7-1-1966

The Marian Philatelist, Whole No. 25

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For the first time in the Christmas stamp series a religious theme will be used. Illustrated is a print of the canvas and also an official print of the proposed stamp. The design, unanimously recommended by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, reproduces a detail of Hans Memling's painting of MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ANGELS, in the Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Postmaster General O'Brien has stated, "It is entirely appropriate to the spirit of Christmas and at the same time will be a miniature reproduction of an outstanding work of art." The true colors of the painting will be reproduced on the stamp. The design was modeled by Howard C. Mildner, the vignette by Edward R. Felver, and the lettering by Kenneth C. Wiram of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

We should all write the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and/or Postmaster General O'Brien and express our appreciation for this choice.

First day cancellations may be obtained by sending addressed envelopes, together with remittance to cover the cost of the stamps to be affixed, to OFFICER IN CHARGE, CHRISTMAS, MICHIGAN 49862. A close fitting enclosure of postal card thickness should be placed in each envelope and the flap turned in or sealed. The envelope to the OFFICER IN CHARGE should indicate "First Day Covers 5c Christmas stamp. Orders must not include requests for uncancelled stamps. Requests must be postmarked no later than November 1, 1966.

NEW ISSUES

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: (Class 1)
Issued May 9, 1966, 3-stamp set with Prague Castle as theme. The 60h value, ochre and black, presents MADONNA AND CHILD from a bas-relief now decorating Prague Castle but formerly in the Church of St. George. Inscription "Relief Svtajirsky 1220" refers to the bas-relief from the St. George Church. Stamp designer was Jaroslav Svab and engraver was Bedrich Housea.

LUXEMBURG: Set of four stamps issued April 28, 1966, commemorating 300th anniversary of that country's dedication to Our Lady. Classifica-

FRANCE: (Class 8, 9). Issued February 12, 1966. St. Peter Fourier, founder of the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine of the Congregation of Our Lady, and the NOTRE DAME CHURCH, Mattaincourt where he labored 30 years, coming in 1597 as cure when it was a rundown and neglected parish. The Religious Order of OUR LADY he founded received Papal approval in 1616. He was canonized in 1897.
SPAIN: (Class 7). Issued April 27, 1966, depicting coat-of-arms of the Basque Province Vizcaya in Northern Spain. Father Pius tells us that Jose Luis Corredor informed him the stamp depicts the Church of San Anton where is venerated the image of OUR LADY OF BEGONA, PATRON OF VIZCAYA. The next issue will contain the illustrations and history of the image.

SPAIN: (Class 8). Issued March 4, 1966, MONASTERY OF GUADALUPE. See article on page 55 giving details of stamp design.

SPAIN: (Class 8). Released April 28, 1966, 80 cts. value, commemorating Sixth Centenary of the founding of the City of Guernica. Design shows CHURCH OF SANTA MARTA in Guernica. See article on page 55.


We are including these four issues in the Marian category since they are a perfect illustration of the Biblical account of "The Flight Into Egypt."

SPAIN: (Class 9). Released May 24, 1966. Showing the Spanish coat-of-arms and a Iberian lion.

VATICAN CITY: (Class 3, 4 for the 50 Lire, as miniatures; Class 2, 4, miniature 7 for the 150 Lire). Set of 6 stamps issued May 3, 1966 for the Millenium of Poland. Casimir Dabrowska was designer of the stamps. Printed on paper watermarked with Papal Keys, perforated 14 x 13-1/2. All subjects in designs had a part in Poland's history. Except for the 220 Lire stamp, all bear the Latin phrase "Millennium of Sacred Poland 966-1966." The 220 Lire carries the Polish greeting "Praised be Jesus Christ, For ever and ever. Amen." Stamps will be valid for postage until June 30, 1967. See illustrations and article on stamp subjects and Christianization of Poland on page 46. Special cancellation contains words "Shrine of the VIR-OF CZESTOCHOWA."

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ROUMANIA: Planned for an early release are stamps reproducing famous paintings in the National Gallery, Bucharest, to be in multicolors. One of the designs will be an El Greco painting THE BETHROTHAL OF THE VIRGIN. This is a most welcome addition to the philatelic life of Our Lady.

SIPEX

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Father E. De Troyer, Gold Medal in Honor Class for his "Blessed Virgin, Queen of the World." Agustin Coronado G., of Mexico City, Silver Medal for "Marian Philately," and Anne Miltz, Mexico City, Bronze Medal for "The Madonna in Art."

CONGRATULATIONS TO Antonio Benet Montagut, of Valencia, Spain, for receiving the Gold Medal at the Alcira (Valencia) Exhibit, held May 20, 1966, for his presentation, which was also judged to be the best in all sections.

FIP Boycott applied to Belgium Issue (Scott B363, Michel 1363, Yvert 1303). Stephen Sieben forwarded the latest list of the FIP Boycotts among which was the 1964 issue reproducing Roger Van der Weyden's DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. This issue should be coded X in the Catalogue of Marian Stamps.

Our thanks to Waller Sager, Editor of the COROS Chronicle, for his in-depth article on MARIAN PHILATELY in the June 1966 issue of "The American Philatelist," page 699.

Our thanks to Mr. Eugen Trauner, Augsburg, Germany, for his continued generosity in enriching our Marian Library with pamphlets, books and view cards of Churches, Shrines and works of Art in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg and England.

