

Mary's Garden's Testimonials-1951

Cedarhurst, Long Island, N. Y. (O-24)

I was intrigued by this ad, and being a Catholic, I should like to know more about the person or persons behind this unusual venture.

My special interest is to develop a special little spot under and near some hemlock trees which surround a corner of my garden where my young daughter used to meditate before she entered the convent this Fall. She had made a tiny rustic frame for a composition of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and placed it on an old spruce in the midst of these hemlocks. I have shade there, coming from oaks too, but could find some sun on the outer edge of the hemlocks. The soil is acid and if, perhaps, you could give me some suggestions. I shall be most grateful.

I cannot tell you how joyful your ad made me for in these days, Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother seldom are mentioned in the daily papers.

I pray that I shall be able to honor the Blessed Virgin by a little garden on the spot where I am sure Our Blessed Mother was very close to our daughter, Mary.

Very Sincerely,.....

P. S. May God Bless You.

Philadelphia, Pa.
4/24 (O-63)

I was very pleased to receive the seeds and am impatient to plant them. With Mary's Blessing we should have a beautiful garden this summer.

Rochester, N. Y.
4/26 (O-75)

Would you very kindly send some seeds enough for eighteen Brownie Girl Scouts to have each a tiny Mary's Garden in her backyard ? Since they are only nine year olds these little girls would need flowers or herbs easy to care for. They need them soon, too! The soil here is rather poor and sandy. I think your idea is a beautiful one which Our Lady will surely bless.

Ozone Park, N. Y.
3/11 (O-76)

Do you have a legend of marigold and dogwood or other flowers. I heard Kate Smith on radio last week, speaking about it but the doorbell rang, so I did not hear all of it.

Rochester, N. Y.
5/23 (O-107)

Kindly send a garden to Mr. ----- with the message " Happy Birthday" from the J-----."

Mr. L----- used to be our next door neighbor. Last year he had a leg amputated

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Rochester, N. Y.
5/23 (O-107) cont.

and when I last saw him was extremely weak. Recently his daughter wrote me that he had been busy in the garden! He is not a Catholic and may throw the whole thing away; however, one never knows, and he loves his flowers.

Stormville, N. Y.
3/18 (C)

Dear Madam:

I am writing you, truly in hopes, that you will find it in your heart to extend me a helping hand. I am truly in need of help. I have no one I can turn to in my family as my sisters are unable to help me. Therefore I must depend upon the goodness of somebody. So I have chose you. I am quite sure that you have gathered from the above address that I am in prison. Yes, I am in prison but I am not a criminal. I am herre for assault defending myself. Me and the other person both was given a sentence for assault on ea ch other..... I have been in prison almost three years. I wa s eligible for parole seventeen moths ago, but the laws of the State of New York says a inmate must have a employment before he can be released. In the past seventeen months I have met the Board of Parole twice, but I had no employment offer. Therefore I am still in Prison too. I am to mee the Board aga in, the first week of May, and if I have a job offer appro ed by that time I will be released. I am from Philadelphia. I have lived there since 1924. Therefore I must submit a Philadelphia job offer. So I am turning to you; praying God if possible you will give me a job offer so I may obtain my release, and again become a useful member of Society a work hard and let the sweat of my labor wash away all the stains of this mistake I have made.....

Thanking you in advance for any consideration given in this matter.

Yours Respectfully,

New York, N. Y.
3/30 (C)

I am very much intrigued by your charming project " Our Lady's Garden." As Mrs. F. will doubtless wish to plant prayerful flowers you will hear from her directly. My son J---- os becomg married in Philadelphia on Saturday at 2 P. M. If perchance you receive this letter in time and care to be present you are cordially welcome.

Cincinnati, Ohio
3/21 (C)

Your letter was most welcome because it struck a responsive note in my thoughts. Mrs. M--- must have heard me gushing forth on my latest project. The only trouble is, that it takes me so long to accomplish very much. Since last summer I have turned my pen to writing a second book. The theme will be the connection of gardening and the Christ-life. The theme is not new but has long been my love. In fact when " Cooking for Christ" was published many of my friends remarked that they were surprise I had not begun with Flowers for Christ or some such title.

