

Mercy's Own 'Little Flower' 'Bundle Of Brogue' Begins 100th Year

By A SISTER OF MERCY

Convents do not usually become too excited about sisters' birthdays, but last Sunday, May 13, the Sisters of Mercy on Blossom Road celebrated a birthday which is perhaps unique in the Diocese of Rochester; for in her sunny infirmary cell, Sister Marcella — the last lay Sister of the Rochester Mercys — began her 100th year of life.

Whether by coincidence or Divine Providence, the Sisters of Mercy received Sister Marcella into the Order in 1855, the very same time that the cloistered walls of Camel enclosed Thomas of Aquinas — the Saint whom Sister dearly loves and imitates.

And while the two "Little Flowers" lived miles apart in different communities, both walked the way of spiritual childhood. Today, Sister Marcella, who lived to see her counterpart canonized, reads every available word about St. Thomas — his virtues, quotes her wisdom, and preaches her "little way."



Sister Marcella's sermon — "Do everything for our dear Lord."

Sister Marcella was born Abigail Fitzpatrick in County Cork, Ireland, in 1855 when Lincoln was beginning his second term as President of the United States. Twenty-four years later, having since moved to Auburn, New York, she entered the Sisters of Mercy at the Motherhouse on South St.

AT THAT time young women who wished to do only the domestic work of a religious community asked to be received as lay Sisters, and thus were distinguished from the choir sisters who taught and carried on the external works of the community.

The category of lay sister has long since been discontinued in the Sisters of Mercy and in 1955 when the Community's new Constitutions were adopted, Sister Marcella, who had formerly chosen the last place in chapel and the refectory, humbly had to take her place as a senior sister in the community, the oldest and longest professed Sister of Mercy in Rochester.

All her religious life, Sister Marcella was a baker and cook. Quietly and quickly, praying all the while, she could knead and bake a batch of thirty loaves of bread — without the aid of electricity. Sister Marcella, St. Andrew's and Holy Cross parishes, the poor and imprisoned will not forget her bread and cookies brought to them by visiting Sisters of Mercy.

Sister also took particular notice of any frail or ailing young Sister and to it that she received extra nourishment. A cup of soup, or milk and cookies was unobtrusively served to such a one.

Perhaps the most unusual fact about Sister Marcella is her uncanny religious knowledge and spiritual wisdom. Although she has had very little formal education, Sister has read the lives of the Saints and the great spiritual writers all her religious life.

She never misquotes any saint or any virtue, and can point to many incidents in the lives of St. Alphonsus, St. John Berchmans, St. Ignace, St. Teresa and several other favorites. Her greatest gift of mind is her keen sense of discernment, and evaluation. No matter what the occasion, her one measuring stick has always been St. Aloysius' remark: "What is this to Eternity?"

This intense awareness of the greatness of God, Sister Marcella has communicated to every young Sister who has ever come in contact with her. Often a novice, cutting apples in the convent kitchen or a postulant, folding clothes in the laundry has felt a gentle tugging on her veil and turned to find Sister Marcella softly offering to help her.

And in the course of their working together, the wisdom of the heart-little Sister poured itself out to the young ones. "Do everything for our dear Lord, do not place your trust in anything else. All that this world can offer is dust."

Typical of her joy of spirit was the remark she made when advised to do something to save her falling hearing: "Now what difference will it make to me if I am deaf? I'll hear enough and besides, I shall be able to talk to God more."

Even after she had lost most of her hearing, and had grown too old to carry on her baking duties, she still kept an eye out for little ways in which she could assist the other Sisters — still obediently attended all the community prayers and spiritual lectures.

Perhaps the only cross attendant on her inability to hear was that she could not hear the con-

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ferences of the Retreat Master, each year; however, she has always made the retreat with the help of notes typed by some loving novice, and often can give back the points better than those who heard for themselves.

The stories and remembrances of Sister Marcella's unusual life form a cherished "legend" for the Sisters of Mercy. She has been loved and honored by every member of the congregation from the gayest young postulant to the most publicly respected school administrator. At her bedside everyone receives Sister's little "sermon" and goes away the wiser for it.

Last Sunday as the sisters remained and rejoiced at Sister Marcella's jubilee, both venerable and youthful recalled just what impressed them most about this joyous bundle of white flannel and Irish brogue.

"I can never remember her being cross," remarked aging Sister Mary Clara, "and she treated everyone alike. She continually sought new ways to make her cooking more appealing."

Eighty-seven-year old Sister Mary Borgia feels that Sister Marcella's charity exceeded all her many other virtues. "Put a seal upon your lips," she'd say when anyone was tempted to an explosion. And Sister Mary Borgia added solemnly, "I shall always consider the greatest grace of my life."