The March 1964 issue, page 26, carried an article on the "Adoration of the Lamb." Kay Ziegler, Editor of the FINE ARTS PHILATELIST, tells us that all panels have been reunited at St. Bavon, this occurring 1945-51, according to Tutta La Pittura di Jan van Eyck Milano: Biblioteca d'Arte Rizzoli, 1954, page 37-8. Also, Hubert Van Eyck now believed to be a myth, and the entire work done by Jan Van Eyck alone.

MONACO: The May 1, 1966 issue stated the painting by Gerard van Honthorst, reproduced on the May 1, 1966 issue, was in the Pitti Palace.
Kay Ziegler wrote us that the original is in the Uffizi Gallery. Evidently the view card in our reference file carried incorrect information.

**BEPEX:** CONGRATULATIONS to Henry Zebrowski, Harrison, New Jersey, for placing third with his exhibit "Our Lady of Philately."

**DAYPEX '66:** CONGRATULATIONS to Stephen Sieben, Skokie, Illinois, for receiving the Apfelbaum Award for his "Iberian Madonna Stamps" on K-Line Pages.

**MARIAN POSTAL CANCELLATIONS**

**ARGENTINA:**

**AUSTRIA:**
41. Vienna, May 31, 1966. MADONNA. "Stamp Exhibition of the Marianist Pupils." Special cancellation used for exhibit. The Madonna is after a mosaic in the Chapel of the Marianist Fathers, the work of academical painter Buach of Vienna.


**BELGIUM:**

**LUXEMBURG:**


**VATICAN CITY:**
2. Vatican City, May 3, 1966. No picture. "The Universal Church rejoices when the most faithful Polish Nation, assembled at the Shrine of the VIRGIN OF CZESTOCHOWA celebrates the Millenium of embracing Christian Faith." Special cancellation for first day of issue of Vatican City's Polish Millenium.

Note: Austria #42 will be illustrated in the next issue.

THE MARIAN PHILATELIST
It is regrettable that Poland's political government prohibited any national observance and the issuance of stamps to commemorate the Millenium. Pope Paul VI has often expressed his love and concern for the people behind the Iron Curtain, and even though Poland issued no stamps, Vatican City did: Set of six stamps, on the Feast Day of the QUEEN OF POLAND, May 3, 1966, in commemoration of this event.

The 15 Lire, black, engraved by Tullio Mele, portrays King Miekos I and his wife Dabrowska; at the center top is the white eagle, symbol of the Polish nation. King Miekos reigned from 962 until his death in 992. Dabrowska was a sister to the King of Bohemia.

The 25 Lire, violet, engraved by E. Donnini, presents, on the left, the Cathedral of Wroclaw, in the center is St. Wojciech, Bishop (one source identified this as St. Adalbert), after a bas-relief on the door of the Cathedral in Dniezno. This saint assisted in the Christianization of Poland, spending a part of his life in Wroclaw. He is buried in the Dniezno Cathedral, which is seen on the right in the design. (Born 956, martyred 997).

The 40 Lire, orange-red, engraved by V. Nicastri, presents the Skalka Church near Cracow, on the left, St. Stanislaus, Patron Saint of Poland, in the center, and the towers of the Cracow Cathedral on the right. St. Stanislaus suffered martyrdom in the Skalka Church and his tomb is in the Cracow Cathedral.

The 50 Lire, red-brown, engraved by E. Vangelli, has on the left the Holy Gate of Vilna, Shrine of the MATER MISERICORDIA, better known as OUR LADY OF OSTRABRAMA. A magnifying glass reveals the picture of OUR LADY above the gate. Queen Jadwiga is in the center, and the Queen Jadwiga Library is on the right. "Jadwiga" means "Servant of God." It was the marriage of Jadwiga to Jagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, which led to the Christianization of Lithuania. The marriage is recorded in the Ostrabrama. The Shrine of Ostrabrama is beloved by both the Polish and Lithuanian people.

The 150 Lire, blue-gray, engraved by Colombati, shows the tower of the Jasna Gora Shrine at the left, and in the center the famous BLACK MADONNA - QUEEN OF POLAND - OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA. On the right is the Cathedral of St. John, Warsaw. On June 24, 1966, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA was carried from Jasna Gora to this Cathedral as part of the Milenium celebration by the Polish people.

The 220 Lire, brown-red, presents Pope Paul blessing a group of Polish people which represent the Polish Nation.

THE QUEEN OF POLAND AND JASNA GORA. Christianization and Polish history are so entwined that it is difficult to separate one from the other. When we begin the history of Our Lady of Czestochowa, we begin the history of Poland. Over 450 Shrines of Our Lady existed in Poland prior to the Iron Curtain, but to every Pole the most important was JASNA GORA. It was the wish of each one to make at least one visit to this Shrine and the QUEEN OF POLAND.

