5-1-1964

The Marian Philatelist, Whole No. 12

A. S. Horn

W. J. Hoffman

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NEW ISSUES

ANDORRA - Spanish Post Office (A-1 Category). Released Feb. 29, 1964, set of four stamps; the 5 pts. value depicts VIRGIN OF MERITXELL after the primitive sculpture of the 8th century now in the Chapel of the Meritxell Shrine. An article on the Madonna statue and shrine is on page 53 of the September 1963 issue. An illustration of the FDC with a VIRGIN OF MERITXELL postal cancellation, together with additional interesting information on this country, on page 31. (FDC compliments J. M. Gomis, Valencia, Spain.)

ITALY: (A-2 Category). Released Feb. 15, 1964, set of two stamps commemorating 400th anniversary of the death of Michelangelo. The 185 Lire value ports THE MADONNA OF BRUCES. Illustration of maximum card and article on page 32. The other stamp in this set depicts the head of Nicodemus (thought to be a self-portrait), a detail from the artist's DEPOSITION now in the Florence Cathedral. The entire work appears on a 1943 Spanish Local issue. Illustration of this stamp and article on page 33.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: (A-1 miniature.) Set of eight stamps issued Feb. 11, 1964 to commemorate 10th anniversary of the founding of Louvain University. The 25 F and 100 F values depict the shield, or coat-of-arms, containing the SEDES SAPIENTIAE (Seat of Wisdom), Patroness of Louvain University, of which the Louvain University is an overseas branch. A souvenir sheet also issued, containing the 20, 30, and 100 F values, imperforate. We understand that only 25,000 copies were released.

SEDES SAPIENTIAE is an invocation of Our Lady in the Litany of Loreto. Mary has this title because the Son of God, who is also called in Scripture the Word and Wisdom of God, once dwelt in Her, and then after His birth of Her was carried in Her arms and seated on Her lap in His first years. Thus being the human throne of Him who reigns in Heaven, She is called "The Seat of Wisdom."

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PANAMA: (A-6 Category). A 22-stamp set depicting world-famous Churches commemorating the Ecumenical Council. The stamp of the Milan Cathedral contains a Madonna in miniature as the MADONNINA is on the highest spire. Father Horn tells us that contrary to all reports the MADONNINA is still on top of the Cathedral spire.

Included in the set are also the following Marian churches: THE ASSUMPTION Cathedral in Panama, NOTRE DAME of Paris, BASILICA OF GUADALUPE, Mexico City, dedicated to Our Lady.
SPAIN: MADONNA IN MINIATURE
1958 - Scott Nos.879, 884

Antonio Benet, Valencia, Spain, supplied us with the following information: This 1958 series commemorated the Fourth Centenary of Carlos I (known to us as Charles V). The 15 cts. and 1 pts. stamps show the head of this king. On the medallion on the hat is a miniature image of THE VIRGIN, encircled with the invocation "O Mother of God, Remember me." Father Horn tells us the original painting is in the Borghese Palace, Rome. Attempts are being made to secure a photo of the original painting as only with the aid of a larger photo will it be possible to describe what the head of the Madonna looks like.

NEW LISTINGS OF MARIAN CHURCHES

ANGOLA: (A-6 Category.) A third church in this set of 18 stamps has been identified as a Marian Church - CHURCH OF OUR LADY, Luanda Island, Scott #508. Series released Nov. 6, 1963. The other two churches were illustrated and listed on page 2 of the January 1, 1964 issue.

MALTA: (A-6 Category.) Issued Nov. 18, 1963. Victory Church dedicated to OUR LADY OF VICTORY, type of 1956 issue. See article on page 56 of the Sept. 1963 issue, titled "Marian Churches on British Stamps," which includes reference to this church.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

VATICAN CITY: Four designs to be released April 22, 1964 on the occasion of THE PIETA leaving Italy for the New York World’s Fair. The 15 and 50 Lire values will picture Pope Paul VI, the 100 Lire THE PIETA, and the 250 Lire a DETAIL OF THE FACE OF THE MADONNA.

