

## CAPE COD SHRINE

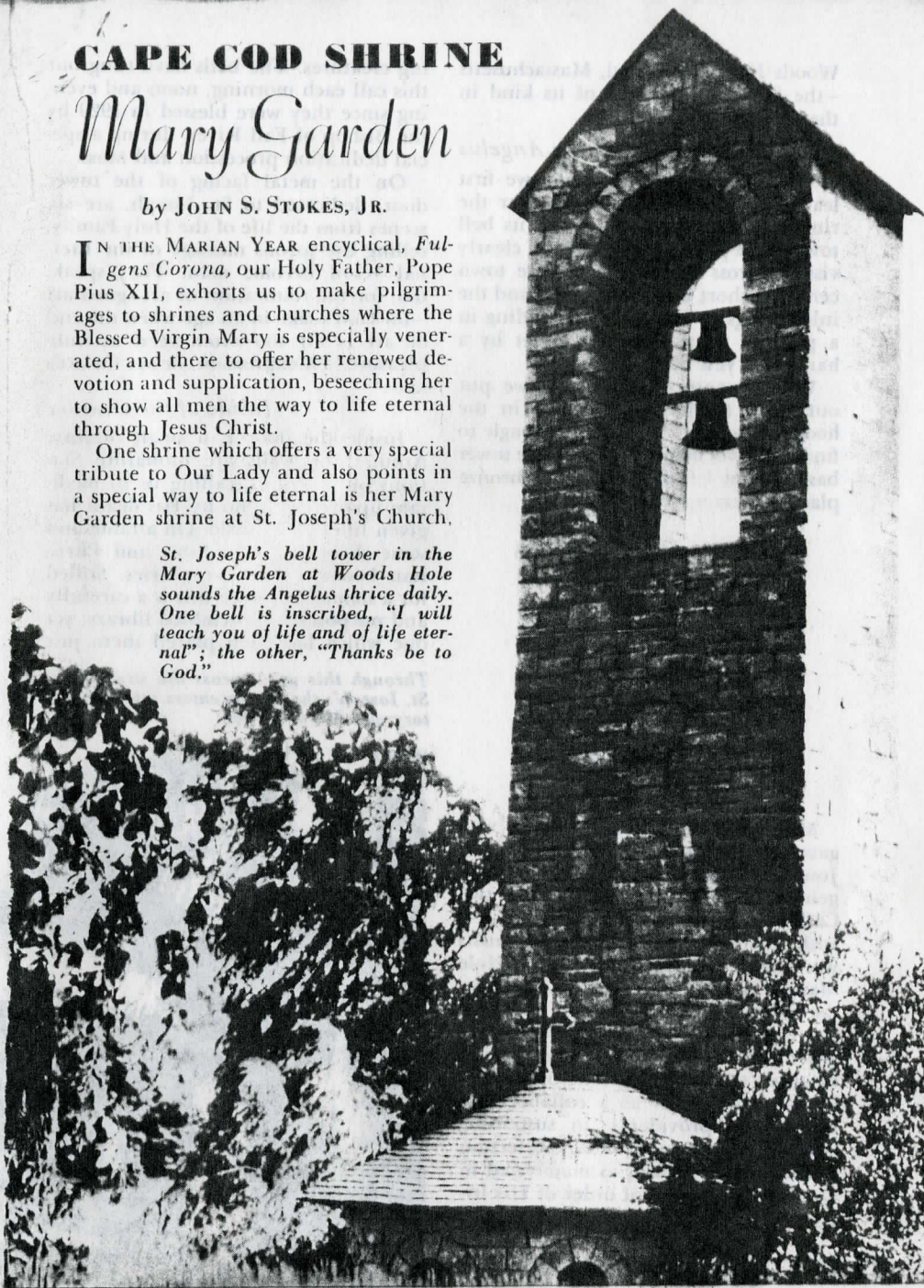
# Mary Garden

by JOHN S. STOKES, JR.

IN THE MARIAN YEAR encyclical, *Fulgens Corona*, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, exhorts us to make pilgrimages to shrines and churches where the Blessed Virgin Mary is especially venerated, and there to offer her renewed devotion and supplication, beseeching her to show all men the way to life eternal through Jesus Christ.

One shrine which offers a very special tribute to Our Lady and also points in a special way to life eternal is her Mary Garden shrine at St. Joseph's Church.