Czestochowa and its famous shrine at Jasna Gora are some 120 miles southwest of Warsaw and about 70 miles northeast of Cracow. Jasna Gora received its name from the white hill or knoll upon which it is situated. The edifice is of Gothic architecture and is said to have the tallest steeple in that part of Europe.
The actual painting without frames is approximately 19 inches high, 13 inches wide and half an inch thick. The background is composed of three boards joined together. It has been renovated twice since its installation at Jasna Gora, the first time in 1430, and the second time during the reign of King John Sobieski. Its colors have not faded too much during the past centuries. It is covered with a plate of very fine silver which is engraved with incidents in the life of Our Lord and His Holy Mother, and enriched with precious jewels. It was crowned in 1726 but this crown was stolen in 1909; in 1910 Pius X presented it with its second and present crown.

The image is painted on cypress wood, and it is maintained vigorously that the wood was the top of the table made by St. Joseph for the use of the Holy Family in Nazareth. An interesting fact said to support this tradition is that within the Holy House of Loreto in Italy there is no table, but there is a plaque stating that the table was used for the painting of OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA. A tradition among the Polish people, handed down from one generation to another, tells that Our Lady sat as a model for this painting, done at the request of the very early Christians, and that it was St. Luke who painted it. Art critics agree that it is one of the oldest in existence and place it in the Roman School under Byzantine influence. OUR LADY is shown at half-figure, holding the Infant on Her left arm; the Infant holds a small board in His left hand, and His right is raised in benediction. It is a verified fact that such small boards were used as books in very ancient times.

The face of the Madonna and Child are of a deep bronze color, and it is not definitely known whether they were thus painted or whether the incense and candle smoke over the centuries darkened them, but this feature has bestowed upon it the title THE BLACK MADONNA.

Sources tracing the painting's origin and history do state that in 326 A.D. St. Helena journeyed to Jerusalem to find it. A Roman writer named Nicefar (lib 15c-14) had written, "The portrait of the Blessed Mother St. Luke painted with his own hands. While she was still alive She saw the painting and impressed into it the pleasing expression of Her countenance." St. Helena contacted the congregation of virgins, old associates of the Blessed Mother, and here she found the painting under their care. She presented it as a gift to her son Constantine in 329, who took it to Constantinople and enshrined it in a Church in that city; there it remained for 500 years. In 803 the Byzantine Emperor gave it as a wedding gift to a Greek princess who had married a Ruthenian nobleman, and the couple brought it with them to Kiev; it remained in the Royal Palace for 579 years.

The Tartars were scouring the country-side, and during one of these attacks on the Belz Castle, a Tartar arrow pierced the throat of the icon, which scar is still evident today. To protect it from further harm and possible destruction, Ladislaus Opolski, Prince of Belz, decided to move it to Oppeln in Upper Silesia, part of territory he had recently acquired. The wagon containing the Icon began this journey of 240 miles to the west, and all went well for 200 miles. When the small village of Czestochowa was reached, the horses stopped and nothing could induce them to go one step further. The Prince then decided that this was where Our Lady wished to remain; he began the building of a fortress-monastery, in the chapel of which he enthroned the Icon. To indicate the size of the edifice, it is written that it was large enough to accommodate 12,000 people. From a distance the hill or knoll on which it was built gleamed brightly due to its composition, and so the Prince named it "Jasna Gora," or "Bright Mount." On its completion the monastery was given to the care of the Basilian Monks of the Greek Rite, however, several years later the Prince gave it to the care of the Latin Rite Hermits of St. Paul, and the Pauline Fathers are still in residence at present although suffering persecution by the government.

When the Black Madonna came to Jasna Gora in 1386, Lithuania was the only pagan nation in Europe, and it was in this year that Jadwiga married Jagiello, the Prince of Lithuania. She took him to Jasna Gora and Our Lady of Czestochowa, and when he returned to his own country
he took Christianity with him, and Our Lady of Czestochowa is credited with the Christianiza-
tion of the last pagan country in Europe.

In 1430, during the Hussite War, Russian Prince Frederick Ostrogski plundered the shrine and
monastery, appropriating the Icon, but the wagon on which it was placed went but a few blocks
(about where the Church of St. Barbara stands today), then stopped. Not even the unmerciful
flaying of the horses made them move. One of the soldiers blamed the Holy Image for this and
in anger and with a curse he hurled it to the ground, breaking it into three pieces, leaving
intact only the faces of the Virgin and Child. Another soldier swung his sword and slashed
the cheek of the Virgin twice, but when he made a third swing he and his companions were
struck dead. This terrorized the rest of the plunderers, who fled, leaving the picture behind.
The pieces were taken back to Jasna Gora and put back together, however, it was impossible to
cover up the slash marks. Several attempts were made but in each instance when the paint
dried the slash marks re-appeared, and are on the Icon to this day.

On the spot where the soldier hurled the image, and where it broke, a well sprouted from the
ground miraculously. The Polish people enshrined this spot and built the Church of St. Bar-
bara around it.

Polish history mentions "The Deluge of 1655." This was the time when Poland was attacked on
three sides with such force that King John Casimir, abandoned by his noblemen, was forced to
retreat. Jasna Gora, the fortress-monastery, was surrounded but with only 200 monks and
knights resisted the siege. On Christmas Day of this year the monks, led by Prior Augustine
Kordecki, gathered before the painting and prayed for deliverance. The prayers were answered
as John Casimir returned and drove the enemies from the land. "The Deluge" thus refers to
Jasna Gora standing alone in the midst of a siege for 40 days, similar to Noah's Ark in the
Flood. In thanksgiving for this victory, King John Casimir, on May 3, 1656, proclaimed OUR
LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA as the QUEEN OF POLAND.

