



AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF NAZARETH.

BRIEF HISTORY OF AN APOSTOLIC RELIGIOUS ORDER,
By a Client of Saint Joseph.
Concordia, Kansas.

Among the many pious orders of religious women that have added to the glory of God and of his Church, the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Joseph of Nazareth stands foremost. Born at a time when the Church of Jesus Christ was sorely tried and in need of religious auxiliaries, its career has since been one of widespread usefulness.

The Congregation was founded in Le Puy, France, in the year 1650, at the suggestion of a saintly missionary of the Society of Jesus — Reverend John Paul Médaille, the Apostle of Velay. In his apostolic journeys, this holy priest had met many pious widows and young girls anxious to retire from the world in order to devote themselves, in a special manner, to prayer, the practice of virtue and their own sanctification, while, at the same time, consecrating their lives to the service of their neighbor.

The establishment of a community, whose object would be to unite the exterior works of charity with the repose of contemplation, had been the first conception of Saint Francis de Sales. The idea of a mind so great, of a saint so perfect as the gentle Bishop of Geneva, could have been but the inspiration of Heaven, and must prove successful. Consequently we find that only a few years after his death, his ideas were fully carried out in the pious Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth, a community of Sisters destined for the solace of human miseries and the Christian education of youth; uniting prayer and contemplation with the external works of charity, and thus adding another jewel to that glorious crown of the religious life, which is at once the ornament, the honor and the strength of the Church. The composition of that essence, so strong and yet so delicate, which renders those sublime virgins brave as soldiers, tender as mothers, pure as angels, with hearts as immense as misery, as strong as love, is a secret communicated by Heaven to Catholicity alone.

Previous to the foundation of this Congregation, many holy and learned persons were unable to conceive that the flower of virginity could be preserved secure and inviolate without the safeguards of solitude and the cloister grate. The saintly Jesuit, on the contrary, thought with Saint Francis de Sales that the fear and love of God were infallible antidotes against temptation and worldly seductions; and that, wanting this holy love and fear, the closest grates

would prove but feeble barriers. Instead, then, of devoting the new Congregation of Sisters to a life wholly cloistral, their Founder placed them in the hospitals and schools and in charge of works of charity in general. He sent them as mothers to the bedside of the sick, the attics of the poor, into isolated huts and garrets; on far distant missions; among savages, even to the soldiers' camp, "with the city streets and highways for their convent, obedience for their enclosure, the fear of God for their grate and holy modesty for their veil." To such a work the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth are marvelously suitable, for our Blessed Saviour, in His infinite and ineffable goodness, having willed to leave, as his representatives on earth, the afflicted, the sick, the hungry, the naked and homeless poor, declaring that whatever is done unto the least of the unfortunate is done unto Himself, it follows that it is He whom His chosen children tend in the suffering members of humanity.

The advent of this Congregation began a new epoch in the history of female religious communities. The world never before had seen such an order, never dreamed of such a mission as theirs until it sprang into sudden existence from the divine inspiration of an humble son of Loyola, at the very moment when its services were most needed. So admirably fitted for the task before them, so well versed in all human science, yet so simple and so humble in their religious character, so full of the loftiest and most chivalrous devotion and so utterly detached from earthly things do those Sisters appear before the world, that its dazzled vision can scarce comprehend what manner of women they are. It was for the purpose of propagating the Faith that the Congregation was called into being and as instruments of that chosen work the members were from the first endowed with every quality that might insure success. They conquered the foe with his own arms, and the world saw that those most humble Sisters were the true enlighteners and friends of their own sex; for the light which their angelic genius cast on human learning and moral reform among the women of France came direct from the great source of Truth.

THE RULE AND CONSTITUTIONS.

The Rule of the Congregation is that of Saint Francis de Sales, while the Constitutions are those of Saint Ignatius Loyola. Their object is to train each religious to the highest possible degree of virtue and learning. The members are to be those who in everything pertaining to human knowledge do not remain behind their age, but are able to follow or even to aid its advances. They are alive to every change in the popular phase of education; they hold to nothing

simply because it has the sanction of antiquity but are ever ready to adopt what stands the test of experience.

THE RELIGIOUS VOWS.

The Sisters annually, for a period of seven years, make the customary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Only those who, after years of faithful labor and strict observance of the Rule, have proven themselves worthy and reliable members are permitted to take perpetual vows. The professed religious has been moulded to such an extent, drilled in the exercise of that wonderful prudence, sound reasoning, and self-control so characteristic of members of the Congregation, that the state of her soul invariably casts a special and unmistakable reflection upon her countenance. She has especially acquired an unbounded love for God, for His Church and for the Daughters of St. Joseph of Nazareth.

PAPAL APPROBATION—MOTHER HOUSE OF CONCORDIA.

The Congregation was formally approved by a Decree issued by our Holy Father, Pope Leo XII., on the 20th day of November in the year 1895.

The Mother House, Novitiate and House of Studies are located at Concordia, Kansas, but the community is scattered through several dioceses and possesses numerous establishments, all of which are self-supporting. The Congregation has been wonderfully blessed by God since it was established in Concordia in 1884, and the members are accomplishing untold good among all classes of society.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS TO THE CONGREGATION.