*St. Joseph's bell tower in the Mary Garden at Woods Hole sounds the Angelus thrice daily. One bell is inscribed, "I will teach you of life and of life eternal"; the other, "Thanks be to God."*





Woods Hole, Cape Cod, Massachusetts—the first public shrine of its kind in the United States.

### *Ringling of the Angelus*

As visitors to Woods Hole, we first learn of the shrine when we hear the ringing of the Angelus, or see its bell tower . . . a prominent landmark clearly visible across the inlet from the town center. A short walk or drive around the inlet brings us to the tower standing in a plot set apart from the street by a handsome yew hedge.

With a sense of adventure, we put our hand to the wooden gate in the hedge. Opening it, we step through to find ourselves before a door in the tower base. To the left of the door is a bronze plaque bearing the inscription:

#### SAINT JOSEPH'S BELLS

*The large bell is named*

MENDEL

*its inscription reads*

I WILL TEACH YOU OF LIFE  
AND OF LIFE ETERNAL

*The smaller bell is named*

PASTEUR

*its inscription reads*

THANKS BE TO GOD

Mrs. Frank R. Lillie, a convert, who gave the shrine as adjunct to St. Joseph's parish church, named the Angelus bells for Mendel and Pasteur—two Catholic pioneers in the study of life—with a special view to the scientists working at the renowned Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratories across the inlet,—of which her late husband was director and president. It was her ardent hope that the shrine would heighten the prayerful sense of the biological work,—seen as a collaboration with God's providence in sustaining life, and as a discovery of the perfection of the eternal Creator as manifested in the diversity and total order of His liv-

ing creatures. The bells have rung out this call each morning, noon and evening since they were blessed in 1929 by the Bishop of Fall River, during a special dedication procession and Mass.

On the metal facing of the tower door, dedicated to St. Joseph, are six scenes from the life of the Holy Family, telling the joyous message of the Eternal Word become man. They speak, too, for the restoration of art—good art—for God's sake in an age when the end of art is all too often seen as only pleasure, self-expression, or art for art's sake.

### *Inside of the Oratory*

Inside the door is a small oratory. Around the walls are miniature Stations of the Cross, calling us to meditate upon Christ who by His death has given life to the world. On a table and some shelves are a Bible and Christian books of many centuries. Stilled for a moment, we see this is a carefully and purposefully assembled library, yet one which has been placed there just

*Through this gate, across the street from St. Joseph's the visitor enters into the oratory and Mary Garden.*





for us. Alone, and in silence, we are face to face with the writings of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, popes, saints and scholars of the Church: holy men speaking out of the ages of God's incarnation, death and resurrection; of His presence with us in His Church until the end of the world; and of His Kingdom which is without end. If the glimpses of life had by leafing through

these books move us to read further, a notice assures us we are welcome to take one with us, and to keep it until we have finished with it.

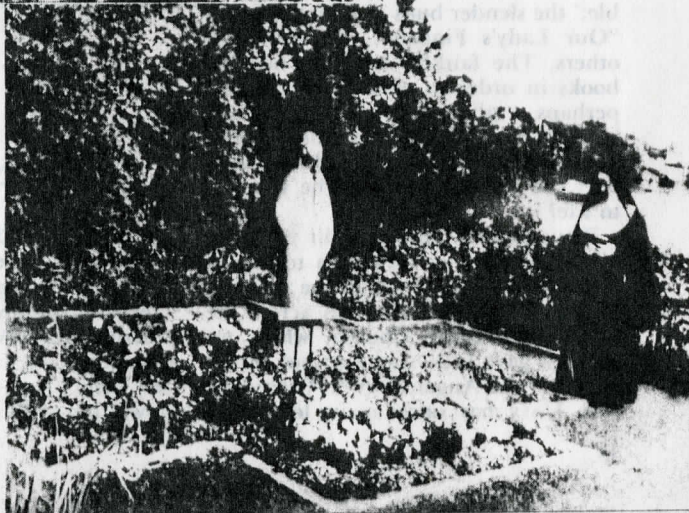
Stepping out again from the oratory, we behold a garden at the other end of the hedged tower enclosure. But this is no ordinary pleasure garden; it is a Mary Garden dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, around whose statue God's



*Mrs. Emilyann Cramer of St. Louis, daughter of Mrs. Frank R. Lillie, who created the Mary Garden at Woods Hole, watches her 15-months-old daughter reach for a statue of St. Catherine.*

*Sister Frances Salano, of Nazareth College, Rochester, N. Y., takes time from work at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory to enjoy "Our Lady's" flowers.*

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riches and artistry—the plants and blooms—are ordered in garden beds.