HOLY GATE OF VILNA - "MOTHER OF MERCY" OF OSTRA BRAMA. This is a famous Polish-Lithuanian
Shrine, or rather it was a Marian Shrine prior to the Iron Curtain. Vilna grew from a
small village to a great city, and its outer walls with nine tower gates were completed in
1522. Of the nine only one remains, that of Ostra Brama. "Ostra Brama" actually means "sharp
gate," but it was on the eastern side of the wall and therefore is often called "the Gate of
Dawn."

In the latter part of the 16th century, a painting of MATER MISERICORDIA was placed on the
wall of this eastern gate. This Madonna became the Patron Saint of Vilna and its location
on the wall a pilgrimage place. The image is painted on boards, and is some 35 inches high
and 50 inches wide, attributed to Fra Luca, done in Cracow in about the latter part of the
16th century. It shows the Blessed Virgin alone, head bent in prayer. The picture remained
on the outer wall until 1829 when the chapel over the gate was built and the picture placed
therein. Unfortunately, it is no longer a Shrine, but it is believed that the picture has
been transferred to the nearby Church of St. Teresa.

The "Holy Gate of Vilna" appeared on 1920-21 issues of Central Lithuania. MATER MISERICORDIA
was the design on a 3-stamp set of Vatican City issued in 1954, and OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA
on a 3-stamp set of Vatican City in 1956. Jasna Gora Shrine appeared on a 1936 issue of the
Polish Offices in Danzig, and on a 1937 issue of Poland.

NEW MEMBERS

Father Erich Borgs
Dr. J. E. Catudal
Sister M. Cyrilla, B.V.M.
Silvio Bento De Oliveira
Marcel Lamoureux
Perpetual Help's Boys Home
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We invite members to send in articles on Marian Philately, and share their interest
in Madonnas or Marian Churches with the membership.

THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

July 1, 1966
This year Luxembourg observes the 300th Anniversary of its dedication to Our Lady. Commemorating this occasion philatelically, a set of four stamps was issued April 28, 1966, with special Madonna and Marian cancellations. The four stamps bear the inscription "1666 Tricentenary of Our Lady of Luxembourg 1966" at the left, top and right margins. Incidentally "Luxembourg" means "strong little castle," and its native spelling is "Luxembourgh."

The 1.50 francs value, light green, shows the City's coat-of-arms and the Golden Key presented to Our Lady in thanksgiving in 1667.

The 2 francs value, light red, shows interior of the Cathedral of Luxembourg which is consecrated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

The 3 francs value, dark blue, presents the PATRONESS, CONOLER OF THE AFFLICTED, also known as OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION and OUR LADY OF LUXEMBURG. The ribbon above the image carries the inscription "Consoler of the Afflicted, Patroness of the Nation."

The 6 francs value, light brown, shows upper portion of pillar adorned with sculptured angels.

The design on the 3 francs stamp is after an engraving by Richard Collin (1617-1697) and the 6 francs stamp shows the work of artist Daniel Muller (1621). The four stamps were engraved by S. L. Harts, and will be valid for postage until further notice.

OUR LADY OF LUXEMBURG, whose Feast is June 20, is an image of the Madonna and Child, of linden wood, and only 38 inches high. It is enshrined above the High Altar of the Cathedral of Luxembourg and bears a double crown signifying Holy Motherhood and Perpetual Virginity: for Holy Motherhood She holds the Infant, and as Virgin She crushes the serpent's head. Over the right arm hangs a golden heart, a rosary, and the Golden Key presented to Her by the Governor, Philippe de Croy-Chimay. He placed Luxembourg under Her protection on October 10, 1666. In 1678 She was proclaimed "PATRONESS OF THE ENTIRE NATION." The image is among the best dressed Madonnas because of her beautiful and elaborately embroidered and bejeweled robes, and including some of the finest lace veils presented by the various famous lace-making areas in Europe.

There are two opinions as to the origin of the statue. The first states that a student from the nearby Jesuit College, which had been established in 1607, was strolling along the banks of the Alzette River outside the city walls. When he reached a place called Rocks of Crispinus he saw a statue of the Virgin and Child lodged in the hollow of an oak tree. He told this to some of his fellow students, and it was decided to take the image and place it on the altar of the college church. The next morning the image was missing from the altar, but was found, back in the tree hollow. It was returned to the church altar, however, on the following morning it was again missing, and again found in the tree hollow. From this the priests and students gathered that Our Lady was indicating a wish to remain where She had been found. A small chapel was erected on the spot and the image placed therein. It was at this time, it is said, that the image received the title "Our Lady of Consolation of the Afflicted."

A second source tells of the deep love Father Jakob Brocquart, of the Jesuit College, had for Our Lady and promoted this love among the people. At their insistence he acquired some land on the slopes of Luxembourg Fortress and there erected a cross. On December 6, 1624, accompanied by the priests and students of the college, he placed an image of the Madonna and Child on the cross. In 1625 a small chapel was built and dedicated to "Our Lady of Consolation, Consoler of the Afflicted," but it was more frequently called "The Chapel of the Glacis," the word "Glacis" meaning or referring to the slope. The Chapel was not entirely completed when in 1626 Father...
Doring views and thanks period, of OUR since 1923, called Brocquart sive 1931, and on May 10, 1626 the chapel was solemnly consecrated by the Bishop of Trier and the miraculous image enshrined.

