NEW ISSUES


BELGIUM: (A-6 Category) Released Aug. 3, 1964 in commemoration of the liberation of the Port of Antwerp by Belgian Resistance in September of 1944. The 6+3F value has in the background the tower of the NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL of Antwerp.

BELGIUM: (A-1 Category) Souvenir sheet issued Sept. 19, 1964, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the death of the artist Roger Van Der Weyden (Rogier de La Pasture). Design reproduces this artist's painting of THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. Illustration and article on page 73.

FRANCE: (A-3 Category) Issued June 13, 1964. Scott #1102. CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF HAUT- RONCHAMP, designed by Le Corbusier. Illustration and article on page 74.

FRANCE: (A-6 Category) Issued Aug. 24, 1964 commemorating the Strasbourg Liberation. The Strasbourg Cathedral dedicated to Our Lady is on the right in the stamp design.

PANAMA: This country has issued an overprint of the souvenir sheet for the Ecumenical Council, obliterating the "de 1962-1963" and printing below it "1964" in orange. The churches depicted on this souvenir sheet are: St. Patrick's, New York; Notre Dame, Paris; Cathedral of Panama; St. Peter's, Rome; St. Paul's Cathedral, London; and Moscow Cathedral.

Also released were six stamps overprinted "1964" in orange, and depicting the Cathedral of Panama; St. Paul's Cathedral, London; Milan Cathedral, Italy; St. Peter's, Rome; St. Patrick's, New York; and Patriarch's Church, Istanbul, Turkey.

The release date of the souvenir sheet and stamps has not yet been ascertained. The Milan Cathedral has the MADONNINA on the highest spire.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Released Aug. 31, 1964, an imperf. sheet, depicting a 5 Kcs. stamp, with the design reproducing a view of Hradcany Castle in Prague as seen from Charles Bridge. The stamp itself is not valid for postage when removed from the sheet.

Also released at the same time was a postage stamp, reproducing a view of the Prague castle.
from the Vltava embankment, also showing portion of the Charles Bridge.

Father Horn tells us it is his opinion a MADONNA in miniature appears on both, but further research is being made.

***

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

AUSTRALIA: To be released in November, the 1964 Christmas stamp, 5d value. Design will be that of a child looking at a NATIVITY SCENE.

NORFOLK ISLAND: 1964 Christmas stamp will be same as that of Australia.

LIECHTENSTEIN: 3-stamp Christmas issue, due Dec. 9th. The 1.30 franc value will depict a MADONNA.

MALTA: Additional information on this 1964 Christmas issue, scheduled for release in November, indicates the design will be a modernistic NATIVITY SCENE with the Star of Bethlehem in the upper right.

***

MARIAN POSTAL CANCELLATIONS

BELGIUM:


31. Same as #30 except in French.

Nos. 28 and 29 received from Rev. Father Hechtermans; Nos. 30 and 31 from Rev. Father De Troyer, both of Belgium.

FRANCE:


PHILIPPINES:

REPUBLIC OF CONGO:
1. Leopoldville. Feb. 1, 1964. SEDES SAPIEN-
The MARIAN PHILATELIST

TIAE. "10th Anniversary Lovanium University, Republic of Congo."

TURKEY:


ILLUSTRATIONS

Belgium #28

Belgium #29

Belgium #30

France #12

France #13

Republic of Congo #1

November 1964
Following are Marian postal cancellations included in the checklist in the May 1963 issue but not previously illustrated:

BRAZIL: #2

The description in the checklist states "Cross of Thorns," but this should read "Crown of Thorns." Inscription within crown of thorns reads "I am established in Zion."

FRANCE: #5

Although date on this is "1964" it is similar to #5 in checklist.

CARMELITE COAT-OF-ARMS ON SPAIN, SCOTT #1105

Verification has been obtained from Rev. Fr. Isaac de Santa Teresa, OD, Seville, Spain, that the two shields on the facade of the Church of San Jose de Avila are the coat-of-arms of the Discalced Carmelites. The photograph better illustrates the facade and the shields.

