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The Experience of Grace and Suffering in Selected Writings of Mother Maria Kaupas

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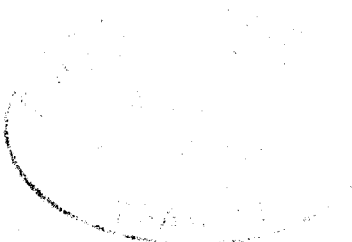
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THE EXPERIENCE OF GRACE AND SUFFERING IN SELECTED WRITINGS OF

MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS



by

Linda Strozdas, S.S.C.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

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VITA

The author, Linda Strozdas, SSC, is the daughter of Peter Robert Strozdas and Marie Cecilia (Meckenis) Strozdas. She was born September 3, 1950, in Sioux City, Iowa.

Her elementary education was obtained in the public schools of Sioux City, Iowa. She obtained her secondary education at East High School in the same city, where she graduated in 1968.

In September, 1968, she entered the Sisters of St. Casimir and began her undergraduate studies at Maria Junior College. In June, 1969, she transferred to Loyola University of Chicago and in June, 1977, she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in English.

She entered Loyola University's Graduate School of Theology in June 1978. Throughout her years of graduate school, the author taught theology at the secondary level and served as department chairperson for the high school where she taught.

In August, 1981, the author published Daily We Touch Him, a collection of excerpts from the circular letters of Mother Maria Kaupas, the foundress of the Sisters of St. Casimir. Her work on this collection inspired the subject of the study undertaken in this paper.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of Christian spirituality, God invites persons to share his mission, to care for his people as he cares for them, to go the journey as he goes, sharing both its light and its darkness. Our own spiritual journeys are influenced by the persons who precede us upon the path of Christian growth and who share the ideals and struggles of Christian living with us in their writings. Of special significance to any particular religious foundation would necessarily be the writings of its original member whose own experience of God, though unrepeatable in many respects, provides invaluable vision and scope, a paradigm so necessary for those whom God inspires to continue in this particular way with all its opportunities and limitations, its future projections as well as traditions. Such are the circular letters of Mother Maria Kaupas, the foundress of the Sisters of St. Casimir. The embodiment of both her personal spirituality and her spiritual teaching, these letters remain just as relevant to the ongoing spiritual formation of the congregation today as when they were first written over fifty years ago. Their validity resides in a predominant theme essential to any authentic spirituality: participation in the paschal mystery.

Through baptism and more completely through religious profession, individuals commit themselves to making the paschal journey through death

1

to life the pattern of their lives. Mother Maria understood that each vowed religious is called personally and corporately to face all the "dying" experiences encountered in the course of daily living and through them to share in Christ's redemptive love. Frequent references to this reality of suffering and grace dominate the thought of sixty-eight of the one hundred and three circular letters. My purpose within this thesis is to identify Mother Maria's understanding of grace and suffering within six of her circular letters from 1932.

To achieve this purpose, it will be necessary to root the study of these letters within the historical milieu which shaped her experience of grace and suffering. Thus, in addition to introducing Mother Maria Kaupas to the reader, Chapter 2 also situates her within those concrete historical circumstances of personalities, events, culture and language through which grace worked in her life. Next I will expand this historical perspective to embrace the theological constructs of grace and suffering which permeated the thought of the 19th century Church. Therefore, Chapter 3 will articulate and evaluate the formulas on grace and suffering operative in the catechism used by the sisters in their schools during Mother Maria's lifetime. In light of the catechism and two other historical sources mentioned in two of the circulars, I will then proceed in Chapter 4 to examine her understanding of grace and suffering within the selected letters. A concluding reflection on the historical

1

"Perfectae Caritatis," Vatican Council II, (New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1979) p. 614.

sources and her thought revealed in these six letters will form the subject of the fifth and final chapter.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER MARIA AND THE SELECTED WRITINGS IN THEIR MILIEU

At the end of the 18th century, the Duchy of Lithuania succumbed to Russian domination--a domination that was to continue more than one hundred years, until World War I.¹ The Russian occupation had a dramatic consequence for the Lithuanian people. In their attempts to systematically Russify the small Baltic nation and to thwart any possible Lithuanian alliance with Poland, the Russian czars confiscated all estates, selling them cheaply to Russian officials. Not only did this antagonize the people, but it reduced the poor to even greater poverty. Animosity grew more intense for the new occupation when they gave lands and treasured possessions of the Church and nobility to the newly established Russian Orthodox Church. All prayerbooks and other publications had to be printed in the Cyrillic alphabet, rather than the "Polish" or Latin alphabet. In addition to this ban of the free press, the new power also prohibited the use of the Lithuanian or Polish language in schools, offices and Church records.²

Instead of compliance with these prohibitions, the Lithuanian people resisted Russification in many ways. A series of revolts in 1831,

¹ Albertas Gerutis, Lithuania: 700 Years (New York: Manyland Books, 1969) p. 122.

² Ibid., pp. 123-129.

1861 and 1863 failed to produce any softening of the imposed Russian rule. The people refused to purchase new prayerbooks printed in the Cyrillic alphabet. Instead, they risked torture, imprisonment and even deportation to Siberia for smuggling Lithuanian books published in nearby Konigsburg, Prussia. In Lithuania itself, the "underground press" flourished. After the abolition of serfdom in 1863, a new educated generation arose from the small landowners and peasantry that strongly supported the battle against Russification. The network of book smugglers reached even the smallest village, where people studied their native tongue in secret. Rather than Russification of this far western "province," the czars' efforts awakened feelings of nationalism that led to an ever-raging battle to preserve Lithuanian identity in language, customs, culture and religion. ³ Into this milieu of poverty, political suppression and religious persecution, Casimira Kaupas (1880-1940), the fifth of eleven children, was born to Anufras and Antanina Kaupas in the Lithuanian village of Gudeliai. A chronological table placed here at the start may be useful toward situating Mother Maria Kaupas amid the events of her lifetime.

3

Ibid., p. 132.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

	1855	Alexander II, Russian Czar until 1881.
	1869	Dec. 8, Vatican Council I. Josef Deharbe, S. J. publishes <u>Katholicscher Katechismus für die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika</u> in the United States.
	1870	Definition of Dogma of papal infallibility.
	1873	Therese of Lisieux born, Alençon, France.
	1876	Russo-Turkish War until 1877.
	1878	March 3, Coronation Pope Leo XIII.
January 6, birth of Casimira Kaupas in Gudeliai, Lithuania. She is the fifth of eleven children.	1880	In the U.S., the Reform Movement to control Big Business and to aid workers is afoot. Immigration to the U. S. from Southern and Eastern Europe continues to rise until 1910.
	1881	Terrorists assassinate Alexander II; Alexander III becomes Russia's new czar. First Eucharistic Congress.
	1885	<u>Cathechism of the 3rd Council of Baltimore</u> , a uniform textbook of Catholic doctrine, is published in U.S.
Casimira's older sister marries. Casimira is the village shepherdess, a servant girl and mother's "big" housekeeper.	1890	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Anthony Kaupas, Casimira's older brother, emigrated to USA.	1892	
	1894	Nicholas II becomes last Russian Czar.
May 6, Anthony Kaupas, ordained a priest for Scranton, PA. In the fall he writes his parents asking them to send Casimira to be his housekeeper.	1896	
June 13, Casimira arrives in Scranton, PA. During her four year stay she first encounters Sisters and is attracted to their religious life.	1897	William McKinley becomes President of U. S. September 30, Therese dies at Lisieux, France.
	1898	Spanish-American War.
	1899	January 22, <u>Testem Benevolentiae</u> , Apostolic Letter denouncing "Americanism."
September 4, Casimira's father dies.	1900	
September 5, Casimira leaves for Lithuania with the intention of remaining there.	1901	Theodore Roosevelt becomes President of the U. S. January 18, Leo XIII publishes <u>Graves de communi re</u> , his encyclical on Catholic Action.
After spending about six months at home, Casimira ponders her life's goals. Recognizing the need of Lithuanians in America with regard	1902	Modernist Crisis begins. Loisy writes: <u>L'Evangile et L'Eglise</u> . Biblical Commission established.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

to matters of the faith, she decides to become a religious there since this is impossible in her homeland. She confides her yearnings to Rev. A. Milukas, a friend.

1902

Rev. A. Milukas asks her to join him in his "New Project," establishing a proposed Lithuanian society of women devoted primarily to the press. She accepts his offer and begins studies at Ingenbohl, Switzerland.

October 27, she arrives at the Theresianum, the boarding school of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross.

August 28, Judith Dvaranaukas, a second candidate, arrives at Ingenbohl.

1903

Jan. 8, James Quigley named second archbishop of Chicago.

August 4, Coronation of Pope Pius X.

October 4, Casimira receives permission from Rome to transfer to the novitiate in preparation for the new foundation.

November 24, In America Lithuanian priests meet in Pittsburgh, PA and form a council to aid the new congregation.

1904

February, Russian-Japanese War.

May, Rev. A. Kaupas and A. Milukas are selected Chairpersons to head the Priests' Council for the new congregation.

May 4, Freedom of the Press reinstated in Lithuania.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

August 16, Antanina Kaupas, Casimira's mother, dies.	1904	
February 10, Rev. A. Kaupas advises Casimira by letter to enter a cloister somewhere in Europe since the entire Priests' Council organized for the new congregation has collapsed. Advised by her superiors, Casimira asks her brother to find a Bishop in the U.S. who will accept them into his diocese.	1905	"Bloody Sunday," a peasant revolt in Russia. Revolt in Lithuania against Russian rule. October 17, Czar's Manifesto restored: Lithuanian language as official language; Catholics could freely buy land; permission granted for formation of political parties, economic and cultural organizations; books and newspapers could be printed without censorship.
April 25, Rev. A. Staniukynas (1865-1917), a priest of the Harrisburg diocese, agrees to assist the new congregation.		
July 2, At the request of Rev. A. Staniukynas, Bishop J. Shanahan of the Harrisburg, PA diocese, agrees to sponsor the new congregation.		December 20, Pius X decree on frequent reception of the Eucharist: <u>Sacra Tridentia Synodus.</u>
October 15, Three candidates: Casimira, Judith and newly arrived Antanina Ungaraitis, leave Switzerland for America.		
November 2, The three candidates arrive at Mount Saint Mary's, motherhouse of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters in Scranton, PA to fulfill novitiate requirements; to learn the English language, and to learn American customs.		
April 6, Pius X gives papal permission for the new congregation to be founded.	1907	December 8, Papal encyclical, <u>Pascendi</u> , exposes the errors of Modernism.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

August 29, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir founded. Casimira receives the name Maria.

1907

October 7, Newly professed Sister Maria begins Document C entitled "Chronicle." This journal of events continues through August 17, 1914.

January, Apostolate of education begins at Mt. Carmel, PA in Holy Cross Parish where Father Staniukynas is pastor.

1908

A. Loisy, leading modernist, is excommunicated.

Rev. Staniukynas is released from pastoral duties to devote full attention to the new congregation.

February 25, Archbishop Quigley of Chicago accepts Sisters of St. Casimir into that archdiocese.

1909

William Howard Taft becomes President of the U. S.

May 7, Pius X founds the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

July 2, Apostolic letter grants permission for the congregation's transfer to Chicago, IL.

1910

August 8, Quam Singulari, papal decree on the reception of first communion for children.

All Saints School opened in Chicago.

1911

February 28, Sisters move into newly constructed Motherhouse and novitiate in Chicago. They open Saint Casimir Academy, a high school for girls.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

<p>August 6-11, First annual retreat in Chicago preached by Rev. A. Staniukynas.</p>	1911	
<p>August 31, Sister Maria writes Document E, a short historical summary of the new congregation for the Sisters in Ingenbohl, Switzerland.</p>		
<p>July 1, Sister Maria's brother, Father Anthony, moves to Chicago with the newspaper <u>Draugas</u> [The Friend] of which he is the editor.</p>	1912	
<p>The Sisters open two schools at Waukegan, IL and Philadelphia, PA.</p>		
<p>August 24, Sister Maria becomes Mother Maria when elected first general superior. She is re-elected for six subsequent terms until her death in April, 1940.</p>	1913	<p>Woodrow Wilson becomes President.</p>
<p>Our Lady of Vilna School opens in Chicago, IL.</p>		
<p>October 27, Rev. A. Kaupas, Mother Maria's brother, dies in Chicago, IL.</p>		
<p>Two more parish schools open in Chicago, IL: St. Michael and Providence of God.</p>	1914	<p>August, World War I begins in Europe. Sept. 6, Coronation of Pope Benedict XV. Sept., James Linden, S. J., publishes a revision of Josef Deharbe's catechism: <u>Katholischer Katechismus fur die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika.</u></p>

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

	1915	An English translation of Linden's catechism is published: <u>Catechism of the Catholic Religion.</u>
St. Joseph School in Scranton, PA opens.	1916	February 9, George W. Mundelein installed as Chicago's third archbishop.
February 7, Rev. A. Staniukynas publishes a Lithuanian translation of James Linden's catechism entitled: <u>Mažasis Kataliku Tikėjimo Katekizmas</u> [The Small Catechism of the Catholic Religion] for students in the primary grades; and <u>Didysis Kataliku Tikėjimo Katekizmas</u> [The Large Catechism of the Catholic Religion] for students in the upper grades. The catechism is used in all the parish grammar schools staffed by the congregation. 4	1917	April 6, U. S. enters World War I. May 27, Benedict XV promulgates Code of Canon Law. November, Bolshevik Revolution in Russia ends 300 unbroken years of czarist rule. Communism replaces Romanov dynasty. Unchallenged, Lenin becomes chief of state. December 22, Mother Cabrini, foundress, dies at Columbus Hospital, Chicago, IL.
Sisters help at parish orphanage established in Philadelphia for children whose parents died in the flu epidemic.	1918	Flu epidemic in the U. S. and throughout the world. Lasting until 1919, more than 20 million persons die. Feb.16, Lithuania declares its independence of Soviet Russia. November 11, Armistice signed; Lithuanian government forms.
December 15, In Chicago, Co-founder, Rev. A. Staniukynas dies.		
Parish school established in Chicago Heights.	1919	Treaty of Versailles creates a new Europe; Lithuanian independence is recognized.

4

Pertinent passages of the Lithuanian catechism can be found in Appendix A.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Parish School opens in Cicero, IL.	1920	April, Nazi party forms in Germany.
May 10, Cardinal Mundelein gives Mother Maria permission to establish a foundation in Lithuania.		August, Woman Suffrage, Amendment 19 to the U. S. Constitution, becomes law.
September 3, Mother Maria and four sisters leave for Lithuania, establishing a house at Pažaislis there. The American foundation numbers 95 professed, 30 novices and 22 postulants.		November 21, Poland invades Lithuania; League of Nations intervenes.
Novitiate established at Pažaislis, Lithuania. Two more schools open in America, in Baltimore, MD and in Chicago.	1921	Laws restricting immigration are passed in the U.S.
July 1, Mother Maria returns from Lithuania.		Warren Harding becomes President of the U. S.
Orphanage in Philadelphia closes.		
Immaculate Conception parish School opens in Chicago.	1922	February 12, Coronation of Pope Pius XI.
		October, Mussolini becomes dictator of Italy.
St. George, Chicago parish school opens.	1923	Calvin Coolidge becomes President of U. S.
Two schools, one in Massachusetts and one in Chicago open.	1924	Lenin dies.
	1925	May 17, Canonization of Therese of Lisieux.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
	1925 Dec. 11, Encyclical <u>Quas Primas</u> , instituting Feast of Christ the King.
Chapel at Motherhouse built and dedicated. Another parish school opens in Philadelphia.	1926 June 20-24, 28th International Eucharistic Congress in Chicago.
Two schools open, one in Minersville, PA and one in Indiana Harbor, IN.	1927
Mother Maria visits Lithuanian foundation from May 25 to November 25.	
General Chapter states that Mother Maria write circular letters to each of the houses. Circular letters begin regularly with the opening of the school year to 23 different houses in America, plus the Lithuanian foundation.	1928 Rome condemns anti-semitism. U.S. Presidential campaign between Catholic Alfred E. Smith and Herbert Hoover. Smith faced deep-rooted, and often vicious anti-Catholic bias.
Mother Maria writes document D, a short history of the congregation up to 1920.	
Holy Cross Hospital opens, extending the apostolate to care of the sick.	
Two more schools, one in PA and another in IN are opened.	
Additional schools, one in Chicago and one in Rockford, IL, are opened.	1929 Herbert Hoover becomes U. S. President. October 24, Stock Market Crash ushers in Great Depression. December, Josef Stalin heads U. S. S. R.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

	1929	Economic crisis spreads to Europe.
St. Joseph, parish school in Chicago, IL opens.	1930	
Sometime between 1930 and 1935 Mother Maria writes Document B, an autobiographical and historical document.		
	1931	May 15, <u>Quadragesimo Anno</u> , 2nd great social encyclical on the Christian Social Order.
Silver Jubilee of the Community. Mother Maria composes Document F, a brief historical account of the origins of the community.	1932	May 3, <u>Caritate Christi Compulsi</u> , encyclical to offset world's economic misery through encouraging the faithful to prayer and penance, honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus to plead for God's mercy on humanity's suffering.
Lithuanian government bestows highest decoration on Mother M. Cyril, IHM and Mother Maria in recognition of their service to Lithuanians.	1933	Franklin D. Roosevelt becomes President of the U. S.; introduces New Deal. August 2, Adolf Hitler becomes Fuhrer of Germany.
Teaching apostolate extended westward to Nebraska with St. Anthony's, Omaha.	1934	"Century of Progress" Exposition in Chicago.
Aug. 31, Mother Maria's last trip to Lithuania. Foundation there has expanded to 7 different cities and towns.		