It bears a very close resemblance to "Our Lady of Montaigu," which disappeared from that Belgian Shrine in 1579 and is believed to have been destroyed by a band of heretics called the Gueux.

Archives attest to the cures and miracles experienced at this Shrine, but that is only part of the story. In 1667 Luxemburg was invaded during a struggle between France and Spain and suffered a siege. Historical chronicles state that Our Lady's intervention prevented the mining of the walls, but the incident which is uppermost happened when the French attacked a second time but were stopped by a very sudden and very unexpected flood of water down the Alzette river. This was the event which brought about the dedication of the entire country to Our Lady, and it was at this time she received the title "OUR LADY OF LUXEMBURG." In thanksgiving, the Golden Key to the Fortress was presented, and it now hangs from Her right arm.

Luxemburg was again invaded by the French in 1795. Churches were desecrated, and the little chapel became a horse stable, finally being demolished. The image, however, had been hidden in the vault of the Church of The Immaculate Conception. Napoleon concluded a Concordat with the Holy See on July 15, 1801, which permitted religious freedom once again. The image was brought from its hiding place and put above the High Altar of the Church. Napoleon visited Luxemburg on October 10, 1804 and as part of the welcoming ceremonies the Golden Key was offered to him, but he refused it, saying "Take it back, it is already in good hands."

CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME, LUXEMBURG. The first foundation of the church was laid in 1613, and its building took eight years. On its consecration it was dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. Over the years it has been dedicated to other saints, but in 1844 it was given the name CHURCH OF OUR LADY, which it retains to this day. The alabaster for the pillars and the jasper for the altar came from Namur and Homburg, and the flagstone for the choir came from Huy. The beautiful wood carvings followed the designs of Martin the Artist, supervised and directed by the sculptor Daniel. All the townspeople participated in the building of their church, for to them it was a labor of love.

Following the French Revolution, Luxemburg became an independent state, which severed its diocesan affiliations with Trier, and its church became a Cathedral in 1870. Before long it proved to be too small, but it was not torn down, merely enlarged. In 1936 the old church did undergo an expansion. The original church became the nave of the new and larger edifice, and an extensive addition was made on the east side. The architect was Hubert Schumacher, and he has been called "a worthy successor to Father Brocquart." The general theme of the Cathedral is MARY, QUEEN. This is emphasized in the stained glass windows portraying the Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, Queen of Prophets; the Mysteries of the Rosary are also depicted. Louis Barielle of Paris was the artist, and these Marian windows have been compared to those of Chartres - but on a smaller scale.

Since 1920 a special observance has been held between the third and fifth Sundays after Easter, and over the years special Papal privileges have been given, the last in 1933. Also during this period, the special votive altar of hand-wrought iron is placed between the choir and the body of the church, the same altar presented to Our Lady on the commemoration of the First Centenary; it is the work of Mastersmith Pierre Petit who was trained at Orval Abbey.

OUR LADY OF LUXEMBURG has appeared on previous postal issues of Luxemburg, the Charity Issue of 1945, and the Notre Dame Cathedral has appeared in miniature on Luxemburg issues of 1921, 1923, 1931, 1946, 1955 and 1963.

CATALOGUE OF MARIAN STAMPS
We are most grateful for the complimentary reviews given the Catalogue in the German GABRIEL and the French publication LA PHILATELIE ChrÉTIENNE, the former edited by Father Bernhard Doring, and the latter by M. Poignant. Our thanks also to those who wrote us their comments.

THE MARIAN PHILATELIST

MARIAN PHILATELIC STUDY GROUP
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Published bi-monthly by the MARIAN PHILATELIC STUDY GROUP at 424 Crystal View Avenue West, Orange, California 92667, U.S.A. Printed by Philatelic-International Printers, at 16061 East Whittier Boulevard, Whittier, California 90601.
MEMBERSHIP DUES (Per Year in Advance): U.S., Canada and Mexico $2.00 per year, Foreign $3.00 per year.
COROB Membership $1.00, Foreign $2.50 per year.

JULY 1, 1966
A VISIT WITH STAMP DESIGNER - MR. JEAN VAN NOTEN OF BRUSSELS

A visit with a stamp designer is most interesting, particularly if the designer is Mr. Jean Van Noten, who has drawn many religious and Marian stamp designs. One may imagine that such an artist must live in a crowded room, with confusion and disorder about, but this is not the environment in this case. Mr. and Mrs. Van Noten have a spacious home and the walls are covered with valuable art treasures from the four corners of the world. Mr. Van Noten is a world traveler, on various occasions representing the Belgian Government as an artistic counsellor to international art exhibitions. He has also won many prizes for his paintings, his tapestry creations, his ceramics, his stained glass windows, etc. It was a surprise to learn that this man, who draws the miniature illustrations or designs for postage stamps, is also a famous painter! "And I am not the only one," he told us, "France, for example, has Mr. Pierre Gandon whose paintings are in many of France's museums; and the late Italian painter, Corrado Mezzana, who died in 1932, created no less than 240 stamps for Italy and later for the Vatican state. Furthermore, in proportion to the growth of popularity in thematic issues, countries are assigning the creation of their stamp designs to renowned or famous painters."