UNITED STATES: A 5-cent commemorative for the centenary of Nevada Statehood, release date not yet known, will reproduce a view of Virginia City; at the very center will be ST. MARY’S IN THE MOUNTAINS CHURCH. Statehood granted Nevada Oct. 31, 1964.

Pleasing PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS.

UNISSUED MADONNA STAMP – Belgium 1943

In 1943 the German occupation authorities in Belgium did not allow the release of a series of engraved stamps on which were depicted the SEVEN WORKS OF MERCY.

The lowest value was a 10 c + 90 c, red-brown, and pictured a NATIVITY SCENE with a monk of Orval Abbey offering the Holy Family something to eat. The designer of these seven forbidden stamps is Baron de Stalins, Paris, and the engraver was Jules Piel of Reims.

The Belgian Post had agreed to the issue and the Orval Abbey was allowed to print the stamps. The Germans, however, who had invaded the country, opposed the release since one of the stamps represented "the visitation of prisoners" one of the "Works of Mercy". This would probably have drawn the attention of the Belgian population to fellow-citizens in German captivity.

So here we deal with an adopted project which, for political reasons, was not executed. The proofs, which had already been printed, are, however, on the market.

.....Jozef Peeters, Beval, Belgium .......

Can you supply information on this Mozambique issue?

Henrique T. A. S. Fernandes supplied the photograph and data which we print here hoping some of our members will be able to furnish further details. Year and date of issue unknown; perhaps it is a "charity" issue. Design is as follows: On yellow background is an image of Our Lady (of Sorrows) in blue, with a bouquet of red roses in front of her. In a semicircle around her head, forming a sort of halo, runs the following inscription: "LUTOUSA DOS EMPREGADOS DOS CTT" (Mournful of the employees of the Post, Telegraph & Telephones.) At the bottom in a panel is "Mozambique," flanked on both sides with 1$00 value (one Escudo). The word "CORREIO" is absent, therefore it was not valid for postal use for its use was voluntary. It is not listed in Gibbons.

DUES FOR 1964 ARE NOW PAYABLE. IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO ALREADY, PLEASE FORWARD THEM IMMEDIATELY.
Father Horn's interesting article on this statue and the Shrine has been published in our September 1963 issue. The country of Andorra, however, is also interesting. It is a tiny principality tucked away in winding valleys beneath towering 10,000-foot peaks of the eastern Pyrenees, sandwiched in between France and Spain and protected by both. It is the smallest country in the world, being only 18 miles long and 12 miles wide.

Its beginning dates back to the 13th century when the princes of France granted the people of the valleys the rights of a principality for their help in turning back the Moorish invaders who had conquered Spain. Andorra's status is guaranteed under a convention drawn up in 1278 under which both Spain and France are responsible for its safety.

The country has no newspaper of its own, and no local news bulletins are permitted on its two radio stations; other countries' newspapers, however, are available. It is also most probably the only country in the world where no internal postage charges are required; if an Andorran at the Spanish end of the valley wants to send a letter to someone at the French end, he merely drops the letter in a post box and it is delivered free.

NEW MARIAN POSTAL CANCELLATIONS

SPAIN: **Listed Under ANDORRA**

UNITED STATES:

BELGIUM:
- Gentinnes, Auto post, June 1963. This postal cancellation depicts a Madonna project which will not be executed. On June 30, 1963, on the occasion of local festivities at Gentinnes (Southern Brabant), a special cancellation was used by the automobile post. This extra cancellation depicts the project of a memorial which will be erected in memory of the twenty martyred Fathers of The Holy Ghost Missionaries at Kongo (The Congo).

According to the first project on the cancellation, the memorial was to have a Madonna statue, the silhouette of which was depicted on this cancellation. According to the latest plan, however, this Madonna statue is to be replaced by a bas-relief. So we are facing a situation where a Madonna statue which will never be erected appears on a cancellation! It must be mentioned that this Belgian cancellation is already scarcely available.

.....Jozef Peeters, Bevel, Belgium....