SCOTT CATALOG NUMBERS FOR RECENT ISSUES

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THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

BASEL'S SPALENTOUR STAMP - SCOTT #390

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

I was interested in reading Frank Flaschner's piece on Basel's Spalentor's stamp, but the fact which puts the stamp so very definitely into the Marian class isn't mentioned. Sometime during the end of the last century the prevalent anti-Catholic feeling in Basel went so far as to have passed an ordinance that called for the removal of the Madonna statue from the Spalen Gate. As one can see from both the 50c stamp, and the enlarged photo with the article, this statue is only about 30 feet above the ground and about six from the gate-top.

And yet, each of the several attempts to take the statue down ended in failure. The first time, a rung of the ladder broke; another time two or three workmen tumbled or slipped while ascending. Finally, it was decided to leave the Madonna where it had been placed generations before. This was told to me by my mother who lived there at the time; later verified by several other reliable people. It's queer that when the intent was simply to remove the statue, all this happened, yet when the intentions were to place the original in the Basel Museum and put another up in its place, nothing at all happened!

Sincerely,
Ernest A. Kehr
New York Herald Tribune

SPANISH LOCAL ISSUE OF ALHAMA
Galvez Nos. 29-34A

Jozef Pesters, Bevel, Belgium, tells us these are Marian stamps. The text printed over the tower-like building reads "Ianua Coeli, Ave Maria, Gratia Plena." (Gate of Heaven, Hail Mary, Full of Grace.)

****

Rev. Father Pius F. Abraham, OFM, of St. Joseph's Seraphic Seminary, Callicoon, New York had his entry on "My Favorite Stamp" selected for publication by the American Philatelic Society. His selection was LA IMMACULADA in the Spanish Zubarlan set, and the article was published in the July 1964 issue of "The American Philatelist," page 763.

****

Sister M. Alonza, FSPA, has written us that she is now recuperating at Villa St. Joseph, R #1, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 54601. We know many of her philatelic friends will be pleased to know this.

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

November 1, 1964
Mrs. Teofila Garcia, of Manila, recently supplied us with a first day cover and a souvenir album issued on the occasion of the inauguration of the Cathedral on December 8, 1958. The following was extracted from the souvenir album:

Out of the rubble of the Second World War has risen the reconstructed Manila Cathedral. To be inaugurated today, December 8, 1958, the Manila Cathedral will stand once more as a dominant landmark of Catholic Philippines.

The history of the Manila Cathedral is, in one sense, parallel to the history of the city: a fascinating chronicle of birth and death and rebirth. For the Cathedral grew up with the city, although the city was founded ten years earlier by Legaspi in 1571, while the Cathedral was built by Bishop Domingo Salazar, O.P., in 1581. Since then, as the city met disasters, natural or man-made, the Cathedral fell - only to rise once more.

Under Archbishop Miguel de Poblete’s direction a new structure was planned, and completed in 1662. For two centuries it stood, a true rock of Faith so it seemed, until the earthquake of June 3, 1863 toppled it. The last reconstruction prior to the present was in 1879; this resisted nature’s onslaught, but in the Battle of Intramuros, in February 1945, modern weapons reduced it to heaps.

In 1963 Archbishop Rufino J. Santos of Manila initiated the Cathedral’s rebuilding. The work is the crowning achievement of Filipino Architect Fernando Ocampo. It is the concrete fruit of generosity from many quarters - Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, American, as well as Filipino.

Cognizant of the Manila Cathedral’s vital bearing on the religious life of our people, the Bureau of Posts is issuing a commemorative stamp depicting the new edifice. On the stamp’s upper right side is a vignette of THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, Patroness of the Cathedral. In 5-centavo denomination, the stamp was designed by philatelic designer, Nemesio Dimanlig, Jr.

****

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THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

November 1, 1964
BELGIUM:  THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS  by Roger Van Der Weyden  
W. J. Hoffman

A souvenir sheet was issued to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of the Flemish artist, Roger Van Der Weyden (1399-1464), also known as Rogier de La Pasture, or Pastour. The stamp, perforated, reproduces his masterpiece, THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS: Father HORN tells us there are several examples of this work, and he has been informed that the one used on the stamp is at the Escorial Palace.

Roger Van Der Weyden was born in Tournai, and this city was selected as the place for the first day cancellation, September 19, 1964. On close examination the cancellation appears to have a three-quarters view of the artist. Some biographers state his date of birth as "c1399," while others show "1400?" He studied goldsmithing but because of a talent for painting was apprenticed to the painter Robert Campin in 1427, and was admitted to the Guild of St. Luke in 1432 as a master painter.

