

A Ministry of Magic

St. Paul, Minn. (RNS) — Sister Cabrini Dongiovanni, SSND, "doesn't wear the traditional nun's garb any more.

If she did, you could say she pulls rabbits from her habits.

In her ministry of entertainment, she uses magic,

ventriloquism, puppetry, singing and dancing to spread the Gospel message.

Her order — the School Sisters of Notre Dame — has released her from teaching duties so she can do her shows — sometimes two or three a day.

At a recent appearance in a

Minneapolis Protestant church, she told her audience to watch closely as she held a seemingly empty pan.

"You can see the pan is empty," she said. "You know it reminds me of what our lives are like without Jesus. We're empty without His love.

"But if we open our hearts to Him, we're filled with the joy of the Spirit, she said while applause greeted the doves which suddenly appeared in the pan.

Next, Sister Dongiovanni displayed her talents as a ventriloquist.

She asked one of her puppets, "Lambie," if he knew how the world began. "Why, it just popped up like popcorn," he replied. At that answer, Sister Dongiovanni gave the puppet and the audience a quick lesson on God's role in creation.

The nun says she is "in love with what I am doing."

"They tell me I am Spirit-filled. I am so happy. My theme is 'A Song of Joy — of Love — of Life and — of Laughter.'

"Jesus wants us to spread the spirit of love all over the world."

She appears before all types of audiences — public and parochial schools, Sunday schools, homes for the elderly, colleges, scout banquets, hospitals and institutions for the retarded.

She usually concludes a show by drawing to music in the dark, then flooding her drawings with color lights. When the audience thinks it has seen it all, she puts on a black light, disclosing the figure of Christ or a nativity scene drawn with invisible chalk. For secular audiences, she draws the flag.

Sister Dongiovanni makes regular tours of an eight-state area. On 10-day tours, she will do 24 shows.

A Farmington, Minn., couple, Edward and Thelma Mahowald, assist her when she needs help.

Sister was an elementary teacher at St. Matthew's School when she began her entertainment "apostolate." She learned some of her ventriloquism and magic from library books and practiced around the house while cleaning.

"I have always been a ham," she said. "As a kid, I loved to dance, sing and write poetry.

"I thought I had given all that up when I entered the convent. But the Lord turned right around and gave it all back to me."



Seton Sale

The Mesdames Arthur O'Brien, John Buyck, Fred Loder and Robert McCambridge prepare for the 41st Seton Branch sale of antiques and collectibles, and luncheon slated for Sept. 20 at Medaille Hall on the Nazareth College campus, at 10:30 a.m. Ed Cornwall will speak. Further information is available from Mrs. O'Brien at 381-4287.

Saint's Skull Found

Canterbury (RNS) — The skull of St. Thomas More, a onetime Lord Chancellor of England who was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to recognize King Henry VIII as supreme head of the Church of England, has been found in "good condition" in a Canterbury Church vault.

The skull has lain for more than 400 years in the vault of St. Dunstan's Church, whose vicar, the Rev. Hugh Albin, assisted archaeologists in excavating the saint's tomb.

The decision to examine the vault was made in connection with the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great English humanist who was canonized a saint in 1935. St. Thomas More was publicly beheaded on July 6, 1535. His daughter, Margaret Roper, placed the severed head of her father in a casket after it had been displayed on a spike on London Bridge.

The casket was buried in the Roper family vault at Canterbury, where Margaret herself was later buried.

BK Note

Bishop Kearney High School has scheduled a Parent Information Night, Sept. 19, 8 p.m. The school will also host the Suburban College Night on Oct. 3, 7:30 p.m. Over 80 colleges will be represented.

The guidance department is requesting that students pick up applications for the SAT and ACT tests which are available in the guidance office. Either of these tests make the students eligible for Regents Scholarships if they are taken before Nov. 1 of their senior year.

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