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SPAIN: Postal Cancellation #E54#41
"Virgen Blanca"-Vitoria

Vitoria, a city of 55,000 inhabitants, is the capital of Alava Province; an interesting town set in beautiful country. The Cathedral of Santa Maria contains paintings by Van Dyck and Rubens and a 12th century statue of The Virgin, but to the people of greater importance is the jasper WHITE VIRGIN OF VITORIA in the 12th century Church of St. Michael. She is carried in solemn procession through the streets, with much bell ringing, on Aug. 12th. The high altar before which She stands was done by Jan Velasquez and Gregoria Hernandez, and is unusually beautiful.

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SCOTT CATALOG NUMBERS FOR RECENT ISSUES:

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>&quot;Well of Virgin Mary&quot;</td>
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MARIAN PHILATELIST

-31-

May 1, 1964
The BRUGES MADONNA seems to have been started soon after the artist returned to his native Florence from Rome, about 1505. He had come home full of honors and renown, having just completed his PIETA, but with no guarantee for the future and no commissions. Setting up shop called for wares to show and apparently at this time he began working on a life-sized group of the Madonna and Child.

It somewhat recalls The Pieta, particularly in the youthfulness of the Madonna, but it actually follows an earlier work, The Madonna of The Stairs, which he did about 1492 at the age of 17 while a member of the Medici household and the Art Academy set up by this Florentine family.

The Virgin in the Bruges Madonna seems to sit in brooding but protective solemnity while the Child slips from her lap and reaches for the earth with an exploratory toe. We seem to sense that the Madonna is stoically aware of the fatal outcome of the Child’s descent into immortality. The Child squirms from her knees with the delighted curiosity of an infant, eyes almost closed with excitement; a plump infant clinging to and yet slipping from the security of the mother’s protection.

The fine details of this work continue his Roman style while the big round head of the Child, with its fat, flat curls, anticipates his David. More than a decade later, Michelangelo would recall this Madonna’s hands and incorporate them in his Moses.

That he highly valued this work is known from a letter written his father from Rome at the beginning of 1506, in which he requested his father to keep the work hidden and show it to no one. Evidently these instructions were not followed for some three months later arrangements were made to have it shipped to a Flemish merchant in Bruges, where, except for a brief visit to the Paris of Napoleon I and to Alt-Aussee in Austria under Hitler, it has remained ever since.

It was escorted to Bruges in 1506 by Francesco del Pugliese for the purchaser, one Alexander Mouscron, a merchant in English clothing materials, having warehouses in Florence and Rome. Historical records show he paid 100 ducats for the work, which is comparatively small considering the 450 ducats paid for the Pieta.

The sculpture is about 50½ inches high, including the base, and evidently was intended to be set up high as the head of the Child appears to be too large in its present position on the altar of the Bruges Church of Our Lady. The June 1963 issue of THE MARIANIST, published by the Marian Library of Dayton University, has an article by Eric Rayner entitled "A Tale of Five Cities," which contains an illustration of the altar on which the statuary is enthroned. (Maximum card supplied by Father A. S. Horn.)

NOTRE DAME CHURCH OF BRUGES -- Belgium 1939, Scott B-256

Though not a cathedral, this church has cathedral-like proportions. In fact, because it has no vast open court or grotemarkt in front, it has an almost overpowering bulk with a thick, massively built tower about 400 feet in height. Built in 1188 on the site of successive churches since 744, Notre Dame, if not a Marian shrine, is a museum of Marian art: "Seven Dolors" by Jean Mosteart, 15th century; a triptych "Virgin and Child" 1490; "The Taking Down from the Cross" 1490; a black marble "Virgin" 1485; a "Virgin and Infant" 1540; the "Virgin and Infant Jesus at Bethlehem" 1598; a tableau of "The Holy Virgin in Her Glory" 1660; and an exquisite white marble group of a Madonna and standing Child by Michelangelo, sharply offset against a background of polished marble. This is the treasure of Notre Dame, a treasure for which, in the 18th century, the Franciscan Capuchins refused 60,000 florin from the English nobleman, Lord Oxford. (Extracted from "A Tale of Five Cities," by Eric Rayner, in the June 1963 issue of THE MARIANIST, published by the Marian Library, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.)
The exact date on which the artist began this sculpture is unknown, but Vasari's biography states that in 1550 he saw Michelangelo at work on this group, and in 1550 the artist was 75 years of age! It is known that he began the work as a source of relaxation from the multitudinous demands of his office as the Chief Architect for the building of St. Peter's in Rome. His first love had always been sculpturing, and his tools had lain idle since the completion of the Rachel and Leah for the Julius Tomb in 1545. Being anxious to get back to his first love, he secured an enormous column capital from the Roman Temple of Peace and began work at once whenever he could steal a moment or two from the many projects involved with his task as Chief Architect. He was in no hurry to finish it, for it was not commissioned, but he kept it in his home for years and chipped away at it as an unfailing source against immediate cares. It is also mentioned by his biographers that he voiced an opinion that this was to be his tombstone.

