

Testimonials - 1953 - 1

St. Paul, Minn. 12/10 C

We will divide the seeds among our friends who are interested in growing a Mary Garden, and may Our Lady help us to make them grow. I am sure it must be a great joy for you to spread this devotion to Our Lady. Gratefully in Mary.

No. Pleasanton, Tex 12/9 C

I wish to start one of these gardens around a local church.

Chicago, Ill. 12/3 C

A number of the seeds are planted and never came up, and in general I am quite successful in gardening. I was really interested in having a nice Mary Garden, and I had interested several of my friends, but was really disappointed in the way many seeds never came up. Good luck in your venture.

St. Paul, Minn. 11/20 C

In recent years my garden has always been divided into three plots --- so it was a trinitarian garden, with each plot dedicated to one of the three divine persons. With this background, I thought adding a plot for Mary would be great fun. But somehow, it gave satisfaction in only a very limited way --- Our Lady's Mantle was beautiful, but it took until September until it sprang into action --- Mary's Bud was excellent until it got some sort of disease and then petered out --- Our Lady's Thistle had attractive leaves, but the rose-purple flowers never appeared. Mary's Gold was good to look at but in the garden (about this I would not complain), too heavily scented to use elsewhere. The biennials and perennials were for the most part a complete disappointment --- the other pansies (Swiss giants that I started inside in March were gorgeous, blooming from mid-June until October, while Our Lady's Delight didn't bloom until August, and then none too profusely. I petted Our Lady's Laurel and started it in a little pot inside --- and the same was true of Mary's Slipper --- none of them responded with so much as a bud ...

Now, there were reasons to account for some of the disappointments so I do not wish by any means to make you feel that this is a serious complaint. My garden was already planned when Father ... gave me your packet, so I probably had to relegate the seeds to second best places. And since I concentrate quite a bit on my roses, I probably did not give your seeds the attention they deserve. Anyway, I enjoyed trying and I hope other "Mary gardeners" had more success than I. With cordial greetings, I am, Very sincerely yours.

Phila., Pa. 1/15 C

What a strikingly original idea Mr. Stokes turned out. Think of it --- formal, metaphysical scholasticism in a cold frame for a flowery Mary's Garden! That's neo-scholasticism at its latest. Yet it was delightful to see the author so fully at home in philosophy. May the New Year bring you its best and most bountiful! And ditto for your garden apostolate. Sincerely yours,

Phila., Pa. 1/13 - C

Apparently you are as much at home in our philosophy as in gardening. As I just wrote in my note to Mr. McTague, making metaphysical scholasticism a coldframe for a flowery Mary's Garden is surely nova in the vetra of scholastic philosophy. I do hope that you will keep on writing and publishing . . . Sincerely yours,

Woodstock, Md. 1/22 - C

You may rest assured of my continued prayers that God may bless you as i know he must be doing already for the work that has flourished so under your care, and guidance. It is a wonderful apostolic project, and as it has given yourselves great consolation, I am sure, thus far, may it be the source of many more abundant graces for yourselves in the future. Gratefully yours in Christ.

Flushing, N.Y. 10/28 C

As you so aptly described in your letter, "Our Lady's garden touches hearts", and we rejoice that we have had a share in making known to others in our Catholic Family your wonderful way of receiving from the hands of Our Lady those spiritual gifts as well as material that are and can be gained in an undertaking such as Mary's Garden. . . . Thanking you for your gracious and kind attention to us, yours in Our Lady's cause.

Phila., Pa. 2/15/ C

After the catastrophe that buried our Mary's garden in the summer, one plant struggled through in September, the Mary's Bud. It gave us fine blooms right up to Christmas, and the leaves are still green. We saw this afternoon youngsters out with their jumping ropes. Can spring be far behind? Soon we will be getting back to work to replant our garden. Already in the fall we succumbed to an ad for winter flowers. We planted bulbs that bloom in the winter. For the last week I have been able to discard my microscope and watch the shoots now appearing with the naked eye. One girl who took some home to plant had blooms several weeks ago. We had to take pot luck in our order, but we saved the Viking lillies and Siberian roses for our Mary Garden plot. Others we just put in the ground beyond, down near the fence. This month, God willing, we will have roses and lillies in our garden to honor Mary. Her plot looks awfully desolate right now. Best wishes to Mr. McTague. I remember your project often and talk it up whenever I can. Sincerely in Christ the Gardner.