I think your idea of a " Mary Garden" charming. For the past ten years I have had a rather complete herb garden in which I have nursed

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Cincinnati, Ohio

3/21 (C) cont.

the Christ-plants and the Mary-plants as well. there are many books which are good source material on the Christ or Mary Garden. No doubt you have read;

Clarkson, Rosetta: Green Enchantment
Rhoad, Eleanor: Gardencraft in the Bible
Wright, Richardson Story of Gardening

There are also a number of references of Bible plants for use in Northern gardens. You see some of the difficulty of very exact or wide reproduction of Palestine gardens is the difficulty of climate variation. Here in Cincinnati I have planted things three years in succession trying to get them to grow. If they don't grow readily--- I quit because I know most other gardeners would not be so patient.

Another source of information would be the curator of the Cloisters in New York City. I have read several articles and lists of herbs and plants which they have introduced in their Cloister garden. What I plan to do is place this wide flung material in a simple handbook for busy Americans who like to garden, to arrange flowers and pray, while doing it. It is a good way to teach liturgy as well. I think it will take about a year for me to finish because I am very busy with my family.

It is good to learn of others who are fired by the desire to see the spiritual in material things. and convey their insight to others.
Wishing you all success and the joy of this Blessed Easter.
I am sincerely yours in Christ

Paoli, Pa.

4/6 (C)

I am writing to ask for gardens to be sent to five friends.

Haverford, Pa.

5/3 (C)

Thank you so much for the enchanting "Mary's Garden's" seeds. They are already planted in alternate, the cahnnel isles, Ruthen Castle, Wales. The Rosemont College Gardens, and here at home!--- Such a poetic idea! Bless you! Eusebus,

Esopos, New York

4/7 (C)

.....No for your idea it's a genuine inspiration. I think it wonderful and wish you all the success in the world. It will take time for it to catch but meanwhile keep plugging the idea through every channel possible

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Why not get on the T. V. program "What's my line" ? telecast on Sunday night at 10 P. M. ? Be interviewed on the radio. Have someone write a letter about you and your project to local papers. Offer the ten packets of seeds free to anyone who has a statue of Our Lady in their own garden. The publicity would be well worth the price. Begin such a garden yourself, and have a photo of it taken. Have photos of Mary Gardens sent you.... like the enclosed from J.... R.... of Edgerly Rd, Harundale, Md.

Now about research on the subject of Lady Flowers.... all I have is a page in an out of print book called "Our Lady's Dowery" by Thomas Bridgett. CSSR, London "Burns and Oites 1875". He in turn makes reference to three books you might secure in the library,:

Church of Our Fathers, Vol. 111, P. 228 by Dr. Rock.
The Catholic Florist by Gushenmark
Popular Names of British Plants by R. C. Prior, and Day.

If I come across anything in my constant reading, I shall make a note of it, and send it along to you. There are of course similar Lady names for flowers in other lands and languages... but English, I presume is what you are hunting for. Hoping you will keep me posted from time to time on the progress of the Mary's Garden project, Cordially in Mary,

Cincinnati, O. 4/13, (C)

I was most interested in the arrival of seeds for Mary's Garden. In fact I had reserved some space in my indoor planting tray for the seeds so there would be no delay in getting them in. Now they are already planted with great hope and a prayer.

The biggest criticism I would have to make on the selection is the difficulty most gardeners would have in getting such seeds to grow to maturity. Would it be possible to select two types of seed one for a beginner's garden which includes just annuals? This will give encouragement where it is needed most. Then for more experienced and careful gardeners you could use the more difficult perennial seed. Most people are so impatient these days and there is so much stewardship to go into the growing of perennials that I am afraid Mary's Garden will be forgotten by the second year by all but the persevering.

..... I have grown rosemary for a number of years and it has never grown to more than 12 or 16 inches. I have never seen it bloom, in fact I don't think it blooms in our climate and is only found to bloom in the Mediterranean region.

I enclose an order for two more packets. Could you send one to Mrs. B---- with a good wish for Mother's Day, but send now because some of the things must go in right away. I wish you all success in your venture and hope that as you work with the project you will solve your problems. The best way would be to try growing these things yourself. Sincerely in Christ...