It was his habit on returning home after a long hard day of inspecting materials and climbing over the scaffolding of St. Peter's to chip away at the block by candle light; or, if he could not sleep, getting up and working away his perpetual restlessness. The marble had curious hard areas in it which had given him some trouble before; and so it was that one night, in 1556, the arm of the Virgin cracked from an unlucky blow. Being a perfectionist and detesting anything less than perfection in his work, he gave the sculpture to his new servant, a recent successor to his Faithful and long-serving Francesco. Two centuries later it found its way to Florence, and to the Cathedral there.

This "Deposition," 7 feet 8 inches in height, is also known as the "Florence Pieta" and represents a powerful and sensitive group among his many amazing sculptures. The huge crouled figure of Nicodemus (supposedly said to be a self-portrait) supports the body of Christ, while on either side the Madonna and a smaller figure, which is certainly one of the Marys, try vainly to hold it off the ground. The angularity of the Savior's long and powerful body cuts poignantly across the group; legs, shoulders and head create a pattern in depth and movement, while the sad old face of Nicodemus looks down on it with utmost compassion.

Although the work is certainly a "Deposition From The Cross," it was called a "Pieta" by his contemporaries, and the similarity invites comparison with The Pieta in St. Peter's, done more than fifty years before. The earlier work has a spring-like or youthful quality, with its meticulous polish and dignified restraint. "The Deposition", however, has the anguish deeply imbedded, with the rough-hewn figures full of despair and burdened with great sorrow, with only the partly polished body of Christ striking a majestic note.

When Michelangelo died in 1564, his friends spirited his body from Rome for internment in his native Florence, where he was laid to rest in San Croce Church. His nephew, knowing of his famous uncle's wish that the group be his tombstone, labored long but unsuccessfully to secure the broken "Deposition" in order to place it as a central feature of the artist's tomb; the owner would simply not part with it, and so another group, done by Vasari, was placed on the tomb.

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GERMANY: Postal Cancellation #34 - "MARIA HILF" - Monchengladbach

One of the most important and unusual buildings in this city, situated in central Germany, is its hospital, called "Maria Hilf" (Mary's Help). It is one of the few European hospitals dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. In 1961 the German Post Office authorized Monchengladbach to adopt a postmark which paid tribute to the Maria Hilf Hospital. The postmark bears a picture of THE MADONNA AND CHILD. (From the Nov. 1964 issue of "Perpetual Help" magazine.)

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The happy life, and useful, comes to those who live beyond the boundaries of self.

The creation of a collection of Madonna Stamps expresses some of the fulfillment of this thought.

Forming such a collection accomplishes several results.
   It is an outlet of one's personality.
   It becomes another enduring record of faith and devotion.
   It is a growing investment in property.
   It is a friend to have when wanted and to put aside when weary -
      And a friend of great charm to introduce to other friends.

Our function as a stamp dealer is to assist in forming such a collection. We must make the stamps available. We must price them competitively. We must produce them in fine to very fine condition.

Beginners are more in need of our help than experienced collectors. This is why we have arranged our 14 series of approvals of used sets. We pay the postage both ways. There is no obligation to buy.

Would you like to see the 1st series?

Marshall H. Williams

Life Member of COROS No. 18
98 East Rock Road              New Haven 11, Conn. 06511
The subject of these stamps is unique: a reproduction of a miniature from the Rabula Codex on the theme of Pentecost. This Codex is in the Laurentian Library at Florence, Italy, (catalogued MS (Syriac) 56), and is also called the "Syriac Book of The Gospels" as it contains the Syrian text of the Gospels. It was edited by Rabula, a monk at the Monastery of St. John (Zagba, Mesopotamia) in 586. The miniatures it contains were not, however, painted by Rabula but appear from a study of the design and coloring to have been the work of various miniaturists (possibly two) at different periods.

