



Dear Tertiary,

Letters frequently come to us from members of the Third Order expressing a wish for more contact with the rest of their Franciscan family. Geographically our tertiaries are scattered over tremendous distances and personal meetings between most of them must of necessity be rare. But we can and do meet together spiritually in our attendance at Mass and in receiving Holy Communion particularly on Franciscan feasts and on our Lord's own day. Both at Little Portion and Maryhill the Sunday Mass is always offered for the friars, nuns, tertiaries and benefactors of our Congregation.

It has occurred to me that a little visit by mail once a month might help to make even our more isolated tertiaries realize that they are not alone, that they do belong to the Franciscan family in a special way, that they have a real share in its spiritual joys and struggles and its service for Holy Church.

February, in our devotional kalendar, is known as the Month of the Holy Family. In our private meditations next month we might do well to meditate on the privileges of belonging to a religious family, and strive to attain in our own inner lives something of the love and trust and holy joy that marked the home at Nazareth. "Jesu, mercy. Mary, help. Joseph, pray."

Faithfully yours in St. Francis and St. Clare,

Mary Veronica P.C.P.
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT † MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI † L. I. † N. Y.

THE MONTH OF THE HOLY FAMILY
FEBRUARY † 1955 † PAX



Dear Tertiary,

When we turn the kalendar again we shall find ourselves entering the Month of the Sacred Passion, one of the seasons of the Church Year specially beloved by the true Franciscan. It is not too soon to begin planning for our annual spiritual journey to Mount Calvary. Our blessed Lord, when the time for His Passion drew near "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Unless we have some definite aim, some steadfast resolution, this Lent will turn out to be just another Forty Days to be somehow lived through.

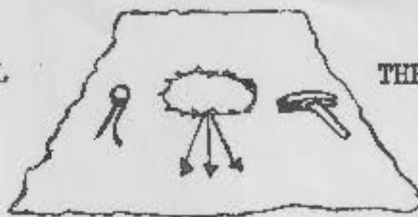
Beginners in the spiritual life like to, and need to, make special "Lenten rules." They list the "Things I will give up" and add the "Things I will do." But the tertiary has her Rule. It needs no special addition or subtraction to make it more Lenten. Instead of thinking of Lent as a time of "doing," why not look on it as an opportunity to free ourselves from the "hypnotizing influence of activity." Usually most of us are so busy or worried that we do not have the time or energy to do the things we really want to do. Herein lies a real problem. Can it be solved? Yes, it has been done. You can do it too. How you do it will depend on you, your temperament and your circumstances. I make one suggestion if I may. You probably cannot change your circumstances, but you can change yourself. You can begin by changing your state of mind, your attitude toward the thing that is keeping you in chains. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Oh, if we could only have more Christ-like states of mind, how transformed our Lents and our whole lives would be.

Faithfully yours in St. Francis and St. Clare,

Mary Veronica P.C.P.

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT + MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI + L. I. + N. Y.

THE MONTH OF THE SACRED PASSION
MARCH + 1955 + PAX



Dear Tertiary,

One of the special joys of being a Franciscan, I think, is the inspiration which comes from knowing that we are not travelling alone in our spiritual journey through life. It is always an encouragement to us, and I hope it is to you, to remember that every day intercessions are being offered for each one of us by all the other members of our Three Orders. Surely with such grace being sought for us we may go bravely on in meeting the problems that each day brings.

For of course it is to be expected that each of us has her own special problems. And when one is solved we may cheerfully expect to find another in its place. Life without any problems at all would be for the Christian a very sad life - one with no possibility of growth, one not marked by the sign of the Cross. Fortunately our problems have a way of changing with the passage of time lest we become too wearied in the battle with sin. And so when those bleak hours come to us when it seems to us that the load we have to carry is more than we can bear, we can take comfort in two thoughts if we will. We are not really bearing the load alone, all the other Franciscans are helping us. And nothing lasts long in this life except God and His love.