Glenmount, N.Y. 1/12 C

The heat and dry weather last summer were quite disastrous to my Mary's Garden --- a 20 by 20 plot. However, I have already put in a lot of work for next summer, and a permanent garden, a 30 by 30 plot. I already have one boundary planted with Father Hugo's rose bushes and St. John's wort shrubs. My Mary's Garden will have flowers and shrubs with religious names, including all that I can grow which are honored in honor of Mary. I planted some biennials and perennials last summer and have great hopes for them for this year. A local carpenter has made a shrine for me. I am hoping for

an appropriate statue. Chatsworth .

Chatsworth, Calif. 12/6 C

I read about your worthwhile project in the Catholic Worker. I think that it is a splendid idea. I am learning to be a professional gardener, so I would be very happy to hear from you. I have an idea similar to yours which I would like to give to you. As you know, most of the area around a house is given to flowers, shrubs, trees, grass and vines. Very little food is grown. Now the idea is to raise some food such as fruits and vegetables, perhaps fowl, rabbits, and so on, and some of this is to be given to the needy. Regular routes would be established such as the ones of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, in order to pick up the food; some could be canned and given later, or the food could be taken somewhere, cooked and fed to the hungry directly. It seems a shame to spend so much time and money on the appearance of a place, and yet not raise some edible things when we have so many needy everywhere.

Mammoth, Pa. 10/17 C

As for the flower garden which I planted from the flower seeds which I obtained from you, it was quite lovely. It was a wonderful experience to have flowers planted in dedication to Mary. I really enjoyed the project. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could obtain flower roots or seeds from Jerusalem, some foreign country where Jesus spent his time on earth. I would love to have a few plants from Jerusalem, or Bethlehem, etc. This is only a suggestion but it would be very nice if you could obtain other traditional plants. God bless you.

Jackson, Minn. 9/19 C

I planted some of Mary's seeds in our vegetable garden. That was the first time I planted that many flowers. I planted St. Joseph's staff, next to our house on the south side. Ever since I read your article in our diocesan newspaper, I have had a greater love for flowers and I want to tell you of my appreciation and gratefulness for undertaking this work of love. I know this work must be pleasing to God so very much. I praise him and thank him for giving you the knowledge of this kind of work and the strength and grace to carry it out and perform it with so much love.

Some of the seeds which I planted became short of my expectations, but being that this work is rather new to me I am not too surprised at the outcome. Of the flowers I planted, Mary's Gold turned out the best. They certainly did bloom. Our Lady's Earrings, I believe, were the next best. I know that the book you sent me with the flower seeds will teach me much on how to care for and tend to plants. I had just planted part of a row in our vegetable garden of flower seeds this year; next year I hope to have a little larger flower garden.

Brookline, Mass. 2/23 C

I know Our Blessed Mother is always watching over you for all you are doing. God bless you and your family.

Emmett, Mich. 11/5 C

I think it would be a good work if the negroes could be interested in growing more fruit and vegetables wherever they own land, they have been so uprooted in their lives that even when they do own a little piece of land, their thoughts do not often turn in the direction of horticulture. If they undertake to plant cherry trees or bushes, they should be instructed that they will need two or more plants as the cherry blossom is an imperfect fruit. I am quite interested in the negro apostolate and I know what their struggle is, with them practical considerations must come first, then beauty. For instance if they do not have to pay so much of what they can earn for food, and vegetables, they will have more money left for flower seeds. I hope that when you become more established, you will have rose bushes, chrysanthemums, etc. You are quite right in thinking that Catholic schools and institutions should encourage the school children to learn about planting gardens and flower beds and so on. There is a great deal of room for improvement.

This is one of the driest summers we have had in about 50 years. In places where it is possible to do so, I think that Catholic teaching orders working among the negroes should encourage them to plant vegetables and fruit gardens as much as possible and to can at home as much as they can. Then there would not be quite so much poverty among them, no, not poverty but destitution all too often.

I shall try to order some more seeds in the spring and I wish you good fortune in your undertaking.

Esopus, N.Y. 2/24 C

I have to give a special talk in Rochester this May on "Our Lady and Poetry". It just struck me that I can bring Mary's Gardens into the picture too. All unknown to you, some 570 pulpits around the United States (eastern portion), have mentioned the story of Mary's Gardens--- i.e. if the novena directors used the story I included in one of my monthly mailings. (I will be sending another story on it in the April mailing.)