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

January 20, Mother Maria returns from Lithuania. The foundation there has become autonomous. At the time of the split the sisters there number 39 in perpetual vows and 27 in temporary vows.

1935

Italy invades Northern Africa.

In America, schools open in Shenandoah, PA and Worcester, MA.

Mother Maria writes Document A. In this biographical sketch of her brother, she gives interesting insights into her early childhood experiences.

August 22, The Baltimore Catechism, translated into Lithuanian by Sister Christina Unguraitis, is published for use in the Congregation's schools.

C.C.D. centers open in Athol, MA and Kewenee, IL.

1936

Mother Maria extends the ministry of the Congregation to the needs of the universal Church when opening 2 New Mexico parish schools, 1 to serve the Spanish-speaking.

1937

Mit brennender Sorge papal denouncement against Nazi Germany.

C.C.D. center in Kewanee, IL closes.

Loretto Hospital located in a non-Lithuanian section of Chicago opens to care for the sick of all creeds and nationalities.

1938

February, Hitler invades Austria.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
(continued)

LIFE OF MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

The congregation extends education apostolate to Rhode Island when it opens Saint Casimir School.

1939

March 2, Pius XII elected Pope.

September 1, World War II begins in Europe. Germany invades Poland; Lithuania invaded by Soviet troops.

April 17, Mother Maria dies at the Motherhouse, Chicago. C.C.D. center in Athol, MA closes.

1940

March 7, Samuel A. Stritch installed as Archbishop of Chicago.

The events of Mother Maria's life circumscribed the particular way God worked through her. From the previous chronology some basic facts emerge. First, we can perceive the development of her self-understanding as her responsibilities expand from family to village shepherdess, to parish housekeeper in America, to foundress and general superior of the Sisters of Saint Casimir.

Secondly, Mother Maria's vision for herself and the community she founded was definitely apostolic. Within that vision we can trace a pattern of a very practical approach to life that gives birth to each new juncture and stage of her self-understanding. Repeatedly she accepts and assumes a new role precisely as a need arises within the circumstances of her life. Her older sister marries, she becomes "mother's 'big' housekeeper." When her brother Anthony requests that she come to Scranton, PA to be his housekeeper, she goes not only because her parents encourage her, but because her brother needs her. Believing she is needed at home especially after her father's death, she returns to Lithuania. Once at

home, though, she honestly assesses the situation there and she realizes she really is not needed there at all since her family has grown and matured while she was in America. She cannot forget her impressions of American teaching religious, nor of the faith-needs of other Lithuanian immigrants there. Having recognized that to become a religious and an educator requires an education, she enters the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross at Ingenbohl, Switzerland, not knowing for sure how either would be accomplished. When it becomes evident that the congregation she is founding will be established in America to serve Lithuanian immigrants there, she agrees to go there to learn American customs and the English language. As a result she and her first companions finish their novitiate with an American community, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, in Scranton PA. The same pattern characterizes her leadership as general superior with regard to the community's apostolic mission. Schools, an orphanage, hospitals, catechetical centers open when there is a need and as she has personnel to staff them. Eventually she circumscribes a truly catholic apostolate for the congregation, one that serves all persons of whatever nationality or creed.

Third, we can see that at each stage apparent obstacles do not deter her. In spite of unexpected twists and turns in events, in circumstances and in the loyalties of significant persons, she continues. For example, rather than passively accept the advice of her brother to enter a cloister in Europe when the Lithuanian Priests' Council of America abandons the "New Project," she prays, she seeks the advice of her superiors at Ingenbohl, and in these circumstances she discovers a way to

reassure her brother with practical instructions and procedures so that the process for the foundation might move forward and be realized.

Equally a part of the fabric of God's presence and grace at work in the persons, circumstances and events of her lifetime is Linden's catechism. Translated into Lithuanian by Father Anthony Staniukynas in 1917, it was used by the sisters in the classroom until 1935 when the Baltimore Catechism was translated into Lithuanian and adopted. The catechism will provide insight into the understanding of grace and suffering taught at that time.

Finally, the colonialism of late 19th century world powers profoundly affected the Church in which Mother Maria founded her congregation. A western, ecclesial nationalism characterized the immigrant North American Church and religious life during this time. Rahner's theological interpretation of Church history helps to situate this 19th century "moment" not only within the context of the past, but the present-becoming-future as well.

Rahner offers a simple three-fold division of the history of the Christian proclamation in the Church: the period of Judeo-Christianity; the era of the Church in a particular culture; and, the world-church. Short-lived, the first period of Judeo-Christianity ended when the Jewish Christians carried the Gospel to the Gentiles. Gentile Christianity of the mediterranean world thus became medieval and modern Christianity of

5

Karl Rahner, S.J., Theological Investigations, trans. by Edward Quinn. Vol. XX: Concern for the Church (New York: Crossroad Publications, 1981), pp. 82-83.

Europe and North America, forming the second period of Church history, a church of cultural confinement. With the origin of European colonialism in the 16th century, the Church exported a European or western Christianity along with other elements of European or western civilization and culture to other continents. The American immigrant Church of the 19th century in which Morthe Maria founded her congregation was an appendage of the western or European church that she and all other immigrants to the United States left behind.

The increasing number and variety of ethnic backgrounds among the immigrant faithful of the late 19th and early 20th century in America created the need for different immigrant groups to ask bishops for clergy and religious of their own particular national heritage to speak their respective languages and thereby preserve their inculturated faith-traditions in their new homeland. The congregation Mother Maria founded in 1907 responded to this need for the growing number of their Lithuanian compatriots in America. Her repeated instructions to the sisters to speak in Lithuanian and to teach in Lithuanian reflect the nationalistic

6

Ibid., p. 78.

7

See Document B p. 90, paragraphs 38 and 39; p. 90, footnote 19; p. 124 in The Founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir.

8

Fourteen of the 106 Circular letters direct the sisters to converse in Lithuanian and to teach in Lithuanian. See Nov., 1928 B; Sept., 1929; Nov., 1930; March, 1933; Jan., 1934; April, Sept., Oct., 1935; Feb., August, 1936; March, Sept., 1937; Sept. 1938 and 1939.

ecclesial mentality which Rahner attributes to the second period of Church history. Further, the initial identity of the community as a teaching congregation corresponds to the dominant image of women religious from the 1800's to the present.⁹ Absorbed in the struggle to preserve the Catholic faith within the limitations of the inculturated traditions characteristic of the early 20th century American immigrant Church, Mother Maria and the members of her new foundation could hardly foresee the emergence of Rahner's third period of church history, the era of world-church officially inaugurated by Vatican Council II more than half a century later.¹⁰

9

Lawrence J. Cada, S. M. et al., Shaping the Coming of Religious Life (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), pp. 39-42.

10

Rahner, Concern for the Church, pp. 78-102.

CHAPTER III

The 19th Century Doctrine of Grace

The fundamental qualities of the Christian doctrine of grace appear in the history of Church doctrine because they first appeared in Christian life. While it is not our purpose here to explore the meaning of grace throughout the centuries of Catholicism in detail, it may be helpful to mention some major points that will be useful in understanding the systematic views and theses that led to those commonly taught in the 19th century Church of Mother Maria.

Rondet notes that the Johannine and Pauline writings contain the basic themes for the doctrine of grace in its entirety. Considered as a higher life, supernatural grace pervades the entire fourth gospel. The Christian receives this higher life through rebirth at baptism when the supernatural force of grace provides the light and the power to avoid sin and to promote union with Christ.¹ The Pauline epistles reveal a more developed theology of grace. A gratuitous gift of the Spirit, grace in Pauline theology is primarily an interior gift of the presence of the Spirit for personal sanctification. Received at baptism, this interior gift of the Spirit may manifest itself by external charisms such as prophecy and tongues. Rondet notes that for Paul grace is a special mercy, a special goodness of God that is a permanent favor, a liberating

¹ Henri Rondet, S.J., The Grace of Christ, trans. by Tad Guzie (New York: Newman Press, 1966), pp. 28-32.

agent that creates and insures our filial relationship with the Father. The much later debated themes of justification by faith and predestination of the elect surface in Paul.²

The Greek Fathers emphasized the divinization of the Christian and the transformation that the presence of the Holy Spirit effects in creatures.³ In the fifth century, Augustine, who believed human nature itself was affected by sin, perceived grace as a medicinal quality that would liberate one's will from its slavery to sin and reorient it to God. He also showed how everything in our salvation, from the first moment of faith to one's death is the result of the presence and work of divine grace in persons---a presence that elects to help and save some.⁴

Unlike Augustine, Aquinas' much later 13th century view of human nature was more ontological and cosmological. For him, humankind needed grace not because human nature was sinful, but because humankind's primary end is God.⁵ Grace, then, is that new nature which elevates one to God through a systematized network of natural and supernatural virtues received respectively at birth and at baptism. In the Thomistic economy of grace, sin and grace are ontologically contrary and therefore cannot

2

Ibid. pp. 33-62; p. 366.

3

Ibid. pp. 65-88.

4

Ibid. pp. 129-144.

5

Roger Haight, S. J., The Language and Experience of Grace, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 58.

mutually exist within a person. Offered freely to all persons, grace is a sanctifying quality. Though not all will be saved, the salvific will of God is universal.⁶ The effect of the gratuitous gift of grace is good works. Good works, prompted by grace, could increase grace, while venial sin decreased grace and mortal sin obliterated it altogether.⁷ Both faith and good works comprise justification.

At the dawn of the Reformation, Luther reacted against the scholastic definition of grace and its categories which failed to adequately express his personal religious experience. Luther noted that grace did not miraculously change him, since his sinful self sinned again. In order to be saved, he held that one need only to trust in God and to trust that he/she will be saved through the redemptive merits of Christ rather than through any particular personal good works one might perform. Luther's theology of grace confronted and challenged the Church's traditional scheme on grace in three basic theses: 1) that humanity is thoroughly vitiated by original sin, and therefore humankind can never be truly justified or without sin during this lifetime; 2) that Christ's redemptive merits alone enable God to look upon sinful humanity as just; and that because of this, 3) a person is justified by faith in God alone,⁸ not by one's good works or merits.

6

Rondet, The Grace of Christ, pp. 209-248.

7

Haight, The Language and Experience of Grace, p. 89.

8

Rondet, The Grace of Christ, pp. 275-289.

Thirty years after Luther's manifesto, those at the Council of Trent responded to Luther's determinism and religious individualism. The Council Fathers decreed that if one is to share in the redemption, the individual must be reborn in baptism. Although one can do nothing without grace, an individual can and must respond to the invitation offered by God. In the process of justification, God takes the initiative through external preaching and through the internal summons of grace. Justification is not merely the remission of sins, but a profound transformation in which one is enriched by God's free offer of grace that enables the Christian to accept God, his grace and its attendant gifts. Once justified, the Christian is empowered to grow in justice. Final perseverance in that growth is a gift from God. Subjective certitude regarding both one's predestination and final perseverance is equally untenable, since both the beginning of the graced relationship and the ability to persevere in it are a free gift from God. We can conclude from all this that basically two theses emerge from Trent. First, that justification is a radical transformation within a person, not merely an extrinsic activity of God. Secondly, in this gradual transformation, a person freely and truly cooperates with God, since God will not save anyone apart from an individual's efforts.

Post-Tridentine theological reflections continued to be preoccupied with the problems of grace and freedom, grace and merit, justi-

fication and predestination. In their focus on the effects of created grace, theologians tended to neglect the relationship that grace initiates: the mysterious indwelling of the Holy Spirit and our filial relationship with God. In addition to this, two basic schools developed. One stressed grace and the transcendence of God while the other accentuated the essential freedom of the human person. The first wanted the creature to realize its pure nothingness before God and the second tried to reveal everywhere the creature's response to the divine call.¹⁰

At the end of the 19th century, however, Scheeben contributed much to restore the patristic understanding of grace mentioned earlier. First, he noted that the gift of the Holy Spirit is primary, and that created grace follows from that gift. Secondly, he asserted that the gift and the presence of the Holy Spirit unites us with the Father and the Son. The soul thus sanctified by the Spirit is at once sealed and adopted by the Trinity.¹¹

10

Ibid. p. 312.

11

Ibid. pp. 373-375.

Grace in the 19th Century

Aimed at the doctrinal formation of Catholic clergy and laity, the catechism provided a summary of doctrine in theological form. Josef Deharbe's 1847 catechism, Katholischer Katechismus oder Lehrbegriff, updated the 1843 Mainz Canisius catechism. Deharbe's work enjoyed widespread popularity in Europe and in America even as late as the 1930's in some places.¹² American German clergymen of the late 1860's cooperatively prepared an edition of Deharbe's work especially for use in their schools in the United States. Deharbe himself revised and corrected their manuscript. Katholischer Katechismus fur die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, authored by Deharbe, was published in the United States in 1869. It was well received into forty dioceses. Although work on the English translation began shortly after the special German edition appeared, the English edition was not published until 1882.¹³ By 1902 Deharbe's catechism was in use almost everywhere.¹⁴ James Linden, S. J., updated Deharbe's work and published Katholischer Katechismus fur die Vereinigten von Staaten Nordamerika in 1914. An English edition appeared the following year.

12

New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 3 "Deharbe, Josef," by J.E. Koehler.

13

Josef Deharbe, S. J., Small Catechism from the German Edition Prepared for the United States, (St. Louis: Benziger Brothers, 1882), pp. 3-4.

14

Josef Deharbe, S. J. Abridged Catechism of Christian Doctrine (New York: Fr. Pustet & Co., 1902), p. 3.

In 1917, Rev. A. Staniukynas translated Linden's catechism into Lithuanian.¹⁵ Until 1935 the Lithuanian edition of Linden's catechism was the standard text used by the sisters with their grammar school children of Lithuanian descent. Because she mastered German in her studies at Ingenbohl, Switzerland, Mother Maria could have handled the German edition of Linden's catechism as well as its English and Lithuanian translations.

The forty-eight page Mažasis Katalikų Tikejimo Katekizmas [The Small Catechism of the Catholic Religion] was used in the primary grades. The more developed and detailed 190 page Didysis Katalikų Tikėjimo Katekizmas [The Large Catechism of the Catholic Religion] was used in the upper grades. Both books followed a similar structure with the following sections: Prayers and Instructions, About Faith, About the Commandments, About the Seven Holy Sacraments and about Prayer. The longer edition concludes with an additional section entitled Priedas or Supplement. The supplement includes four sections: the books of the Bible, a short preparation for confession, a short explanation of the Holy mass and finally, a list of nine recommendations for Christian living.

Ten questions and corresponding answers numbering from 288 to

15

James Linden, S. J. Didysis Katalikų Tikėjimo Katekizmas, trans. Rev. A. Staniukynas (Chicago: Draugas Publishing Co., 1917). See Appendix A which includes all the sections pertinent to this study.

It is quite possible that Staniukynas used both Linden's German and English editions to prepare his Lithuanian translation. Like the German edition, he places the Table of Contents at the end of the text. Like the English Edition, he indents every paragraph; and he uses numbers 1, 2, 3 to designate a threefold division of Old Testament books in the Appendix instead of following the German a, b, c in the same section.