Faithfully yours in Him,

Mary Veronica P. O'Connell
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT + MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI + L. I. + N. Y.

THE MONTH OF ST. JOSEPH
APRIL + 1955 + PAX



Dear Tertiary,

What a wealth of spiritual grace and joy this blessed season holds in store for us. Spring and Eastertide, the festivals of St. Francis and St. Joseph and holy apostles, leading on to our Lady's own month and our Lord's ascension. And yet, human nature being as it is, I would venture to guess that not one of us is experiencing that fullness of joy which is our heritage as Catholics and daughters of St. Francis. Perhaps you may have noticed a current advertising slogan about people being in the mood but not having the money. It lends itself to a neat paraphrase. Some people are in the mood to be joyful in God but haven't the opportunity for the sacramental privileges of the Church. Some people have the Sacraments but aren't in the mood to be joyful. Surely we Franciscans should be numbered among those who have both the Church's worship and the mood to be joyful in it.

To be sure it is not always easy to match our moods with the Church's liturgical year. Our moods, our attitudes, are really our mental clothes. We have to learn how to dress the mind and the emotions. We have to search for clothes of the right kind and change them on the right occasion. What a freedom it brings to the soul when we finally learn the lesson that we really can choose our moods, that like St. Francis we, too, can be "clothed with the garment of praise."

Faithfully in our Risen Lord,

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT @ MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI @ L. I. @ N. Y.



THE MONTH OF OUR LADY
MAY @ 1955 @ PAX

Dear Tertiary,

Our American Congregation of Franciscans came into being in 1917 on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Every year since then the eight days of the Corpus Christi Octave together with Sacred Heart Day have been observed as a Solemn Novena of prayer and praise by all the members of our Congregation and their friends. This year the Solemn Novena will be kept from June 9th through the 17th. I am sure that you will want to join with our friars, nuns and tertiaries in intercession for all our needs both as individuals and as a Congregation, and in thanksgiving to God for all His blessings to us.

The days of this Solemn Novena always hold opportunities for special grace for us all if we will only seek to receive it. They could also well be days in which we might profitably do a little reflecting on the meaning of our vocation. Just why am I a Franciscan? Certainly it is not because God wants me to do something for Him. We are so apt to think that unless we are bustling about doing something, nothing is being done. We blind ourselves to the real truth that what we are is the important thing. What we do can only be the outcome of what we are. God gives us our Franciscan Rule as an instrument to build our characters. May He ever mould us more and more into the likeness of His Son and His blessed servant Francis.

Faithfully yours,

Mary Veronica P. C. Rep.
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT * MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI * L. I. * N. Y.



THE MONTH OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
JUNE * 1955 * PAX

Dear Tertiary,

Summertime will soon be here again, the season of hot weather and lazy days and perhaps even spiritual slumps. We are apt to find it harder to "keep our Rule." Of course it is the part of prudence (which is really sanctified common sense) to be guided by the outward circumstances which God sends us, the weather, our physical strength, and so on. We may not be able to attend as many Church services as we do in the winter. There will probably be many days when we don't "feel" like saying our Office and making our meditations. But in spite of the difficulties, no faithful tertiary will ever want to take a vacation from her vocation.

If you are planning to travel this summer, you may find it impossible to keep some parts of the Rule. In this case I suggest that you ask for dispensations from these particular regulations as explained on page 14 in the Manual, always remembering that no one has the authority to dispense herself. Your spiritual life will lose nothing from being dispensed from certain obligations. On the contrary, the change in circumstances will provide your soul a useful chance to grow. And if your inner attitude is right, everything that happens to you outwardly will be right, too.

May you have a very happy summer.

