

# **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,

With the influx of new seminarians, it is a great aid to their study of the liturgy not only to learn in the classroom but more importantly to serve on a regular basis during the liturgical ceremonies at the various positions required. Besides the Solemn High Masses offered by our priests and the Solemn Pontifical Masses offered by the bishop and assisted by the major order clerics, our seminarians are active also in assisting the priests at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. What better way for them to learn the proper rubrics of these ceremonies than to frequently assist at them!

We began this month with the ceremony for the blessing of candles followed by a Pontifical High Mass. In less than two weeks, the seminarians will be assisting at the solemn blessing of ashes and another Pontifical High Mass to usher in the Holy Season of Lent. This will be followed by the study and practice



*Solemn Pontifical Mass  
for the feast of the Purification*



*After classes a few of the seminarians dug out the convent's driveway of a massive snow drift, supervised by Rambo, the Bishop's dog*

of the ceremonies for Holy Week — Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday's Mass of Chrism and Mass of the Last Supper, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. There will also be the review of the chant for Tenebrae for Wednesday in Holy Week.

Although I do not believe in "global warming" and "climate change," our weather in the midwest has seen near records for January. We recently had very warm weather — nearly to 60 degrees — only to be followed by the temperatures this last week dipping to 20 below zero with the wind chill factor and accompanied by a considerable amount of snow.

With Lent just around the corner, it would be well for us to prepare for this holy season by making spiritual resolutions. There are many pious practices that can greatly aid our spiritual renewal. The Stations of the Cross, meditation on the Passion, extra visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary and the Seven Dolors of Our Lady are a few. Lent is indeed the acceptable time of grace.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

## Acquisition of St. Philomena

This past January, Fr. Carlos Borja located a beautiful statue of St. Philomena from a religious goods dealer in Europe. The statue was produced in the 1800's and had been darkened over the years. After several attempts by the Sisters to clean the statue with various chemicals, Bishop Pivarunas had the thought after finishing his prayers in the church late one night to use a particular gold and silver polish, which works wonders on chalices and ciboria. Not wanting to damage the statue, he rubbed the gold and silver polish on a small area of the left hand. To his amazement, the discolorization came off and the original colors of the statue returned. A few days later, after several hours of cleaning and touching up with an airbrush, the Sisters were able to restore the statue to its original beauty.

It is providential that we were able to get a statue of St. Philomena. Pope Gregory XVI, on January 13, 1837, officially raised St. Philomena to the honor of the altar, granting a Mass in her honor and the Pope based this solely on the multitude of undeniable miracles worked through her intercession. Nevertheless, in 1961, she was removed from the calendar for erroneous reasons, and in 1968 all indulgences in regard to devotion to her were suppressed by the Conciliar Church. During this lapse of time, it has been difficult to find large statues in her honor. This Virgin Martyr is truly a great model for the students of our academy and boarding school; her statue is located near the front entrance of our church on the Gospel side to facilitate frequent visits to her shrine.



Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46), who authorized her public veneration, showed his esteem and devotion to the saint by giving her the title "Patroness of the Living Rosary," and donating a magnificent gold and silver lamp to her sanctuary.

Of all the Popes, however, Pope Pius IX cultivated the most special devotion to the virgin-martyr. As Archbishop of Spoleto, he was one of her devout clients and did much to spread her veneration. Later in life, when Archbishop of Imola, he fell very ill and his cure was attributed to St. Philomena's intercession. When raised to the throne of St. Peter, this Pope availed himself of his power to bestow still greater luster on the saint at Mugnano, where he offered Holy Mass on the altar of the saint, and afterwards publicly

venerated her relics. In 1849, he named her "Patroness of the Children of Mary."

Leo XIII imitated his predecessor in the honor shown to St. Philomena during his pontificate. Before his election to the papacy he made two pilgrimages to her shrine. After he had become the Vicar of Christ, he gave a valuable cross to the sanctuary. He approved the Confraternity of St. Philomena, and enriched it with indulgences. Furthermore, he raised it to an Archconfraternity.

Not less devoted to the little saint was our beloved St. Pius X. Costly gifts, among them a magnificent gold ring, were given by him to her shrine. He often spoke warmly of her and manifested his devotion to her in various ways.



## Excerpts from *The Life of Father Pro*

by Rev. M.D. Forrest, M.S.C.

### Episcopal Proclamation

Had the Church submitted to these flagrantly unjust conditions, it would have thereby repudiated its own divine origin and authority and betrayed the sacred trust reposed in it by its Divine Founder. Therefore, the Bishops of the Mexican Republic, a week before the satanic decree of Calles was to go into effect, issued an official statement, redolent of pathos and dignity, to the Catholics of Mexico:

"Since the conditions imposed render impossible the continuation of the sacred ministry, we have decided, after consulting our Most Holy Father, Pius XI, that, from July 31 of the present year until we determine otherwise, all public worship requiring the participation of priests be suspended in all the churches of the Republic.