Esopus, N. Y. 9/20 (C)

I just got an idea.... Churches should have Mary's garden's about their outdoor shrines! I'll do up a squib for the Priest Magazine.

FRONT YARD IVY MARY GARDEN
WITH TULIP
BOSTON, MASS.



By thy example may I strive
At solid virtue to arrive,
Till freed from sin, I once arise
To sing thy praise in Paradise.

SEVENTH DAY.

The Tulip.

The bright-colored Tulip holds itself erect upon a straight firm stem surrounded by somewhat oblong leaves. Its calix closes at night but reopens, as soon as the sun rises. The only thing which this flower lacks is perfume. Although it does not delight the sense of smell, yet it rejoices the eye by its beautiful, variegated dress. In a spiritual sense, the tulip may be compared to prayer, and is therefore, taken as an emblem of this virtue.

When the Archangel Gabriel brought to the Blessed Virgin the glad tidings, that she was to become the Mother of the Most High, he found her absorbed in prayer. As often as we read of Mary in Holy Scripture, we find that she loved prayer. When yet a child, she practiced this virtue, and when she was brought into the temple, she spent the entire day in prayer and work. In her humble home at Nazareth, she frequently prayed, and during the awful passion of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ,

she obtained by prayer, that strength, which enabled her to stand without shrinking beneath the Cross of her dying Son. It was during prayer, that she, with the Apostles, received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, and in prayer she awaited the consummation of her life. Our Divine Saviour who extremely loved this virtue, incites us to it by the following words: "Watch ye and pray;"¹ and "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times."²

None followed Jesus more faithfully than Mary. With justice could St. Epiphanius say: "The life of Mary was a continual prayer." We also have an obligation to pray, for upon prayer depends our salvation, which we can gain only by persevering in prayer. We should therefore, rejoice to have such a sublime example as Mary, in whose heart bloomed the tulip, the virtue of the love of prayer; and we should frequently contemplate it in order to imitate it.

THE TULIP HAS ITS HEAD ALWAYS DIRECTED TOWARD HEAVEN. This signifies prayer, which is a colloquy of the soul with God. God is to the soul, what the sun is to nature, its light, its warmth and its life. Therefore, if the Christian prays, he turns toward Heaven, where God abides. God is the King of kings, and Lord of hosts, therefore the Christian prays with reverence and devotion. God is eternal love, and Father of goodness; therefore

¹ Math., XXVII, 41.

² Luke, XXI, 36.

the Christian prays with love and confidence; and if our prayer were always borne on these two wings of reverence and love, as St. Bernard calls them, it would always obtain its end, and never remain unheard. With what respect did Mary petition her Divine Son at the marriage-feast at Cana! And with what unshaken confidence did she continue her prayer; when it seemed as though Jesus did not heed her petition. "As water is necessary for trees, flowers and plants," says St. John Chrysostom, "even so is prayer necessary for us; for, as the former will dry up for want of sap, so our souls without prayer, like a flower which has not been moistened for a long time, becomes dry and bends towards the earth."

THE TULIP REOPENS WHEN THE SUN RISES, whereas it is closed during the night. Thus the soul, which loves prayer, opens herself only to God and heavenly things; esteems only these; perceives only these; and, with great care, shuts herself up to the night of sin, and to the world, which would deter her from prayer, or make it distasteful to her by distractions. Thus we behold Jesus Christ seeking a solitary place for prayer; yes. "He even left the company of his Apostles, when he wished to pray. The Blessed Virgin Mary also, we find alone at prayer in the temple and at home. Only when duty, good example, or love for her neighbor required it, did she leave the holy retirement of her house. "If you wish to pray well," says St. Francis de Sales, "withdraw as much as possible

from the world; above all do not meddle with matters which are foreign to your calling; for, the more freedom you give yourself in idle talk and useless thoughts before prayer, the more feeble and empty will be your prayer, and the more will you have to suffer from distraction."

