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THE LAND OF THE SUN.

AT THE HACIENDA.

(Continued.)

If the arrival at the hacienda was like a dream in the white moonlight of the night, when the great mass of buildings was all made up of silver lights and dark shadows, and the lamps gleaming in the pillared courts and lofty apartments only served to show dimly their vast spaces, it was a very striking reality in the brilliant sunshine of the next morning when the members of the party, emerging from their various apartments, found themselves on a wide arched corridor surrounding the four sides of a court fit for a baronial castle.

"Oh, how delightfully medieval!" cried Dorothea, as she looked around at the great open paved space where a thousand men-at-arms might have manoeuvred with ease, at the immense, fortress-like walls, at the long vista of corridors shaded by orange-trees, and at the bellies of the chapel which rose above the roof of the house against a sky of dazzling lapis-lazuli.

"Don't let Don Rafael hear you call his residence medieval," said her brother with a laugh. "He might not understand that you mean to flatter it. There are Americans who would not use the term in a flattering sense—and with these Americans Mexicans are more familiar than with those who admire the antiquity of their dwellings and customs."

"If he thinks we are uncultivated modern barbarians, able to appreciate nothing but a steam-engine, I hope you will be kind enough to undeceive him," replied Dorothea with dignity. "since I, for one, cannot possibly restrain my admiration for this splendid, picturesque place."

"Here he is now," said Philip advancing to meet the elderly gentleman, of aspect as picturesque and as dignified as his house, who came toward them. A tall, well-knit figure, set off to advantage by the costume of the country, a clear-cut, bronze face with an eagle eye and partially gray hair, the bearing of an Hidalgo and the manner of a courtier, such was Don Rafael de Vargas, his own stately home. In very good English he welcomed the party again, told them that his house was their own, and begged to know if they had rested well during the night. Assured on this point, he expressed regret that his wife and daughters, who now came up in smiling phalanx, could not speak English, but hoped that the American ladies had sufficient command of Spanish to communicate with them.

Philip, for the American ladies, expressed their sincere regret that this was not the case—and then for several minutes was kept very busy interpreting the hospitable greetings and compliments of Dona Herminia and her three daughters. Two of these were married—charming young matrons with manners as attractive as their faces; but the youngest, Dona Mercedes, was in the first flush of girlhood, and of a very bewitching loveliness, delicate, high-bred, and piquant.

"There she is!" said Philip in a discreet tone to his elder sister, when he was at last able to cast his mantle of interpreter upon the shoulders of Russell. "Isn't she a beauty? She beats Violet Grenshaw hollow, as I knew she would!"

Mrs. Langdon, suppressing a laugh, replied that Dona Mercedes was certainly a beauty in the full sense of that much-abused term—"and a perfect picture," she added, as she stood looking at the girl with undisguised admiration. There was indeed a strikingly picturesque quality in her loveliness, the quality which makes an artist, on seeing some particular face, long for his color-box and brushes, that he might transfer its lines, tints, and tones to canvas. Here all the lines, tints, and tones were of the most charming description. The soft brunette skin was fine and pale as ivory, save where a coral-like color bloomed on the rounded cheeks, dark curling hair clustered around a beautiful forehead, perfect brows lay straight as a Greek statue's, above the large and brilliant dark eyes with their long, curling lashes, the delicate nose expressed refinement with something of pride, while the lips, "like a scarlet thread," parting over milk-white teeth, and the shape of the dimpled chin, indicated that the young lady possessed a very decided will of her own. In fact there was something in her whole appearance suggestive at once of a spoiled child, and of a saucy, somewhat mutinous, disposition. "And this is the girl we were afraid that Philip would marry!" thought Margaret, with a humorous sense of the situation. "She looks like a young princess, and I fancy would not think of condescending to a poor gringo, a mere civil engineer, as Philip no doubt appears to these people."

It was certain that, kind as the De Vargas family had been to the young engineer, they received a new and much higher idea of his social environment from the appearance of his family and friends. The ladies, especially gauged with fine accuracy the position of these very elegant and distinguished-looking strangers of their own sex. "They are evidently persons of the highest consideration in their own country," Dona Herminia confidedly said to her daughters. "I am much pleased to know them."