The main difficulty in stamp designing is that although the drawing may be beautiful on a large canvas, it must be reduced to a miniature and printed in one, two or, at the most, three colors. To this must be added the particular requirements of the one issuing the order. And then there are rush orders. Mr. Van Noten said that once he had but three days to successfully complete the three stamps portraying the Aerial Bridge of Berlin in 1960. Even if he spends months of work on a set of stamps, it sometimes happens that the artist may be subjected to disillusion. Sometimes the postal administration changes such or such a detail, sometimes the engraver's work lacks fidelity, or the impression is not up to the requirements with regard to the features, or the reproduction of the colors could have been much better. The past year, however, has seen a closer collaboration between these various sectors, and the most important technical progress has been achieved, with the result that at present we have postage stamps of a very high quality.

Mr. Van Noten began his stamp designing during the war, in 1942, with the Belgium winter relief set illustrating the various figures of St. Martin. The next year he designed the stamp picturing the famous SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF HAL (Sc. B367, M# 655, Y-T 638, Gl. C354). St. Martin, in fact, is venerated as the Patron Saint of this church and the illustration of the stamp reproduces the small bronze statue of this Saint which overlooks the Baptismal Font in the CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF HAL.

Following this set of twenty stamps portraying St. Martin, he did the 1943 set for the war prisoners and the 1944 series for the Red Cross from the Van Dyck paintings. For the latter he settled his choice, in addition to the Van Dyck self-portrait, on five works, all famous and all of Christian inspiration: The Good Samaritan, Christ Healing the Paralytic, St. Sebastian, The Child Jesus by the Earth Globe, and The Holy Family. Upon the completion of the sketches they were submitted for approval to the authorities, and to the general astonishment of all, they refused to accept the stamps of the Christ Child and The Holy Family, finding them looking "too Jewish!" But to the joy of Madonna collectors, the refused stamps were replaced by the well known MADONNA AND CHILD in the Munich Pinacotheque (Sc. B373, M# 661, Y-T 650, Gl. C360). The Nazis seemed to bear ill will towards these sketches, especially St. Joseph.

Mr. Van Noten smiled when relating this and said, "Did you know that the other stamp, the one no doubt which gave the impression that it was Christ and not Hitler who was ruling the world, was replaced by the stamp illus-

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trating Icarus? We were then in 1944, and the German forces, particularly the Luftwaffe, were experiencing severe losses. It was on purpose we chose from the Greek legend this illustration of Icarus, who flew so high that the sun's heat melted the wax by which his wings were fastened and he fell to his death in the sea. You can imagine the pleasure we had in having them accept the substituted drawing of Icarus."

Thus each stamp has its own story. It is not only due to the events or to the people portrayed, but even to the circumstances which brought the designer to conceive his work in such and such a manner, or in such and such a form. If one looks closer to the stamps of Belgium with this in mind, stamp collecting can become not only a most interesting hobby but also a very enriching one. For example, in 1948 Mr. Van Noten was asked to draw the set of OUR LADY OF CHEVREMONT. He went to the famous Marian Shrine on the heights near Liege. The workers were still there, on high scaffolding, rebuilding the Conventual Church of the Carmelites which had been destroyed during the war. Slowly the stamp project matured, and the artist tells us of his impression when at the end he discovered in the Pilgrimage Chapel the small statue treasured there: "An ancient cult each year brings long lines of pilgrims to this image of Our Lady—of yellow wax and old-fashioned lace, a golden crown on its head, looking at the pious visitors from its six inches of height, surrounded by paper flowers and relics of saints, under a canopy of delicious Rococo style. In my first sketches I tried to recall this little Madonna in her candy-like frame with its gold and precious stones. The design (Sc.453, Mi.833, Y-T 779, G1.C441), is the image of this miniature Madonna and Child in a silk robe with Brussels lace, bright as a lantern, a profile figure in front of the small chapel in the twilight sky."

Since then Mr. Van Noten has created many stamps with all the love and joy an artist possesses. His works are mostly for Belgium, the ex-Belgian Congo, the Republic of Congo, and also for Rwanda. With a bit of attention you will note at the bottom of many of his stamps are his initials, VN or J.V.N. of J.Van Noten. "In all," he told us, "I have drawn up to now over 250 stamps. Actually there are over 350 since often the same design is issued in different colors. This winter I have some twenty stamps to create. Can you imagine that my stamps are spread over the whole wide world, in some 250 million issues?"

(The above extracted from an article by Father Hechtermans in the December 1965 issue of MEDIA-TRICE ET REINE, and translated by Bro. Jacques Saumure, O.M.I., Notre Dame Novitiate, Richelieu, P.Q., Canada.)

