

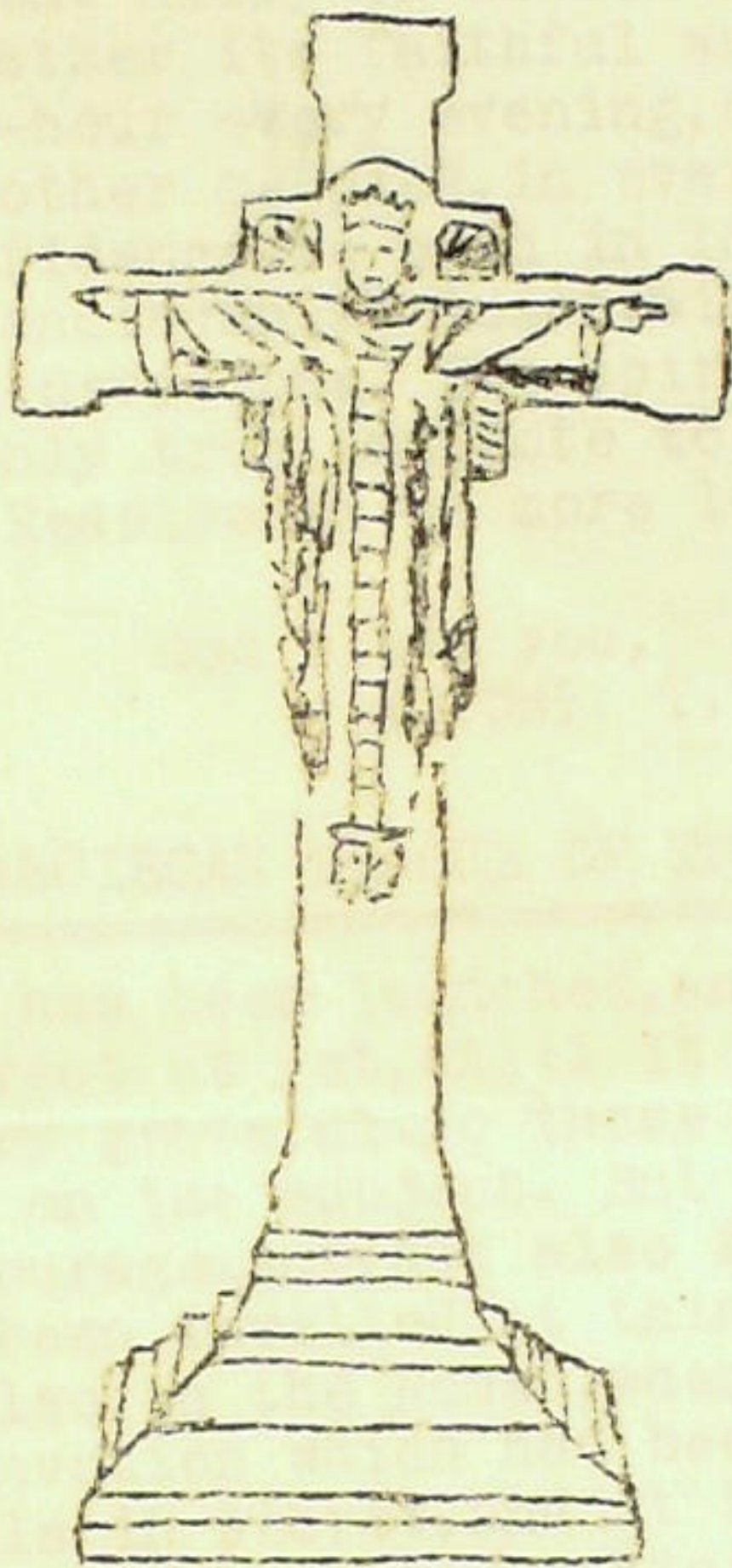
Summer 1939

Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-aggression Pact is signed between Germany and the Soviet Union, a neutrality treaty that also agreed to division of spheres of influence. As details of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact become public, Neville Chamberlain recalls the Parliament several weeks early. In a burst of legislation, a War Powers Act is approved; the Royal Navy is put on a war footing, all leaves are cancelled, and the Naval and coast defense reserves to be called up, especially radar and anti-aircraft units.