And Dona Mercedes remarked frankly that the young lady was a dark mare.

ment as soon as possible which placed him at her side, "they are charming, your sisters. I cannot tell which I admire most. The one in blue is perhaps most beautiful, but the one in black has most distinction."

"The lady in blue is not my sister," replied Philip. "She is a friend only. At home she is considered a great beauty; but in Mexico, "pursued this bold and unfaithful young man, "she does not seem so beautiful, by comparison with the ladies of this country."

He was rewarded by the laughing gleam that came into Dona Mercedes' bright young eyes. "Do you find them, then, all so beautiful, the ladies of Mexico?" she asked. "I am afraid you are a great flatterer, señor. For my part, I think there can be few anywhere more beautiful than this friend of yours."

"She is a friend of my sisters," said Philip the mendacious.

At this moment the party was reinforced by the approach of three young men, one of whom proved to be a son-in-law, while the other two were sons of the house—handsome young fellows who had received their education in Europe, and one of whom was attached to the Mexican legation in Paris. Both spoke English, the latter, Don Rodolfo, particularly well, and on him Miss Gresham smiled approvingly. It was the last thing she had expected, to find so unmistakable a man of the world in this Mexican hacienda, which seemed to her imagination as remote from the scenes which his appearance and manner suggested as if it had been located on another planet. So, with pleasant surprise on all sides, and a generally agreeable sense of good will, the party moved toward the dining-room, where breakfast awaited them.

At the door the members of the family all drew back and motioned their guests to precede them into a vast apartment, where a table, at which fifty persons might have been seated, occupied the centre of the floor. There was little else in the room. A tiled-paved floor, delicately frescoed walls, two or three sideboards of very simple construction, and an array of chairs, these things, with the great table, made up the fittings of the apartment. On one side was the square aperture in the wall through which, according to Mexican custom, the food is passed from the kitchen—which invariably adjoins the dining-room; on the other side tall windows opened upon a beautiful garden enclosed by a high wall, where flowers were blooming in profusion and birds singing in the trees.

"How wonderfully feudal it all seems!" Dorothea remarked in a low voice to her sister, as they grouped themselves about one end of the long table, and coffee and chocolate were served by white-clad, crimson-cinctured servants. "I could not have imagined anything at the present time so suggestive of the past. This table seems made for an unlimited hospitality, and I feel as if all the retainers would presently march in and take their places below the salt."

"We are still very feudal in Mexico, señorita," said a voice beside her, and turning she found, somewhat to her confusion, that her remark had been overheard by Don Amando, the eldest son of the house.

"Oh!" she said, bearing in mind Philip's caution, and blushing quickly, for this English-speaking señor was looking at her very pleasantly with his bright dark eyes, "I hope you do not think that I use the term in any unfattering sense. It seems to me delightful to find anything left in the modern world so picturesque as this life of yours, so full of the spirit of times that seem as far from us as the middle ages."

He smiled, evidently understanding that she spoke with honest enthusiasm. "You must talk to my father," he said. "He is a great adherent of our ancient ways. I too, like them—but I recognize that we cannot hope to keep them from changing. At present, however, there is still much that is picturesque and feudal in the best sense, in this our Mexican life. I am glad that you like it. Many Americans think us—how do you call it?—anti-quoted."

"I am not that kind of an American," said Dorothea with great distinctness. "There are numbers of antiquated things that I admire exceedingly, and which I think we have very poorly replaced. But as for this life of yours—this distinctively Mexican life of the hacienda—it interests me beyond measure, and I hope you will not think me very inquisitive and troublesome if I ask many questions about it."

"It will give me the greatest pleasure to tell you anything, everything, that you may wish to know," said Don Amando with the most evident sincerity.

"I perceive one thing very plainly," said Travers after breakfast to Mrs. Langdon, as they all strolled slowly around the orange-shaded corridors of the great quadrangle toward the sala, "that if you do not take compassion on me, I shall be driven to commune with my own thoughts alone. Here is the general monopolized by and zealously extracting information from Don Rafael, while Russell is engaged in exchanging compliments with our hostess, Phil has eyes, ears and tongue only for that very pretty girl, and the two young men are evidently determined to absorb the attention of our contingent of young ladies, so unless you allow me to address a remark now and then to you, I shall be driven simply to exchange smiles and bows with the very affable gentleman who is talking to me on other side, señor."

what is his name?"