He did some traveling, visiting Italy in 1449, spending time in Rome and Ferrara, and admitted to being impressed by the Italian masters and their works. He did some commissioned works while in Italy, but retained his Flemish style. He is credited with being the founder of the Brabant school of painting.

His works, extremely popular during his lifetime, express a deep sense of religious mysticism and many of them reflect a religious fervor tinged with sadness. One of his biographers said, "his works express the extraordinary gravity of Christian life."

As a matter of interest, the other paintings in the group of "four most moving," are as follows: "The Entombment," "The Last Judgment," and "The Seven Sacraments."

(Apraisal extended to Rev. Father De Troyer, St. Blasius-Boekel, Belgium, who forwarded to us the first day cover illustrated with this article.)

****

AWARDS: It is a pleasure to extend congratulations to the following award winners:

COLOMIA '64:  Rev. Father Hechtermans, Louvain, Belgium awarded a Bronze medal for his exhibit of postal cancellations depicting the Marian Story: Her Life and Veneration.

Jozef Peeters, Bevel, Belgium, awarded a Bronze medal and special prize for his deep study of the theme "Refugium in Bello," (Our Lady, Refuge in wartime.)

SPAIN:

Antonio Benet awarded a Gold medal at the Burgos Exposition, together with the Grand Award, for his collection of stamps of the Marian theme. And in Barcelona's International Fair Exhibit was awarded first prize for his exhibit representing the Philatelic Group, which included a total of 1800 stamps of the Marian Theme. This latter is both a personal and group gratification to Senor Benet.

***

THE MARIAN PHILATELIST  
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November 1, 1964
FRANCE: CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE HEIGHT - RONCHAMP

This chapel is due to the talent of Le Corbusier. The old building had been destroyed in 1944 during the battles of the Liberation. The origin of the Marian cult goes back to antiquity. According to tradition, on a hill of "Notre Dame du Haut" rose an ancient temple of idols; in a period subsequent, according to the prediction of St. Farrel and St. Ferjeux, in the region of Besancon, this temple would have been replaced by a chapel dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The prediction served to rally all the neighboring peoples in the practice of the new cult.

There is no cause to be surprised at finding the cult of The Virgin on this mountain since antiquity. The cult came about through a church dedicated to "The Nativity of The Virgin," (Sept. 8th), and which served as the parish church of Ronchamp until 1741. In 1737 the Archbishop issued a decree for the inhabitants to build a new parish church since the old church was in a state of ruin, and, what is more, its location was on a high mountain which was inconvenient and impractical a good part of the year. The new church was constructed in the village, however, the devotion continued at Notre Dame du Haut. On August 30, 1913 the chapel was, unfortunately, destroyed by a storm. Reconstructed in 1924, it was again destroyed in 1944.

Le Corbusier, when requested to build the chapel, refused at first but taken by the beauty of the site, by the challenge it presented, and by the spiritual grandeur of the enterprise, he accepted and began work. In 1951 the plans were approved. On the day of consecration, Le Corbusier said, among other things, "In building this chapel, I have wanted to create a place of silence and of prayer, of peace and of inner joy; the holy sentiment animates our work." This chapel is criticized sufficiently, above all by the partisans of the old school. Personally, I have gone there, Monsieur AbbeZone writes, and truly it is a place of prayer.

(Translated from the September 1964 issue of CERCLE PHIATELIQUE ST. GABRIEL of Belgium, Rev. Father J. Volkaerts, Editor.)

BELGIUM: CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF SABLON, BRUSSELS - Scott No. B-616

This 1957 issue, with a surtax for anti-tuberculosis work, bears the inscription "Infantin Isabella Brussel 1615," and in the foreground pictures a royal lady at a King's hunt; to the left is a Spanish crossbow with two crossed swords, and in the background is the CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF SABLON, in its earlier gothic phase. The Cross of Lorraine in the upper right signifies the purpose of the issue.