298 in the Large Catechism concern grace. We can easily perceive a synthesis of the traditional elements of the doctrine of grace that developed throughout the Church's history: that grace is twofold, actual and sanctifying; that actual grace enlightens the mind, enables the individual to accept grace and to cooperate with it; that God's dispensation and salvific will are universal; that good works and prayer, along with frequent and devout reception of the sacraments obtain sufficient graces for one's salvation; that at baptism the Holy Spirit gifts the soul with sanctifying grace making one a child of God and an heir of heaven; that sanctifying grace is the supernatural life of the soul and a heavenly beauty added to the soul to give it a resemblance to God; that mortal sin effects not only the loss of sanctifying grace, but the loss of God himself;¹⁶ that through the sacrament of penance and perfect contrition, one can regain lost grace and finally, that with every performance of good works and the reception of the sacraments, sanctifying grace can be increased.¹⁷

Of Linden's presentation of grace the following can be said. Taken in its totality, it primarily emphasizes created grace to the neglect of any conscious awareness of uncreated grace. Such a unilateral

16

Ibid. Numbers 295 and 296 wherein this concept is reflected, most closely correspond to the distinction between uncreated grace and created grace---though Linden does not use this terminology. See Appendix A.

17

Ibid. #297 and #298.

approach understandably focuses on the types and categories of grace rather than on the relationship with God and all humankind that grace initiates and sustains. Merely stressing created grace leads to the erroneous conclusion in #296 that equates the loss of sanctifying grace with the loss of divine indwelling.

Secondly, focus on created grace objectifies grace. As an object or exact quantity, grace can be measured, lost, regained and even increased. Such quantitative analysis of grace removes the recipient from the real praxis of faith. Objectivizing grace reduces the economy of salvation to a privatistic religiosity concerned with the acquisition of the appropriate amount of grace(s) at the expense of the experience of a personal encounter with a loving God who does more than dispense or withdraw grace for our welfare.

Thirdly, an exaggerated theological formalism that objectifies grace sets up a sharp distinction between human nature and grace, the world and God. Grace thus spiritualized dichotomizes the human person because its scope of operation is limited to the soul rather than affecting the whole person. Only the sacraments, prayer and good works are seen to ordinarily mediate grace to the neglect of the historical mediations of God's gratuitous presence within the countless "profane" dimensions of day-to-day life. Spiritualized grace is thus ahistorical.

Fourthly, as an ahistorical created object, grace is that extrinsic quality added to human nature to elevate unworthy humankind to God. This approach both underscores the transcendence of God and stresses the abysmal depths of human frailty.

Finally, this understanding of grace admits the functioning of both prevenient and subsequent graces. In Linden's schema a divine intervention may cause a human collaboration as is the case in #293.

We must cooperate with grace and not reject it. Ask God for his grace each day and diligently strive not to close your heart to grace. Lord Jesus says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. (actual grace) He who hears my voice and opens the door (responding to grace) I will go into him and (sanctifying grace) sup with him and he with me. 18

With the exception of two instances within the catechism which speak of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence at baptism,¹⁹ it may be concluded that Linden's treatment of grace is object-oriented rather than being-oriented. Further, obedience rather than love characterizes the relationship that exists between God and the believer.

18

Ibid., #293.

19

Ibid., #295 and #100.

HUMAN SUFFERING IN 19TH CENTURY CHURCH DOCTRINE

Of equal significance to our study is the 19th century doctrine of human suffering. Once again we find Linden's catechism helpful in this regard.

Twenty-eight questions and corresponding answers located in six different sections address the reality of human suffering.²⁰ Four of these sections appear within the context of the author's explanation of the Apostles' Creed: "God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth" (39-44); "The Fall of Man and Original Sin" (57-63); "The Incarnation" (65-72); and lastly, "The Passion" (81-88). Extricated from a lengthy treatment of the sacrament of penance, section five (382-384) describes the punishment due to sin. The final section, number 6 of the Supplement, offers practical directives to the individual in the experience of suffering.

In these very different sections Linden consistently approaches human suffering in terms of what causes it and the effects it produces within the soul of the believer. God "who controls all things" may send one suffering.²¹ The suffering that is thus initiated by God may affect the sinner's salvation²² and may enable the just to increase their reward

20

Ibid. See Sections on Suffering, Appendix A.

21

Ibid., #44.

22

Ibid., #43; #44 Application.

23
in heaven. Hence, suffering is a special gift from the "Heavenly Father,"
and when accepted as such, it can be a source of rich blessings. 24

Through both the sin of "our first parents" and every subsequent
sin, humanity, in its disobedience to God's commandments also causes hu-
man suffering. 25 The effects of original sin inherited by every person
and each mortal sin are both spiritual and physical suffering: a loss
of sanctifying grace, a permanent rupture within one's filial relation-
ship with God; a blighted intellect and weakened will; an inclination
toward evil; and lastly, pain and death. 26

Having designated God as well as human disobedience as agents of
human suffering, Linden identifies another source of human suffering:
the punishment due to sin. 27 Humankind inherited sin with its eternal
punishment, the loss of sanctifying grace and heaven. At the same time,
every person also merited temporal punishment, those sufferings one
experiences presently and hereafter in purgatory. 28 Christ, the sinless

23
Ibid., #43; #384.

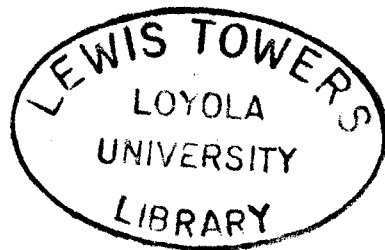
24
Ibid., #6.

25
Ibid., #59; #383.

26
Ibid., #59; #60.

27
Ibid., #63; #383.

28
Ibid., #383.



one, suffered out of obedience to his "Heavenly Father" and because of
 his love for all persons.²⁹ His mute obedience won forgiveness for human-
 ity's disobedience and thus merited the forgiveness of the eternal punish-
 ment due to sin.³⁰ Thus his passion and death earned humankind the right
 to merit grace and eternal life.³¹

Though God forgives the eternal punishment due to sin, he does not
 always completely forgive the temporal punishment due to sin.³² Linden
 directs the believer to "hate sin because it brings misery on earth."³³
 Subject though one may be to present suffering and the possibility of
 purgatory, penance and the patient endurance of one's daily crosses may
 produce the following effects: the mitigation of the temporal punish-
 ment due to sin; the merit of many graces; and finally, a rich reward in
 heaven.³⁴

Linden's categorical method of cause and effect places rigid de-
 terminations upon the reality of human suffering as it reduces the mys-

29
 Ibid., #84; #85.

30
 Ibid., #86.

31
 Ibid., #87.

32
 Ibid., #384.

33
 Ibid., #63.

34
 Ibid., #384.

tery of human suffering to a problem. This oversimplification of the praxis of suffering is reflected in the determinate question and corresponding answer format of the catechism. Consequently God, Jesus and humankind become personalities possessing narrowly circumscribed roles within salvation history. Each is hardly interrelated since each is strictly separated by nature and function. God, as benevolent cause of suffering and Jesus, the one who endured suffering perfectly, exist as transcendent and autonomous others in relation to each other and to the believer. Both God and Jesus act upon the believer rather than in solidarity with the believer in the experience of suffering. At best Linden's God and Jesus exist alongside human suffering thus denying the dialogical reality that exists among the persons of the Trinity as well as between the Trinity and every other.

Furthermore, Linden's emphasis on the effects of Christ's passion, death and resurrection focuses the believer's attention on what Christ did for each person rather than who Christ is for each person. Explaining Christ's suffering in this way inspires the wrong motivation for the suffering believer's imitation of the suffering Christ. Like Christ, the believer mutely accepts suffering: in unquestioning and dutiful obedience to the Father; ³⁵ because of his/her indebtedness to Christ; ³⁶ to avoid

35

Ibid., #84; #6.

36

Ibid., #88.

37

suffering now and in purgatory; to merit many graces and a rich reward
in heaven. As a result, Linden reduces the paradigmatic significance of

39

Christ's sufferings to personal salvation alone and thus encourages a self-preoccupation with the benefits one receives. Viewed in this way, human

suffering can be easily and incorrectly sought as the only means to union with God. As Gerstenberger notes, suffering does not necessarily lead to

salvation, but rather, fellowship with Christ has its outworking in suffering as the believer discovers in the experience of his/her suffering

40

one's constant dependence upon God. This utter dependence upon God requires a radical self-forgetfulness, one that is a life-long cultivated vision that looks away from oneself to Jesus who in turn draws the believer to love every other person. Linden, however, promotes a privatistic religiosity. Typical of 19th century piety, his schema fails to acknowledge the social dimension of authentic Christian mission and ministry.

Finally, we can conclude that in the theological constructs of 19th century Catholicism, human suffering existed in opposition to both uncreated grace and created grace. The causal relationship God shares

37

Ibid., #63.

38

Ibid., #384.

39

Ibid.

40

Erhard Gerstenberger and Wolfgang Schrage, Suffering, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), pp. 208-210.

with Jesus and all humankind in the event of human suffering places him at cross-purposes with his creation. A demanding, exact judge, God renders, measure for measure, graces to those who dutifully obey him as well as punishments to those who disobey him. In such a system of punishments and rewards, uncreated grace, the offer of God's very self to accompany every other even in suffering, becomes overshadowed by the believer's efforts to satisfy God for his/her human nature vitiated by sin. Consequently it encourages the believer to strive relentlessly for the appropriate amount of graces requisite not only for eternal life, but even for a "higher degree of happiness in heaven."⁴¹

As that reward for dutiful obedience, created grace also stands in opposition to human suffering. In the sections of Linden's catechism on grace which we reviewed earlier, we saw that mortal sin and sanctifying grace (created grace) cannot coexist within the soul since through sinful disobedience one loses the divine indwelling altogether.⁴² Sanctifying grace is that which restores one's obedient relationship with the Father.⁴³ Once more we become children of God and heirs of heaven. Another aspect of created grace, actual grace, similarly repairs the damages wrought by sin. It enlightens our darkened minds. It strengthens our weakened wills

41

See Appendix A, #292.

42

Ibid., #294, #296.

43

Ibid., Compare #294 with #59,1.

to avoid evil inclinations so as to do good.⁴⁴ Personal sin, then, thwarts the presence of created grace within the believer. Only the believer can cause sin. But one is advised to hate sin not because of the disintegration it creates within one's relationship with God, self and all creation, but rather because of the misery or suffering it brings to an individual.⁴⁵ Hence, human suffering in this theological system exists in stark relief against the background of a "benevolent" divine intentionality that would restore a maverick humanity to its proper place.

With the critiques of the 19th century doctrine on grace and suffering in mind, we can now turn to the circular letters of Mother Maria.

44

Ibid., Compare #290 with #59,2.

45

Ibid., #63.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPERIENCE OF GRACE AND HUMAN SUFFERING IN SELECTED LETTERS OF 1932

INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCULAR LETTERS

By 1928 the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir which Mother Maria founded had experienced rapid growth in membership which enabled it to serve twenty-three parishes in America as well as its fledgling missions in Lithuania. Though dispersed during the academic year, the sisters in America returned each summer to their motherhouse in Chicago for further study and to renew their life together. The General Chapter of 1928 asked of Mother Maria two things: to give the assembled professed a bi-weekly instruction during the summer months and to write a monthly letter or instruction to the sisters dispersed in the various parishes during the months of the school year.¹

In September of 1928 Mother Maria began writing the Circular Letters to the sisters in their respective "missions" and to the sisters in Lithuania. She continued this custom until her death in April of 1940. The Circular Letters of Mother Maria number one-hundred three.² My procedure in this chapter will be to examine six of the nine letters

¹ Mother Maria Kaupas, Loving You, (Chicago: Sisters of St. Casimir, 1980), p. 14.

² For easy reference, the complete text of each letter appears before the analysis of the letter. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Mother Maria refer to the letter presently being discussed. As an additional aid to the reader, I have introduced paragraph numbers.

written during 1932: January, February, March, May, June, and December A.

The year 1932 held special meaning for Mother Maria and the sisters because it marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. Commemorative events such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc., are often opportunities to refine one's perspective of life. The past is reviewed, the present evaluated, and the future anticipated. Mother Maria accomplishes this in the six selected letters in a manner unique to this period. Unlike the letters of any other era, there surfaces a "journey" leitmotif as the primary analogate of the spiritual identity of the Congregation. In this chapter as we proceed to discover Mother Maria's understanding of grace and human suffering, we will attempt to uncover the internal logic and implications of the paradigm she employs.

January 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] By the grace of the Most High, we again begin to number the days of a new year. The past year will never return and, as we watch it slip into the past, how we would like to be assured that its days were filled not only with noble thoughts and aspirations but also with noble deeds. There was no lack of God's graces, but we are now embarrassed when we realize how often our indolence impeded our striving after virtue. Let us express our sorrow and then, as we advance into the new year, let us strengthen our will with firm resolves to be steadfast in doing good, trusting God unreservedly, and to walk courageously the paths marked out for us by His grace.

[2] This year of Our Lord, 1932, is for us, the Sisters of St. Casimir, a special year for we commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of our Congregation. All of us who entered the ranks of the Congregation's laborers during this silver jubilee era shared the first hardships as well as the first singular graces of God and its first joys. We have much for which to thank God, and with all my heart I ask you: thank Him!

[3] May this entire year be one of thanksgiving. I suggest that each one of us choose some practice---a prayer or some good work---by which we will express our gratitude to God for all His assistance and graces bestowed on our Congregation during these first twenty-five years. Let us thank Him for having called us to share in these manifestations of His goodness. Let us thank Him, too, for the hardships which, with His Divine help, we have borne. How to express this gratitude to our most gracious Father, your own hearts will dictate. I know, so I merely urge you: be grateful to Him!

[4] As we reflect upon the past, it becomes evident that God's grace was never lacking, but equally evident are our own negligences, omissions, and shortcomings in the estimable work of our Community. If we note that this silver interval is beginning to tarnish and to become dull, at least now restore its luster through a more zealous performance of good works; let us put forth all effort to prepare for a golden period of pure brilliance. God will help us if only we cooperate with His grace.

[5] With the particular ends of the Community's work in mind, I must today seriously caution you that in the spiritual sphere there are numerous infractions in silence and recollection, and in your apostolate among children, regarding Lithuanian. We must, without fail, improve in these two areas.

[6] Thank God, here too, I find some notable exceptions. In some of our religious families the Sisters are striving to keep silence and to

uphold our Lithuanian heritage. I advise others also to imitate these efforts. For example, in order to better observe it faithfully during the specified times and in the designated places, a list of their names is posted in the community room. Sometimes the intention is specified. Offenders indicate the number of offenses after their names. They then perform some private penance for these infractions.

[7] A similar method is used as an aid for speaking Lithuanian. Speaking English during those recreations when the use of Lithuanian is compulsory, failing to converse in Lithuanian with one's pupils, are all transgressions against which the Sisters must be vigilant. Moreover, they themselves try to read and encourage their pupils to read Lithuanian books and periodicals which can be obtained from Lithuania. It is gratifying to see how much the pupils enjoy reading them when their meaning is explained and the true spirit and love of their Lithuanian heritage is nurtured and upheld. Dear Sisters, this is one of our most neglected duties. Let us regard this obligation as of primary importance, and God will help us.

[8] Once again I urge all of you toward gratitude to God and zeal in the tasks He has assigned us. From my heart wishing you a truly Happy New Year, I remain, as always,

With love, your
Mother Maria

JANUARY 1932---CREATED GRACE: GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND ASSISTANCE
FOR THE JOURNEY

The subject matter of Mother Maria's letter of January 1932 reveals that she is present to what is happening here and now in the life of the community. First, she mentions that it is a new year marking a special era, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the community. Secondly, she proposes that the year be one of thanksgiving for the graces of the past. Thirdly, she notes that there are both personal and communal infractions against silence and recollection. Lastly, she urges the sisters to speak only Lithuanian in the apostolate so as to maintain the Lithuanian heritage of those whose language and culture had been suppressed in their homeland. Just as her admonitions stressing the use of the Lithuanian language to preserve the identity of the immigrants they served can be understood in light of a 19th century nationalism that pervaded the world and the Church, so, too, can her use of the term "grace" be best understood within the context of her 19th century catechetical training.

Mother Maria uses the word "grace" seven times in her January 1932 letter. In the opening paragraph, grace is God's providence that permits each sister to begin a new year. It is God's generous assistance that enabled each sister to fill the past year with "noble thoughts, aspirations and deeds. . ." Lastly, grace is God's own light that will reveal to each person the path one is to follow in the future.

The following observations about Mother Maria's use of "grace" in this first paragraph can be made. First, grace as she uses it is a

provident, generous assistance and an enlightening God-given operation upon the individual. As such, her use of grace reproduces the 19th century thought and teachings about created grace we discussed earlier.³ Secondly, this initial paragraph introduces the first strains of the "journey" leitmotif because she sees that this operative grace pervades the present and the past. She confidently trusts its future intervention. Hence, she intimately links grace with the journey of one's individual way to God. Lastly, because she understands created grace in this way, we find here a hint of grace as God's provident presence, or uncreated grace.