The miniatures are to be found at the beginning of the Codex on pp 1-14 verso; it should, however, be remembered that they follow the order of the Syriac script, that is, from right to left, and that, therefore, in terms of the way we open a book the text commences at the end of the manuscript. These miniatures are not themselves originals, but are probably copied from a Greek original that had been influenced by the Asiatic and Oriental art forms cultivated in the monasteries.

The miniature of Pentecost appears last on p 14 verso and completes the cycle of great miniatures, set in geometrical frames such as the vault under which the figures appear on these stamps. It was first reproduced as plate XXIV in the "Bibliothecae Mediceae-Laurentiae at Palatinus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Catalogus" (1742), published by S. E. Assemani. Ten years later it was issued by A. M. Biscioni in "Bibliothecae Mediceae-Laurentiae Catalogue" as plate XXVI, and then by R. Garrucci in his "History of Christian Art" (1876) as plate CXL 2, subsequently appearing in various art books and encyclopedias, and now has for the first time been reproduced in the form of a stamp.

The miniature is probably very old and the quality of the colors is excellent, whereas the coloring on the stamps lacks depth and the design not very clear. Above the design the stamps carry the legend "Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II" (Second Ecumenical Vatican Council).

The design represents the descent of the Holy Spirit as narrated in Chapter 2 of Luke's "Acts of The Apostles": While the Apostles had gathered with Holy Mary at Jerusalem for the last supper, the Holy Spirit descends on each of these present in the form of a tongue of fire.

This is why we see this fiery symbol above the heads of each of the thirteen persons (the twelve Apostles, including Matthias who had already been elected to replace Judas Iscariot, and the Holy Mother). The Virgin Mary is in the center of the group and it is important to note that above her head, in addition to the tongue of flame, there hovers a white dove, symbol of the divine nature of the Holy Spirit, by virtue of which Holy Mary conceived Jesus in her virgin womb. Moreover, her head is not surrounded by a halo similar to that of the other Apostles, but is bathed in a white aura of light (which is actually barely visible). This stamp therefore has a Marian significance of the highest order. The Apostles are gathered in four groups of three.

Unfortunately, these details are barely visible on the stamp and the other qualities of the miniature are therefore lost to us, i.e., the influence of Syria and Palestine on Byzantine iconography, an influence that decisively modified artistic trends. In any case, this is the first appearance of a scene that will be repeated time and again in later centuries.

In view therefore of the artistic importance of this miniature, it was most appropriate that the Italian Post Office should choose this subject to illustrate a thought previously expressed by the late Pope John XXIII. Indeed, Pope Paul VI, in a prayer composed by him for the Ecumenical Council, appeals to the Holy Spirit to repeat "in our time such miracles as a new Pentecost." It would doubtless have added to this series if, as someone has suggested, one of these phrases or something similar had been incorporated into the design of these stamps.

... Alfonso Bassan, P.I.M.E. ...

This article appeared in the Jan-Feb. 1963 issue of the Italian "CABRIEL", Avv. Nicola Berardi, Editor. Translation was obtained through the assistance of Raymond E. Dealy, Washington, D. C.
Sister M. Alonza, F.S.P.A.

Many nations have issued stamps to commemorate Mother's Day as the spirit of the idea spread throughout the world.

Julia Ward first suggested an observance of Mother's Day in 1872. In 1904 Frank E. Her- ing of South Bend, Indiana, launched a campaign for it. In 1907 Anna Jarvis, of Philadelphtia, Pennsylvania, initiated efforts for a nation-wide observance. On May 8, 1914 President Wilson signed the resolution for National observance, and the following year proclaimed that the second Sunday in May would be observed nationally as "Mother's Day."

Austria, with its firm Christian background, naturally sought a motif which would be closely allied to the topic—the loveliest of Mothers—to honor each individual mother. Like many countries of the Old World, Aus- tria glories in immortalizing great artists by reproducing their masterpieces on post- age stamps. One of the old masters, regarded by reliable critics as Germany's most famous artist, Albrecht Dürer (Duerer), was the son of a goldsmith, painter and engraver. The younger Durer was born at Nürnberg, Germany, on May 20, 1471, and died there April 6, 1528.