The postal administration titles this stamp as "Grand Serment de Bruxelles," (The Great Oath of Brussels), and commemorates an event from 1615. Each year the crossbow marksmen of the "Grand Serment" shot the king's bird from the tower of the Sablon Church. On May 15, 1615, Infanta Isabella attained the championship shot and became the Champion Queen; this occasion was observed with great festivities and a splendid procession.

Originally the Church of Sablon was a Military Church of the Gendarme Corps, the Grand Serment of the crossbow marksmen under the supreme command of the magistrate of the city of Brussels. In 1450 the Grand Serment was incorporated to include royalty and commoners, thus all important families were represented, and placed under the guardianship of the Church of Sablon. The name "Sablon," or "Zavel," means "fine sand," and was given to the church because of its location near the target place of the crossbow marksmen and the sandpits.

The church was founded in 1304 by John II of Brabant and was dedicated to Our Lady. The edifice is a charming monument of Gothic architecture, and was erected in three eras: the choir and north transept, 1435, in early gothic style; the main aisle and the two side aisles, in high gothic, about the middle of the 15th century.

After the surrender in 1348, Lady Baet Soethens of Antwerp brought a statue of Our Lady to Brussels and it was placed in the new church. The statue was called "Our Lady of the Stick or Pillar," and portrayed Our Lady seated with the Christ Child standing on her knee. The statue was brought to Brussels on a barque over the river Senne, and the motif of the barque of Our Lady is repeated in much of the stone-mason work of the church. After the installation of THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

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of the statue in the church, pilgrims flocked to Sablon and it was soon necessary to build a larger church.

In 1560 iconoclasts burned the churches, including furniture and wood statues. The glass paintings burst into fragments. Only the glass windows of the famed St. Gudule Church of Brussels could be removed and thus were spared. The church then received new renaissance furnishings, but this fell victim to the French Revolution. At present the church functions in a rather barren exterior.

Of the many chapels in the Church of Our Lady of Sablon, the most interesting to the pilgrims is the chapel containing the statue of OUR LADY OF SABLON, to which devout pilgrimages are made.

(Translated from the March 1958 issue of the German GABRIEL, by Mr. & Mrs. Frank Banjert.)

**CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN, Velasquez**

*Spain: Scott #899*

The idea of the Coronation of Mary in Heaven after Her Assumption lodges in the words, "Come, my bride, from Lebanon ... thou shalt be crowned..." (Song of Songs 4:8). Probably the earliest extant example of this theme is the mosaic in the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, dating to about 1140; it portrays Our Lady already crowned and sitting at the right of Her Divine Son.

About a century later came the more familiar design of Christ placing the crown on His Mother’s head. The theme was also a great favorite among English medieval carvings, and was used extensively in the embroideries which hung as wall decorations at the time, reaching its peak during the Renaissance period.

Several great artists have used this theme and among them must be included Diego de Silva Velasquez (1599-1660). In 1599, as a "Day of The Stamp" issue, Spain issued a series of postage stamps honoring this native son who rose to artistic fame. As a design for the 1 pta. value, his painting of "CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN" was used. The Virgin Mary is seated on a throne at the foot of the Trinity, eyes lowered in humility in anticipation of the moment of coronation. Small angels hold the mantle and float about and under Her, as though having just escorted her on a cloud into heaven. The crown, a circlet of roses, is held by both God the Father and God the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a resplendent dove above the crown, sheds rays of brilliant light on the participants.

King Philip IV commissioned Velasquez to do this painting, the exact date, however, is not known, as is the case with many of this artist's works. Measuring about 70 x 53 inches, it is now in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

*****

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November 1, 1964
On March 24, 1962, for Stamp Day, Spain issued a series of stamps depicting the works of Francisco de Zurbaran; three of these belong in a Madonna collection.

The 2.50 pta. value (1101) is known under various titles: "Virgin of Grace," "Madonna of The Rosary," "Virgin of Mercy." The complete painting includes two Mercedarian Monks gazing prayerfully at the flower-bedecked head of Our Lady, who wears the badge of the Order about her neck. Approximately 5½ x 5 feet, the canvas was painted in 1638, and presently is in the collection of the Duke of Montpensier in Madrid, in the Palace San Telmo. Two copies exist: one in the Gardner Museum in Boston and the other in the Lozaro collection in Madrid.