From the individual sister's journey in the first paragraph Mother Maria shifts now to the community's journey of the first twenty-five years. In this second paragraph she seems to separate grace from the context of life. She writes: "All of us who entered the ranks of the Congregation's first laborers during this silver jubilee era shared the first steps taken in the Congregation's works and the first hardships as well as the first singular graces of God and its first joys." Whatever she understands to be "the first singular graces" appear to be those operations of God apart from the first hardships and joys, as though she understood them to be some particularly special founding graces. We can only speculate on her intent here. Again, grace is an external divine intervention operative in their lives.

3

See Appendix A, #290. Herein she speaks primarily about actual grace.

In her next reference to grace in the third paragraph, its use has still another meaning. Herein "graces" could possibly mean God's assistance. Though we cannot assign any exact meaning here we can deduce that she reveals that grace is God-given; and that in her use of the verb "bestowed," she considers God's past assistance and graces as his gifts. This particular usage again points to her typically 19th century expression of grace.⁴

The fourth and last paragraph we will study in detail in this letter of January 1932 contains two references to grace. As in the first paragraph, grace is God's prevenient operation that has been and always is "never lacking," or is always present. In her final reference to grace she places the concept of prevenient grace before subsequent grace. One progresses in the spiritual life then, or the journey, insofar as the individual trusts God unreservedly and cooperates with his grace. She applies this same principle to the journey the community makes. The Congregation will succeed insofar as its members corporately trust God unreservedly and corporately cooperate with his grace.

From these four paragraphs we can see that the religious life as Mother Maria perceived it, is a journey into which God's providential and operative graces intervene. For the religious in community, "the paths marked out for us by His grace" are never traveled alone. Just as God's

4

See Appendix A, #288, #289, #294, #298. The catechism also uses the verb "bestow" in reference to grace as God's gifting action upon individuals.

provident preventient and subsequent graces are at the sisters' disposal at any point during the journey, so too are the sisters accompanied by fellow religious who also share their steps. Seen in this way, religious life is a dynamic network of interpersonal relationships with God and with one's fellow religious. We will see how she develops this further.

February 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] As we begin this month, we shall also begin the holy season of Lent. My intense desire is that during the holy Lenten season all of you may draw ever more closely to Jesus, our Savior, and our best Friend. When He walked the earth, men came to Him with complete confidence. St. Mark (6:56) writes in his Gospel: "And whithersoever He entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole." Without doubt, people with problems and troubles waited eargerly for Him, or went in search of Him just so He might help them.

[2] Do we not need His help? O Lord! The very thought that we are spouses of Christ, yet looking inwardly at how we appear, fills our souls with fear and concern. And where shall we seek help for our shortcomings and strength for a more zealous life in His service, if not from Jesus? We do not have to wait for Him nor seek Him from afar, for He remains among us always and is ever disposed to help us, waiting only for us to touch Him.

[3] We come in close contact with Jesus through the Sacraments He instituted. Every morning in Holy Communion He actually unites Himself to us; He touches us during Holy Mass, during meditations, visits, prayers and works. Whether or not we are aware of Him, He operates in our souls, ever touches us. But this does not suffice, for He expects increased effort from us. "And as many as touched Him were made whole." (Mark 6: 56) It is obvious that He is waiting for us to stretch forth our arms to Him, for us to come close to Him. How shall we do this? Through love. We must love Him ardently and surrender ourselves totally.

[4] As we decide on the Lenten practices which, however small, we shall lovingly offer Him, to these let us add the resolution to live these days in intimate friendship with Him, to cherish Him as our dearest Friend, to Whom the smallest detail of our lives is of utmost importance. For this reason, let our first, and every subsequent, thought, word, and deed be offered daily to Him. Let us embrace Him sharing all these with Him. He never forgets us, but constantly longs for the love of our hearts, and it is only those hearts which cling to Him through love that are saved.

[5] My dear Sisters, let us all strive particularly during Lent to draw as close to Him as the children whom He held within the circle of His arms, and who jostled one another in their effort to be closest to Him. May our Spouse be gladdened by the vision of our Community in holy competition with one another for increased love of Him. Forget-

ful of self, let us offer Him each misunderstanding, each humiliation that offends or hurts us. Finally let us place in His hands our weaknesses and failures. Our sincere, contrite love for Christ will heal our ills and shortcomings because it will constitute "touching" Him. Let us apply the healing power of this ardent love of Jesus and become the kind of religious He wishes us to become.

[6] Placing with the most profound trust all my needs with yours within the pierced Heart of Jesus, I remain, as always,

Loving you,
Mother Maria

FEBRUARY 1932---UNCREATED GRACE AND CREATED GRACE IN THE JOURNEY

Though "grace" is not pronounced in the circular of February 1932, Mother Maria orchestrates a complex synthesis of both uncreated and created grace. My procedure will be to identify her understanding of uncreated grace, or God's presence and the offer of that presence as well as created grace, the effects of the presence of God.

"My intense desire is that during the holy Lenten season all of you may draw ever more closely to Jesus, our Savior and our best Friend." This second statement of the first paragraph reveals the following: First, we can see that for Mother Maria the primary focus of this particular Lenten season does not rest on the number of practices or penances one can perform; but rather, she hopes that this Lent might be a time of interior growth in intimacy with Jesus. Secondly, while we could find evidence of Jesus as our savior in the catechism,⁵ Linden's over-all object-oriented presentation of grace would hardly support her assertion that Jesus is "our best Friend" and that each person could draw nearer to him in a relationship as personal as friendship. Thirdly, the action of one drawing "ever more closely to Jesus. . ." that she introduces here is as dynamic a relationship as is the "journey" leitmotif in the previous letter. Finally, in this statement she assumes that a relationship between Jesus and each sister already exists.

In the remainder of the paragraph, she presents the sisters with

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See Appendix A, #288, #291-#293.

the people of Mark 6, 56, as a vivid example of persons "with problems and troubles" who encountered Jesus through waiting for him, searching for him, and through touching him. She understands that these Gospel personalities were helped or made whole as a result of first touching him. The encounter with Jesus is followed by his help or healing; that is, his created grace. Moreover, it may be noted that through her use of this passage, the Jesus she portrays is a very approachable and personal presence. Finally, even the most marginal encounter with his presence results in his help.

Within the five sentences of paragraph two, a unique dynamic begins to unfold, the interplay between two presences: God, and if one responds, every other. We see that Mother Maria alternates her focus of attention from self to Jesus; from Jesus to self, as she proceeds to describe the encounter that quite possibly reflects her own experience of uncreated grace.

With the first statements she begins with self. Like the persons in Mark 6, 56, one has only to look within to recognize one's need for Jesus' help. Unlike the persons in the Gospel who had to wait for Jesus to arrive, Mother Maria's final statement in this paragraph reveals her belief that he is always present. "We do not have to wait for Him nor seek Him from afar, for He remains among us always and is ever disposed to help us, waiting only for us to touch Him." In addition to her awareness of the divine indwelling, or uncreated grace, a condition made

6
possible at baptism, we also sense her awareness of God's presence as the offer of his very self to humankind. Hence, it is God who waits for each person rather than the opposite situation as described in the Gospel. It is God who initiates the relationship with humankind by the offer of his presence as he waits for us to "touch Him." Finally, with this statement Mother Maria has succeeded in shifting our attention from self to reflecting on the presence of Jesus and his manner of befriending us.

In paragraph three, Mother Maria mentions the traditional means of grace: sacraments, prayer and good works. 7 As previously mentioned, Linden's manual primarily stressed the objective qualities of grace and in so doing, describes what "grace(s)" one receives through each of these usual means. Hence, through the sacraments, prayer and good works, Christ dispenses those graces necessary for personal salvation. For Mother Maria, however, the sacraments, prayer and good works are those avenues through which Jesus encounters or "touches" each person. She emphasizes Christ's involvement rather than what one receives from him.

In the third and fourth sentences of paragraph three, she again underscores the actuality of the Divine presence and its self-offering nature that operates even when one does not recognize Jesus or is unaware of him. In this instance she describes his operation in us, or preven-

6
See Appendix A, #295 and #100.

7
Ibid., #288 and #298.

ient grace, that invites a subsequent response. "Whether or not we are aware of Him, He operates in our souls, ever touches us. But this does not suffice, for He expects increased effort from us."

Next, she interjects a segment of Mark 6, 56. In so doing, she indirectly implies the manner of humankind's response to Jesus' repeated self-offer: through "touching" or encountering him as the Gospel personalities; and through experiencing the same effects of that encounter, his healing. Encountering him always precedes the effects of his presence.

Lastly, the closing statements of paragraph three reemphasize Jesus' continual self-offer to humankind, his patient waiting; and, they serve to point out the practical human manner of "touching Him." Hence, the paragraph ends with a return to the focus on self as she sketches the general characteristics of each person's way of touching him: through love and total self-surrender.

What does it mean to touch him through love, and how does one surrender oneself totally to him? Practical woman and teacher, Mother Maria now begins to specify in paragraphs four and five exactly what the sisters' response to God's self-offer entails. Even though she stresses growth in intimacy with Jesus during this Lent, she does not dispense the sisters from personal lenten practices. In fact, she assumes that they have already planned to select them. Whatever they may be, these practices, if offered to him lovingly, can be a concrete means to "touch Him." However, for Mother Maria the more direct means to "cherish Him as our dearest Friend," is through a reciprocal self-

offering to him. In the remainder of paragraph four she elaborates the meaning of one of the morning prayers, a self-offering prayed privately upon rising, and the "Morning Offering," recited in common during the Chapel prayers. Both are found in Švento Kazimiero Sesery Bendrosios Maldos, a manual of Community Prayers published in 1930. 8

Through offering one's every "thought, word and deed," and sharing with him "to whom the smallest detail of our lives is of utmost importance," a person not only touches him, but through his/her self-revelation, embraces him. Having discussed "thoughts, words and deeds," the final paragraph before her closing statement, paragraph five, illustrates 9 the last segment of the morning prayer: sufferings. Although she does not use the word "suffering," feelings of disappointment, humiliation, hurt caused by another through misunderstanding, comprised her definition of human suffering herein. Offering Jesus these personal experiences that shape and affect one's very self as much as "thoughts, words and

8

Linden's catechism does not contain any "Morning Offering." However, the first prayer upon rising in the Manual of Prayers of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters given as a gift to Mother Immaculata by Sister Cyril, IHM, contains the elements of self-offering. In 1927 the Sisters of St. Casimir published a similar manual of prayer. Its format is identical to the IHM manual. Pages 3-95 are in Latin; 96-236, in Lithuanian in Maldu Rinkinēlis. Švento Kazimiero Sesery Bendrosios Maldos, published in 1930 and in use when this letter was written, is entirely in Lithuanian. The first prayer upon rising was identical to the IHM manual of 1924. See Appendix B.

9

"I consecrate to Thee, in union with the merits of Jesus Christ, all my thoughts, words and actions, and all the sufferings of this day." See Appendix B.

deeds," provides additional means for drawing closer to him. Self-revelation and self-offering seem to involve two contradictory movements: self-awareness and self-forgetfulness. Before being able to offer one's suffering to him, one must first be aware of that hurt. A person must recognize it, feel it, own it and admit that it causes pain. Mother Maria seems to assume this, otherwise, how could one offer anything to him in detail? She also recognizes, however, that if one desires to use "suffering" or anything else as a means to encounter Jesus, he/she must be equally aware and convinced of Christ's desire to know about it, to really share that experience with him/her. Here it seems that self-forgetfulness is not a denial of human suffering, but a compassionate understanding of what one concretely does when suffering. Self-forgetfulness is the act of owning the unpleasant experience and recognizing Christ's offer of himself in it as he extends his hands to receive it. The result is Christ's healing, or the effects of "touching Him" in this way.

By way of summary, it can be said that in the February circular of 1932, Mother Maria reveals her practical understanding of grace as God's offer of himself to humankind. The healing effects of his presence and the strength to deal with one's sufferings always follow an encounter with him. She is also equally cognizant of the main elements of humankind's response to God's self-revelation: a loving and reciprocal self-offering. Finally, for her, self-presence and self-forgetfulness facilitate one's self-offering given in loving response to God.

March 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] Last month we resolved to draw closer to Jesus, and remaining as close to Him as possible, to plunge into the abyss of His love. Let us this month heed anew His repeated invitation to climb the hill of perfection toward Him.

[2] Envision Jesus atop a hill, at the foot of which we stand, as He invites us to scale it. For what purpose? Solely that we may be with Him, which should suffice us for today, for Lent, for our entire life, for all eternity. Let us contemplate Him at the summit of this hill. It was not easy for Him to reach it, but carrying His cross He did it for us, and now He invites us to imitate Him. For this He chose us in calling us to the religious life. In the convent, we began to climb the steep hill of perfection and, sometimes more or sometimes less zealously, continued our ascent toward Him. We have still not reached Him on the pinnacle, and now during this Lenten season, as He invites and encourages us anew to mount more earnestly toward Him, let us nobly answer His invitation and strive to progress more rapidly.

[3] What does this climbing entail? Many difficulties, numerous falls, and much that goes against our poor, weak human nature. See our companions in this ascent. They may not all be attractive, yet we climb with them because they too were called, and that fact should outweigh all else and render them welcome companions. During the course of this journey, many temptations must be overcome, temptations to discouragement and even abandonment of the ascent. Let us keep our gaze steadfastly upon Him at the summit and recall the goal of our God-given vocation--union with Him. He sees the difficulties of our journey and He pities us. He descends and says to us, "Behold, let us go up together. And so we do not go alone, for He journeys with us. Immediately the going becomes less difficult, for we can do all things with Him.

[4] With Him leading us in our ascent, what is left for us to do? To remain ever close to Him, and never forget that He chose us that we might follow Him, make His interests our own, treasure all that He treasures, despise what He despises, and continue our climb to Him.

[5] Let this, then, be our program for Lent and for Life. Let us meditate upon the temptations which He endured, the hardships, the self-sacrifices, humiliations, and His passion and death. All this He suffered that He might satisfy His Heavenly Father for our offenses. Let us ask ourselves, "What am I going to do for Him?" I will suffer with Him. Suffering is necessary, and Jesus cannot suffer any more. His is now a glorified body. But someone must suffer, for suffering must continue. To whom can He entrust this precious privilege if not

to His spouses, who offered themselves as oblations to Him?

[6] Lay people often ask, "Why is there so much suffering?" Among religious such a question is superfluous. Here suffering is expected; for this we entered religion and for this we remained. Let us, therefore, accept suffering willingly, even with joy, as a mark of special privilege. Let us remind ourselves in our hour of suffering: I am His co-worker and I rejoice that He makes use of me, just as I am. For Him, I am neither too old nor too weak, nor too incapable; I am working with Him, as He wishes, even when sickness and suffering alone are my lot.

[7] Let us then lift up our hearts, for we are His spouses, His holocausts, His co-workers. Let us perseveringly climb the hill of perfection always with Him. As an expression of our gratitude and love for the honor bestowed on us, let us seek to do whatever good we can, to find any means by which we may ascend higher.

[8] Along the way we encounter many opportunities that we can always utilize: for self-denial, affording others happiness; for suffering, that others may not be inconvenienced; for rendering service, even in small matters; opportunities to receive services gratefully, that we may thus follow the example of our Lord. Did He not accept the services of Simon and Veronica? These are all little acts of love, but they oil the wheels of family life within convent walls, particularly when we have no natural attraction for one another! If we accomplish little good, it will not be due to lack of opportunities but rather to our failure to avail ourselves of these. But we shall not be so negligent. We shall climb with Jesus Who is so generous and Who gave us an example that we might do as He said.

Together with all of you, I commend myself to His love.

Loving you,
Mother Maria

MARCH 1932---THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF GRACE AND HUMAN SUFFERING

While Mother Maria disclosed the interplay between uncreated grace and created grace in the previous letter, she stresses another aspect of God's presence in the March 1932 circular: the reality of Jesus' self-revelation in his transcendence as well as in his immanence. She notes that while all have already resolved to draw close to him and to remain as close to him as possible, he is always summoning them forward to himself. The reality of Christ's self-offer in his immanence and transcendence assumes concrete dimensions for her within the "journey" motif. Though background in the two previous letters, the "journey" pervades the entire March 1932 letter as Mother Maria uses a common 19th century analogy to define religious life: climbing "the hill of perfection." To perceive religious life in this way implies that it is a life-long process of purification. Purification in turn implies suffering. It will be my procedure to examine her understanding of the meaning and purpose of human suffering; its role within religious life; and finally, the relationship of human suffering to grace in the offer of Jesus to journey with and at the same time beyond an individual.