Plant markers, and a notice posted to one side tell more: that the garden is composed of plants which centuries ago, in popular tradition of pre-reformation, Catholic England were seen and named to recall Our Lady and her mysteries. Ordered here about her statue, they join the Angelus bells in singing a litany of her praises: Virgin Flower, Assumption Lily, Mystical Rose . . . Here is truly a garden oratory, where our hearts are lifted up by plant life to Our Lady, Queen of all life.

#### *Heritage of the Flowers*

The plants and blooms also bring us testimony of the deep piety of a former age when Christian love and devotion were mirrored in even the "little" things of daily life, such as the flowers of the field. With penetrating clarity and impact we are struck by the imprint of intimate devotion as out of the silence of the centuries the pendant bloom clusters of primrose once again come into focus as "Our Lady's Keys"; the pointed seed pods of wild geranium as "Madonna's Pins;" the stout, erect stalk and blossom clusters of mullein as "Mary's Candle;" the dainty blue blossoms of harebell as "Our Lady's Thimble;" the slender buds of honeysuckle as "Our Lady's Fingers". . . and many others. The faithful have no need of books in order to read. Is there here, perhaps, a glimpse of a vast forgotten heritage from the ages of The Faith—a sacramental view of nature which awaits only the vision of faith to be restored to life?

Thus edified, and brought to heart, mind and soul we now turn to depart through the gate by which we entered. As we do we see before us across the street St. Joseph's Church, which we perhaps gave little notice in our initial quest for the Angelus tower. Overjoyed that Mary has once again led us to

Christ, we proceed from garden to church and kneel before the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

#### *In Retrospect*

Leaving St. Joseph's a few minutes later, restored in spirit, we see once again the tower and Mary Garden; and beyond them across the inlet the Woods Hole town center and laboratories. But the elements of the picture have come together with new clarity. The notes sounded separately are heard in harmony. Angelus tower, Mary Garden, sacred art, holy books, St. Joseph's Church are seen in unity as bringing us to Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life. And beyond them is the world, from which we came and to which we are to return, restoring all things in Christ.

Ordered here in the most immediate and direct way to prayer, church and Sacrament—architecture, art, books and plant life bring us to a vision of how they may be thus seen and ordered else-



where, too. And in the Mary Garden particularly, are we afforded an apt means for bringing this vision to our families, friends and neighbors, at a distance from Woods Hole. Not everyone can make a trip to Cape Cod, but any little place—even a window box or flower pot—will do for a Mary Garden.



Why not more than one? Why not Mary Garden shrines at other churches, and at homes and schools where the children can play and where Our Lady's flowers and their care can become a part of daily living and devotion?

#### *Call to Stewardship*

Apprenticeship in the arts-craft of horticulture and the undertaking of faithful stewardship for seeds, plants and blooms for Our Lady, can teach us our responsibility and call to stewardship under God's providence for all His living things, and, by analogy, for the supernatural life of grace in our souls. And as we cultivate plant life dedicated to Mary, and offer its blooms as gifts at her shrine, we can make yet another offering: the interior offering of the joys and sacrifices of our work as spiritual bouquets to Mary and to her Divine Son and Lord.

Stewardship for a Garden of Our Lady, prayerfully undertaken, contains the "one thing necessary"... not only for gardening, but for all work, no matter how scientific or technical or how highly organized it may be. It holds up the mirror, asking whether our work is undertaken primarily for earthly pleasure, ambition or solicitousness, or, properly, as a means to life eternal.

#### *Work, Prayer, Sacraments*

To work is to pray; and truly prayerful work leads to and is nourished from the sacraments... that ultimately the three—work, prayer and sacraments—may become one in us, rising up as a holocaust to God. May Our Lady in her garden help us thus to sacramentalize earth and its fruits and to supernaturalize governance and labor, that we and all things may be lifted up in Christ.

*All photos through courtesy of the BOSTON SUNDAY POST.*