ACHEL AND CHEVREMONT MARIAN STAMPS DESIGNED BY MR. JEAN VAN NOTEN


In 1948 the Fathers from Achel and Chevremont asked Mr. Jean Van Noten to prepare sketches for postage stamps which would help them rebuild their monastery badly damaged during the war. The four stamps of Achel, issued April 1, 1948, commemorate St. Benedict, the Founder of the Benedictines. During its existence the Order was reformed and many branches were thus formed, among them the Trappist who occupy the Hermitage of Achel on the border of the Belgium Limbourg Province and Holland. However, what concerns a Marian Philatelist is that one of these 1948 issues has a Marian interest: it is the 1,35 francs value depicting the Abbey (Sc.B448, Mi.817, Y-T 774, G1.C436.) As Father Henri of the Hermitage of Achel confirms, all Trappist Monasteries are primatively dedicated to the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. The Trappist constitution states, "All our Monastical churches are founded in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and are dedicated to Her." So we understand why all the Abbeys are named for Our Lady — Notre Dame de Sion, Notre Dame de Sept-Fons, etc. The official name of the Achel Monastery is OUR LADY OF SAINT BENEDICT and that of the Rochefort Abbey, OUR LADY OF SAINT REMY.

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If we look at the stamp closely we can distinguish, under the oval of the facade, a statue of the **BLESSED VIRGIN** against the wall. Mr. Van Noten conceived his sketch according to the plans for the "new Hermitage," but unfortunately the sale of the stamps did not provide sufficient funds to execute the proposed plans, therefore the buildings illustrated on the stamp have never been erected! The design portrays a Marian Church and a statue of the Blessed Virgin which existed only in the architect's plans.

**OUR LADY OF CHEVREMONT**

The four stamps of **OUR LADY OF VAUX-SOUS-CHEVREMONT** near Liege (Sc.B451-454, Mi.820-823, Y-T 777-780, G1.C439-442) are all Marian stamps, even the 65+65 centimes stamp picturing St. Begga. Indeed, after the tragic death of her spouse Ansegise, the castle of St. Begga at Chevremont, "Castellum Novum," (New Castle), was transformed into a monastery with the help of her son Pepin de Herstal and was dedicated to OUR LADY. It is this fortress converted into a monastery that is seen on the 65+65 centimes stamp. One of the most famous descendents of St. Begga, Charlemagne, expressed his faithful devotion to the "Convent St. Mary of the New Castle," which at the end of the tenth century was to be totally destroyed. The Marian cult, however, flourished once again on the Holy Hill of Chevremont.

The Jesuits, ordered out of England by Elizabeth I, and then out of Douai and Louvain, finally found a place to settle in the Principality of Liege. These young Jesuit seminarians from England are the ones who erected the small chapel on the hill of Chevremont in 1688, and this small chapel appears on two stamps in this set: in the left corner on the 1,35 francs, and especially on the 3,15 francs stamp. On this latter stamp the date "1668" and the Jesuit symbol "IHS" are seen, and above the door, on the pediment of the chapel, the seminarians had the words written "Sancta Maria, ora pro Anglia." (Holy Mary, pray for England.) Inside the chapel, which soon became a renowned and much visited pilgrimage place, the students for the priesthood enthroned a small statue of Our Lady with the title "MOTHER OF MERCY," seen on the 3,15 francs stamp, and very likely was one of the ten small statues done by the Chartreux Monks of Liege at the time.

Pius XI authorized a solemn crowning of this small statue on September 9, 1923, which was done by Bishop Rutten of Liege. On a recent septennial feast, Queen Elizabeth II was officially represented; this was a most eloquent gesture since the chapel had been built by Englishmen driven from their country by Elizabeth I, and here it was they prayed for their native country.

**OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL**

After the return of the Jesuits to their country, the French Revolution struck a hard blow to OUR LADY OF CHEVREMONT. Bishop de Montpellier of Liege asked the Carmelite Order to assume and assure the ministry of the pilgrims, which they accepted, and brought with them their devotion for OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, seen on the beautiful 10+10 francs stamp (Sc.B454, Mi.823, Y-T 780, G1.C442). It is the Father Prior himself, in his ample white mantle, who posed for Mr. Van Noten.

Bishop de Montpellier wanted Chevremont to become the Lourdes of the Liege region, and he layed the first stone for the future large church in 1877, which is seen on the 1,35 francs stamp (Sc. B452, Mi.821, Y-T 778, G1.C440). Despite difficult days which followed, the church was erected and dedicated in 1899 by Bishop Doutreloux, and in 1928 at the request of Bishop Kerho's it received the title of a Minor Basilica. The two world wars caused considerable damage to the building. On the stamp may be seen a miniature Madonna statue over the lower window of the transept; this statue was damaged during bombing raids.

Father Marcel, of the Chevremont Carmelites, graciously answered our questions concerning the crest of the Carmelite Order seen on the 1,35 and 10 francs stamps in this set: "The brown color is the color of our cassocks; the upper part is of silver color and stands for the white mantle we have on during the chorus singing or the recitation of the hours of the breviary; and the
three stars represent three personages (since these could not be drawn on a crest), Elias and Elisha with the lower star representing the Blessed Virgin Mary."

(Extracted from Father Hechtermans' article which appeared in the February 1966 issue of MEDIATRICE ET REINE, published by the Montfort Fathers, Louvain, Belgium, and translated by Bro. Jacques Saumure, O.M.I., Novicat Notre-Dame, Richelieu, P.Q., Canada)

**SPAIN: "ROOT OF JESSE"

1943 Issue: Scott 726, Michel 911, Yvert-Tellier 724, Gibbons 1145

Mr. Gil Diaz, Zaragoza, Spain, sent us an illustration of a portion of the "Jesse Column" of the Gloria Porch of the Cathedral of St. James of Compostelo. The following article, by Father A. S. Horn, appeared in the January 1956 issue of the AGE OF MARY, on the 1943 issue of Spain, Scott 726.