"Never mind," said Mrs. Langdon with a smile. "If I mentioned it, he would know that we were talking of him, and I have not Spanish enough to explain why. It is surely a pity that the tower of Babel was ever begun! But whenever you feel the need of conversation pray do not hesitate to address yourself to me. By present appearances, I am no more likely to be monopolized than yourself."

In this opinion Mrs. Langdon reckoned without her hostess. When they reached the sala, an immense apartment, as superb in space and proportion as the rest of the house, she was at once led to the seat of honor, a sofa at the head of the room, where, seated between Dona Herminia and her eldest daughter, she was obliged to employ all the Spanish at her command and to engage Russell's aid as interpreter besides, to maintain a conversation with these friendly people.

Meanwhile, Don Rafael was only too delighted to initiate the general into the inner life of the hacienda, its modes of working, and all the details of the life of its people, most of whom had been on the estate for generations, and would under no circumstances think of leaving it. He was taken into the great office and store-room in one, where the accounts were kept, and where the laborers purchased almost all of their supplies, furnished them at the lowest profit possible by "el amo"—the master. "At the height of the season our rays [pay-rolls] average two thousand dollars a week," said Don Rafael, "so you see there is need of a bookkeeper."

"And a bank also, I should think," said the general.

He was then taken into a world outside of, yet closely surrounding the casa grande—a world of granaries and store-houses, as full to overflowing as the granaries of Egypt in the years of fatness; of shops where, with comparatively primitive tools, the work of the hacienda was done; black-smithing, carpentering, shoe-making—all the trades were represented, and very good was some of the work accomplished, notably some carriage-building which, in its results, astonished the general. Then there were the schools for both sexes, maintained by the proprietor, and filled with dusky boys and girls who were all studying aloud in the ancient fashion which, like many other ancient fashions, still lingers in Mexico.

"To-morrow," said Don Rafael, when the general, a little tired, was finally conducted back across the wide plaza-like space around which these buildings were grouped, to the shade of the great house, "we will start early—say at five o'clock, so as to avoid the heat of the sun—and ride out on the hacienda. You will probably be interested to see our modes of agriculture."

"Nothing could interest me more," said the general, heartily.

Indeed he told Russell a little later that while the cities which they visited had been very brilliant and picturesque, this glimpse of the inner life of the country, of the management of its great estates, was infinitely more interesting to him. "It is like another world," he said, "totally different in every respect from ours. There is something fascinating about its semi-patriarchal, semi-feudal character."

"A mixture of the East and the middle ages," said Russell smiling. "You can understand now why there is such an Arabian Nights flavor about many of the stories which are told of these great proprietors. I must get Don Rafael to tell you some of them."

Meanwhile the younger members of the party had not been idle in sight-seeing, although their attention was not directed to the inspection of the granaries and shops. Led by one of the married sisters and by Dona Mercedes and Philip, Miss Gresham and Dorothea, with Travers and their two young hosts, passed through an atrio enclosed by a balustrade and adorned by a fountain, and mounting a superb flight of steps, they found themselves in the long, graceful arcade which extended along the entire front of the vast building. Here they paused for a time to admire the magnificent view of valley and mountains that stretched before them, and were then conducted to the chapel, which rose at one end of the house, and was capable of containing at least six or seven hundred people. Finely proportioned, like all Mexican churches, built of stone throughout, with lofty, frescoed ceiling, noble organ, and splendid churrigueresque altar, it was in all respects a sample of that princely generosity which the highest class of Mexicans have for centuries displayed toward religion, and which the best of them practice to-day as much as ever. Simple marble slabs let into the pavement told where rested below the dust of those who in their earthly day owned this magnificent heritage, and who now slept in the peace of God before the altar where they had so often slept in life. In a dim, spacious sacristy, almost as large as the church itself, the sacristan, a brown old man in the cleanest of white clothes, showed them sacred vessels and vestments rich enough for a cathedral. A stair behind the sacristy led to the chaplain's apartments above—two rooms, one a chamber, the other a study lined with books—which commanded so entrancing a view over the vast stretch of pastoral valley to the purple hills beyond, that it was difficult for Dorothea to tear herself away from it.

(To be continued.)

SACRED WRITINGS.

To Consult Them at Hazard Is Decided to Be an Abuse.

