



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Our seminary facilities have been a beehive of activities the past few weeks. The first week of July our religious and secular priests gathered for our biannual priests' meeting. Twenty-one priests were in attendance together with our two deacons (soon to be ordained). Many of our parishioners eagerly anticipate the priests' meetings because the priests are offering Holy Mass at different altars at the same time throughout the morning and they have the opportunity to assist at several Masses each morning.

No sooner had the priests' meeting ended than the Sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of God (CMD) held their 20th annual girls' camp with 98 girls participating. With this many girls, there were three different locations to house all of them. As soon as the girls' camp ended, we began our boys' camp with 57 boys in attendance. Each of these events were certainly a spiritual success and we are grateful that our Blessed Mother especially protected all of the children during their many recreational activities. Although the children come for a summer vacation, they

also had the opportunity for daily Mass, frequent confession, and daily prayers including the recitation of the Rosary.

A few months ago there was a photograph of the groundbreaking ceremony for Sacred Heart Academy's new facility in Burlington, Colorado. Now that the construction is nearly entirely complete, the ceremonies for the blessing of the new school took place and the teachers and students anxiously await this new school year in their new building. May God bless all the parishioners and benefactors of Immaculate Conception Church.

Meanwhile our clergy and religious have been extraordinarily busy to prepare for Mater Dei Academy's new school year here in Omaha, which begins in less than a week. A few weeks following the academy's opening, Mater Dei Seminary will begin classes. With four new seminarians, there will be thirteen seminarians studying for the priesthood.

As always your prayers and support are greatly appreciated and please be assured of our daily remembrance of you in our prayers.

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI





Mary Immaculate Girls' Camp



Milites Christi Boys' Camp



The Blessing of Sacred Heart Academy, Burlington, Colorado

St. Philomena, Virgin and Martyr

On May 24, 1802, excavators in the catacomb of St. Priscilla came upon a loculus (tomb) which had never been opened. On the following day, which had been set for the opening of the vault, the learned custodian noticed three slabs with the inscription: "LUMENA-PAX TE-CUM FI." It appeared that out of haste they were misplaced. The first slab should have been last, resulting in: "PAX TE-CUM FI-LUMENA," translated, "PEACE BE WITH YOU, PHILOMENA."

Various symbols of martyrdom painted in red were also included on the slabs. One was an anchor, considered an emblem of hope because of its resemblance to a cross, or a symbol of martyrdom since many martyrs had anchors tied around their necks and were thrown into the sea or a river. Then there were two arrows, one pointing up, the other down, and a lance. These also are symbols of martyrdom. Lastly there was a palm, signifying triumph, and a lily — an emblem of purity.

Within the tomb, there was a vial containing dried blood of the martyr. This is of great significance since many miracles have been worked by way of this relic.

The contents were then examined by many experts including doctors, surgeons, and theologians. The fractured skull and the bones were thought to be a girl 12-13 years old.

The relics were then placed in the Treasury of Relics. There they remained until a holy priest from Mugnano, Italy, arrived in Rome. Upon approaching the relics, he had an inspiration to acquire them for his church in Mugnano. This presented great difficulties. During his stay, he became seriously ill. He promised St. Philomena that if only he could obtain her relics he would take her to Mugnano and make her his special patron. He was instantly cured and all the difficulties of obtaining the relics ceased. He was soon heading back to Mugnano, having happily obtained the ashes, bones, and blood of the Saint.

From this time on, countless miracles were worked by the Saint's intercession. The sick were healed and the dying were cured. Many conversions were worked. How happy must the humble priest have been who had possession of her relics!

Investigation into the life of St. Philomena was to no avail as she had been forgotten for so many years. Yet St. Philomena has revealed to three of her devout clients the story of her life. These revelations have received the imprimatur of the Holy Office declaring them to contain nothing deserving of censure and giving us the right to accept them. One of these revelations was made to Mother Mary Louisa. The Saint tells that she was the daughter of the king of a small Grecian state whose parents were converted to Christianity by a Roman doctor named Publius. When she was thirteen years old, her father took her to Rome to see the Emperor who had waged an unjust war on them. The Emperor, on seeing the Saint, agreed to peace on condition that he receive her hand in marriage. Her parents agreed to this and afterwards sought to convince her that she would be happy as Empress of Rome. But she rejected the offer and told them that she had made herself

the spouse of Jesus Christ by a vow of chastity at eleven years of age. "My father then endeavored to prove that a child of my age could not dispose of herself as she pleased and exerted all his authority to force me to obey. My Divine Spouse, however, gave me the necessary strength to stand by my resolution."

On learning of her objections, the Emperor requested her to be brought before him that he might persuade her otherwise. Her father came for her but, she continues, "seeing that my resolution was unshaken, both he and my mother, casting themselves at my feet, implored me to change my mind. 'O daughter!' they exclaimed, 'Have pity on your parents! Have pity on your country! Have pity on our kingdom!' I answered that my virginity must take precedence of all else."

