

March-Month Of Great Saints

By FRANK KELLY

The month of March by tradition, both in and out of the Catholic Church, has become known for the feast of Ireland's patron, the great St. Patrick.

Of course, Catholics honor St. Joseph, the patron of the universal church and the spouse of the Blessed Virgin, throughout the month. His feast day occurs on March 19, two days after St. Patrick's feast day.

ASIDE FROM these two days, the month is taken very much for granted by many Catholics who don't realize that this is a month that commemorates the feasts of many great saints.

Today, March 7, for instance, is the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican priest who set down the common sense rules on how to think correctly. His great series of writings reflect the thought of some of the greatest minds in the world today. He was named by Pope Leo XIII as patron of all Catholic Schools.

ONE OF THE most important feast days of the Blessed Virgin

also occurs this month; that of the Annunciation on March 25 when the Angel Gabriel, whose feast is on March 24, announced that she was to become the Mother of God.

On March 21, the feast of St. Benedict, founder of 12 monasteries occurs. One of the monasteries, Monte Cassino, was recently rebuilt after being bombed during World War 2.

St. Gregory the Great, the Benedictine Pope who was elected by the unanimous voice of priests and people, is still revered today for his magnificent contributions to the Liturgy of the Mass and Office.

TWO OTHER founders of religious orders are remembered this month. They are St. John of God, whose feast is March 8, founder of the order of Brothers Hospitallers of St. John of God, and St. Francis of Rome, who founded the Benedictine Oblate Congregation of Tor di Specchi. Her feast day is March 9.

A Crusade preacher, St. John Capistrano is honored by the church on March 28. This Fran-

ciscan priest enrolled 70,000 warriors through his preaching.

St. Dominic Savio is the latest of the March saints to be canonized. A native of Italy, he was born in 1842 and died while a seminarian at the age of 15. His life shows our youth how to go right and his life illustrates how he reached the true natural goals of all men, serving God in this world and being happy with Him forever in the next. His feast day is March 9.

THE FEAST OF the 40 Holy Martyrs on March 10 commemorates the offering up of their lives by 40 soldiers from the



St. Dominic Savio



St. Thomas Aquinas

garrison of Sebaste, Armenia in the year 320. Forty soldiers were exposed on a frozen pond for refusing to sacrifice to idols. All went through their martyrdom except one, but one of the soldiers guarding the martyrs, so admired their fortitude, that he joined them, thus meriting the crown of martyrdom. The one who left perished in a bath of tepid water prepared for him.

Another of the great Doctors of the Church, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, has his feast on March 18. As a simple priest, he instructed catechumens during Lent. His instructions, which are still used, show conclusively that Catholic doctrine was the same as it is now. He died in 386.

PARABLES FOR TODAY

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"Do not judge, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged." This warning is Christ's preface to his parable on avoiding harsh judgment. He is forecasting the fate of those who set themselves up as judges and hand down malicious and meretricious opinions about their neighbors.

The heart of the hypocrite who sets himself up as the judge of others is laid bare in this pointed parable:

"Why," asks Christ, "do you see the speck in your brother's eye and are not able to see the beam in your own eye?"

"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me cast out the speck from your eye,' when at the same time there is a beam in your own eye?"

"You hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to cast out the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5)

THIS PARABLE gives us the picture, as Christ sees it, of the man who knows too much, of the gossip-monger and the self-appointed judge.

Like a sword, Christ's story cuts through the critic's soul, revealing its weakness and wickedness. Seldom does Christ speak more severely or more scornfully than when He rebukes the fault finder.

"IT IS EASIER to be critical than to be correct," as the statement Disraeli said. He might have added that it is easier to tell tall tales than the truth. The man who has a mad passion for telling all he knows about everybody, sooner or later runs the risk of telling things he does not know.

The petty practice of prying into other people's souls leads the gossip into exaggerating and misrepresenting other people's faults. The loose-tongued man, as often as not, is also a liar. He not only violates charity, he also offends justice.

HYPOCRITE! In this one word Christ sums up the whole meanness of the man who knows too much. The man who is always talking about the weakness of other people wears a mask of deceit. This is hypocrisy, seeming to be what he is not.