A curious case was recently examined at Rome by the Ecclesiastical Courts which gave rise to a curious question, "How far is it permitted to consult sacred books at hazard, and to draw conclusions by means of the texts which meet the eyes in the opened volume?" A person had made a practice of consulting holy books in this manner without, at the same time, doing so for gain, or for any but a good motive and in good faith. It happened that she had on several occasions hit upon the most strange and striking truths, and that her predictions were more than once realized. The decision of the Ecclesiastical Court is that such practices were an abuse, and the would-be prophet was forbidden to continue them. If, however, any person desire to consult sacred writings at hazard, and for the good of their souls, the best method is that followed by St. Ignatius, who used to read extracts from the imitation of Christ twice a day. In the morning he read it by order of chapters, and in the evening was in the habit of opening it at hazard. The great saint was wont to declare that he had always drawn great comfort from these improvised counsels and admonitions. One of the most learned editors of the imitation (Genes) once stopped near the town of Viterbo, and charmed by the beauty of the spot decided to reside there for the remainder of his days. Almost immediately after his resolution was taken, he opened his favorite book, and the verse that met his eyes was: "Why dost thou stand looking about thee here, since this is not thy resting place?" Struck by this warning, our traveler at the same instant heard the slow and solemn tolling of a church bell. He rose from the place where he was resting, and walking towards the town met a funeral procession bearing a dead body to its last earthly habitation. The Christian wayfarer accompanied his unknown brother to his narrow home, and then continued his opened chapter in the imitation which, with marvelous applicability, continued: "Thy dwelling must be in Heaven, and all things of the earth are only to be looked upon as passing by. All things pass away, and thou along with them."

The Church's Jewels.

When Cornelia heard the boasts of certain Roman matrons as they displayed their jewels, she had naught to say. When asked to show her jewels, she bade her visitors bide awhile. Presently two rosy boys came romping home from school. "There," said the mother, "these are my jewels." If our mother the Church were called on to-day to display her treasures, who would dare say nay; were she to point to the religious educators and in a just pride bespeak them as her jewels. "Priceless gifts of heaven, you Catholic educators. I salute you! Bright jewels in the crown of the Holy Church, I hail you! Your sombre robes, your simple homes, your sweet retiring ways can never dim the lustre of your deeds. Jewels of Mother Church on earth, yours it shall be to shine as stars in Heaven for eternity."—Baltimore Mirror.

The Priesthood.

Notwithstanding the scandals which must occur, the Church points with pride to the history of the priesthood. One of the chosen twelve betrayed his Master; the eleven lived, labored and died for the Master. It is the same in the priesthood; one falls, eleven are faithful unto death. One in time of temptation falls away; eleven by devotion and self-sacrifice edify the faithful, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity; yet such is the perversity of human nature, even in some who are Catholics, that they will see, criticize and publish the defects of an individual priest, whilst they are blind to the zeal, charity and devotion of hundreds of faithful priests who live only for God and their fellow-men.—Right Rev. Dr. O'Sullivan.

Thomas Francis Meagher.

Seventy years ago to-day, says the Buffalo Evening Times of August 3, Thomas Francis Meagher, the Irish patriot and American soldier, was born in Waterford, Ireland. At 20 years of age he was a compatriot with Daniel O'Connell, eloquently pleading from the same platform with the great leader for Ireland's cause. When 35 years old he was condemned to death. Escaping from Van Diemen's Land in his 30th year, the remaining fifteen years of his life were spent in the land of the free. Before reaching his 40th year General Meagher was conspicuously fighting in the war for the Union, receiving a severe and honorable wound at the head of the Irish Brigade of the Army of the Potomac.

The Blessed Virgin.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the direct guide of the women of the earliest Church. In convents are found to-day the exquisite manners which spring from a perpetual consciousness of God's presence. For women living in the world, the pure ray of light which streams from the first century to the twentieth has been sometimes obscured. But for religious women there has been no mist rising from the miasma of self-indulgence, no smoke from the fires of vanity to hide the lights, and that it still shines for us all in due part to their heroism in preserving unbroken the noblest traditions of womanhood.

MIRACLES FROM GOD.

REV. J. H. M'MAHON'S LECTURE ON THE LOURDES CURES.