Polio Victims Gain Grace

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope John XXIII told hundreds of polio victims that they are storing up heavenly graces through their sufferings.

In a special audience for persons crippled by polio, the Pontiff compared their present afflictions with the weaving of a rug. Ray weavers work from the underside of a rug and see how well they have done only at the end of their work, he said.

It is the same with suffering, Pope John continued, because only at the end of life do the afflicted find out how well they have done in accordance with the beatitudes, in which Christ proclaimed blessed are those who weep and suffer.

Senator Dodd Says

Surrender Worse Than War

Jamaica, N.Y. — (NC) — A U.S. senator declared here that if the free world surrenders to communism to avoid the risk of nuclear war, it condemns itself to a death "just as final as nuclear destruction itself."

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut told 400 persons at St. John's University that the fundamental question facing the United States and its allies is this: "Do we value our freedom and civilization enough to run all the risks and meet all the challenges which the communists will force upon us in the years ahead?"

HE SPOKE at the final session of the St. John's Freedom Institute, a year-long program designed to alert and inform the community of the great evil of international communism. The university conferred upon Sen. Dodd an honorary doctorate of laws.

Sen. Dodd condemned "unbridled intellectuals who advocate unilateral free world disarmament and submission to communist control under the

Confirmation Sunday For 517 Adults

Adults will receive the sacrament of Confirmation at two Sunday ceremonies, one at Sacred Heart Cathedral, the other at Corpus Christi Church.

At the Cathedral, 235 will be confirmed in a 4 p.m. rite and 282 will receive the sacrament at Corpus Christi at 7:45 p.m.

Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence E. Casey will administer the sacrament, the sign of Christian maturity.

Most of the adults to be confirmed are recent converts to the Catholic Church.

Parishes sending the largest numbers to the Cathedral ceremony are: the Cathedral parish itself, 35; St. Monica's, 22; Immaculate Conception, 20; Mother of Sorrows, 19, and St. Charles Borromeo, 18.

At Corpus Christi, that parish will have 27 to be confirmed; Blessed Sacrament, 22; St. Mary's, 16; Holy Redeemer, 15; and St. Andrew's, 14.

Almost every Rochester area parish will be represented at the annual adult Confirmation rite.

Like Asks Prayers

Washington — (RNS) — President Eisenhower has proclaimed Memorial Day, May 30, as a "day of prayer" for permanent peace.

He called upon Americans to ask God's help in building a world in which "war shall be no more."

Groundbreaking For St. Ann's

Construction of the new St. Ann's Home for the Aged will begin with groundbreaking rites scheduled for Sunday, June 5, at 4 p.m.

Monseigneur Arthur E. Rattigan, diocesan director of Catholic Charities, said the \$5-million ten-story structure at 1480 Portland Ave., Rochester, is to be completed by December, 1961.

5 Day Vacation For Pupils

Pupils in diocesan schools will have a five day vacation before their final June sessions.

Schools will close for Ascension Thursday, May 26, and remain closed through Memorial Day, Monday, May 31.

Thursday is a holy day on which all Catholics are to attend Mass. Parish schedules should be consulted for exact times.

Refugees Ignored, U.S. Laws Blamed

Nazareth College

To Honor Alice Foley

At its thirty-third annual Commencement to be held in the Eastman Theater on Monday, June 6, Nazareth College will award the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters to one of her most distinguished alumnae, Miss Alice Foley.

AT NAZARETH, Miss Foley majored in English, and received her Bachelor of Arts degree Magna Cum Laude. She was awarded her Master of Arts degree by the University of Rochester, and did further graduate study at Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin, and Fordham University.

In addition to her academic degrees, Miss Foley also holds her School Psychologist Certification.

MISS FOLEY has had a varied career on all levels of the educational field, beginning with teaching in the elementary grades. Later she became a teacher of English in the Brighton High School. In 1942 she was appointed assistant principal of the Brighton Intermediate School, and then served as principal from 1943 to 1951.

In that year she became principal of both the elementary and intermediate schools and con-

tinued in that position until 1955 when she became the director of instruction for the Brighton schools in District No. 1.

Miss Foley has also been an instructor in Education and Psychology at both the University of Rochester and the Brockport State College of Education.

In addition to her teaching and administrative work, Miss Foley has served actively in several educational organizations. She is a member of the Advisory Board of Nazareth College, and of the Teacher Education and Certification Advisory Council. She is a member of the Board of Directors and a past president of the New York State Teachers' Association, Central Western Zone.