The 5 pta. value (1103), "The Virgin Child," was painted in 1632. The canvas, approximately 3-3/4 x 3 feet, is now in the New York Metropolitan Museum.

The 10 ptas value (1104), "La Immaculada," was painted in 1632. The canvas, approximately 6½ x 4-2/3 feet, is now in the Museum Carralba in Madrid.

Francisco de Zurbaran (1598-1662) received his art education in the school of Juan de Roelas at Seville, and based his style on that of Caravaggio. He first attracted notice with his series of pictures of the life of St. Peter, which he painted for the St. Peter's Chapel in the Seville Cathedral.

SPAIN: MONASTERY OF SANTA MARIA OF POBLET - Scott Nos. 1155-1158

In 1963 Spain issued a series of stamps commemorating this Cistercian Monastery, referred to as the "El Escorial of Aragon and Catalonia." It does bear a resemblance to the El Escorial, and was in the process of being built when Philip II visited it in the spring of 1564. He spent Holy Week there, and history records that he asked a great many questions concerning the building, and that on his return to Madrid he immediately commanded his architects to add a Pantheon to the Monastery of San Lorenzo of El Escorial, incorporating therein the ideas conceived at Poblet.
The Poblet Monastery was the mausoleum for the reigning monarchs of the House of Aragon, the most famous being Catherine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII. The monastery was burned to the ground in 1853, its sepulchers defiled and the statues of the kings destroyed. The monks, however, had removed the remains of the monarchs to the Cathedral of Tarragona prior to the sacking.

In 1931 Spain declared the Monastery of Poblet a national monument, and plans were initiated to restore it to its former glory. In 1940, under the direction of the Spanish sculptor, Federico Mares, reconstruction began and was completed in 1957. The remains of the monarchs of the House of Aragon were returned to Poblet in impressive ceremonies. The royal tombs, in the main chapel between pillars, hold the remains of eight kings, nine queens, two princes and ten princesses of the House of Aragon, as well as many others of royal blood. As was intended, it has become a national monument and ranks with the El Escorial on visitors' itineraries.

BOLIVIA: OUR LADY OF COTOCA - Scott #C-231
W. J. Hoffman

For one day a year a little sleepy town in Bolivia ranks with Fatima, Lourdes and Guadalupe. It vibrates with thousands of pilgrims who have come for miles on trucks, jeeps, wagons, some in a dilapidated condition; some also come on foot, and even on something which resembles a Tonerville trolley and which runs to and from the city of Santa Cruz.

December 8th is the day "Mamita de Cotoca" reigns. We know this day as the Feast of The Immaculate Conception, but in the jungle lowlands in the region of the city of Santa Cruz this is the "Feast of The Mother of Cotoca." It is indeed a "Feast." As the pilgrims gather, the area surrounding the church becomes covered with stalls, hastily assembled and composed of crates, canvas, bamboo and reed mats. In addition to the food stalls, since this is an all-night feast, religious articles are available for the pilgrims. The church is constantly full and the number of candles lit is astounding; it seems each pilgrim has saved a penny or two to light a candle to Our Lady. Music is also a means of expression and two bands vie constantly with each other to see who can produce the greatest volume of sound in honor of Our Lady, and this goes on all night.

The doors of the church are reopened about 4:30 in the morning and the pilgrims flock in, some staying the entire five hours, through ten masses being celebrated for the feast. The high point comes after the Pontifical Mass when the statue is taken down from its throne and carried in procession around the town, escorted by thousands of pilgrims and playing bands. If the pilgrims

know the words to the hymn the band is playing their voices are raised in song. After the procession the statue is placed on the church steps, and the favorite hymn and national anthem are played, after which it is returned to its niche in the church. The ceremonies are over by noon, and the exodus begins, but one hears on all sides, "we will be back next year."

The Shrine of the Virgin of Cotoca is located some 15 miles from the city of Santa Cruz, in the eastern part of Bolivia. The statue, considered miraculous, was found in the trunk of a tree by negro convicts who had fled to the wooded area for refuge. A small chapel was built to house the statue, and in 1799 Father Pedro Toledo Pimental received permission to erect a large chapel so that pilgrims could come to pay homage to Our Lady.