One of his best-known works, now in the historical Imperial Art Mu- seum in Vienna, Austria, is his "MARY WITH THE HALF PEAR," and it is this painting which was selected by Austria in 1936 for its Mother's Day commemoration stamp.

The painting portrays the Madonna holding the Child Jesus, who clasps in His chubby baby fingers what seems to be less than a half-pear—possibly the last bite of a delicious one—and accounts for the title given it by the artist, "Madonna With the Half Pear."

A special postal cancellation was also authorized, as shown on the illustration. The "Nuttertagasseifer" means "Mother's Day Observance."

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MARIAN PHILATELIST

Andrij D. Solczanyk, Chester, Pennsylvania, informed us of the above special souvenir label sheet issued for the 5th Philatelic Exposition by the Philatelic Group of St. John Baptist at St. Adrian de Beso, held June 23-29, 1955. The sheet depicts the present Church of St. John the Baptist and the many statues enshrined in this church. On the bottom of the sheet are "Purisima," "Virgin of The Pillar," "Virgin of the Holy Spring," and "Virgen of Remedio."
HOW TO MOUNT A THEMATIC COLLECTION

By Rev. F. De Troyer

The thematic collection is beginning to be recognized as a true philatelic collection. If this does not always succeed, the fault lies with the same thematic collectors who at times do not understand well the meaning of a "thematic collection," or have not presented it in correct form.

Every International Exposition patronized by FIP (International Federation of Philately) presents two sections: a classical section and a thematic section. The awards are the same for both. But the reports of the judges always reveal a small number of thematic collections, and many of the collectors who participate in these competitions do not understand why their collections are not awarded the coveted prize.

However, if one visits such thematic expositions one is able to justify the judges' decisions because, in effect, many thematic collections are presented without some plan; others are adorned with much design; others lose themselves in an enormous quantity of non-philatelic items such as photos, press clippings, etc. The saddest of all is that many of the collections have in the background sufficient material to make it a truly interesting collection, but the collectors do not understand how to mount it.

It is certain that each collector should be able to collect as he pleases, but it is also certain that each collector should at least try to mount a collection so that it will be deserving of the name "thematic."

For this reason I am induced to give the readers of this excellent philatelic magazine some indications which are the fruit of my discussions with qualified persons about the international rules of thematic collections, and also my own personal experiences in this field.

I. DEFINITION OF A THEMATIC COLLECTION.

In general, a thematic collection is a collection which has as its base and foundation not the classification of postage stamps by countries, or dates of issue, but the image depicted on the stamps. The international regulation approved by FIP, FIPC, and the International "GABRIEL" movement admits three classes or species of thematic collections.

(1) The collection of subjects or motives.

This type has as its base the subject which the stamps depict or the proper end of their emission. It consists of a simple juxtaposition of stamps which will be included if they have some affinity, some bond, or some link. Besides this interior affinity, no titles, no explanatory annotations are necessary.

In this category fall all such collections as "Red Cross," "Europe," "Exploration of Space," also collections of flowers, animals and other subjects which do not necessitate other arrangements except that of countries, alphabetical or otherwise.

It is obvious that such collection is not able to compare with the collection properly called "thematic" (refer to number 2), because these do not involve study of any kind. Until there are specialists who want, for this same reason, to have them represented among the specialized classic collections.

And here already we find one of the reasons for which many collections do not obtain the desired prize: because they are inferior to the properly called thematic collection, although they have the same subject, and because no profound study is involved even though they may have all the pertinent stamps.

(2) A Proper Thematic Collection.

This is a collection mounted by following a determined plan and an idea conveying a theme inspired by the subject of the stamp. The thematic collection develops a "theme", presents a thesis, and therefore is necessarily accompanied by explanatory texts. It is on this type, on a par with the most advanced, that we will expound our ideas and give our advice.
(3) A Didactic Collection.

This is a proper thematic collection which constitutes a profound study of a determined subject, of a theme, by means of postal stamps and other probationary elements. It studies a subject, develops a theme in all its details, and has educative character.