In viewing the March 1932 circular of Mother Maria in its totality, we find quite a different approach to the reality of human suffering in relation to grace. For her uncreated grace or Jesus' offer

of himself to every other exists without question in the experience of human suffering. In the second and third paragraphs she relates very simply how Jesus intimately accompanies each member of the community in the suffering moments of their journey to complete union with him. Accepting his companionship and abandoning oneself to his leadership necessitates an active share in his concerns. Thus the intimate relationship with Christ that she encourages her sisters to embody in paragraph four has its outworking in imitation of his passion, death and resurrection, especially in the event of human suffering. One suffers in union with Christ not so much for personal salvation, but rather, like Christ, one suffers for the salvation of all others. The last four paragraphs describe how every event of daily life can be redemptive for others, and beneficial to "family life within convent walls." Having sketched these general observations, we will now examine the letter in greater detail.

In the second through fourth paragraphs of this circular Mother Maria expresses her understanding of Jesus' nature. Unlike Linden whose Jesus remained aloof in his perfect obedience to the Father, Mother Maria alternates her attention first from Jesus who goes before us (paragraph 2) to Jesus who travels with us (paragraph 3). In the fourth paragraph the two interacting modes of his nature converge into a single reality. Without pronouncing the word "suffering," these paragraphs reveal her practical approach to suffering and the manner in which one never suffers alone, since Jesus who is at once transcendent and immanent offers himself to an individual throughout "the

climb."

Beginning with paragraph two, we see that in the image Mother Maria employs of Jesus' presence at the top of a hill and all others at the bottom, she acknowledges that a distance separates one from him. Although she envisions his position as one above humankind, he is also before us, rather than totally beyond us in his otherness. Therefore, his presence is still tangible rather than outside the scope of a person's ordinary means to experience him. Furthermore, the distance between him and every other can be lessened since even in his transcendence, his self-offer welcomes one to attempt the ascent of the "hill of perfection," a means to union with him.

Continuing, she states that the sole purpose of the religious lifestyle is to be united with Jesus "for today, for Lent, for our entire life, for all eternity." In the same place, Mother Maria next logically names two practical means to attain that union: contemplation of Christ and imitation of Christ. She reveals that through the contemplative dynamics of looking at Jesus and listening to him, one can recognize the following: his struggle, the manner in which he struggled; why he suffered; and at the same time, one can hear his invitation to imitate him. The act of looking at Christ and listening to him in this way precedes imitation of him. When compared to Linden's treatment of Christ's passion, this second paragraph contains an essential difference. Mother Maria focuses on Jesus and the manner in which he reached "the summit of this hill," rather than emphasizing the effects of his passion.

In the concluding sentences of paragraph two, she observes that those in the convent who have already begun to make the ascent are still on the way. To reach Jesus so as to share his perspective, is a gradual process as is the formation of all interpersonal relationships. For her, looking and listening, the roots of one's authentic mimesis of Christ, are nurtured by Christ's continual invitation and encouragement to "mount more earnestly toward Him."

Moving to paragraph three, we find that Mother Maria discloses a practical approach to suffering. Union with Christ in the experience of suffering involves two movements we have seen before in the previous letter, self-presence and self-forgetfulness.¹¹ The progression from the former to the latter that she traces herein enables the reader to own his/her own experience of suffering and to recognize Christ's personal offer to share in it. Hence, the first three sentences assist the reader to identify and name the sources of suffering in one's life: personal struggles with self, with others in community, and, with fidelity to one's commitment. Awareness of the source of one's suffering and of the suffering itself gives way to self-forgetfulness as she returns the reader's attention to Jesus. To the earlier contemplative dynamics of looking and listening she adds remembering and finally, Jesus' own embrace, so that at last, in the midst of suffering one may be "caught up" in the Lord. Looking at him, remembering one's initial encounter with him and

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See page 54 above.

and listening to him are those activities of self-forgetfulness which still one's efforts to dominate the existing situation. As a result one begins to perceive that she is not alone in her concerns as the individual discovers that Jesus' self-offer has always been extended to her. Thus in the activities of self-forgetfulness one grows in presence to Jesus as she begins to recognize him; as she comes to acknowledge and accept that her singular efforts alone can never achieve union with him; and finally, as she offers to share with him even the difficulties of her journey. Mother Maria notes that Jesus responds to the reciprocal self-offering of the individual transforming the "human not yet" into the "human already."¹² His presence enables the religious to experience the fullness of her humanity since she is now no longer controlled or crushed by the experience of suffering. Consequently she experiences "the going" as less difficult since one can now "do all things with Him."

For Mother Maria, Jesus' presence unquestionably permeates every moment of one's life. Accompanied by Jesus, the religious is empowered by his presence to allow him rather than herself to navigate the way. She looks to him for direction as she entrusts the journey to him. Remaining "ever close to Him," and never forgetting his personal invitation to the journey in religious community, the individual's values and visions are exchanged, even abandoned for his interests; what he trea-

12

Tibor Horvath, S.J., Faith Under Scrutiny, (Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 272.

sure; his way. While following him, the religious herein assumes the mind and heart of Christ.

Thus far Mother Maria has described the ideal loving interpersonal relationship between Christ and the sisters she addresses. As Christ accompanies the religious in every moment, so the sister in turn accompanies and therefore follows him. But the experiences of remaining "ever close to Him" and subsequently following him that Mother Maria describes here, inevitably lead to her affirmation that this spousal relationship is not primarily in service of itself. The remainder of her letter bears this out.

To put on the mind and heart of Christ is to possess a radical life-attitude that willingly and actively assumes the mission of Christ here and now. Mother Maria's description of Christ's mission in the fifth paragraph echoes Linden's explanations of the purpose of the paschal sacrifice. Like Linden, she notes that the historical Jesus endured all sufferings and death to "satisfy His Heavenly Father for our offenses."¹³ However, the parallel between Linden's constructs as well as her understanding of the purpose of Christ's sufferings and the role human suffering assumes for her fellow religious, ends here. In the catechism self-aggrandizement characterized the basic motivation for the Christian's mimesis of Christ in the endurance of one's sufferings. In

13

When compared with the catechism, even the language of this statement coincides. Both here and in the catechism God is Christ's "Heavenly Father." See Appendix A, #81-85.

In contrast, love for the redeemer and his interests (the salvation of all) marks Mother Maria's understanding of the paradigmatic significance of Christ's sufferings for her religious congregation. She perceives that in itself human suffering is simply an inevitable part of "our weak human nature." But for his spouses who are intimately united with him, human suffering becomes transformed into a work of co-redemptive love. Therefore, the sisters' intimate share in the mind and heart of Christ set forth in the previous paragraph, impels the religious to be his body as well, likewise atoning for the sins of humankind. It is suffering of this redemptive nature that Mother Maria maintains must continue. Further, suffering borne of co-redemptive love is an essential structure of the congregation's religious lifestyle.

Having expressed the co-redemptive significance of human suffering for herself and for her sisters, Mother Maria's opening statement of paragraph six encapsulates a comprehensive definition of the religious woman. While engaged in a uniquely espoused interiority with Jesus, the religious woman possesses an outward orientation to the world as she continues the redemptive work of Christ in the world. She writes, "Let us then lift up our hearts, for we are His spouses, His holocausts, His co-workers."

In the last two paragraphs, however, Mother Maria does not confine the sisters' opportunities for co-redemptive love to the experience of human suffering. A persevering closeness to Jesus "along the way" that she advocates in paragraph six, expands one's heart to see every event, even the most commonplace, as an opportunity for co-redemptive

love. One's perseverance in the creative utilization of these "little acts of love" listed in paragraph seven serves to express one's gratitude and love for Jesus; to accomplish much good with him with others; to "oil the wheels of family living within convent walls;" and as a result, enables one's ascent of the "hill of perfection." Though never mentioned directly herein, self-purification or self-perfection remain for her the by-products of co-redemptive love.

The cumulative impressions of Mother Maria's March 1932 circular leave us to conclude that the accepted 19th century doctrinal formulations of human suffering inadequately express her personal understanding of the meaning and purpose of human suffering; of its role within her life and the congregation she founded; and of Christ's self-offer within suffering as within every other event along the sisters' way to inmost union with him. For her the experience of human suffering is an unavoidable part of every person's life. As with any other life-experience, suffering for a religious is always in potentia redemptive love. The actualizing of this potentiality itself, however, requires not only one's belief in Christ's personal self-offering presence in every life-event, but also the development of an intimate relationship in response to him. Having put on the mind and heart of Christ, the sister can then become his body, his "co-worker," bearing with love whatever sufferings life offers for the salvation of others.

CONCLUSION

From the preceeding study, four themes surface as significant for Mother Maria's perception of grace and human suffering. Though individual aspects of her understanding, these four themes share a close association. Primary to her person-oriented understanding of grace and its effects is the fact that Jesus is a self-offering presence who invites all other persons into a personal relationship with him. Second, neither suffering nor any other human experience can definitively diminish or jeopardize the offer of Christ's self-communication to every person. Thus, rather than existing in opposition to each other, grace and suffering are interrelated since Jesus' presence pervades every circumstance throughout history. Third, she applies these first two personal convictions to her religious congregation so that along with every other experience, the suffering she or her sisters experience is always in potentia a share in Christ's redemptive love. Finally, the actualization of this potentiality requires not only a belief in Christ's personal self-offering presence in every life-event, but also demands that the individual actively respond to him and thus develop an intimate relationship with him. Mother Maria signifies the dynamic interchange between Christ and each sister with the image of the journey undertaken together in Christ for the salvation of others. In light of historical resources other than Linden's catechism, we will now proceed to examine the selected circulars that remain.

May 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] This year as we honor Mary during the month of May, the Holy Father recommends to Apostleship of Prayer members the intention of devotion to Mary, Queen of Martyrs. This choice is not without cause. Difficult times oppress the people, and who can tell what is yet to come? We may even witness another age of martyrs. It is fitting and beneficial, then, for all to draw closer to the Queen of Martyrs.

[2] If this devotion is necessary for all people, as spouses of Christ Crucified how much more are we in need of this--we who sacrificed all choosing a life of martyrdom? That Mary is the Queen of Martyrs and we her children, we should never forget. Though we may not suffer actual martyrdom, our life cannot be without suffering. This was pointed out to us at the outset of our religious life and subsequently we have had continual reminders. Perhaps we have even more than once rejoiced at having this privilege. But did we remember this in time of trial? Perhaps we anticipated only extraordinary persecutions involving bloodshed, and we neglected to profit from daily opportunities for martyrdom nor did we take note of them.

[3] What are these opportunities for martyrdom? In religion we receive the promised hundredfold already in this life. This is what Our Lord promised us when he said to St. Peter who exclaimed: "Behold, we have left all and followed Thee." In answer Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who hath left house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive now in this time a hundredfold as much, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, children, and lands--with persecutions, and in the world to come, life everlasting." (Mark 10:28-30) What Christ promised He fulfills and gives us a hundredfold "with persecutions."

[4] What are these persecutions with which He bestows His gifts upon us? Countless trifles, which torment and annoy us, such as: opposition to our opinions, desires, tastes, or expectations. Christ gives us our spiritual fathers: in the person of our chaplains, pastors, confessors, and retreat masters. Though they be good and perfect, they hardly please everyone. Some Sisters do not even notice these imperfections, others find them a source of real trials. These latter should constantly keep in mind that the greatest gifts of the Lord are stamped with a cross.

[5] Our Superiors are mothers. They take not only the place of our mothers, but the place of our Heavenly Father as well, and the more imperfect they are, the more we must resort to the virtues of faith, obedience, love, and patience; in a word, all the virtues to properly

remember their prerogative and position. Is it surprising then, that they, too, may be given to us "with persecutions?"

[6] Sisters, if it were not for them, what would be accomplished in the Community? What could we as individuals accomplish? They are God's gifts to us, although sometimes they are given to us "with persecutions." Rarely do we find one who pleases us perfectly; oftentimes they try our patience to the "nth degree." In practically everyone we find something we dislike, something irritating. Pupils and patients are a source of heartfelt joy in working for their benefit. But our spiritual mothers realize, nonetheless, how much care, weariness, anxiety, and disappointments are entailed here. They are truly a gift given "with persecutions."

[7] Lastly, the house and land given to the Sisters may be earmarked by the cross. How tremendous the cost of keeping it fittingly clean, as becomes His abode. Envious eyes soon label this as extravagance, and even level accusations of unsuitability. Obviously, it cannot be otherwise--His gifts are given to us "with persecutions."

[8] What is needed then to use these gifts properly? "Only one thing is necessary" and that is love. Let us love not only the gifts of God, but also the manner in which He chooses to bestow them. Let us look upon everything as coming to us from His loving Heart, and let us again offer to Him all that we are called upon to endure. If others offend us, let us always remember that we, too, have hurt them. Let us, then, humble ourselves, but never become discouraged and abandon the pursuit of perfection.

[9] This month let us draw nearer to the Queen of Martyrs in fervent devotion. Let us beg this devout dedication to her for one another and all. From her life let us learn patience and resignation to the Will of God, that we may resemble her in all the afflictions we bear.

Entrusting myself to your prayers and

Loving you,
Mother Maria

MAY 1932: MARTYRDOM: OPENNESS TO GRACE IN THE JOURNEY

To the papacy Pius XI brought an astute diplomatic career. As Papal Nuncio to Poland for three years following World War I, he witnessed first hand the struggles of Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to maintain their newly won independence at the edge of Soviet Russia.¹⁴ Later as Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan and as Pope he experienced the anti-Catholic policies of Fascist Italy.¹⁵ His encyclicals Quadragesimo Anno¹⁶ and Caritate Christi Compulsi¹⁷ that precede Mother Maria's May circular reveal his understanding of the causes of the Great Depression as well as his cognizance of communism and other forms of socialism that disturbed the fragile peace of post World War I Europe. He recognized and understood the intense religious and political persecutions precipitated and waged by atheistic communism, nazism and fascism against the Church and all humanity. In May 1932 he invited the members of the Apostleship of Prayer to devote themselves to Mary, Queen of Martyrs.

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Lillian Brown-Olf, Their Name Is Pius (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 320-327.

15

Ibid. pp. 327-337.

16

Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1931), pp.31-38.

17

Pope Pius XI, Caritate Christi Compulsi (New York: Paulist Press, 1932), pp. 6-8.

That same May the Messenger of the Sacred Heart, a monthly Apostleship of Prayer publication received by the Sisters, carried an article entitled "Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs." It informed the association's membership of the Pope's monthly intention. Written by Bishop Hafey of Charleston, South Carolina, the five-page article first offers a meditation on Mary's life-long martyrdom. Within this brief section the author stresses that loyal members of Christ's Mystical Body "must look upon sorrow, suffering, yes, unceasing persecution as evidence of God's love."¹⁸ Further, if suffering were asked of Christ's own mother, then "all the loyal members of Christ's kingdom¹⁹ must expect to live under the shadow of the cross. . ."

The second segment of the bishop's article describes the present world crisis and its cause: a growing indifference to God. Herein the author reminds the reader that these days of world-disturbance necessitate both the intercession of Mary and emulation of her constancy and fortitude in her life-long martyrdom. He stresses that all should unite themselves "as willing victims in the sacrificial Mary." Such a union would then expedite the resurrection of the world²⁰ and effect Christian peace, justice and distributive prosperity.

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Rt. Rev. William J. Hafey, "Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs," Messenger of the Sacred Heart 67 (May 1932): 12. See Appendix C.

19

Ibid. p. 13.

20

Ibid.

Within the final segment of his article, Bishop Hafey more pragmatically addresses the American-immigrant church for whom he writes. First he reminds the readership of the approaching International Eucharistic Congress to occur in Ireland.²¹ He next identifies Ireland as a martyr-nation because in spite of centuries of persecution, she remained faithful to Christ, to Mary and to the Church. Consequently he perceives Ireland as a symbol of hope in the battle against the "flesh and the devil." Then, however, he warns the "sons of Erin" as well as all others who emigrated to America from Europe that although they may have escaped other "fields reddened by the blood of martyrs," they may presently lose their faith in "the killing atmosphere of cynicism and religious indifference."²² He emphasizes that now theirs is a bloodless, lifelong martyrdom which will require greater courage of them as they struggle to remain faithful to Christ's doctrine "in the face of a scoffing and worldly-minded generation."²³ As a result, he points out that the opportunities to be a martyr like Mary "are manifold and ever at hand." After listing them, he finishes the article by summarizing the reasons that impel the faithful to honor Mary, Queen of Martyrs: the difficult times; the request of the

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The International Eucharistic Congress took place in Dublin, Ireland, from June 23-27, 1932.

22

Hafey, "Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs," p. 14. See Appendix C.

23

Ibid., p. 15.

Holy Father and the example of the Irish.