I am writing to one of my confreres in England today --- Rev. J. Lumley-Holmes, Editor of the magazine, Novena. I must ask him to run an article on Mary's Gardens --- even to reprint mine from last year. It would be a wonderful way to get the project rolling in "Our Lady's Dowry," once again.

Ed and yourself, John, are in my prayers . . . that your project for Our Lady's honor runs like wildflowers through the world this year. May this lenten season find you busy to the elbows in packing and shipping Our Lady's seeds. Cordially in Mary,

Hamilton, Ont. 2/22 C

The article in the March edition of the Catholic Digest, concerning your venture on behalf of Our Lady in promoting devotion to the medium of flowers, has made a very great impression on me and caused considerable thought and planning on my part. After receiving approval of my pastor, Rev. and other diocesan clergy, I approached the sisters of They are a cloistered order and are furthering the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. They would be more than willing to take up your apostolate and distribute the seeds . . . however, it has been left up to me to make the necessary arrangements with you. Knowing of the tremendous response this article has had, and the over-burden of work at this time of year, I would attend to all the business arrangements, at no cost to the sisters until this work is under way. The sisters will package the seeds and distribute them, even without profit, just to further devotion to Our Lady. It is sincerely hoped that you will grant our request and (cooperate with us in this project).

Camden, S.C. 3/7 C

I found the enclosed in the paper (Charlotte - S. C., Observer) the other morning and thought you might be interested. It is very exciting to have your garden appearing in so many places. You must be gratified and Our Lady must be pleased!

Duluth, Minn. 3/13 C

I read my son's "Columbia". I find your interesting article on the Mary flowers. Many, many years ago, when I was a child and later in my teens, I used to see in old gardens (sometimes German gardens) attended by old ladies, mostly, a plant (outdoor) called "Sweet Mary." . . . I would be so happy if I could find one of these plants, as I have tried for many years to locate one.

Rosehill, Miss. 3/15 C

Through a series of coincidences I recently met Miss Heather Woods --- an English journalist who has lived for 3 years at Fatima. She had come to America to work as technical advisor for Warner's Film of "The Miracle of Fatima." She was an amazing person, with great apostolic zeal, and it was through her that I gradually developed the idea of building a Fatima shrine at Rosehill --- a logical starting point for the Sistercian project.

I have just completed a three foot statue of Our Lady which will be placed in a ravine near the Cistercian's parish church. This is a most natural and exotic setting overlooking a wide horizon of vermillion hills fading into a misty blue background.

Roses grow wild in that vicinity and the plants could be collected and cultivated in a special garden of roses. And using the Fatima theme, a garden of the Son, would be most appropriate. Such a garden would make use of wild sunflowers and other yellow and orange flowers having a heliocentric design.

Not that I have read about your Mary's garden, I am intrigued no end. Such a garden at the proposed shrine would be a natural addition. Although I see the hand of God in nature and see the plan of design in flowers and plants, I must confess I am ignorant about the problems of horticulture. However the Cistercians who are mostly Europeans, have a natural affinity for the soil. . . .

What do you think of the possibility of sowing seeds and flowers from our proposed Fatima shrine? Would it be a worthwhile venture? It seems that this would give the Cistercians a source of income which in their isolation and obscurity --- is greatly needed. May the Blessed Mother smile on you, Your friend in Christ.

Wellsley Hills, Mass. 3/28

We are ordering only the six packets of "easy to grow" seeds this year in hopes that we can do a really good job with the few that we try. Last year's suffered mainly, I think, from being planted too late. We did get some lovely flowers in September, but better planning would surely have yielded more flowers throughout the summer.

I will see if I can re-arouse interest in the ladies of our Confraternity group. Last year's failure again resulted, I feel, by my bringing the subject up of Mary's Garden's so late, the planting season was almost over.

New York, NY 3/21 C

Your article on flowers of Our Lady came today. It is charming and you have a wonderful project. I wish I could order more but I only have window boxes.

Valite, N.Y. 3/22 C

Praise be God, His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph!

