



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,

As many of you know, there are many institutions under my spiritual care, and there are multiple centers for the work that I oversee as bishop and as CMRI Superior General. Following the feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, June 27th, the CMRI Sisters held their Chapter, and at the same time the CMRI priests and religious held their Diet at Mount St. Michael's in Spokane, Washington.

A Chapter is a gathering of professed religious to elect a Mother General and 4 Sister Consultors, to review the constitutions and rule of the congregation, and to address important issues in the congregation; it is held every 6 years. At a Chapter each professed

Sister has the right to speak and to vote on these issues. At this Chapter Reverend Mother Mary Agnes, CMRI was re-elected as the Mother General.

A Diet is a gathering of professed religious in between Chapters. Although no elections occur, nevertheless, important matters are discussed amongst the CMRI priests and religious that pertain to the religious life.

As Superior General of CMRI, I am required to be present for both the Sisters' Chapter and the priests' Diet and to approve any matters voted on at the Chapter or Diet. Needless to say, it was a very busy and productive week.

I would like to congratulate Brother Martin Marie, CMRI (Michigan) on his first vows and also Brother Mary Fidelis, CMRI (California) who was received as



a novice.

In order to better provide for the scholastic instructions of our religious seminarians, it has been decided to move the religious seminary with Fr. Gregory Drahman, CMRI in Olathe, Colorado, to Rathdrum, Idaho, in the same facility as the minor seminary (in a separate section of the building). This transition will enable Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI to assist Fr. Gregory Drahman in the classes for our major religious seminarians. Nevertheless, our CMRI novitiate will still be in Olathe, Colorado, on the property of St. Joseph's Church with Fr. Bernard Welp, CMRI as the superior of the novices.

Besides my frequent travels to administer Confirmation this summer, I also have given adult doctrine classes in some of our parishes. Our priests and religious have conducted various summer camps for our boys and girls, respectively, around the country. For the Midwest, Fr. Michael Sellner organized a boys' camp near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, along the picturesque Mississippi River in the same area where the famous missionary Fr. Marquette first discovered this river and dedicated it to the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Philip Davis, CMRI conducted his boys' camp in the scenic Pacific Northwest in the



Brother Martin Marie takes his first vows

mountains of northern Idaho. Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI held his boys' camp along one of the many beautiful rivers in Ohio. The CMRI Sisters had their St. Philomena's Girls' Camp at Mount St. Michael's. And finally the CMD Sisters had their 27th annual girls' camp here in Nebraska and Iowa; this year there was a record number of girls—161!

Those of our secular seminarians who did not travel home for the summer have been assisting in different parishes around the country as well as at the various boys' camps. Franz and Leopold Trauner from Austria have done amazing work on the two side altars for Immaculate Conception Church in Sartell, Minnesota. Francisco Gomez from Mexico has kept up with the grounds around the new seminary property in Iowa as well as the large garden.

The month of August has two beautiful feasts of Our Blessed Mother—her glorious Assumption into Heaven and her Immaculate Heart. Let us continue to fulfill the prophecy that Our Heavenly Mother made during her visit to her cousin Elizabeth in which she foretold “henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.”

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



Brother Fidelis Marie, CMRI receives the habit

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 approval of the Holy Office (December 21, 1833) 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.



Outlines of Moral Theology

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

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

The obligation to profess the true faith is both negative and affirmative. As a negative commandment it forbids one ever to profess a false religion or to deny the true religion. Such acts are intrinsically wrong, grave sins, and even the fear of death will not justify a person in performing them. This principle extends also to an implicit denial of the faith, such as receiving the sacraments of a false religion. Even to wear the garb or insignia proper to a false religious sect would be gravely sinful when this dress or insignia would be equivalent to a profession of the religion itself. This would ordinarily apply to Masonic emblems and the garb of the Salvation Army. However, this would not be the case if the garb in question is primarily national or traditional (in a certain locality), even though ordinarily it is worn only by persons of one religious group. Thus, it would not be a denial of the faith to wear the fez in Turkey.

As an affirmative precept the obligation to profess the true faith binds a person (by God's law) as often as silence or ambiguity or his manner of acting would suggest an implicit denial of the faith, contempt of religion, an insult to God or scandal to one's neighbor. Thus, if a Catholic is present at a gathering in which the Catholic religion is being derided, he should ordinarily profess his faith and make some manner of protest. However, a person is not always bound to profess his faith, since there are times when silence, or even an ambiguous manner of acting would not involve any of the consequences just enumerated. In fact, at times a Catholic could perform an action which in itself is lawful, even though forbidden by Church law, with the realization that others will thus conclude that he is not a Catholic. For example, in time of persecution a Catholic could eat meat on Friday if otherwise he might be the object of suspicion. Again, a young person who enters the Church without the knowledge of his parents could stay away from Mass on Sundays when it would lead them to judge that he had become a Catholic and to punish him severely in consequence. It should be noted, however, that to abstain from professing the faith is not the same as denying the faith or professing a false religion, for such things are intrinsically evil. Thus, the young person in question would never be allowed to take active part in a false religion, however grave the inconveniences might be that the parents would inflict. Ordinarily ambiguities are to be avoided, and a Catholic must be willing to declare himself such. This is particularly true of a public personage. It is well to remember, however, that our American law does not require a statement of one's religious affiliation as a qualification for office—e.g., school teacher. Hence, if a person applying for such a job were asked his religion, he could refuse to answer.

By the law of the Church certain persons must profess the Catholic faith on particular occasions—for example, clerics before the reception of the subdiaconate, professors of theology at the beginning of each scholastic year or at least when they first enter on their office, university professors, etc.

Adsum, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha NE 68134-3356
www.materdeiseminary.org