantages of it. They have but to give their studies the right direction, and a career lies open before them.

But we cannot find priests in this way. There are two impediments. First, we have no such premiums to offer to the young candidate for the priesthood. We offer him a life of labor, not limited to so many hours in the day, or so many days in the year; an income less than that of most clerks in a city office, and likely to dwindle down to nothing if he be promoted to be Rector of a mission; no "plums," and no securities, and very few honors. In short, a life of ceaseless self-sacrifice and unceasing labor. There is not much to attract in all this.

But a graver impediment than this is, that a lad cannot choose the priesthood as he chooses a profession, at his own will or fancy. In truth, he does not choose the priesthood—he is chosen for it. What is to be done, then, to promote this good end? The first thing to do, our Lord Himself has taught us. "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into the harvest." Four times a year the Church bids us pray, and pray with fasting, for those about to be ordained, and we may fairly include in this prayer all those in any stage of preparing for the priesthood. Many holy souls, both in religious houses and in the world, offer their frequent prayers for the same intention; and all who have had occasion to know the multitude of stray sheep in our large town missions, and of the many inquirers knocking at our gates, must be moved to join in this prayer. Is it not an intention specially suitable to the Apostolate of Prayer?

Though we cannot invent a vocation for ourselves or for others, we can do much to encourage and promote it. As a good seed planted in good ground, well tilled and kept free from weeds, will flourish, whereas among thorns or by the wayside it will be trodden down or choked, so a vocation sown in the heart of a child may come to perfection, if watched and cherished by those who have the care of that child, or, on the other hand, be utterly lost through their neglect. In this matter, as in all others, God requires our co-operation. The lad himself who has had the happiness to receive the first sign of a vocation, must correspond to it, but how shall he do so if he is not taught and helped? It is the duty and the happiness of a good pastor to watch for vocations and to help them forward, but it is no less the duty of parents, and the priest can do little if the parents are neglecting their part. A good home, pious parents—having prudence, too, as well as piety—careful training in obedience, diligence, and self-denial, as well as observance of religious duty—these things are so necessary to a good vocation, that it is difficult to suppose a case in which they are wanting, without the loss of it.

I come to the end of the limited space allowed me, having done little more than make a beginning. But I must add a very few words to point out mistakes too commonly made about vocations. All the care and training I have bespoken above are needed, and are the bounden duty of parents for all their children. It does not therefore follow that where these are provided, and the child responds to them, that he is called to be a priest. Piety and all virtues are demanded of the laity as well as of the clergy. It would be a bad day indeed for us all when it was otherwise. But this careful training will give room to the vocation to develop itself as it could not otherwise, and the good priest and the good parent will soon be able to observe the distinctive marks of a priestly vocation.

These are too delicate and too various to be even enumerated with any completion in so short a treatise. Among them at any rate should be found—a love of the Church and of the Church services, a regular and devout frequenting of the sacraments, devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Victim of Divine Love, and to our Blessed Lady, the Queen of the clergy; and a certain steadfastness and perseverance, both in study and in play, the mark of a solid character. If fathers and mothers would realize how much is entrusted to them, how much they can and ought to do to train up their children in a good Christian life, vocations would spring up of themselves. Till the ground, hedge it about, and pull up the weeds, and God will give the increase.

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NEW ORLEANS' COLORED NUNS

In the old French quarter of New Orleans, with its narrow streets, latticed windows and jealously guarded courts, where the fig and orange tree grows, is a square of rather miscellaneous architecture. Its central building, 717 Orleans street, is several hundred years old. It has a stately entrance, with great pillars and old-fashioned, ornately carved doors. It was once the old creole opera house and ballroom of the early days. Now it is the home of the colored nuns.

The powdered and ringleted damsels with hoop distended skirts who stepped daintily across the threshold to scenes of gayety in bygone years have given place to dark robed figures whose white ruffled caps only bring into stronger relief the bronze and ebony of their skins. The very names of the streets here are rich in history and romance. There are Orleans and Bourbon, Chartres and—him of the iron hand and gentle heart—Tonty. Saades of the past are jostling one another, though in a gentle, side-walk way, at every street corner, and at nothing do they seem to be more astonished than at the sight of the colored nuns.