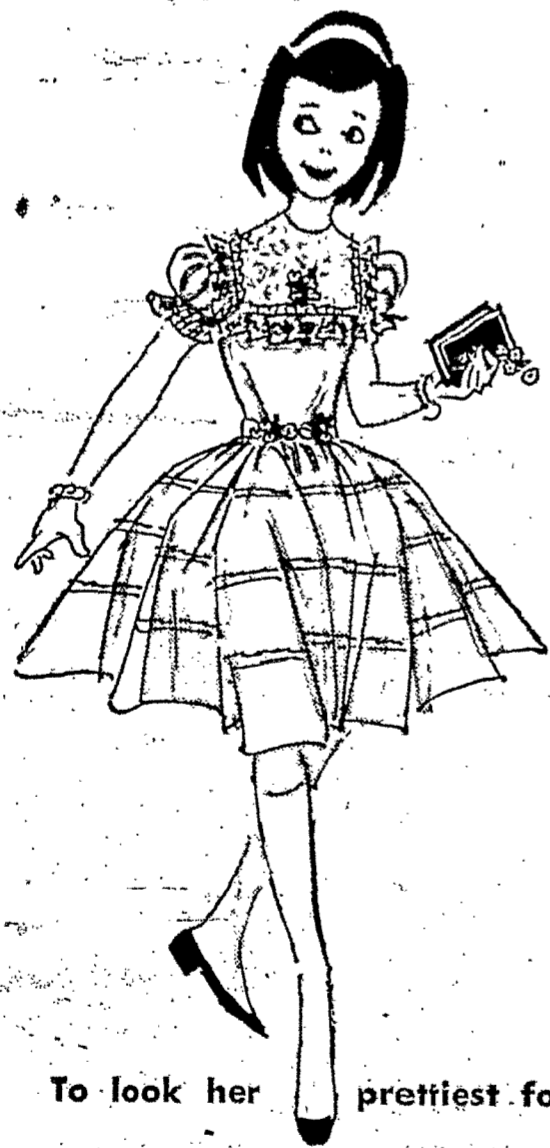
Clad in his cloak of self-righteousness, he stalks forth to hurl barbs of bitterness at heads and hearts that already may be bowed and broken.

He judges others severely but is soft and indulgent with himself. He censures others and at the same time is equally guilty, and very often worse.

Wearing his face of fraud, the eager critic likes to rattle skeletons in strange closets but is silent about the secret speck hiding in his own soul.

PRESUMPTION IS also found in the man who talks too much about the faults of his friends and too little about his own. All men are our brothers, as Christ points out. Any man who has given us the right to sit in judgment over them?

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BOOK SHELF

Priest's Retreat

By SISTER MARGARET TERESA, Nazareth College
THE PRIESTLY LIFE: A RETREAT, by Msgr. Ronald Knox. Sheet '58. 176 pp. \$3. At all Catholic book stores.

Monsignor Knox was so many things: great translator of the Bible, commentator on it, discerning chaplain of Oxford students, satirist, story-teller and Retreat master.

This second volume of Retreat conferences is a legacy he leaves to his fellow-workers in Christ, and if we the general reader find much in it to appropriate to ourselves, it is "ours" without offense, a good increased by being shared.

It takes a new look; it is undated spiritual reading useful to all. As he himself remarks, spiritual reading is a boon at the

in the ceaseless growth of her relations with earth.

Mary, he concludes, "is a personal romance." But in a second conference, on the priest as a mother of souls as well as a father, he is set free (via St. Paul's concept of forming Christ in souls) to speak of Mary with sublimity.

PRACTICAL in a high degree, and equally buoying to the spirit, are his talks on "Energy and Repose," or how to be "super agens, semper quiescens" and the one on looking at "Death as a Friend." "No, do not tell me that we are selfish, if we find relief..."

"The point is, not that we care less about these things as we draw further away from the world and closer to God, but that we worry less. The blessed Saints in heaven care, but they do not worry; and the most unselfish people you and I know on earth were not worriers."

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THIS ANALYSIS of idleness (as the giving of priority always to what interests us) and of perseverance (as the slowly learned art of becoming a reasonable and pleasant oldster) have that strong bent of the original, that newness of outlook that builds the Knox legend.

His study of obedience reaches by simplicity the same (delayed) point of recognition. Obedience, he shows, entails discipline, and discipline is a very old word, "discipleship."

Holy Land Pilgrims
Jerusalem - (NC) - Pilgrims from 45 nations came to visit the holy places in the Holy Land during 1957, it was reported here by the Franciscan Fathers of the Custody of the Holy Land.

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