It is understood that it is not always easy to distinguish between a thematic collection and a didactic collection, but one thing is certain: The judges do not accept an excess of photos or other non-philatelic elements, nor texts excessively long. One is able to have, therefore, a collection in which a principal is collected by a wrong road.

II. THE THEMATIC COLLECTION.

(a) The Theme: Before beginning a collection, and certainly before mounting the first stamp in our collection, we should have a clear and precise idea and a determined concrete plan. This is the essential element of a thematic collection because a thematic collection is "a thesis defended by means of the postage stamps." This thesis, which must be the idea conveyed, directs the bond between all the different pages of our collection. Our plan should be logical and well oriented in form so that one is not lost in following the road in its evolution.

For members of GABRIEL this thesis must be a religious idea. The study and development of this idea will be for us a spring of personal edification and a medium of modern apostolate: The Gospel, the History of the Church, the veneration of the Holy Virgin, the Liturgical Year, the Lives of the Saints, and such other themes which enrich our spiritual life. To show our collection to our friends, and above all to exhibit it in Expositions, will radiate this idea all around us. A missionary in Tunis wrote me: "Our students collect nearly all the stamps they get their hands on, but those which have a Christian motive are used as an object for an exchange of ideas." Who is able to measure the effect of a beautiful collection of religious stamps presented at an Exposition in a non-Christian country?

(1) The theme should indicate the logical bond between the stamps assembled.

A collection of the Virgin classified by countries, or by the size of the image, is not a true thematic collection.

A collection of "The Lives of The Saints," on which is given a brief biography of each saint, will not become a true thematic collection if it lacks one general idea which unites all the pages of the collection; for example, "The Saints are the reflection of the Life of Christ" -(a) In their union with the Father (such or such saint); (b) In their love for their fellow-man (such or such saint), etc.

For the "Liturgical Year" it is not enough to collect, one beside the other, the Feasts of the year, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc., if we fail to bind these Feasts into an idea. For example, the Christ who lives in His Church, or something similar.

(2) The theme should be developed in logical order.

The theme must be developed as a true thesis in a manner to admire so that those who see our collection should inevitably be able to say, "in fact, this certainly is clear."

a). Almost always the theme should have its subdivisions and these should be presented in a logical connection and in such a manner that the general plan appears with clarity. If we select, for example, the theme "Christ, Child of God, made man," we should not talk a little of His miracles, a little of His sermons, or a little of other items; but, for example, Jesus is the Son of God because (1) The miraculous signs of His birth; (2) Because His miracles demonstrated His Divine character; (3) His sermons are proof of a wisdom superhuman, inspired; (4) By His death; (5) By His resurrection; etc.

b). The theme should not see itself weakened by digressions which will carry too far afield. Thus, for example, in a Marian Collection we should not see flowers which scarcely from afar are able to insinuate themselves to the Virgin; to illustrate the Creation it is not necessary to find all the possible animals on the stamps of the world.

c). It is desirable that all the parts of our thesis be more or less of the same length and have more or less the same importance. This nevertheless depends, naturally, on much of the same theme.

MARIAN PHILATELIST

May 1, 1964
3). The thematic collection should explain the stamps and philatelic points by means of a reduced text.

(Article 7 of the International Regulation.) This explanation ought to be authentic and free of errors. We note that a thematic collection necessarily has to be always incomplete because we do not possess always the pertinent stamps in their entirety, or they do not even exist. Therefore only incidentally we should be able to talk, for example, of a Pope, of a Saint, of whom we do not possess some stamp; nor should we give titles to the Blessed Virgin which we are not able to endorse by means of stamps or postmarks.

For Expositions it is indispensable and almost obligatory to have a first page which announces the general plan of our collection, the diverse subdivision of our thesis, with an indication of the pages they occupy.