This postage stamp, in deep blue, with a value of 75 cts., was issued to draw attention to the Spanish Holy Year of 1943, and has as its design a censer and a portion of a column of the Gloria Porch. The huge censer, called "botafumeiro" in Spanish, hangs from a chain at the transept crossing of the grand cathedral built in honor of St. James. It is called the "King of the Censers," and is almost six feet high.

Inside the principal entrance to the upper church of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostelo is the "Porch of Glory," completed by Maestre Mateo in 1188 after 20 years of labor, and now considered to be one of the greatest glories of Christian art. On the shaft dividing the central doorway into two is a seated figure of St. James. The shaft itself is adorned with an exquisitely delicate carving of what is termed in church decoration as "The Tree of Jesse." As a culmination of this lower shaft, and as a support for the statue of St. James, is an ornate carved capital on which is represented the Blessed Trinity as well as the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

In the Book of Isaias, XI,1, we read: And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root." St. Jerome interprets the Blessed Mother of Jesus as this "rod." Based on this quotation there arose in the Middle Ages the custom of the complicated and yet artistic representations, in both painting and sculpture, of what is termed "The Tree of Jesse," in which representations Jesse is usually shown reclining at the bottom, and then intermingled in the trunk and branches which grow forth from Jesse are found his principal descendants, David, Solomon and the others, until the crowning glory of the tree or line is reached in Mary.

The principal detail of the decoration to the left on the stamp is the Blessed Virgin, who occupies the highest, most prominent position on the decorative shaft. It has been impossible to ascertain the identity of the figure to the left of the Blessed Mother although this appears to be the Archangel Gabriel at the moment of Annunciation.

**FRANCE: MOUSTIERS-SAINTE MARIE, 1965 Issue, Sc.1123, M.I.1515, Y-T 1436

Moustiers is located at the base of the rocky lower Alps. A tourism issue depicts two of these peaks joined by an iron chain with a star suspended in the center. A legend is connected with the chain which tells of a native nobleman who had been captured by the Turks and placed in chains. In prison as he gazed forlornly out of his cell, he asked Our Lady to deliver him back to his native land, and promised that if his prayer was answered he would build there a magnificent chapel in her honor. The prayer was immediately answered, for an angel appeared and transported him back to Moustiers. The French poet Mistral used the legend for one of his poems, a few lines of which read ..."At your feet, Virgin Mary, I will hang my chain if I ever return to Moustiers, my country ..." The nobleman built the chapel, right into the mountain side, and originally called "Our Lady of Beuvoir." It is said the first chapel dates to around 433, but the present one is from the 9th century, with restorations made in the 15th. It is a magnificent edifice of Gothic style. The "Virgin of Beuvoir" is reputed for restoring people to life, particularly children who have not been baptized. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Moustiers was noted for porcelain art, some of which are yet on the main altar.

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The design on this 1.50 ptas value stamp shows the church front, facing south, with 22 stone steps leading to the portal. The Tower of Santa Ana is on the right and is called the "clock tower," completed middle of 15th century. The left tower is the "Porters Tower." Between the two is the facade not of the church proper but of the Chapel of Santa Ana, dating to the last half of the 15th century. The original facade was hidden when the chapel was constructed in front of the church, but a portion of it is visible – the lovely arch of the church rising above the latter construction.

The Monastery of Guadalupe is the most important building in the area and was founded in 1340 by Alfonso XI following his victory over the Moors. A small hermitage was erected on the spot in 1322 and contained the miraculous statue of the VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE. A detailed history of this Monastery is contained in the November 1, 1964 issue covering the 1959 series of stamps depicting this Monastery.

(Our thanks to Antonio Benet Montagut for sending us the maximum card illustrated above.)

SPAIN: CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA, Guernica

Antonio Benet Montagut, Valencia

Commemorating the Sixth Centenary of the founding of Guernica, on April 28, 1966 Spain issued an 80 cts. value stamp, and for the design used the "Anteiglesia of Luno." Anteiglesia means a parochial church and municipal district, commonly found in various places in Vizcaya. The city of Guernica-Luno occupies the geographic center of Vizcaya, and is situated in one of the loveliest areas in this part of Spain, overlooking the luxuriant plains through which flows the Mundaca River.

The church in the stamp design is that of SANTA MARIA, whose construction covered the period from 1418 to 1715, and which contains the famous posthumous work of Inurria, the "El Cristo." To the right of the church is the historic oak where the traditional oath was re-affirmed regularly to uphold the laws and liberties of the people. In the hermitage near the tree was venerated the image of NUESTRA SENORA DE LA ANTIGUA, and there also were held the General Councils. The portal of this church dates from 1518.

Despite various regrettable reforms in 1826 this hermitage was definitely situated by the actual edifice known as the Chapel and Hall of Justice and a historic archive of great documental value.
MADONNA STAMPS OF PORTUGAL

The following sets are unused and in fine to very fine condition.

We purchased the entire stock of Portuguese Madonna Stamps from a recently retired wholesaler.

Prices are firm until August 1st.

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MARSHALL H. WILLIAMS

Life Member of COROS No. 18

98 East Rock Road
New Haven, Conn. 06511

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