From Hafey's article a definition of martyrdom emerges. It is tailored to alert his readership that they experience a persecution no less threatening to their faith than the overt persecution from which they fled. He sees that to live their faith in the midst of religious indifference requires greater courage and persistence in the daily battle they are called upon to wage against the more subtle manifestations of evil, than a one-time conflict ending in death. For this reason he offers the Marian virtues of fortitude and constancy for the faithful's imitation.

Even though Hafey's composite sketch of the martyr is that of the courageous soldier warring against evil in life's battlefield, there appear underlying nuances of passivity, dualism and nationalism in his representation. When calling upon the faithful to unite as willing victims in the sacrificial Mary, he implies that Mary, in her martyrdom, was a passive victim of a God who requested her to "suffer more than any other."²⁴ Furthermore, the article dwells solely on the world's negative qualities, thus immersing the faithful in a world-milieu dichotomized as secular and sacred. Finally, his exclusive mention of the persecuted Irish serves to extol a particular people when in fact other peoples suffered persecution for their faith equally as much.

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Ibid., p. 13.

In the opening statement of her May 1932 circular, Mother Maria informs the sisters of the Pope's recommendation to devote the month of May to Mary, Queen of Martyrs. That she read of it in Hafey's article may be posited because of other similarities that exist between the article and her circular. As Hafey adapts the Pope's message to his readership, so does Mother Maria. Although she makes use of Hafey's approach, her letter is hardly a synthesis of his thought. It will be my purpose here to identify her understanding of martyrdom and the manner in which she perceives the papal recommendation applicable to religious life in her congregation.

Mother Maria begins her May circular consonant with the Pope's intention for the month. As she encourages her sisters to draw closer to Mary, Queen of Martyrs, she views the Pontiff's recommendations as "fitting and beneficial" for all persons, since "difficult times oppress the people." We recognize that she briefly incorporates two points from Hafey's article: promotion of the papal recommendation for the month; and, its suitability for the times.

In her second paragraph Mother Maria immediately initiates the subject matter for the rest of the letter: the application of the papal recommendation to the religious lifestyle. Herein she first identifies religious with their spouse, "Christ crucified." Having associated them with Christ, the first martyr, she reminds the sisters that when they entered into a spousal relationship with him, they sacrificed all and opted for a life of martyrdom. Because they are martyrs by vocation and for life, she notes that religious would be in need of devo-

tion to Mary, Queen of Martyrs even more than the rest of the faithful whose present experience of "difficult times" is not by choice. Perhaps because she perceives martyrdom as a constituent of their vocation and lifestyle, she concludes that their life cannot be without suffering. Mother Maria ends this second paragraph by pointing out that the sisters need not limit their perception of martyrdom and hence their very life to "extraordinary persecutions involving bloodshed." Rather, she encourages them to recognize the "daily opportunities for martyrdom," and to profit from them.

In our analysis of the second paragraph we can see that like Hafey, Mother Maria points out to her readership that they can expect suffering; that martyrdom need not be confined to persecution ending in bloodshed or death; that the martyrdom of which she speaks is lifelong; and finally, that daily living provides ample opportunities for martyrdom. But within these similarities in content, two significant points of divergence occur. Hafey states that the loyal members of the Mystical Body must perceive sorrow, suffering and unceasing persecution as evidences of God's love; and, that one should not expect better in life than Christ's mother who was not spared suffering.²⁵ His reasoning implies that God's love causes sufferings. Though she does not deny Hafey's comments, Mother Maria stresses that suffering is constitutive of the religious lifestyle which the sisters freely assumed in

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Hafey, "Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs," pp.12-13. See Appendix C.

imitation of Christ crucified. Religious are hardly victims of a bloodthirsty God.

Mother Maria's opening question of paragraph three, "What are these opportunities for martyrdom?" encompasses the topic of the next five paragraphs. Quoting Mark 10, 28-30, in paragraph three, she notes that Christ promises "a hundredfold 'with persecutions'" to those who follow him. She observes that "What Christ promised, He fulfills. . ." As professed followers of Christ, religious "receive the promised hundredfold already in this life." Herein Mother Maria forms the foundation for what is to follow. The "daily opportunities for martyrdom" are the "promised hundredfold 'with persecutions'" that Christ promised and fulfills in their lives within the present moment. While suffering within the religious lifestyle issues from the sisters' free choice to follow Christ, the persecutions they experience are merely a consequence of God's own goodness in a sinful world. Her next four paragraphs will bear this out.

In paragraphs four through seven Mother Maria enumerates some specific opportunities for martyrdom within the sisters' lives, those occasions in which Christ bestows his gifts. She observes that Christ gives the sisters spiritual fathers, but they hardly please everyone; superiors, but some difficulty is always experienced with them; pupils and patients who are a source of joy, but these too can be difficult; property and houses, but these also may occasion difficulties. For her the world is permeated with God's goodness, and the little sufferings or persecutions the sisters might experience are merely a conse-

quence of God's own goodness in an imperfect world.

Unlike Hafey, she does not view humankind as evil, nor does she attribute the existence of evil to divine retribution. Neither does she bemoan the existence of suffering, nor does she take the opportunity to champion the Lithuanian people who also knew centuries of religious, political, and cultural persecution. Rather, Mother Maria's perspective in this letter remains focused on God and his goodness. Here as in the February and March circulars a contemplative attitude toward all of life undergirds her message. She directs the sisters to nourish a life-vision that chooses to view everything as an expression of God's goodness.

Consequently, in paragraph eight, Mother Maria advises the sisters merely to tolerate with love the differences they experience. She begins this paragraph asking, "What is needed to use these gifts properly?" Into her response she weaves the first part of Luke 10, 42: "'Only one thing is necessary,' and that is love. Let us love not only the gifts of God, but also the manner in which He chooses to bestow them." Within these lines she invites the sisters to love all of life that is permeated with the creativity of God in the variety of gifts he offers and in the manner in which he offers them. In order that the sisters might love the creativity of God in all its myriad and original manifestations, she encourages them to "look upon everything as coming to us from His loving Heart." Thus convinced of his provident and personal love for them, the sisters can repeatedly offer to him all that they are called upon to endure.

To live thus: lovingly allowing God to be a personal, loving and provident God of creativity in their lives, requires a humility or openness to patiently accept his way of arranging all of their experiences. As a result, in the last sentence of the paragraph she encourages them to "humble themselves" and to persevere in the "pursuit of perfection."

In the final paragraph, Mother Maria, like Hafey, isolates the Marian virtues she feels necessary for the type of martyrdom she outlines for her sisters. She invites the sisters to learn Marian "patience and resignation to the Will of God," those qualities necessary to live in openness to the personal presence of God and to his gifts. Living thus, the sisters will resemble Mary in the loving manner in which they bear their afflictions.

Of the May 1932 circular it can be said that Mother Maria not only informs her sisters of the Pope's recommendation to devote the month to Mary, Queen of Martyrs, but she also takes the opportunity to communicate to them the manner in which they can live his recommendation in their daily lives. She understands martyrdom as an inherent structure of the religious life for two reasons. First, religious have freely decided to imitate Christ who himself was martyred. The sister is a martyr by choice not only at the outset of her religious life, but throughout its entirety as well. She is not a victim of a demanding, vengeful God. Secondly, the religious experiences persecutions because she lives in the fulfillment of Christ's promise to give his followers a hundredfold "with persecutions." These persecutions

are simply a consequence of God's goodness in an imperfect world marred by sin.

For her, martyrdom is the practice of patience and resignation to the will of God in the face of opposition to one's personal preferences. In this sense martyrdom requires decisive personal action. The Marian qualities of patience and resignation to God's will which she invites her sisters to imitate are hardly passive in the sense that she explains them. Their exercise demands no less persistence and fortitude than "extraordinary opportunities for martyrdom." Through these qualities the sisters will be able to live as Mary in times of affliction: to choose to live in loving openness to a provident God, to his gifts and to how he chooses to give them. As revealed in this letter, her spirituality herein approaches all of life as a gift. Thus, she uniquely harmonizes the human and the divine in a world of contradiction.

June 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] May the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus be remembered, adored, and loved by us in a special way during this month, and may the example and the lesson taught by the Sacred Heart be realized by us all!

[2] This month Christ's Vicar on earth, through an encyclical, summons all the faithful, through the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to prayer and penance to plead for God's mercy on humanity's suffering. Let us not remain deaf to His voice. If any one, religious should be the first to offer prayer and penance for the needs of mankind. Through this practice, let us increase our fervor and spirit of sacrifice in honoring the Heart of Jesus. By our penance, let us recognize our shortcomings and our preoccupation with our ego. We waste so much time thinking about ourselves that even when we come to the feet of Jesus in prayer, how often, instead of commending to Him the needs of others, we concentrate only on our successes or failures, or the impression we are making on others.

[3] If anyone has rebuked us, or made an unfavorable comment, we give in to feelings of sadness, complaint, hurt, and even discouragement, and perhaps we wonder, "Who accused me in this way?" Suspicion and rash judgment begin. Our feelings, aroused and disturbed by such thoughts, harness the imagination to self-love, and we begin to entertain all sorts of distorted views. It seems to us that others are more highly regarded and more dearly loved, while we are ever being wronged. With such dispositions, everything becomes more burdensome, so that neither zeal nor success is evident in our works. We do what personally appeals to us, but what happens if an act of charity and sacrifice is required of us? Our immediate response is a barrage of "I'm not here for that." "Why always me?" "Others can do it, too." "I can't do it," and even, "I will not!"

[4] On the other hand, however, when the Superior is asked a favor she cannot grant, what accusations of injustice, of harshness are heard! And all this from the lips of one who has renounced all, from a person who has proclaimed herself a submissive follower of the humble Christ?

[5] I have here delineated only one pattern which leads to spiritual downfall. But how many others there are, all of them springing from a lack of prayerful friendship with Jesus, from a lack of generous sacrifice for love of Him, and from a negligence to place within His Sacred Heart the petty hurts we experience. In order to free ourselves from or avoid this kind of ruin, let us through prayer and penance seek refuge in the Heart of Jesus, offer to God the merits of this Heart, and earnestly strive to learn for the future to keep

within our hearts the lessons Jesus taught us: meekness, humility, and sacrifice. Remember that, in spite of the best intentions, little misunderstandings and crosses will never be lacking in life. From time to time we will unwittingly hurt one another's feelings, but bear in mind that we can hide our own hurts. Instead of parading them, and thus making ourselves and others miserable, we can, through humble, quiet prayer at the feet of Christ, learn to control our words and actions despite our bruised feelings.

[6] And so, this month see how many acts of self-denial, of sacrifice for the good of others, of humility, and of love we are able to perform, and what a sweet disposition toward others we can cultivate for the love of Jesus, and how much we can alleviate the sufferings of humanity through such a life of sacrifice.

Humbly commending myself to your prayer to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Your
Mother Maria

JUNE 1932---SUFFERING: PENANCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

As in the previous circular, Mother Maria begins her June letter with a reference to papal teaching. She refers herein to the encyclical Caritate Christi Compulsi presented in Rome on May 3, 1932²⁶ by Pope Pius XI. Divided into four chapters, the encyclical describes the world's present economic miseries;²⁷ outlines the moral causes for the world-wide economic depression;²⁸ encourages all humanity to employ prayer and penance to become more united with God and with each other;²⁹ and finally, invites the faithful to make reparation not only for personal sins but like Christ, to make reparation for the sins of others as well.³⁰ To accomplish this purpose, Pius XI requested that the faithful devote the entire octave of the Feast of the Sacred Heart that June to mortification and prayer.³¹ He instructed all the faithful, regardless of their economic condition to exercise penance appropriate to

26

Pope Pius XI, Caritate Christi Compulsi, (New York: Paulist Press, 1932), p. 16.

27

Ibid. pp. 4-5.

28

Ibid. pp. 4-8.

29

Ibid. p. 20.

30

Ibid. p. 18

31

Ibid. p. 22.

their situation. While he suggested that wealthier persons might forego certain pleasures and engage in almsgiving, he advised the poor and jobless to accept from God's hands the effects of their imposed state of poverty and to bear their difficulties in union with Christ's sufferings. He noted that the penance of the former would satisfy "divine justice" and draw down "divine mercies,"³² while that of the latter would "efficaciously hasten the hour of mercy and peace."³³

It cannot be established with certainty from the June circular whether Mother Maria read the encyclical Caritate Christi Compulsi, or even a review of it. Striking similarities do exist between the form and content of the June letter and the encyclical that indicate it very likely that Mother Maria read it and that it served as a basis for her circular that month.

Whether intentional or not, Mother Maria constructs her message to the sisters in a manner similar to the logical framework of the encyclical. First, paragraphs two through four disclose the present reality that her religious companions frequently fail to live what they first professed: a life of prayer and penance in service of others. Next, in the first half of paragraph five she enumerates some causes of this situation and suggests some remedies. Throughout the remainder of the letter she notes the purpose of their "life of sacrifice."

32

Ibid.

33

Ibid. p. 23.

A closer examination of the contents of the letter further supports our supposition that Mother Maria read the encyclical. Mother Maria's adaptation of the Pope's request for prayer and penance to the religious life comprises the contents of the letter in its entirety. We saw that in the encyclical Pius XI identified the sufferings of humanity as unemployment and poverty caused by the global economic crisis. He advised the poor who suffer the effects of this severe economic crisis to view their condition as a means for penance which would gain God's mercy and effect relief. Mother Maria extracts this essential message, the call to prayer and penance, and applies it to the religious lifestyle. She identifies her sisters with the poor. In her adaptation, however, she seems to recognize that the very nature of consecrated life within community necessarily altered the impact of the world's economic crisis for religious who would never experience unemployment and whose freely vowed poverty, though already austere with regard to food, clothing and accommodations, never exacted destitution. The impact of her message here rests in the fact that she identifies an equally oppressive and pervasive experience of suffering in the day-to-day life of the sister and explains to the community how it can be used not only as a means of penance to "alleviate the sufferings of humanity," but also must be accepted and used by the religious if one really understands religious life essentially as sacrificial, penitential and a life in service of others' good.

Equally significant as the form of the letter and the message therein that is a direct application of the letter to the ency-

clical, is what Mother Maria chooses to omit in paragraph two when she speaks about Pius XI's directive. She notes that the "Vicar of Christ" has called the faithful to prayer and penance "to plead for God's mercy on humanity's suffering." We saw earlier that the Pope requested the rich to do penance so that they might satisfy divine justice while the penance of the poor would merit mercy and peace.³⁴ Again, we might suggest that perhaps because she identifies religious with the poor, Mother Maria perceives the purpose of penance for herself and the sisters simply as a plea for God's mercy. Although for Mother Maria penance has nothing to do with divine justice, it has everything to do with religious life. For this reason she continues in paragraph two: "If anyone, religious should be the first to offer prayer and penance for the needs of mankind." However, she sees that for the religious prayer and penance for this purpose encompasses much more than isolated moments when crises occur such as those mentioned in the encyclical. For her a person comes to religious life aware that it is essentially a lifetime of sacrifice and penance in service of others' needs. This becomes evident in the final paragraph of the circular wherein she encourages the sisters to see how many acts of penance and of love they can perform so as to see "how much we can alleviate the sufferings of humanity through such a life of sacrifice."

The first sentences of paragraph two and all of paragraph

six have helped to establish thus far that Mother Maria most likely used the encyclical as a source for her June circular; that she identified the congregation with the poor and hence envisioned penance as that which intercedes for humanity's suffering to obtain God's mercy; and lastly, that she understood religious life as essentially a sacrificial and penitential life at all times in service of others' needs. The remainder of the letter serves to illustrate very concretely that which frustrates this essential purpose of religious life: self-centeredness.

Returning to paragraph two, we see that Mother Maria emphasizes that a penitential life in service of others' needs will augment the sisters' personal love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Further, she notes that penance in the religious lifestyle necessarily alerts the sisters to recognize that which prevents them from living their commitment that is essentially sacrificial for others' needs: personal shortcomings and self-preoccupation. A penitential spirit preserves the outward orientation of their intercessory prayer for the Church, thus enabling the sisters to fulfill their raison d'etre. Though she does not deny the need for penance with regard to one's personal salvation, it is not her emphasis here as it is in the Pope's

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encyclical.

In paragraphs three and four Mother Maria perceptively traces

a pattern of self-absorption which leads to failure to live out the sacrificial dimension of religious life. She notes that a rebuke or unfavorable comment made by another may spark feelings of sadness, complaint, hurt, discouragement and distrust that may initiate suspicion or even rash judgment. Feelings thus fired and left unattended foster an unhealthy self-love which distorts one's perception of reality. Such a disposition provokes self-pity and fashions a dwarfed self-image that moves one to regard others as more privileged than oneself and everything as burdensome. As a result, enthusiasm and success in one's work diminishes. One begins to select to do only that which personally appeals to her, thus rendering oneself incapable of any "act of charity and sacrifice required of us." The sister so entrapped by this self-seeking disposition becomes the center of a fast-shrinking universe of one, ordering everything to fit her personal tastes. Mother Maria's concluding statement of paragraph four brings into sharp focus the specific situation described in these two paragraphs. Complaints, accusations and harshness hypocritically issue from the lips "of one who has renounced all. . ." and "who has proclaimed herself a submissive follower of the humble Christ."