Ever faithfully in our Lord,

Mary Veronica P. C. Rep.
Reverend Mother



Dear Tertiary,

It has made us happy this past month to enter the records of several clothings and professions in our Third Order. Always in the spiritual life there seem to be special blessings from God attached to new beginnings. And in a religious family such as ours, the grace and joy that thus comes to an individual has a way of overflowing and outspreading so that the other members of the family, too, are infected with the enthusiasm and are perhaps inspired to make special efforts to strengthen their own religious zeal. Of course we do not have to wait for some special occasion like a profession or New Year's Day to make fresh starts. Our blessed Father Francis loved the word "begin." He frequently exhorted his friars, "Brethren, let us begin to serve God for hitherto we have made but little progress." Yes, it is never too late to begin anew, and this makes our life one of great hope.

In this family of ours, the older members, those who have been long professed, have kept the Rule faithfully over the years, may not be so easily stirred to heights of enthusiasm. But they too have their special contribution to make in moulding the spirit of the whole family. For it is they who give us that indispensable thing, stability. And it is they who stimulate us all to strive for the special blessings which can only come with long and patient perseverance in a life of dedication.

Congratulations and best wishes from us all to the newly clothed and professed.

Faithfully in our Lord,

Mary Veronica P. O'Connell
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI L. I. N. Y.



THE MONTH OF SAINT CLARE
AUGUST 1955 PAX

Dear Tertiary,

We Claresses want to thank all of you who have greeted us on our Feast Day and "wished us good luck in the name of the Lord." The Feast of St. Clare is one of those times which makes us rejoice in the oneness and the fellowship of our Franciscan Congregation.

In thinking of the three-fold spirit of our vocation, poverty, penance and prayer, we are reminded that while St. Francis and his First Order exemplify the virtue of poverty in a special way, and the Third Order with its protectors, St. Louis and St. Elizabeth, show forth the practice of penance, it is St. Clare and the Second Order to whom is given the vocation to witness to the spirit of prayer. This month of St. Clare is an appropriate time for each of us to review our own personal habits and customs of prayer. We have our Holy Rule for our guide and the lives of our heavenly patrons for inspiration. Our methods of prayer, whether liturgical, mental or vocal, should have their own techniques and not be hazy. If God has already shown you methods which suit your particular needs, be very grateful. One has to practice prayer a long time before one prays very easily. Habits of prayer are slowly formed, but when formed they are hard to break. Surely we all know that the state of emotion we attain in prayer means nothing at all in respect to our spiritual progress. The one thing our prayer can be judged by is its fruit. If it has all the right effects it must surely be a good prayer.

May the gentle St. Clare obtain for us all the grace of prayer like unto her own.

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT + MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI + L. I. + N. Y.

THE MONTH OF ST. FRANCIS
SEPTEMBER + 1955 + PAX



Dear Tertiary,

"Ave Pater Seraphice! Ora pro nobis! It is with these words that the morning House call and its answer is given in the Houses of our Congregation during the happy days of St. Franciside, from September 17 through October 11. And so our first waking thoughts each day are turned toward our blessed Father Francis.

"Hail Seraphic Father! Pray for us!" We have the privilege of calling St. Francis our Father because we profess to follow his Rule. But certainly we will be Franciscans in name only unless in addition to keeping his literal Rule we are striving also to live in his spirit, and his spirit is the spirit of love.

Your soul grows by loving God and man. Tertiaries are told that they must make a special point of loving any tertiary they do not like. There is, of course, a difference between liking and loving, and we are not commanded to like anyone. But can you imagine our blessed Father Francis disliking anyone, or even any creature the good God had made? Our likes and dislikes are usually based on pretty silly attitudes when we come to analyze them. I would recommend a simple exercise for any Franciscan. Take a piece of paper and write down a list of the people and things you dislike, and if you have time, a list also of the ones you like. Are you willing to try to learn to like these things you now dislike? If so, I would say that you are really growing in the spirit of St. Francis.

Cordially yours in our Lord,

Mary Veronica P.C.R.
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI L. I. N. Y.