Thank you for sending me the packets of seeds. I planted them on the 17th and two of them, Our Lady's Mantle and Mary's Gold were up on the 19th. Half of them are already up .. Mary's Bud, St. Joseph's Staff, Our Lady's Mantle. Later I will be getting some perennials and biennials, I hope.

Enclosed is one of the lapel rosaries which I designed in 1948, and which the Pope called the "Golden Rosary Beads" when he sent me his special, paternal Apostolic blessing for the rosary he received. Please accept it as a gift memento. May the Mother of God watch over you. Sincerely in Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Indianapolis, Ind. 3/31 C

Praise be Jesus Christ!

Interestingly enough, only last week, Monsignor Duggan sent us a collection of your delightful little seed packets, for a first beginning of our Lady's garden here in Carmel. Now that we have this further contact with your delightful gardening project, we shall be even more interested in Mary's blossoms --- and their charmingly quaint new names. With sincere appreciation, I am,
Your humble servant in Christ.

Philadelphia 4/3 C

"What earth does each spring
"Is only a hint of the thing."

Plant the enclosed, ugly, dead things and watch for the resurrection in a few weeks. They are Siberian roses. Plant them at the peace of Easter may again be found in Russia under Mary's patronage.

Exeter, N.H. 4/7 C

Thank you for the package of seeds for the Mary Garden. I am much interested to see it altogether as you present it, and shall keep it that way for a while in the hope of interesting friends. It is beautifully done.

With many thanks and the hope that more Mary gardens will be planted this spring. Sincerely yours.

Collegeville, Minn. 4/7 C

Congratulations on your article in the current issue of the Catholic World. Your product is getting excellent, and deserved publicity. With every best wish, with the blessings of the season, I am, Cordially yours in Christ.

Gloucestershire, England
4/7 C

I think yours is a most beautiful work. It made me happy to hear of it.

Des Moines, Iowa 4/9 C

I do want to let our many editors have a feature article about your project. We sent out a monthly release to Catholic newspapers throughout the U.S. . . . Could you get me a snapshot of a child in the Mary Garden, if possible with a man looking at the flowers and talking to the child? It might be some passing truck driver, postman or the cop on the beat. I feel a picture of this kind would be best in a newspaper feature.

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Our Blessed Mother must be particularly happy with the project which you and your partner have so ably developed. Sincerely yours in Christ.

Des Moines Iowa 3/4 C

I had read the article in the Catholic Digest and last night was pleasantly surprised on opening the Columbia to find another story and the picture of you and Mr. McTague. This was very pleasant as I could really visualize your enthusiasm, which I am sure many of the ladies here in Des Moines share with you.

May Our Blessed Mother continue to aid and bless you and Mr. McTague in your apostolate.

I am enclosing as much of the material you requested as I have been able to collect.

The first faint suggestion of a religious flower show was given to me when my friend, Mrs. . . . told me she had built a shrine for display at a deanery meeting of their newly organized Council of Catholic Women. Sometime later the thought came to me to have many entries; one from each affiliation, and to make it a liturgical, or religious flower show. I thought each parish might carry out some appropriate idea for the patron saint of their church; and then have someone do one for "Our Lady of Good Counsel" as the central theme.

Shortly after the article in America of March 8, 1952, (Gardening for Our Lady) appeared, a friend of mine, Mrs. . . . called and read it to me. We were more enthusiastic than ever. On March 9, I wrote Mr. Stokes asking for any additional ideas or suggestions he might have and the result was the reception of all the fine literature he and Mr. McTague had arranged on "Gardens for Mary." I then called a meeting and asked for the appointment of parish chairmen and read all the material I had to the group. . . .

My thought in having this liturgical flower display was to spread devotion to Our Blessed Mother that would reach not only Catholics but others as well. Most every human being loves flowers, and I could visualize many Mary's gardens blossoming, and that the telling of the names of these flowers of Mary should arouse a greater interest in her. I also hope to increase the attendance at our local deanery council meetings by having something different, something so old that it was new. I wanted it to tie in with our spiritual development, giving new ideas for shrines in homes and gardens. . . . Gradually interest in this project grew, and cooperation of many of the women was wonderful. Also . . . the idea came to me that using some of the titles given Our Blessed Mother in the litany. Mrs. . . . and her husband worked up a number of these, which were most appropriate, such as "House of Gold", "Gate of Heaven",

HOSPITAL MARY GARDEN
JEROME, IDAHO