St. Philomena endured the attempts of the Emperor to persuade her for thirty-seven days. Then the Virgin Mary appeared to her in the dungeon and said she would leave that place of sorrow in three days, but she would have to suffer cruel torture for the love of Jesus Christ.

This was soon fulfilled for, the Emperor despairing of success, had her "tied to a pillar and scourged mercilessly to the accompaniment of horrible blasphemies." Then still unshaken she was thrown back into the dungeon to die. But God sent two angels to pour a heavenly balm on her wounds. She was cured.

The next day the Emperor, seeing her stronger and more beautiful than ever, tried again to persuade her. This having failed, he ordered that an anchor be tied around her neck and that she be tossed into the Tiber. But once more Jesus sent the angels to her aid. They cut the cord, and brought her back to the bank without a single drop of water

having touched her garments.

The Emperor then ordered her to be pierced with arrows and again, near death, to be thrown into the dungeon.

When she was again cured, he ordered the torture to be repeated. But the arrows refused to leave their bows. Claiming that this was the result of magic, Diocletian then ordered the arrows to be heated red hot. "This persecution," as St. Philomena says, "was of no avail. My Divine Spouse saved me from the torture by turning the arrows back on the archers, six of whom were killed. This last miracle brought about other conversions, and the people began to show serious signs of disaffection towards the Emperor and even reverence for our Holy Faith."

"Fearing more serious consequences," she continues, "the tyrant now ordered me to be beheaded. My soul, glorious and triumphant, ascended into Heaven, there to receive the crown of virginity which I had merited by so many victories."

How powerful must be the intercession of St. Philomena! There are many instances where favors have been granted through her intercession. Many who pray to the Saint promise to propagate devotion to her if their favors are granted. This has proved to be very pleasing to her and her Divine Spouse as those requests are so often granted.



Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

Disposal of the Poor Box Receipts

Question: In my parish we have accumulated a large sum of money from donations to the poor box. Very few instances in which it was necessary to help any of these a small sum sufficed. Can the surplus in the poor box be used for such purposes as sending to summer camps boys and girls who are not impoverished but whose parents cannot pay for such a vacation, or helping toward the needs of boys and girls who show an inclination toward the priesthood or the religious life, but whose parents would find it difficult to provide them with the means of attaining the desired goal?

Answer: Doubtless, some would recommend that this good pastor send the surplus money in the poor box fund, not needed for impoverished persons in his own parish, to some other parish where there are persons who are poor in the strict sense of the term. They would argue that the motive of those who donate this money is to help those who are truly poor elsewhere. I believe that such a disposition of the funds may be made by a pastor. But I am also of the opinion that the idea proposed by the pastor is fully acceptable, and that the use of the funds as he suggested within the limits of his own parish is permissible and laudable. Boys and girls who, though not poor in the strict sense of the term, cannot afford the benefits of a good summer vacation, or who lack the funds helpful to pursue what seems to be a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life can be regarded as poor in the wide sense. Hence, I believe that the donations of the faithful of a parish to the poor box can be reasonably applied toward the temporal or spiritual welfare of the young persons of the parish, as described by our questioner.

The Disappearance of Library Books

Question: Would you please say something in your columns about the custom of taking books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., from the shelves of institutional libraries without having a proper record made and without subsequently returning them?

Answer: This request was made by the head librarian in a large Catholic university. His request is based on the appalling fact that much material in the form of books, pamphlets, and periodicals is constantly disappearing from the shelves without any record being made and is never returned. What makes the matter worse is the strong indication that many of those who take this material are priests or seminarians or religious.

Of course, objectively a sin of theft is committed. Doubtless, many of those who commit such deprivations are not guilty subjectively in the beginning. They intend to return the material "in a day or two." But time passes on, and the books or periodicals or pamphlets remain on the borrowers' shelves for weeks or months or years. Perhaps after a long time he argues that the material must have been replaced in the meantime, or he convinces himself that the library has a large number of copies and one will not be missed. It is very difficult to excuse from sin one who rationalizes in this way. He has acquired something to which he has no title, even if it has not much value and can easily be replaced. And frequently it cannot easily be replaced. The book may no longer be for sale; or it may be a book that can now be bought only at a high price. It may be one volume of a set, and its theft renders the whole set practically useless. A professor may have to change his course content and his examinations because this book is no longer available for reference. It must be very evident that the purloining of even one book may constitute sufficient matter for a grave sin against justice, not to speak of charity, because of the inconvenience and hardship the "borrowing" may cause others.

All those who make use of the services of a library should be most exact in complying with the rules determining the borrowing of a book. Priests, seminarians, and religious especially should be most careful never to cause the library officials any trouble in this connection. They should make it a matter of conscience to let the custodian know if they take out a book, and should return it promptly within the stipulated time.

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