Two honorary societies, Kappa Gamma Phi, from Nazareth College, and Delta Kappa Gamma, have elected her to membership. She is also the author of articles and papers published in various educational journals.

The D. Litt. degree which Nazareth is awarding Miss Foley, is the fourth honor which she has received during her teaching career. She was given the Education Award for Elementary Education, the Shattuck Schools Centennial Award for Achievement in Secondary Education, and the Brighton Elementary Club Civic Award in 1958.

Don't Spare The Rod

Home Discipline Needed

Falls Church, Va. — (RNS) — Archbishop Egidio Vagnoni, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, confessed here that he has a memory of childhood spanking and feels he is much the better for them.

The archbishop addressed members of the Sodality Council of St. James parish here in this growing suburb of Washington, D.C.

Urging Catholic parents to exercise stronger discipline with their children, the archbishop recalled that as a youth in his native Italy he had a tendency to be "somewhat wild." As a result, he was frequently spanked by his parents, as well as being verbally rebuked.

"I'm sure," he recalled, "my mother was right to spank me. I'd like to see the poor woman who will marry me."

"But, in you can see, Almighty God took care of that," he chuckled.

Speaking of the problem parents face, he urged that parents should be firm.

He deplored the growing secularism of American society. When he came to the United States as Papal Delegate in 1950, he had been away from the United States nearly two decades, he pointed out. He previously served as an assistant at the Apostolic Delegation in Washington from 1937 to 1942.

"A very worldly secularist and non-Christian attitude" seems to be reflected more and more in press, public life, and the government, he declared.

65,981
LAST WEEK'S PAID CIRCULATION

President's Plea Spurned

While Nikita Khrushchev heaped insult after insult on America this week, this nation's reputation was further tarnished by a massive neglect for the world's refugees.

This neglect was dramatized by the arrival in this country of Latvian ten year old Andrejs Surtis, the millionth person to be resettled by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

The 29 nations Committee has had to find homes for these million people chiefly in Canada, Australia, South America and Israel because U.S. immigration laws block most refugees from coming here.

Both Pope John XXIII and President Eisenhower have appealed for widespread sympathy for the plight of refugees — extolled by Communist take-overs in their homelands.

The arrival of the Surtis led pointed up an ironic fact — despite the American record of generosity in dealing with refugee problems, the United States was failed to assert leadership in the World Refugee Year it sponsored with the United Nations.

The WHY emphasis made June 30 and our contribution to the program has fallen far short of expectations.

According to Religious News Service the only legislative action taken by Congress this year in behalf of refugees consists of a token bill passed by the House and now awaiting approval by the Senate. Unless liberalized, it would admit only about 5,000 refugees from European camps to this country in the next two years.

The measure has been sharply criticized in press editorials as shamelessly inadequate, "paltry," "insignificant" and "backsliding courage and generosity." But it has the backing of religious and related refugee agencies on the grounds that it is better than nothing.

The legislation gave little support to the high ideals expressed by President Eisenhower early this year when he sent a special message to Congress urging basic changes in U.S. immigration laws. The President's proposals would double the present quota immigration, from 154,000 to about 300,000, and would authorize admission annually of at least 10,000 refugees above the quota limits.

Hardly had the President's message reached the House when Congressman Francis E. Walter (D-Penn.), chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, came out with a statement that the proposals had no chance of enactment.

He commented caustically: "If anybody has any doubts as to when the Presidential election is to be held, this message ought to clear it up. The same thing came up four years ago and will come up four years from now."

CONGRESSMAN Walter himself is the author of the bill that seems most likely to be enacted, if any. Introduced last year when it died in committee, the measure provided for an unspecified number of refugees under the mandate of the UN High Commissioner to enter the U.S. as pariahs.

This year the refugee bill was taken from the shelf and dusted off. Congressman Walter held hearings on refugee legislation in general and his own bill in particular.

Before passing the measure, the House Immigration Subcommittee amended it by limiting to 2,000 the number of refugees to be admitted and by setting July 1962 as a terminal date.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees, a non-government group designated by President Eisenhower to encourage public participation and coordinate between cooperation in World Refugee Year, said the House-passed bill was an "insupportable slap" toward the hospitalized and needy.



'Bring Flowers of the Fairest'

Children throughout the Diocese this month take part in traditional May rites honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary. At Fairport's School of Religion, three sets of kindergarten twins brought bouquets to our Lady's shrine. Led up for the procession are Catherine and Caroline Montagna, Bruce and Brady Crane and Joyce and Judy Robinson.