1891

THE CROSS

My dear friends and sisters,
I have been thinking much of late of the cross, and how it has been the symbol of our faith and hope. It is a symbol which has been with us from the beginning of time, and it is a symbol which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our faith, and of the faith which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our hope, and of the hope which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our love, and of the love which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our faith, and of the faith which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our hope, and of the hope which has been the source of our strength and comfort. I have been thinking of the cross as a symbol of our love, and of the love which has been the source of our strength and comfort.



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T E R T I A R Y T I D I N G S.

No.6. SUMMER NUMBER 1939.

E D I T O R I A L.

My dear Franciscan brothers and sisters,

I was very struck, during a spell on the continent, by the way so many people went daily to church to pray for peace. I wish every church would gather its faithful around the altar, day by day, in this way. A half-hour every evening, devoted to prayer for peace and for the good of other peoples, in every church in our land, would create in us the confidence we need in this twilight of war-peace. I hope that every Franciscan, at least, will dedicate a little part of every day to such devotions. The spirit of St. Francis in the world today is the only true antidote to the spirit of Herr Hitler and his companions. Resolve to be more like the gentle Father of our Order.

God bless you,
ANTONY, T.S.F.

THE FRANCISCAN LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

Our new venture has been launched, and though I cannot say the results have been great as yet, still it is something to have got started and I am very grateful to those few members who have sent me encouraging letters on the subject. But I hope you will not confine your efforts to encouragement, but also feel at liberty to criticize. Much criticism has been levelled at this devotion, not only in our own Communion, but also in the Roman, when the attempt was first made to popularize the devotion which had been formerly practised chiefly by a few devout souls in secret, and it is well that we should be equipped with an answer to these criticisms. One most frequently met with in our own Communion is that it is a Roman devotion of very late origin, but this is of course an entire misapprehension of its purpose. That purpose is merely to increase devotion to the LOVE of Our Lord, as typified in His Sacred Heart, and has its origin in His own words "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart". In our Rule Manual we read that the spirit of St. Francis is an exemplification of this spirit and that "for this cause the American Congregation of Franciscans is especially dedicated to the Sacred Heart". So this Month of the Sacred Heart, perhaps the loveliest in the whole year, is almost as much a Franciscan month as September itself and we may hope for great blessings on our little new League during it. Though as yet I have had but few applications for membership, I have sent out a great many papers, so very likely there will be a great increase

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in numbers shortly, especially if you all persevere in prayer, as I hope you will, that each of us may be a true Missionary for that Sacred Heart of Love. Our Priest-in-Charge here at Blisland, who has enrolled, very kindly suggested that it might be a good way of starting the branch we hope to have here to get together a few interested people at a small informal meeting on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. I was naturally most grateful for this suggestion as I shall be if any of you can induce your parish priest to do likewise. I am sure no League or Fellowship should exist in a parish except under the leadership of the priest in charge, though remembering the number of organizations for which a Catholic priest is generally responsible, one does recognize that that leadership must for the most part be merely nominal, not entailing extra work or responsibility.

THE SHRINE OF SAN DAMIANO.

Thinking over the subject for our "Travel Talk" this month, I decided that it must be something specially connected with the central idea of the season. Almost any of the Franciscan shrines arouse a train of thought connected with it, but perhaps one of the most pertinent is the little sanctuary of San Damiano, just outside Assisi. For it was there that St. Francis heard clearly for the first time the Voice of the Sacred Heart speaking to him. There had been other revelations, half understood, heard dimly and confusedly, such as the call at Spoleto, which led him to renounce his warlike project of following Walter de Brienne; and that other more significant call to embrace the leper. Now at last, when the way had been well prepared and the ear had become attentive, came the supreme call, the outcome of which has been countless thousands of disciples of the Sacred Heart after the Franciscan method. Come then with me to San Damiano.

It is but a little way out of the city, on the road which runs at the foot of a steep rubbly hillside path from the city gate. Down that path in the midnight darkness of Palm Sunday 1212, Clare Scifi may have stumbled to meet the torches of Francis and his brothers coming to greet her, and to herself light the Franciscan torch for the Second Order; down that path Francis himself must have passed many times when he dwelt with the priest of San Damiano and down it have passed countless numbers of pilgrims, all intent on seeing the place which was in reality the true birthplace of Franciscanism, albeit St. Mary-of-the-Angels holds that title. For surely the true beginning of anything lies in its motive force, the idea behind its achievement, and it was at San Damiano, not St. Mary-of-the-Angels, that St. Francis heard the call of that to which his whole life was to be henceforth devoted. There is another claim for supreme importance, too, which San Damiano can make. It was the first house of the Poor Ladies, as the Second Order were called in St. Francis' days; the house where Clare