The Congregation of St. Joseph is cosmopolitan in membership, but its subjects are mainly drawn from the following nations: United States of America, Canada, Ireland, Mexico, Germany, England, France, Italy, Bohemia, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Spain. It makes no difference whether aspirants to the order be rich or poor; all that is required is solid piety, signs of a religious vocation, and good health. Educated applicants are naturally preferred, but no pious soul, fulfilling required conditions, will be rejected. The custom in the community is to educate those young girls whose intellectual training has been neglected, provided they evince talent, are mentally capable of making the prescribed course of studies, which is of a very high standard, and are sincerely desirous of persevering in the Congregation. The Sisters who aspire to become teachers are obliged to pass a satisfactory academic and normal examination, before they will be permitted to instruct others; hence the high grade of scholarship amongst the teachers of the Congregation. If a novice shows a decided talent for a special branch of education, she is provided with the best instruc-

tors obtainable and encouraged in every way to thoroughly perfect herself in her particular study.

All young girls are not called to become school teachers, but as the community will conduct works of charity in general, dressmakers, milliners, stenographers, typewriters, domestics, etc., etc., are received into the order, and places suited to their individual tastes and capacity are found for each member in the various convents.

From sixteen to thirty years, is the most appropriate age for the admission of candidates into the Congregation. Educated ladies or workers are received at a more advanced age.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION IN GENERAL.

Catholic girls, unfortunately, give little, if any attention, to the fact that every person has some special vocation, and yet it is a subject of vital importance to them, both here and in the great hereafter. They seldom, if ever, think of the fact, that there is a divine calling for every state of life. Saint Paul says, "Every one hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that." Theology teaches that if, in the choice of a state of life we wish to secure our eternal salvation, we must embrace that state to which God calls us; in which alone He prepares for us the abundant means that facilitate salvation. Hence, on account of neglecting to study God's holy will, we have unhappy marriages and a great lack of subjects for the religious orders of the Church. God alone knows how many young women there are, who, having, through their own fault, lost their vocation, are now suffering the consequences of their neglect to follow His holy will instead of their own. There are hundreds of young ladies now aimlessly walking the earth, who would have made zealous religious, and thus be instruments in God's hands to teach others the way to Heaven.

The religious life is a fixed state of community existence under one rule approved by the Church; a state in which souls who aspire to perfection consecrate themselves to God by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The end of the religious state is to tend towards perfection, by the exact observance, not only of the Commandments, but still more of the evangelical counsels. To aspire and tend toward perfection is the characteristic of a religious.

Two conditions are required to enter religion, viz., vocation—fidelity to that vocation.

Vocation, which means a call from God, is generally recognized: First, by a fitness, that is, a disposition of mind and body to comprehend the obligations of the state and endure its labors and fatigues. Secondly, by an at-

traction; that is, a feeling, be it instinctive, or be it the result of reason, which leads the will to choose the religions rather than the secular life. This sentiment may arise from a supernatural or even from a purely natural motive. If the latter be confided to a prudent confessor; if it lead the soul to become more pious, more devoted to its duty, and if it persevere, it may be a direct call from God.

The supernatural motives may be: Disgust with the world, though we have met with no disappointments; the desire of doing penance and expiating past faults; the desire of gaining Heaven more surely, the happiness of living in a community, sheltered from the dangers of the world and the occasions of sin; the certainty of doing the will of God in all things by obedience; the desire of being more pleasing to God—to give ourselves to Him in gratitude for the benefits He has bestowed upon us and the love He bears us.

The natural motives may be: A great humiliation from which one desires to escape; vexation at not having succeeded in an institution or an enterprise. God frequently makes use of such causes to lead souls to Himself.

The marks that an attraction for the religious life comes from God, are: Constancy, in spite of obstacles; peace of mind in spite of exterior opposition and the repugnance of nature; a life more pure; more submissive; more faithful to every duty.

Parents who formally oppose an acknowledged vocation in their children, and prevent them from embracing the religious life, sin mortally. They may doubtless examine and test the vocation of their offspring, but the trial should not last longer than is reasonably necessary.

Letters of inquiry regarding admission to the Novitiate of the Daughters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, accompanied by a letter from the spiritual director, may be addressed to

Reverend Mother General,
Nazareth Academy,
Concordia, Kansas.

A New Departure.

Dr. Marschand, the celebrated French physician, has at last opened his magnificently equipped laboratory in Windsor, Ont. There is a large staff of chemists and physicians at his command, and the men and women of Canada may now procure the advice of this famous specialist free of charge.

Dr. Marschand has a world-wide reputation for successfully treating all nervous diseases of men and women, and you have but to write the doctor to be convinced that your answer, when received, is from a man who is entitled to the high position he holds in the medical fraternity.

Why suffer in silence when you can secure the advice of this eminent physician free of charge.

All correspondence is strictly confidential and names are held as sacred. Answers to correspondents are mailed in plain envelopes.

You are not asked to pay any exorbitant price for medicines, in fact it rarely happens that a patient has expended over 50 cents to one dollar before he or she becomes a firm friend and admirer of the doctor.

A special staff of lady physicians assist Dr. Marschand in his treatment of female cases. Always inclose three-cent stamp when you write and address the Dr. Marschand Chemical Co., Detroit, Mich. U. S. A. Mention the Northwest Review when you write the Doctor.