The statue is some 32 inches high, of wood, colorfully painted, and is beautifully dressed with a rosary circling the neck. It is encased in a beautiful shrine behind the High Altar in the church and pilgrims climb winding stairs on each side to pay homage to Our Lady. She has thus been honored by the Bolivian people for nearly 200 years; some 20,000 pilgrims visit the shrine each year. She resembles Our Lady of Copacabana in facial features. The statue was solemnly crowned in 1954.

Our Lady of Cotoca is also patroness of the army, and particularly of the Air Force. Flyers drop flowers from their planes as they fly over the Shrine.

The stamp was issued in March, 1962, commemorating the Fourth National Eucharistic Congress in Bolivia, even though the Congress had been held in 1961 in the city of Santa Cruz.

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PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS
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THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

November 1, 1964
This catalogue of Spanish Civil War Madonna Stamps is fully illustrated, most of the stamps are priced.

Not only the stamps listed in the COROS Handbook No. 1 are included, but nearly all of the known variations as well. These variations were the inevitable result of war-time conditions. They are quite fascinating, with double impressions, printing on the gum side, on both sides, inverted and transposed and double overprints, and other errors.

The Galvez Catalogue of 1959 (recently reprinted in part by his heirs) was published in the Spanish language. For accuracy and thoroughness, there is nothing to compare with it among the catalogues in other languages. Ours is the first on this subject to be published in the English language. It closely adheres to the listing in the Galvez Catalogue. With a few exceptions we have learned that prices quoted by Galvez are still realistic today.

To make these Spanish Local Madonnas available to collectors has been a real adventure. To possess as complete an inventory as we have collected has been possible only because of the aid of many friends, both here and abroad. We are obliged to make continuing efforts to replace stamps which are sold, often with much discouragement.

Our catalogue is free.

Perhaps the outstanding rarity is the 9th issue of Zaragoza. One of our friends in Madrid has written to us that some years ago Mr. Galvez told him that only 100 sets of these were issued. In the Galvez Catalogue these are priced at about $240. each. This would substantiate that statement. We have been negotiating with the owner of a few of these, who offered to sell at that price. Fortunately, he agreed to a much lower price, and we then bought 15 sets, which we now offer at $85. It seems to us that this is a real opportunity for collectors of Madonna Stamps.

MARSHALL H. WILLIAMS
Life Member of COROS No. 18
98 East Rock Road
New Haven 11, Conn. 06511

THE MARIAN PHILATELIST -78- November 1, 1964
In 1959, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Franciscans taking over the Monastery of Guadalupe, Spain issued a set of three stamps: two with views of the Monastery and the third depicting the portals of this ancient building. Ancient it is, for even though the first records date to 593, it was known prior to that. However, after the reconquest of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1493, there is nothing legendary about this great monastery on the "hidden river." The ancient wooden statue of Our Lady venerated here is said by some to go back to the time of St. Luke the Evangelist.

In 593, St. Leander went to Constantinople to seek help from the emperor for the Catholics of his region, and while there he became a close friend of St. Gregory the Great. Shortly after St. Gregory became Pope, a terrible plague afflicted Rome. Pope Gregory, bearing his favorite statue of Our Lady, which he had brought to Rome with him from Constantinople, led the procession through the streets of Rome, singing litanies and petitioning deliverance from the scourge of the plague. Tradition states that as the procession wended its way, the Archangel Michael appeared over the tomb of Hadrian (since called Castel San Angelo), sheathing his sword and that the plague ceased then and there.

As was the custom when a new Pope was elected, prelates from everywhere journeyed to Rome to pay their respects to the new Pontiff. Because of a threatened attack by the Visigoths, St. Leander did not dare leave Spain, and sent in his stead his younger brother, Isidore, together with other distinguished prelates. To express his great personal friendship and affection for St. Leander, Pope Gregory sent back many gifts, and also the statue he had carried in the procession.

The Moors invaded Spain in 711, and after the defeat of Roderic, the Catholics of Spain took their precious statue of Our Lady, and the other gifts Pope Gregory had sent to St. Leander, and hid them in a mountain cave in the Guadalupe Mountains from which flowed the "hidden river," sealing up the entrance with huge stones. In the course of five centuries the location and memory of the statue became lost.