I give the following as an example of the theme of my Marian Thematic Collection:

General Title: The Blessed Virgin, Queen of The World

1. The Life of the Blessed Virgin, terminating in apogee in the Coronation in the Heavens (95 pages).
2. Titles or advocations which the Christian people give to Mary; for example, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Peace (53 pages).
3. Many countries have elected Mary as Patroness, such as Hungary, Poland, where She is Patroness and Queen (65 pages).
4. The Christian people have venerated Mary in innumerable places of pilgrimage (115 pages.)
5. Collection of special motive: The Abbey of Orval as place of pilgrimage (90 pages.)
6. Christian artists who have dedicated to Mary the greater and most beautiful part of their creation (80 pages.)
7. In all the world there have been constructed churches, a veritable crown of homage to the Mother of God (125 pages).

Total 628 pages.

As the theme is most personal in our collection, it is well that we do not copy the theme of others except that which will inspire and illustrate the mode of work.

If the foregoing appears to my readers a little severe and exacting, do not forget that its sole end is that of stimulating you to give life to your collection and radiate around it the ideas which live in your heart.

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Father De Troyer is parish priest of St. Blas (O. V.L) Belgium, and has the following titles and duties, which substantiate his expertise in the matter of his article: Charge of the Press of the World Union of St. Gabriel, Member of the Academy of St. Gabriel, Member of the Commission of Contact FIP-FIPCO - GABRIEL, Member of the Thematic Commission of FIP. His collection, referred to in the article, was awarded gold medals in Buenos Aires, TENEK 61, Melusina-Luxembourg 1963, and Istambul-Turkey 1963.

Father De Troyer has also stated that a catalogue is not a manual of thematic collecting but should simply enumerate most completely all the stamps which merit the name "Marian," and validate itself by enumerating these by country, date of issue, or groups of Marian intensity.

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(The foregoing article appeared in issue No. 9, 1964, of GABRIEL LATINOAMERICANO, Bogota, Colombia, edited by Rev. Father Ricardo Struve Haker. We felt it would be of assistance to our members, particularly to those just beginning a collection, and with the cooperation of Father Struve Haker and Father De Troyer are able to print it here.... Editor.)

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MARIAN PHILATELIST

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May 1, 1964
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MONASTERY OF OUR LADY OF LA RABIDA
Spain: Scott Nos. C31-35, C43-44

This Franciscan Monastery, situated near Palos in Andalusia, appeared on the low values of the Columbus airmail stamps issued in 1930. The name "Rabida" derives from an Arabic word meaning "hermitage."

This Monastery is of historical interest. Tradition has it that in ancient times it was a pagan shrine, and after Constantine's conversion became a sacred place for Christians. Being located on a low hill in an isolated area close to the sea, it was frequented by hermits long before there was a monastery on the spot. No one really knows who founded the actual Monastery or when it was established. Legend is that St. Francis founded it while the Moors still held that section of Spain. But it is certain that it was given to the Templars following Moorish expulsion and held by them until suppression of their order in 1311. It was then taken over by the Franciscans who tended it until driven out by the Monastery Dissolution Act of 1835. The abandoned buildings fall into ruin, even being used as stables.

The decision to commemorate and celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus aroused interest in this Monastery and it was restored to the condition it was in when Columbus found it a haven of rest and hope. At its restoration in 1924 the Franciscans were again given charge of it.

The historical significance lies in the fact that when all scientists turned their back on Columbus and his "new theory", it was to this Monastery he came, in the early part of 1492. Turned down by kings and fellow-scientists, and having no place to go, he came to La Rabida. Some day he came for free lodgings; others say he came to consult a monk cartographer he had known in Portugal. Prior Juan Perez listened to Columbus, and became an enthusiastic supporter of the "new theory." Father Perez was a favorite with Queen Isabella. Urging Columbus to remain as guest at La Rabida, he went to urge the Queen to reconsider Columbus' plea for support. A cloister is still pointed out as the place where Columbus paced anxiously awaiting news from Father Perez. The rest is history: Columbus did have another audience with Isabella and she gave her support.

The Monastery buildings date from the 14th century and are famous for the beautiful Mudéjar Cloister. The whole monastery was restored in 1929, and a monument consisting of a tall column bearing a globe was erected to commemorate the Fourth Centenary of Columbus' voyage.

...Mr. & Mrs. F. H. Benjert....

Volume 5 of THE MARIAN ERA contains an article on "Our Lady of Philately", with 125 stamps illustrated. Pamphlets enclosed.

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