Cases Cited That Effectually Disprove the Claims of Infidel Science That the Miracles Are of Hypnotic Suggestion—Wonderful and Permanent Healing.

Father McMahon of New York lectured recently at the Catholic summer school at Plattsburg, N. Y., on the "Miracles at Lourdes and Hypnotism." He said:

There is at Lourdes a fact unequalled in the history of miracles. It is found in the little chapeau which is labeled during the pilgrimage as the "Bureau des Consultations," where an inquest on all reported cures is held by a number of reputable physicians who have come from all parts of Europe and even from distant countries to investigate the wonderful cures at Lourdes. Almost every year from that severe jury go forth a number of cures that cannot be accounted for by any human science. It is only necessary to cite some of the most remarkable of the recent cures to disprove forever and completely the claim of infidel science that the occurrences at Lourdes are not an evidence of the existence of the supernatural, but simply cures that can be affected at any hypnotic clinic. Let me hurriedly cite some of the most remarkable of these cases.

In 1878, in the month of September, Mlle. Joachime de Hant came to Lourdes. For 13 years she had exhausted almost the whole series of human sufferings. She had dislocation of the hip joint, permanent contraction of the muscles of the thigh, which rendered her right foot club footed, and an ulcer covering two-thirds of the external surface of the right thigh. Some days after she arrived, on Sept. 19, the physician who had testified to the above disease declared that he examined Joachime de Hant and had found that the lesion above mentioned had completely disappeared, a simple redness indicating the place of the ulcer. Certainly no hypnotic suggestion could account for this cure. Leaving aside the question whether hypnotic suggestion could ever restore a muscular contraction, certainly it could never heal an ulcer of so violent a nature, leaving the skin fresh and natural, with all the tissues perfectly healed and no indication save a redness.

Again, Mlle. Faure had a congenital distortion of both hips. After submitting to all the different treatments known to medical science the poor invalid resigned herself to a life of suffering. Going to Lourdes, she insisted even on helping the sick to bathe, and it was only through complaisance that she yielded to the solicitations of friends and herself bathed in the piscina. In a few seconds, without any expression of emotion or pain, she came forth entirely cured and walked erect and firm.

More than that. In 1879 Mlle. Dubois ran a needle into the fatty part of the hand at the root of the thumb. In trying to draw it out the top portion of the needle broke off, leaving the greater part of it imbedded in the hand. Surgical operations failed to remove it, although it could be distinctly felt. She suffered intermittently intense pain, and by degrees the fingers of that hand were doubled over. After seven years her sufferings continued, when during a pilgrimage to Lourdes she plunged this hand thrice into the waters of the piscina. At the first immersion the contracted fingers opened almost entirely. At the second the needle appeared in almost its entire length under the skin at the root of the thumb, and at the third it emerged entire from the extremity of the thumb, whence it could be easily withdrawn. The whole occupied exactly four minutes. Eight physicians made a minute examination into all the details of this miracle and unanimously declared that it could receive no natural explanation.

Furthermore, on Aug. 20, 1889, Pierre Delanois, for six years suffering from locomotor ataxia in its most advanced stages, was cured suddenly and permanently during a procession of the blessed sacrament at Lourdes without the intervention of the miraculous water. He had bent down to kiss the earth, according to the command of Our Lady to Bernadette, saying, "Notre Dame de Lourdes, cure me if you please and if you think it necessary," when suddenly he rose erect, with every trace of his awful disease lost. This man had been treated by 14 of the most distinguished physicians of Paris. He had been 16 times in the hospitals of Paris. He had undergone all the varieties of treatment used in such cases from potassium to morphine and to deep cauterizations with red-hot iron and even the method of suspension. His sight had become obscured. He was afflicted with shooting pains. There was a lack of co-ordination in his movements. In his lower members he was partially paralyzed and utterly unable to walk without assistance when he arrived at Lourdes on Aug. 19, 1889. On Aug. 20 all these symptoms had disappeared, and Pierre Delanois was able to officiate as one of the most active and zealous of the branchardiers in taking care of the sick.