In the 13th century the statue of Our Lady was rediscovered. According to legend, a group of herders were tending their cows in the Guadalupe valley; among them was one named Gil. One of Gil's cows died and he began to skin the animal to take home the hide; after making two cuts in the shape of an "X" on the belly of the dead animal, he was startled at the apparition which stood before him. "Do not be afraid for I am the Mother of the Savior," the apparition said, and further instructed him to lift the dead animal and let it rejoin the herd, and then go to the priest of the village of Caceres and tell him to come and search the area for there would be found an ancient cave containing her image; she also said that one day on that spot would be erected a beautiful church in her honor, with people living around it in a village, and in this temple she would show her goodness and mercy.

To Don Gil's amazement, the dead cow came suddenly to life. He hurried home but on arrival found that his son had just died. Believing what he had just seen, he petitioned Our Lady to revive his son, telling her it would be much easier for him to convince the priest of the reality of the apparition if she worked this miracle, and also promising to consecrate himself to her service at the place where she had appeared to him. At this point the priest came to bury the boy, but to the amazement of all, the boy was suddenly restored to life and asked his father to take him to the place where Our Lady had appeared. The clergy looked to Don Gil for an explanation, and after telling them all that had happened he led the way to the place where he had seen Our Lady.

Arriving at the place where now stands the Monastery, they found the cave containing the wooden statue of Our Lady. Their first thought was to carry it in triumph back to Caceres, but Don Gil pointed out that Our Lady had requested him to leave it there as the place was to become a sanctuary dedicated to her. They sealed up the cave and built an altar upon which the statue was placed, calling it a "provisional hermitage." At his request, Don Gil and his family remained as guardians of the hermitage.

In 1340 Alfonso XI of Castile ordered the erection of the "Royal Monastery of Guadalupe," and the royal decree reads, "Because the little hermitage of Saint Mary ... is very small and..."
ruinous, and because the people who come there have no place to stay ... we direct that the
ermitage be made much larger in the manner of a large church which can accommodate the
people who come in pilgrimage."

In 1399 the Order of the Hermits of St. Jerome was placed in charge of the Shrine of Guada-
lupe, and they faithfully tended their charge for over 400 years, until expelled in 1835
by anti-clericalism. During their tenancy the mountain retreat echoed with the praises of
God and His Mother.

In 1908 the Franciscans took over the restored Monastery and were amazed to find there a
vast library of music, apparently considered of non-commercial value by the anti-clericals;
in this library were discovered over 250 sacred songs composed by just one monk, Friar
Manuel de Pilar, and he was only one in the long and distinguished line of Choirmasters.
Today the Monastery has a collection of sacred vestments, both for mass and for the office,
reputed to be the finest in the world. The choir stalls are masterpieces of wood carving,
et it takes very little imagination to vision the thousands of friars who resided here
during the centuries, filling the stalls and raising their voices in singing God's praises.

Cortez and most of his soldiers were from Andalusia and Estremadura and claimed Our Lady of
Guadalupe as their patroness. During one of his campaigns in Mexico he was bitten by a
scorpion, and since a scorpion bite was considered fatal, he called on his patroness to
help him; to the amazement of all, he recovered, and as a thanksgiving for this favor he
ordered to be made a large golden lamp of incalculable value and a large golden scorpion,
donating both to the Monastery. The golden scorpion now is in the Museum of the Institute
of Valencia of Don Juan, Madrid.

FRANCE: CHURCH OF OUR LADY IN DOUAI
Scott #924

This stamp was issued in 1959 commemorating the centenary of the death of Marceline Des-
bordes-Valmore.

Origin of this church dates to the 13th cen-
tury. The facade of the church shown on the
stamp dates to around 1852. The church is
renowned for its celebrated altar-piece of
Anchin, consisting of nine oak panels, re-
presenting on the outside Christ enthroned
between the Madonna and the donor, who is
being presented by his patron, St. Charlemagne,
and monks of Anchin, headed by St. Benedict.
On the five interior panels the Trinity is
seen surrounded by members of the Church
Triumphant. There are 254 figures on the
altar-piece. Although severely damaged in 1944
it has been restored. In the garden in front
of the church is a bronze statue of Marceline
Desbordes-Valmore, the poetess, who was born
in Douai in 1786 and died in Paris in 1859.

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