Yet the order is not such a very modern one after all, for it was founded in New Orleans over half a century ago. Its members are now well known figures on the streets of the Crescent City. The special object of its institution was the education and moral training of the young colored girls and the care of orphans and aged infirm people of the race. It has had the cordial support of such eminent churchmen as—Archbishops Blane, Olin, Perche, Leroy and Janssens, who successively filled the archiepiscopal See of New Orleans. It has also a novitiate where young girls are trained for the work of the order with the view of extending the work to every parish in Louisiana, and, if possible, into every southern state.

In the orphan asylum 135 children are sheltered who would otherwise be thrown upon the state. These, as well as the sixty poor old colored men and women and many of the children in the school, are dependent upon the Sisters for their daily bread. Formerly the Sisters obtained a fair revenue by going through the streets of New Orleans, from door to door and into business houses and railroad offices, soliciting alms for their charges. So quietly did they labor that few outside the city were even aware of the existence of the order, the only colored Sisterhood in the United States. But the yellow fever which broke out in the south in August caused that section to be hemmed in by quarantine and the wheels of commerce were stopped. As a pathetic letter just received from one of the Sisters says, "Our friends have always been among the poor laboring classes, who seem to feel most for us, and since this class has suffered particularly through lack of employment for three months, and their distress at present is almost as great as ours, we cannot but conscientiously apply to them for aid. Even if we did it would not be forthcoming, as they have not the means to give us now the mites wherewith we have hitherto managed to sustain our little orphans and poor people. * * * Ours is a colored order, and it is not all who can understand and feel for us, especially in this section."

"We find ourselves on the verge of winter without food or clothing for our helpless little ones. Our schools will not afford us any support this term, as our patrons are among the poor. * * * We know not where to turn for aid save to the people of the north, who have always been the friends of our race. Were our dear Archbishop living we know he himself would apply to the country in our behalf. * * * We can only turn to you ourselves now that he is dead and our friends in this section are too seriously crippled by the paralysis of business to help us for months to come. We will be glad to get anything, whether in money, food or clothes."

Chicago has a heart as big as herself. Maybe now that her poor list has, as the bureau of charities shows, been cut almost in two, she may be able to give a little of her abundance to the poor colored nuns of the South, who are spending their lives in noble works of charity for the betterment of their race. And many a pickaninny of the South finding his friends of the north gratefully his thanks to "Santa Claus" and to Chicago.—Mary J. O'Nahan in Chicago Post.

Where can I get some of Holloway's Corn Cure? I was entirely cured of my corns by this remedy and I wish some more of it for my friends. So writes Mr. J. W. BROWN, Chicago.

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Human nature is quite sure that the living now, would charge to us. By means the alms, not which human nature propose and perform looks upon as necessary life, liberty, and the pines, when not guided by divine grace. "This world" can do but to make of this life what for mankind. For if Christ had never come and manifested a supernatural end for what other end would thought of? "Let us say the world, "f die."

You will hear on who say: "We live are men of the world we have faith in and towards a higher destination ourselves to the or we would be left take part in the hope and learning, and things which are to be ing. You see at a cowardly Christians! birthright to heaven tage. They seek after of the world first. T as of the first importa in getting hours in or an exceptionally science or art, he th failure. What does "Seek ye first the and his justice, and will be added unto y. Our Lord has come has revealed to us th to enter and be God dom which is of God of this world, and l only kingdom that he His. To fail of ob that glorious and et and happiness is to to a state which is eternal death, cha And, compared to th the state of hell deser. But you may ask not conform oursel the world in so far Just think one minu where the trouble estimate of its good t. It makes them fir and its estimate is f only secondary in the Irish people in th ingly suffered for the good things of th have to put their fa less worthy, then tians followed the a and refused to con wrong estimate of t things. They died rather than conform. Secondly: The good things is wron to an excess which is reason as it is Money, and houses, ture, horses and car clothing, learning are good. But fol practice of the wor if you, a Christian them. Who do l money, too much l and furniture, too carriages and clothe ing, and too much in any way you mu much. Too much m for religion. You, as St. Paul h you in louder tone not conformed to world that cannot bounds of reason against the wis by the law of Chris

What Miss "Missions," say J., "are given for ing the pastoral w awakening in the a full realization condition, and ext means to unite th God. Missions ar for those who hav the performance of Church, or wholly but likewise for the spirit of divi kindled in their a tions more keenly great object for ated more firmly mnds. To receiv mission it is need service five times ber of sermons; perform the penu receive Holy Com sion church; lastl for the Holy Faith.

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