These are facts that have been attested by the most rigorous scientific examination—an examination that puts to shame the reckless statements made by physicians, who, in their desire to get rid of the supernatural, hesitate at nothing. They cannot be accounted for on the ad-

any hypnotic suggestion or in any natural manner. Consequently, standing before them, we have unhesitatingly to pronounce that they are miracles from the direct intervention of God in the natural world. No quibbling can escape from this conclusion; no hair splitting, no abuse, no lying, can get behind these indisputable facts. There they are for any one to investigate. These persons are still living. The physicians who attended them made out their certificates, and the highest science—represented by Catholic, Protestant, and infidel physicians—has attested their complete and permanent cure.

THE SYMBOL I. H. S.

What the Letters Mean and Why They Are Used by the Church.

Like many other signs and characters, these letters have a meaning quite different from what people commonly attribute to them. It is an interesting story to learn the reason why they are used by the church and in particular by the Society of Jesus.

In the early ages of the church the Christians had to be very careful of the way in which they talked in public, for if they uttered a word to the effect that they were Christians they were often seized and tortured to death. Similarly they had frequent recourse to signs and symbols to preserve their holy things from profanation. A pagan, for example, meeting the image of a fish in the catacombs or elsewhere carved in stone or wood, would never suspect a religious meaning. Yet it was the emblem of our Lord himself. The letters of the Greek word meaning a fish—Ich-thu—are the initials of our Lord's title, "Iesus CHRIS-THEUS UIOS DEI SOTER"—in English "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."

So it was natural that the holiest of names, the name at which every knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth should bend, should at the same time appear frequently and yet be preserved from profanation by the most mysterious of symbols.

Now IHSUUS is the holy name in Greek capital letters, the H being simply the long E of the English. I. H. S. was simply the abbreviated form used by the early Christians. In former times it was also occasionally abbreviated I. H. C., with a line over the top, signifying that it was an abbreviated form. These letters are the I, the long E or Eta, and the S, or Sigma of the Greek. The Greek S of the early times was written in a variety of ways, often like the S or C of our time. The emblem traveled from Greece to Rome and was afterward ignorantly written in Roman letters I. H. S. The line of abbreviation over the H was soon forgotten, unless the cross sometimes set over the H is to be considered as replacing it.

The two interpretations, "I Have Suffered" and "Jesus Hominum Salvator" are pious indeed, but not warranted by history. The symbol is Greek and is simply the three first letters of the name of Jesus in that language. It is for this reason that the Jesuits or members of the Society of Jesus chose it for their emblem.

In conclusion we may tell a little story referring to the use of this emblem by the Jesuits. A Franciscan monk once playfully interpreted the letters for a Jesuit as "Iesuiti Habent Satis" (The Jesuits have enough). "Yes," the Jesuit answered, "provided you then read the letters backward, 'Si Habent Iesum'" (If they have Jesus).

The Scapular of Carmel.

Born in the county of Kent in England, our saint left his home at an early age to live as a hermit, and he passed 20 years in penance and prayer, after which he entered the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and in 1245 was chosen prior general. Mount Carmel is a headland on the coast of Palestine and is named as a place of devotion for the prophet Elias 900 years before Christ. Here the Order of the Carmelites began its existence in the twelfth century. These religious brethren became known as the "White Friars," and St. Teresa was one of their famous saints. St. Simon Stock entered the order.

The Blessed Virgin appeared to him at Cambridge and gave him a brown scapular which she bore in her hand, ordered him to wear it and promised that "no one dying in it should suffer eternal burning." Pope John XXII confirmed this, and many popes subsequently endowed the society with privileges and indulgences. Bossuet, the famous preacher and scholar of France, says: "The scapular is no useless badge. You wear it as a visible token that you own yourself. Mary's children and she will be your mother indeed if you live in our Lord Jesus Christ." The devotion spread rapidly and has been blessed with abundant indulgences until now every child who loves Mary wears the scapular of Carmel, or, as it is commonly called, the brown scapular. St. Simon died at Bordeaux in 1265.—Catholic Review.

The Beauty of Light.

It is light which constitutes the chief beauty of landscape, for a bed of dried cactus in the Campagna of Rome is more lovely in its colors to an artist's eye, than all the magnificence of nature on the northern side of the Alps.—Knebel Digby.

Catholic Notes.

Mgr. Satoli celebrated mass in open air in the presence of nearly 12,000 people at Butte, Mon., recently.

Father Nicholas Mauron, head of the Redemptorist order, died in Rome recently.