In the opening statements of paragraph five, Mother Maria enumerates some of the causes and remedies of the self-serving disposition she has described in the previous two paragraphs. Herein she notes that a lack of prayerful friendship with Jesus, of generous sacrifice for love of him as well as "negligence to place within His Sacred Heart the petty hurts we experience," lay the foundation of every

"pattern that leads to spiritual downfall."

The remainder of the fifth paragraph offers several practical means through which the sisters can become free from or "avoid this kind of ruin." She advises the sisters to place themselves in Jesus' heart and to assimilate the lessons he has taught them: meekness, humility and sacrifice. Once again she stresses the necessity of a close, personal relationship with Jesus. These sentences in which Mother Maria places the practices of prayer and penance within the current ecclesial liturgical feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, also mirror the concluding segment of the encyclical.

36

As Pius XI ends the encyclical he identifies the choice that all are called upon to make because of his message.

But the peoples themselves are called upon to make up their minds to a definite choice; either they entrust themselves to these benevolent and beneficent inspirations and are converted, humble and repentant, to the Lord and the Father of Mercies, or they abandon themselves and what little remains of happiness on earth to the mercy of the enemy of God, to the spirit of vengeance and destruction. 37

Similarly Mother Maria offers her sisters a choice. She points out that experiencing and having to deal with hurt feelings is an inescapable part of life. Though "little misunderstandings and crosses" may be an inevitable dimension of life, it is clear that for her they need not determine one's behavior. Hence she places before her sis-

36

Pius XI, Caritate Christi Compulsi, pp. 21-23.

37

Ibid., p. 20.

ters two modes of handling these sufferings. One can either draw attention to oneself by parading these hurts or one can, in quiet prayer, place them at the feet of Jesus. Mother Maria notes that selecting the former option creates misery for oneself and for others. The latter choice, on the other hand, enables one to learn to control her "words and actions despite our bruised feelings." She infers that in following the course of self-control, one will be happy as well as generate happiness for others.

Thus far Mother Maria has identified an ordinary yet naturally pervasive experience of human suffering in daily life: hurt feelings. She has requested that her sisters choose to place these "petty hurts" in the Heart of Jesus and by their prayer learn to become more like him. To choose to unite one's sufferings with Christ is at once the manner of prayer and penance that she prescribes. Her last paragraph accomplishes two tasks. In it she acknowledges that to live in the manner she has requested requires acts of self-denial, of sacrifice for the good of others, of humility and of love. She encourages the sisters to see how many of these acts they can perform. Secondly, by telling the sisters that the purpose of their lifelong task of transforming "petty hurts" into occasions of prayer and penance is "to alleviate the sufferings of humanity," she unites the congregation completely to the papal message given the entire church in the encyclical.

As the Pope asked the poor to unite their sufferings to

Christ's, so her sisters not only can choose to do the same, but they must, since this is their life. Together with Christ and his Church, the sisters' lives can become more fruitful as Christ's whose love, even in suffering, the encyclical points out, saved the world.

It can be concluded that within the June circular Mother Maria unites the congregation with the entire Church, and that as the letter unfolds, she reveals that prayer and penance for the welfare of others encompasses the necessary penitential dimension of the religious life-style. She shows that by placing oneself in Jesus' heart, the religious can transform the "petty hurts" of life: feelings of sadness, hurt or discouragement. Then, having learned meekness, humility and sacrifice from Jesus' heart, one can perform acts of self-denial, of sacrifice, humility and of love, and thus cultivate a pleasant disposition toward others. Handled in this way, the sufferings of the religious life are simply a means for one to become transformed in the heart of Christ, and with Christ to "alleviate the sufferings of humanity." Living thus, the sisters fulfill their life commitment.

December 1932

My dear Sisters,

[1] The celebration of our Congregation's Silver Jubilee is over. I wish to thank you briefly but most sincerely for your splendid efforts expended and your prayers offered to God for this anniversary and even remembering my role in this. May God always unite your hearts, thoughts, and energies in harmonious work, as they had been united in the accomplishment of our Congregation up to this milestone.

[2] As we enter now into a new period of our Congregation's history, let us pause briefly today to consider a fitting motto, so that with an ever more beautiful spirit than previously, we would press forward in furthering the works initiated by our institute, and assiduously and continuously strive to better achieve the noble objectives of our Congregation: the personal sanctification of its members and the performance of works of mercy.

[3] During the past twenty-five years, God has generously blessed us in our strivings toward these two goals. If at times these efforts were accompanied by hardships, today there remains only pure joy and gratitude to God Who aided us in surmounting all obstacles and in attaining that which was accomplished. Let us ever be mindful that hardships nobly endured are the mainsprings of true happiness.

[4] As we progress now toward the golden years of our institute, let us not imagine this golden period other than one in which souls are tried as gold in the fire. Though God's plans for our future are unknown to us, it behooves us to be prepared for all things, especially for trials and all troubles. Hence, I dare to offer you a personal motto. Fortified with a good intention, wherever you are and whatever you do, always keep it in mind: God is here--God wills this!

[5] Especially let us be permeated with the thought that God is within us, and all that He grants or permits flows from the love He has for us. Second, let us form the habit of seeing God in every person with whom we live, those for whom we work, those whom we meet, and even in those persons who might persecute us.

[6] Third, let us lovingly recall that God, not only as God but also as Man, remains in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar for us and with us. Exhortations to love Jesus should seem superfluous to us religious when we recall and actually experience His promise to be wherever two or three are gathered in His name. He abides always in our midst even in poorly adorned altar tabernacles. Note how faithfully He fulfills His promise, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I also will be in their midst." We who have dedicated ourselves to Jesus, let us love Him, and from His example let us learn

to cherish and most zealously fulfill the promises we made to Him.

[7] As I mentioned, God's future plans for us or our Congregation are unrevealed. But one thing is certain, God loves us and nothing will happen to us without His knowledge, and whatever He permits will be lovingly allowed for us to experience. Our only concern must be to persevere in His love and not to let ourselves be overcome by sinful desires and thereby deserve punishment. The hardships we suffer are not really evils. The soul who loves Jesus becomes more like Him and also more fortunate, for she remembers that, when He became Man, He, too, had to suffer innocently. Thus He left us an example for behavior in similar circumstances, and how through these sufferings, the soul becomes more pleasing to Him.

[8] To a soul dedicated to God how can it be other than gratifying to endure unjust sufferings? Granted, that for weak human nature this is difficult, painful, and seemingly unjust, but recalling that God wishes this, one can nobly suffer all for Him and with Him and obtain from this extraordinary happiness, peace, and true joy! So let us prepare our souls for battle against whatever within us and about us is opposed to God. Let us remain peaceful under all hardships, humiliations, accusations, and condemnations, regardless of their source. Let us constantly recall our motto: "God is here! God wills this!" Whatever it is that befalls us, this is the will of our Heavenly Father, and He is at hand to assist us and see us safely through all the vicissitudes of life. Accept His assistance and in this way honor Him.

[9] Now in the grace-laden season of Advent, let us beg for ourselves and for one another the special grace to fulfill our good resolutions and to merit the protection of the Most High for our Community in the future. May God's Divine Providence always find us worthy of a place within the ranks of His dearly beloved souls!

Loving you,
Mother Maria

DECEMBER 1932---GRACE: GOD'S PRESENCE AND PROVIDENCE IN THE JOURNEY

In her December 1932 circular that marked the close of the congregation's silver jubilee year, Mother Maria offered the sisters a personal motto: "Fortified with a good intention, wherever you are and whatever you do, always keep it in mind: 'God is here---God wills this!'" In this motto she succinctly reveals her belief that God is a person and that his self-offering presence lovingly pervades all reality. As it is presented in this letter, the motto also indicates her conviction that God permeates not only every place and circumstance, but all of their history as well. She perceives that it is his loving presence that has made possible the sisters' life together thus far; that makes it possible in the present; and that will make it possible in the future. Therefore, the motto serves to shape each sister's interpretation of her personal yet communal past and present journey into the future. It will be my purpose here to uncover the relationship of her motto to her understanding of grace and suffering.

Through the structures of past, present and future, Mother Maria directs the sisters to recognize God's presence among them. First, in paragraph three she focuses their attention on the past twenty-five years, reminding the sisters that God has generously blessed them. Then she observes that although hardships often accompanied them, the joy and gratitude they experience at this first milestone is the result of God whose presence faithfully aided them "in surmounting all obstacles and in accomplishing all that was attained." Lastly, she encour-

ages the sisters always to remember that "hardships nobly endured are the mainsprings of true happiness." Unlike Linden, Mother Maria refuses to say in this third paragraph that suffering is the consequence of personal sin. Rather, as in the May circular, she sees that it is merely a consequence of God's good gifts in a sinful world. When lovingly and nobly endured, suffering can be a source of true happiness.

41

In the next two paragraphs Mother Maria turns to the present discernment of God's presence and providence among them. First she asks the sisters to consider the present era that stretches forward to the celebration of their golden jubilee year as one in which they will be purified. Her indirect reference to 1 Peter 1, 6-7 herein, sketches the essential meaning of their present life as it unfolds into the future. They are to look upon their present sufferings as an era in which God purifies their love. Further, she gives the sisters impetus to continue in their journey, expectant of the same bittersweet experiences inherent in the motto which she personally offers to the sisters so that they might be prepared for whatever God permits, "especially for trials and all troubles."

In the remaining paragraphs Mother Maria urges the sisters to be convinced of God's loving presence and providence within themselves, all other persons, the Blessed Sacrament, the community and within all

 41

Compare with March 1932, paragraph 3; May 1932, paragraphs 4-7; June 1932, paragraphs 5-6.

the "vicissitudes of life," especially suffering.

Beginning with the fourth paragraph, she encourages them to see God in every person with whom they live; in those for whom they work or meet; and even in those who might persecute them. Directives similar to these had been given to the sisters in the May and June
42
letters.

Continuing into the next paragraph, she perceives that religious experience his presence in two instances particular to their vocation and lifestyle. Present for them and with them in "the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar," Jesus always dwells in their convent chapels. Secondly, citing Matthew 18,20, she states that the sisters enjoy Christ's presence because they live in the fulfillment of his promise to be wherever two or three are gathered in his name. Just as he fulfills his promise to remain with them, so she encourages them to love him and fulfill their promises to be present to him.

Because Mother Maria understands God's presence as constituent of the religious lifestyle, she can interject a certainty about the future at the beginning of the seventh paragraph. Her statement that the sisters can always be certain of God's love serves as prelude to the close parallel she delineates in the next paragraph between Jesus' suffering and the suffering a religious might experience. She perceives that like Jesus, religious must be rooted in God's love and so

she advises that the sisters' singular concern be to remain in his love. Christ's love, rooted in his love for God, permeated all that he endured, even unjust suffering. At times religious will experience sufferings that are undeserved. Rather than despair because of these unjust sufferings, Mother Maria notes that the religious, rooted in God's love, has cause for rejoicing because she can become more like Christ who, when he became human, also "had to suffer innocently." Viewed in this way, the hardships the sisters encounter possess a changed meaning: they are not really evils, but when, after Jesus' example, the sister endures them out of love for God, they become a means through which the religious can become more like Jesus and more pleasing to him. To endure unjust sufferings with love as Christ, then, is a source of "extraordinary happiness, peace and true joy!"

With regard to Mother Maria's teaching on suffering in this circular, the following observations can be made. Unlike Linden's theological system in which God and Jesus acted upon the believer and remained aloof from the experience of human suffering, Mother Maria's belief in a personal, immanent God of love along with Jesus' tangible example of love, enables her to support and encourage her sisters to endure even unjust sufferings as Jesus did. Suffering endured in this way, becomes a source of joy because one becomes more like Jesus and thus more pleasing to him. Her attention remains fixed on the person of Jesus. Love for him is the primary motivation for one's behavior in the event of undeserved suffering. In this she differs markedly from Linden who reduces the paradigmatic significance of Christ's

suffering to the believer's personal salvation and thus encourages self-preoccupation with the benefits one receives.⁴³ Finally, in these two paragraphs we detect none of Linden's thought that explains the existence of human suffering as the consequence of a vindictive God.⁴⁴ As in the March circular, Mother Maria perceives the existence of unjust suffering merely as a part of life. And, if one endures it with love, unjust suffering is also a means to become more like Christ. That one becomes more like Christ, however, depends upon the quality of the interpersonal relationship one shares with God and the extent to which the religious responds to God's love and strives to remain in it. She invites her sisters to remember that for persons dedicated to God, it is gratifying to endure unjust sufferings. Invincible confidence in God's loving presence and providence, however, will enable the sisters to battle against whatever "within us and about us is opposed to God." Through their remembrance of this, and through their acceptance of God's assistance, she notes that the sisters will give true honor to God.

In many ways the motto, "God is here---God wills this!", provides a synthesis of what Mother Maria has been revealing to us about grace and suffering all along. She perceives that grace is God's personal, loving presence faithfully and providently offering to accompany

43

Linden, Appendix A: #6, #63, #84, #85, #88 and #384.

44

Ibid., #382-384.

the sisters in their entire history: the journey of their past and present into the future. God's presence is a constituent of their lifestyle. Hence the motto is a starting point from which one interprets all reality. When operative in the sisters as the basic core of their existence, her motto at once prepares and directs the sisters to accept God's assistance and thus to progress "safely through all the vicissitudes of life." Further, as those whose singular concern is to remain in God's loving presence, religious imitate Christ who did the same, even while enduring the experience of unjust sufferings. Such a personal relationship with God then, enables the religious to endure sufferings as Christ did out of love for God, and to look upon suffering, especially those sufferings which are undeserved, as a means for becoming more like their Lord, and therefore, more pleasing to him.

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIVE CONCLUSION

In this detailed examination of the selected 1932 circulars of Mother Maria Kaupas, it has been my intent to identify her understanding of grace and human suffering as well as its role within the congregation she founded. Earlier, at the end of the discussion of the January, February and March letters, I identified four significant themes that surfaced in those three circulars. I stated that Mother Maria experienced grace as the personal self-offering presence of God. Secondly, she perceived grace and suffering as interrelated human experiences. Thirdly, she taught that suffering along with every other experience is always in potentia a share in Christ's redemptive love. And lastly, she understood that the actualization of this potentiality rests in an individual's response imaged in the journey the religious freely undertakes together with Christ for the salvation of all others. In the light of these four themes I am now in a position to expose her teaching on grace and suffering found in the six letters I have examined in its points of convergence with---yet distinct departure from---the historical sources which have been employed in this study: Linden's catechism, Hafey's article, "Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs," and the encyclical of Pius XI, Caritate Christi Compulsi.

GRACE

In those places wherein Mother Maria explicitly talks about grace, her thought reflects that of the catechism. Her usage of the word "grace" in the January letter addresses only one dimension of the word: created grace. Therein she reveals that grace is object-oriented; that it is a divine intervention superimposed from without.

However, when speaking of the experience of Jesus' presence and that openness to him she hopes the sisters would cultivate, Mother Maria describes grace in its totality: Jesus' self-offering presence or uncreated grace; and the effects of his presence or created grace. Her experience of grace is person-oriented, and not object-oriented as Linden's theological constructs. In the February and March circulars we see that grace is the self-offering presence of Jesus, a person to be encountered rather than an object to acquire for one's personal salvation. Her composite profile of Jesus therein reveals that he is loving, approachable and personal in his presence offered in every moment of one's life. As a result, her concern about the development of a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus preempts all others in these two circulars and becomes the foundation for her spiritual teaching to the sisters in the May, June and December letters in which she directs them to integrate the experience of suffering into their religious life.

In the May letter, for example, she views authentic martyrdom as an intrinsic structure of the religious lifestyle and perceives that

its authenticity hinges upon one's personal relationship with God. An intimate relationship with the Lord enables one to love him and to accept with love his gifts as well as the manner in which he chooses to bestow them. Such a close relationship with Christ also empowers one to render suffering meaningful; to perceive it as a privileged share in Christ's life; and finally, to see it merely as a consequence of God's goodness in a sinful world.

The June letter discloses Mother Maria's conviction that prayerful friendship with Jesus prevents the religious from spiritual downfall, that self-absorption which impedes the sister from utilizing the occasion of suffering as a means of authentic fulfillment of her lifelong vocation of prayer and penance for the good of others.