HOLY
HOLY
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THE MONTH OF THE HOLY ANGELS
OCTOBER 1955 PAX

Dear Tertiary,

Unless we have an aim, we drift. The Third Order Rule in Chapter XII tells us that each tertiary "shall have always one virtue singled out to strive after and to practice." This does not necessarily mean that it must always be the same virtue, or that we cannot change the virtue until we have succeeded in practicing it to perfection, for that day will probably never come. The Rule does imply that we should use care in selecting our virtue, and then perseverance in striving for it. Temperamentally some people find it helpful to pick out a new virtue every month and others prefer to keep the same one for a year or so. In either case it is wise to phrase the virtue in concrete terms, to make it as practical as we can in reference to our everyday life.

Unless we study ourselves, we can never see the particular virtues for which we need to strive. And so the Rule in Chapter VI requires us to examine our consciences daily. This does not mean, of course, that we have the right to pass judgment on ourselves. There can be only one Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, acting through the priest He has appointed as His representative in the Sacrament of Penance. Examination of conscience does mean that we must make regular attempts to look at our souls, objectively and as intelligently as possible. Have you ever honestly tried to see yourself as if you were another person looking at yourself? If so, you know what an illuminating experience this can be. And if you will do it now you may very well see with new eyes what next month's virtue should be!

But virtue itself is only a means, not an end. Virtue is not God nor union with God. Let us never make the mistake of letting our pursuit of virtue become a hindrance to our love for God.

Faithfully in Him,

Mary Veronica P.C.R.
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI L. I. N. Y.



THE MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS
NOVEMBER 1955 PAX

Dear Tertiary,

This is always a very busy time of the year here in the convent. No doubt it is for you, too. And this state of being very busy brings us special problems but also special opportunities for growth in our spiritual lives.

When work piles up on us, when we get behind in our allotted tasks, when we have to keep rushing to meet deadlines, our constant complaint is apt to be that we do not have enough time. Oh, if there were only more hours in the day! Have you ever stopped to consider that all our anxieties relate to time?

It is never true to say that we have no time to think about God, to talk with Him and listen for His voice. The time we have for anything depends on how much we value it. Thinking determines our use of time; time does not rule over thinking.

The author of the "Cloud of Unknowing" advises us well. "Take good heed unto time, how thou spendest it; for nothing is more precious than time. A token it is that time is precious: for God, that is giver of time, giveth never two times together, but each one after other. For time is made for man, and not man for time."

We have all the time there is. Let us pray for each other that we may learn to use it wisely to the glory of God.

Faithfully in Him,

Mary Veronica P.C. Rep.
Reverend Mother

ST. CLARE'S CONVENT MARYHILL
MOUNT SINAI L. I. N. Y.



THE MONTH OF THE HOLY GHOST
DECEMBER 1955 PAX

Dear Tertiary,

The popular slogan "Put Christ back into Christmas" is obviously not needed by members of our Third Order. And so may I suggest another slogan for your consideration: "Put some silence back into Christmas." And for a text I give you one of my favorite antiphons which is used at Vespers and Lauds on the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity. "While all things were in quiet silence, and night was in the midst of her swift course, thine almighty Word, O Lord, leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, alleluia."

Most people like to talk. They like noise, particularly at Christmas time, because they are used to it. And for these people, silence is something like olives. You have to learn to cultivate a taste for it. Occasionally visitors in a religious house complain that silence "gets on their nerves." But once they have accepted it, learned to understand it and use it fruitfully, they find themselves loving it.

God's life is a silent one. Sound belongs to matter. All growth is accomplished in silence. You can't make silence. You can make a noise. But you can only make silence by stopping the noise, or stopping your ears, or stopping the dissipating chatter of your own inner voices. Silence, of course, is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. And the reason we try to "put some silence in our Christmas" is to prepare a place in our hearts for the Christ Child.

Ever faithfully in our Lord,

Mary Veronica P.C. Rep.
Reverend Mother