and her Sisters prayed and worked, loved and suffered, and rejoiced to uphold the ideals of their Founder. The place too where the valiant daughter of the Scifi defended her flock from the Moslem horde who were breaking in, confronting them in calm confidence, armed only with the Sacred Host from the Tabernacle. They fled in terror from that unearthly Guard, and the nuns were saved from worse than death. Whence it comes about that an Abbess of the Poor Clares is the only woman in the whole world who has the privilege of unveiling the Tabernacle and exposing the Sacred Host.

All this is commemorated by a statue of St. Clare which stands in the little piazza in front of the church, and the whole place is fragrant with memories of that devoted woman who, perhaps more than any of St. Francis' first followers grasped the whole spirit of his message and followed unswervingly to the end. The Friars who live at San Damiano now show you the place where she, at the command of the Pope, blessed the bread for her Sisters, and where, in consequence of that humble obedience (she had asked the Pope to perform the blessing and this was his response) every loaf was straightway marked miraculously with the Cross; they show you also the little Choir behind the altar, which is still almost as it must have been in St. Clare's time. In that humble little Choir, with its stalls of old old oak, one seems to feel the very spirit of those first days of joyous poverty, when all the world was new and every member of the band was consecrated to a wondrous Apostolate. Yes, it was here, at the altar of tiny humble San Damiano, that St. Francis received his true call to the Apostolate of Love and Poverty. It was here he took the first step forward into that unknown future which was to hold such marvellous things for him and for his followers. For it was here, kneeling at the then half ruined altar, that he heard the Voice from the miraculous Crucifix which gave him his vocation.

Vocation! The word has often been taken to mean merely a call to the Religious Life, but its true meaning connotes a call to ANY kind of life so only it be informed with the spirit of religion. It is a wonderful word if one realizes its true context; the calling of a soul to serve God in the special way He has appointed for it from the foundation of the world - the way IN WHICH NO OTHER SOUL CAN SERVE HIM. St. Francis at least understood this tremendous truth, if he did not in the least understand whither his acceptance of it would lead him. His response ~~was~~ complete and instant - he laid his life upon the altar for the Master to use as He would. And in that act of complete self-dedication the Franciscan brotherhood was born.

So I think the chief lesson we learn from San Damiano is self-surrender and therefore it seems to be entirely appropriate to this month of the Sacred Heart. For self-surrender must always mean the surrender of our selfish heart to the Divine Heart, since heart and will are the only things which are ours to give or withhold. Where the

heart is, there also the will follows, though it knows not whither it goes, nor what the end may be. But Love knows.

There is little space left for Notes, but I must find room for at least part of an article sent me by another of our C.A. members, as it bears so closely on the subject of this number.

"This strange unintelligible
our hearts

T. O. S. F.

"This strange unintelligible title came to my notice through one of our brothers at the C.A. Training College, and I was told it was a Third Order secular for men and women who, though not called to the monastic life, desired to carry out as far as they could the ideals of St. Francis in their daily life. So I prayerfully decided to offer myself for membership, being much inspired by the example of two members I knew personally. These two men seemed to remain quite undaunted by the sneers and rebuffs of people with adverse opinions; carrying on quietly in the true spirit of Franciscanism, fighting unweariedly in the battle against evil and striving always to draw men and women from the dark abyss of sin into that glorious Lovelight of the Sacred Heart of God. How could I resist such a wonderful call - the call which every Franciscan has received, the call which our Seraphic Father heard and obeyed. But the joy of that wonderful vocation cannot be complete unless we pass on that message of love to our fellowmen. Such is the context of the appeal made by the Editor in the Spring No. of T.T. - that each Tertiary will make some effort to win souls to the fellowship of the "League of the Sacred Heart". Our Franciscan Rule teaches us that we should be "in the world, but not of the world" and there is a divine inspiration in these words. An inspiration to tread the path which leads us at last to our goal - into the Presence and Love of the Sacred Heart of Our Blessed Redeemer".

That little article is I think a very helpful comment on the lesson I have tried to draw from San Damiano, showing how the self-surrender of St. Francis may take new forms in our days. The essential thing is the self-surrender, not the form it takes.

SISTER MARY FRANCESCA OBL.S.F.

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