"In order that the faithful may continue to pray within them, the churches will not be closed, thought the priests in charge will withdraw from them.

"We leave the churches to the care of the faithful, and we are confident that they will preserve with all solicitude the sanctuaries which they have inherited from their ancestors, or which they have, at the cost of such sacrifice, erected and consecrated to the worship of God.



"Let us take comfort and courage from the words Christ addressed to His Apostles when He announced His approaching death and resurrection: 'Behold we go up to Jerusalem, where the things shall be fulfilled which the prophets wrote of the Son of Man. He will be delivered to the gentiles and will be mocked and spat upon. And then He will be scourged and will be put to death. And the third day He will rise again.

"The life of the Church is that of its Divine Founder. Thus, beloved children, the Church in Mexico is today delivered up, persecuted, imprisoned, reduced to a state resembling death. But the Mexican Church also will, after a short period, rise again full of life and strength, more vigorous than ever. Hold fast to this hope."



### Facing the Firing Squad

Everything was in readiness for the execution; the firing squad stood by with loaded rifles, and even motion-picture cameras were in evidence. The officer in charge, Major Torres, asked Father Pro to express his last will. "Permit me to pray," answered the priest. Kneeling, he took from his pocket a crucifix, which he kissed and held in his right hand, and a rosary, which he held in his left. He commended his soul to God and, refusing to be blindfolded as he stood erect, said calmly: "Lord, Thou knowest that I am innocent." Then, making the sign of the Cross over the spectators, he said to the firing squad and the others who perpetrated his execution: "May God have mercy on you. May God bless you."

Without the slightest nervousness he walked to the wall, tranquilly faced the soldiers, stretched forth his arms in the form of a cross, and exclaimed: "With all my heart I forgive my enemies." Then, just before the order to fire was given, he quietly uttered the favorite ejaculation of the Mexican martyrs: "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" (Long live Christ the King!). The volley was fired, and the beloved Father Pro, idol of the people of Mexico City, fell dead, riddled with bullets. But, to make doubly sure of his death, a soldier approached and, at close range, fired a bullet into the dead priest's head, thus giving him "*el tiro de gracia.*"



## From *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 1957

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### The Absolution of a Recidivist

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**Question:** On what grounds do some theologians base their teaching that a recidivist may not be absolved unless he manifests extraordinary contrition? Is not the minimum degree of contrition sufficient for the fruitful reception of the sacrament of Penance, as long as it extends to all the penitent's mortal sins and is based on a supernatural motive?

**Answer:** The questioner is perfectly correct in asserting that no extraordinary degree of contrition is required from even the most hardened and most habituated sinner, including the recidivist, the person who has returned to the same habit of sin after previous confessions without any apparent effort at amendment. But the questioner is wrong in saying that some theologians require extraordinary contrition from the (formal) recidivist before absolution may be imparted. What these theologians demand is extraordinary signs of contrition. For, since the recidivist has proved that his mere assertion that he is sorry and intends to amend does not give the confessor sufficient moral certainty to justify the conferring of absolution, a more convincing proof of his dispositions is called for, and the signs by which this is manifested are called extraordinary signs by some theologians, special signs by others. Such signs would be the fact that the penitent is now making a mission or retreat, the fact that he has recently given up an occasion of sin, and above all the candid and sincere statement that he is now more aware than ever before of the necessity of amendment and is resolved to avoid sin in future (*verba cordialia*). It is difficult to see how a priest can continue to absolve a person month after month when this penitent has been committing some grave sins regularly without any apparent manifestation of amendment, unless the confessor obtains more convincing proof of contrition than the mere repetition of the act of contrition.

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### An Inheritance for Masses

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**Question:** A sum of money was left in a will for Masses, but without specification of the number that the testator wished. However, the deceased person, in the course of her lifetime, was accustomed to have "announced Masses" said regularly, giving the additional stipend expected for these. In view of this fact, may "announced Masses" be said for the legacy at this same higher stipend?

**Answer :** Canon 830 prescribes that if a sum of money is given for Masses without any indication as to the number of Masses the donor wishes, the number is to be computed according to the stipend prevailing in the place where the donor lived "unless it must be lawfully presumed that his intention was different." In the case described by the questioner it can be reasonably presumed that the testator intended the stipends for the Masses to be reckoned according to the custom she followed during her lifetime—that is, "announced Masses" may be said, according to the stipend which the faithful are accustomed to give for them.

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