THE TULIP EXHIBITS A GREAT VARIETY OF COLORS, and by this, it tells us that prayer, although essentially one, has nevertheless various methods. Spiritual writers, speaking of the different kinds of prayer, divide it into vocal and mental. Among the vocal prayers, the first place is given to the Lord's prayer, which Jesus Christ Himself has taught, and the holy Rosary which the Church has enriched with so many indulgences and treasures of grace, and which the saints so much loved to recite. In regard to mental prayers, by far the most useful and meritorious one is the "Way of the Cross," which we should love so much the more, since the Blessed Virgin Mary herself first went this Way through the streets of Jerusalem, meditating and praying. There are also ejaculatory prayers, which are momentary elevations, or glances, of the soul towards God. A good intention is likewise considered a good prayer, for, by it, all our works, actions and employments are sanctified, and so to speak, changed into prayer. But we should pay particular attention to the admonitions of two great saints of the Church, namely, St. Francis de Sales, who says, that in affliction and adversities, the best

prayer is: "O Lord, Thy will be done:" and St. Alphonsus, who recommends above all, the prayer of petition. He says that, "after holy Communion, we should ask for humiliations; and every evening beg for the grace of final perseverance."

O heavenly Tulip, my most beloved Mother Mary! In your heart burned the love of prayer, and you practiced this virtue to an exalted degree in every circumstance of your life! Obtain for us also the grace, that we may every day comprehend more and more the majesty of prayer, since there can be no greater honor for man, than to speak to his God. Teach us yourself, O Blessed Virgin, how to pray, for you are, according to St. Bonaventure, the teacher of prayer. Oh! if we could only pray as we ought, then we would surely walk in the way of virtue; for St. Augustine says: "Whosoever knows how to pray well, knows also how to live well." Instill into our hearts, O Blessed Lady, a great love for solitude and contempt for this world, that we may not be troubled by distractions during prayer, nor be induced to leave off praying; and when by your powerful intercession with God, you have obtained for us, a sincere love for prayer; then we will pray with joy; we will spend all our spare time in this holy exercise, and thus we will sanctify all our actions, and in prayer we will seek and find our rest and consolation; then will we be able to say with that holy servant of God, Zitta, "Every one must have joy, as for me, I have mine in prayer."

The Tulip's crown, raised high in air,
Reminds us of the voice of prayer;
The humble prayer from earth ascends,
And God, assistance kindly lends.

Blessed Mary knew this holy art,
And from her sinless Virgin heart
The prayer of faith, of hope, of love,
Ascended to the Throne above.

Through life, prayer was her loving task;
At Cana's feast we hear her ask,
And tho' it was before His time,
Her Son changed water into wine.

While now from Heaven she sees our needs,
E'er with that Son for us she pleads,
And prays that we from God ne'er roam,
That so we reach our destined home.

In all our trials may we find
Assistance in this Mother kind;
And when on earth our lives shall close,
May we in Heaven find sweet repose.

PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

A few years ago when the German edition of this little book first made its appearance in public, it produced a deep impression upon its readers. For more than a year, the thought constantly recurred to me, how much good might result in honor of the exalted Queen of Heaven if it were published in the English language; more especially as the addresses are convincing and simple; while the language graceful and animated, speaks eloquently to the pious heart. Therefore I thought the book to be one of devotion for those people who speak the English language. That it may become properly such, I added to the addresses the Litany of Loretto, together with some other prayers suitable for the beautiful month of May.

O holiest, sweetest Advocate, great Queen of Heaven! deep as the ocean in suffering, exalted and incomprehensible in joy, "Deep calleth on deep," "Abyssus abyssum invocat," Ps. 41, at thy feet I lay this little book in silent homage; do with it what pleaseth thee. Every sinner is permitted humbly to approach thee. Thou wilt then surely not despise the poorest of thy children with her little gift. Dear book, go forth now into the world, knock at the door of all hearts, and by thy sweet influence may the "Ave Maria" often be

heard arising in gentle accents from the hearts of the rich and the poor. May the image of our beloved Lady and Queen ever shine forth in the hearts of all, and with the divine image of Jesus Crucified, be the chief ornaments of their homes.

O dearest of all Mothers, O mystical Rose! grant that in our poor hearts the roses of holy love may not only bud, but develop into beautiful flowers of virtue. Thou Flower of Sharon, and Lily amongst thorns! refresh the arid hearts of thy children and after this our exile is ended, show unto us Jesus thy Divine Son.

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT,
ST. MARY'S, ELK CO., PA.

Feast of St. Gertrude, A. D. 1893.

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