Finally, in the December circular Mother Maria notes that God's personal presence and providence faithfully accompanies the sisters' individual yet communal history: the past, the present moment and the future. The sisters presently live in the fulfillment of his promise to be wherever two or three are gathered in his name. Therefore, she instructs the sisters to imitate Christ who, rooted in God's love, possessed an invincible confidence in God's presence and providence, even in the face of unjust suffering. It is evident that for her one's authentic mimesis of Christ begins first by imitating the Son's personal love-relationship with his Father.

MEANS FOR GRACE

A second indication of Mother Maria's experience of grace as a

personal encounter with God appears with regard to her explanation of the means of grace. Along with the performance of good works, Linden's catechism encourages the believer to frequent and devout reception of the sacraments and prayer. These usual means for grace enable the believer to obtain the amount of grace necessary for his/her salvation as well as to achieve a greater degree of happiness in heaven.

Mother Maria also identifies the same means for grace in her February circular. But because her experience of grace is person-oriented, the sacraments, prayer and good works are means to encounter grace rather than to obtain it or increase it. They are simply those avenues through which Jesus "touches" the sister and through which Mother Maria encourages the sister to "touch" him in return.

Likewise, within the March, May, June and December letters, she views the experience of suffering as another possible means for grace. When one is anchored in God's love, that love for God transforms the experience of suffering into a meaningful, privileged share in Christ's life. Both Linden and Hafey, however, encourage the believer to endure suffering not so much as a means of grace, but rather to imitate the passivity of Christ and his mother so that the believer's suffering might merit satisfaction for the sinfulness of humanity before a vengeful God. Similarly, in Caritate Christi Compulsi, Pius XI looks upon suffering as a means of penance to satisfy divine justice, rather than as a means to become transformed in the heart of Christ.

EFFECTS OF GRACE

A final illustration of Mother Maria's experience of grace as a personal encounter with a personal self-offering God occurs in her understanding of the effects of grace. In Linden's catechism, the effects of grace proceed logically from its object-orientation. Grace is that "ticket" to the heavenly banquet as well as that indicator of the believer's position at the banquet table. Primarily in service of the believer's personal salvation, grace destroys sin, enlightens the mind, strengthens the will and comforts the believer. While the catechism's perspective of grace as that object primarily in service of one's salvation is not denied in the first three circulars of 1932, neither does it receive mention. Instead, Mother Maria stresses that the effects of Jesus' presence touch each individual for the purposes of fostering a greater union with him and with all others. Thus, union with Christ and imitation of his redemptive love for the salvation of others, flow from her person-oriented perception of grace.

Similarly, within the last three letters, one's reciprocal openness to the self-offering presence of God results in an authentic response to him, thus enabling the religious to trust in God's faithful presence and loving providence as Jesus did; and, to share in Christ's redemptive life spent for all humanity.

GRACE AND HUMAN SUFFERING

Within the February and March circulars, Mother Maria perceives

human suffering merely as a part of life's experiences. Jesus accompanies the sisters through his self-offering presence every moment of their journey. Hence, the presence of suffering does not jeopardize in any way his self-offering love nor diminish the presence of uncreated grace. Rather, the event of human suffering, like every life-experience can be shared with Jesus and thus become the occasion for the sisters' reciprocal self-revelation to him who desires to know even the smallest detail of each one's life. Mother Maria notes that perseverance in self-presence to Jesus can lead the sister to acknowledge and accept his companionship. In doing this, union with him becomes more complete. He in turn shares his interests and desires: the salvation of all. As a result, the shared interiority between Jesus and the religious possesses his outward orientation to embrace all humanity. One's inmost union with Jesus impels the religious therefore to be his body so as to continue his redemptive work of love. Therefore, human suffering along with every other life-experience provides the opportunity to share in Christ's redemptive love.

In Linden's schema, on the other hand, grace exists in opposition to human suffering. As benevolent cause of everything, even suffering, Linden's God exists apart from the experience of both Jesus' suffering and human suffering. Perfect in the manner in which he endured his passion and death, Jesus remains as equally distant and transcendent as his "Heavenly Father" in his relationship to humankind in the experience of suffering. Thus Linden separates the divine presence from the experience of suffering and instead diverts the

believer's attention to Christ-like endurance of suffering for the purpose of meriting enough grace(s) for personal salvation. Motivated thus, the believer can easily and incorrectly seek suffering as the only means to union with God, or misconceive it as a singularly special indication of God's favor.

The last three circulars examined within this study offer additional dimensions of Mother Maria's understanding of suffering. Convinced that all reality is permeated with God's presence, she communicates in her May 1932 letter that suffering exists merely as a consequence of God's provident goodness in a sinful world. Hence, she instructs the sisters to love God, his gifts and the manner in which he chooses to bestow them. Her positive view of humankind and of the world unifies the sacred and the secular in a world of contradiction.

Unlike Mother Maria, Bishop Hafey, whose article we referred to in our study of the May circular, reflects a negative attitude toward the world and humanity. Operative and extolled in Hafey's representation of martyrdom is that the reader willingly and passively ought to be a sacrificial victim of God's love as were Jesus and Mary. Consequently, this attitude casts into shadow the freedom and love expressed within the entire lives of Christ and his mother and reduces their nature to that of puppets subject to the whims of a demanding God. Further, in his comparison of the faithful's experience of suffering to Mary's martyrdom, Hafey demeans the human experience of suffering. Finally, because he stresses only the deficiencies of the human race in

evolution to that point in history, Hafey effects a polarization between the sacred and secular dimensions of human experience.

In the June 1932 circular, Mother Maria perceives the purpose of suffering that religious endure as that which serves to alleviate the suffering of humanity. Again, she transcends the thought of the catechism which stresses suffering in service of one's personal salvation. Further, in this letter she emphasizes the fact that the sufferings of religious can obtain God's mercy rather than appease God's justice, a point mentioned in Pius XI's Caritate Christi Compulsi.

Finally, in the December letter she perceives suffering as a privilege and as a means for the sisters' authentic mimesis of Christ's love for God, a love which in turn motivated his loving endurance of undeserved suffering for the salvation of all others. When endured in this way, she notes that hardships become the source of extraordinary happiness, peace and true joy.

Mother Maria's December letter differs radically from Linden's theological constructs which proposed that God and human suffering exist in opposition to each other. Neither happiness, true joy, nor peace could be found in Linden's system that reduces the paradigmatic significance of Christ's suffering to a personal "salvation savings account" in which if one deposited enough passively endured experiences of suffering, the sinner might possibly merit a mitigated time in purgatory while the just, a higher place in heaven. As in the March, May and June letters, Mother Maria's focus herein remains unchanged: religious lovingly endure suffering for the benefit of others' salvation.

GRACE, SUFFERING AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

It can be concluded that the very different historical sources against which we evaluated the six selected letters from Mother Maria's circular letters of 1932, separate grace from the praxis of human suffering. Thus, in the experience of the believer, they actually partition God from life. In their overemphasis on the fallen nature of the human person, Hafey's article and Pius XI's encyclical forget God's constant desire for self-communication and self-offer extended to every person. For Linden, the life of the believer consists of "falling into" or "falling out of" grace; of either sharing in God's life or losing God altogether through sin. The catechism encourages one to avoid sin because it diminishes or even destroys one's cache of grace that may remit the punishment due to sin. His system of thinking fails to consider the social implications of sin. Christian life and worship become privatistic and self-serving in their orientation.

Convinced of God's continuous self-offering presence in suffering and in all human experiences, Mother Maria uses the journey as a dynamic model to image the life of each sister's unique yet communal way to union with Jesus. "Whether we are aware of him or not," she writes in February, "He is there. . ." In March she writes, ". . . we do not go alone, for He journeys with us." In both letters she models a method of prayer which will assist the membership of the congregation to grow in awareness of his presence, especially in the experience of suffering when Jesus seems or feels most distant.

Through her method of prayer, she encourages each sister to recognize God's presence in everything; to trust that he never abandons anyone; and to see that it is actually they who fail to be aware of him. Deeper union with him engenders a faith-vision that orients one toward love of one's sister-companions in community. Thus the sisters are involved in a dynamic network of interpersonal relationships with God and with each other as they journey together for the salvation of all others.

The May, June and December letters further validate Mother Maria's conviction that both grace and suffering are constituents of every Christian life, but especially for religious who freely choose a lifestyle that is in service of others' needs. Like any follower of Christ, she points out that religious live in the fulfillment of Christ's promises to be "wherever two or three are gathered in my name" (Mt. 18, 20) and to receive a hundredfold 'with persecutions,' (Mark 10, 28-30). Cited in the December and May letters respectively, these passages apply to any Christian. But in the March, May, June and December letters, Mother Maria quite clearly points out that grace and suffering are particularly intrinsic elements of the religious lifestyle. Hence, for her, the religious life is a lifetime of prayer, sacrifice and of penance in the service of others' good. In these four letters she also points out that every individual realized this sacrificial nature of religious life before she entered the Congregation. Each agreed to this understanding of religious life. The purpose of these four letters seems to be to remind the sisters of

their true vocation and to encourage them to live it authentically.

In addition to the penitential nature of their vowed lives, she teaches in the March and December letters that the religious life is essentially a privilege, not because it is better than any other Christian lifestyle, but because of the intimate relationship one is called to share with Christ in the Father that necessarily orients the religious to live out her life in service of others. Finally, when lived authentically for the purposes she outlines, religious life is a joyful life because one then enjoys complete union with the Christ who first embraces her and whom she in turn imitates.

CONCLUSION

Though it was never my primary aim to attempt to expose all that had been operative in the 19th century theological constructs concerning grace and suffering, I attempted, nonetheless, to explicate and to ponder the underlying attitudes about God which then prevailed so as to better understand the theological milieu in which Mother Maria was immersed. While our three very diverse historical sources have been instrumental in this regard, they have more importantly helped to interpret Mother Maria's understanding of grace and suffering. In comparing the letters of Mother Maria with these sources, however, it is evident that her perspective of grace and suffering clearly transcends each of the sources employed in this study and hence the 19th century theological constructs they embody.

The selected letters reveal her personal relationship with God.

In these letters her heart-to-Heart experience of God follows the characteristics of true friendship: presence, dialogue, mutual self-revelation and self-giving. Thus, grace for her is first of all friendship with a loving and provident God whose self-offering presence penetrates all reality and envelops all past, present and future time into eternity. For those who enjoy and pursue an intimate relationship with Jesus, grace is also the effect of those who "touch Him." Hence, for her it is also God's ultimate strength to share in his salvific will.

Suffering is never a display of divine strength or vengeance, but rather, for her, it is always simply the consequence of God's goodness in an imperfect world marred by sin. She teaches that when the religious imitates Christ's intimate relationship of love with the Father, suffering then can be borne with love as Jesus did. In this way she looks upon the sufferings of the religious as a privileged share in Christ's redemptive love for all others and therefore a source of great happiness, peace and joy.

From this extensive study it is evident that Mother Maria enjoyed and communicated an experience of God radically different from that expressed in the accepted doctrinal formulations and some hierarchical statements of her day. A future study of her autobiographical accounts, retreat notes and personal correspondance may reveal that which contributed to the formation of her understanding of grace and suffering.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Didysis Kataliku Tikėjimo Katekizmas
[The Large Catechism of the Catholic Faith]

Grace---pp. 118-121

288. Is it possible for us through our own innate faculties to so keep the commandments that we can save our souls?

With our innate faculties it is impossible to keep the commandments in order to save our souls; God's grace is necessary.

Grace is the inner gift of the Holy Spirit that we may save our souls. Christ merited us this grace and the Holy Spirit gives it to us. But ordinarily we receive it through the sacraments and prayer.

289. How many kinds of grace are there?

Grace is twofold:

1. Actual
2. Sanctifying

There are more kinds of grace: supernatural virtues; gifts of the Holy Spirit; forgiveness of sins.

290. What are the effects of actual grace?

Actual grace enlightens our mind, strengthens our will to avoid evil and to pursue good.

The Holy Ghost's inspirations belong to actual grace.

291. Do we need actual grace?

Actual grace is most necessary because without it we cannot perform the smallest act toward our salvation. (John 15)
(Phil. 2, 13)

292. Does God give his grace to all mankind?

God gives sufficient grace to all to save their souls. It is God's will that all men be saved and he who prays devoutly and receives the sacraments often and devoutly obtains enough grace for his soul's salvation and he may gain a high degree of happiness in heaven.

293. What must we do that God's grace would lead us to salvation?

We must cooperate with grace and not reject it.

Ask God for his grace each day and diligently strive not to close off your heart to grace. Lord Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. (actual grace) He who hears my voice and opens the door (responding to grace) I will go into him and (sanctifying grace) sup with him and he with me.

294. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is that inner gift which makes us children of God and heirs of heaven.

Since sanctifying grace makes us children and heirs of heaven, it can therefore be said that it can't be in the soul at the same time with mortal sin; sanctifying grace destroys mortal sin just as returning life destroys death. It also bestows on the soul a heavenly beauty and gives it a resemblance to God. Christ compares it to the heavenly banquet.

295. When do we receive sanctifying grace for the first time?

Sanctifying grace is received for the first time at Baptism. The Holy Ghost who bestows sanctifying grace on us enters the soul to live therein. 82

296. How do we lose sanctifying grace?

We lose sanctifying grace by falling into mortal sin. Along with sanctifying grace we also lose God himself.

82

In this place it might also be good to point out the contents of numbers 100 and 306 since both have to do with grace in the context of Baptism. These can be found on pp. 50 and 123 respectively.

100. What kind of graces does the Holy Spirit bestow on the faithful?

1. The Holy Ghost lives in the souls of the faithful to make them holy and just.
2. It enlightens them, strengthens and comforts them.

306. What graces does baptism bestow on the soul?

1. It destroys sin and forgives the punishment for them.
2. It bestows supernatural life and assists the soul to live the supernatural life.
3. It makes us Christians and seals us with the indelible mark of a Christian.

297. How can we regain the lost grace?

We regain the lost grace

1. through the sacrament of penance;
2. through perfect contrition.

After receiving God's grace through perfect contrition, we still have a duty to confess that sin.

298. How can we increase sanctifying grace?

We can increase sanctifying grace

1. with every reception of the sacraments,
2. with every good work that we perform.

Sanctifying grace is the most precious gift of God on earth. Through it we really become God's children and inherit the right to live with Him eternally in heaven and share His Divine Happiness. Therefore avoid mortal sin that you may not lose sanctifying grace; diligently perform good works that you would constantly increase it.

Didysis Kataliku Tikėjimo Katekizmas
[The Large Catechism of the Catholic Faith]

Sections on Suffering---pp.30-32; 36-37; 38-40; 44-46; 151-152; 185

God the Creator of Heaven and Earth: #39-#44

39. Why do we call God the Creator of heaven and earth?

We call God the Creator of heaven and earth because he created the whole world out of nothing.

40. Why did God create the world?

God created the world
1. for his own glory,
2. for our good.

41. Having created the world, is God constantly concerned with it?

Yes, God takes care of all creation and governs it most intelligently and in the best way possible. Nothing happens in the world without the will of God or without his permission. The Lord Jesus says, "Are not two sparrows sold for next to nothing? Yet not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent." (Mt. 29) The concern of God with his creation is called God's providence or the sustainment and government of the world.

42. With whom is God concerned most lovingly?

God is most lovingly concerned with mankind. The savior says: "As for you, every hair of your head has been counted. . ." (Mt. 10, 30)

43. If God is concerned with all creation, why is there so much suffering?

There is much suffering
1. that sinners would mend their lives in order not to be lost for eternity;
2. that the just would have opportunity to increase their happiness.

44. Since God controls all things, does he therefore also will the evil in the world?

God wills no evil, but he permits it because he gave men a free will and knows how to derive good from evil.

Application: Always trust God's providence like a child and never murmur against it. God is always concerned with your good, even when sending you sufferings. He knows best what is useful and saving. "For whom the Lord loves, He disciplines; He scourges every son He receives." (Hebrews 12, 6) "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him. . ." (Romans 8, 28)

The Fall of Man and Original Sin: #57-63

57. What command did God give to our first parents?

God said to our first parents: "From every tree in the Garden of Eden, eat; but from one tree in the center of the garden, do not eat: for if you eat of it, you shall die the death.

58. What did the first parents do?

The first parents broke God's commandment and sinned. (That sin was mortal.)

59. What evil consequences did the first parents have to suffer because of sin?

The first parents lost sanctifying grace and all the gifts relating to it.

1. They ceased being God's children and were not able to enter heaven.
2. Their mind was darkened, their wills were weakened, and they were inclined to evil.
3. They were sent out of the Garden of Eden, had to suffer much, and finally, die.

60. What evil consequence did Adam's sin bring to all men?

All men inherit sin and its evil consequences. Therefore now all people come into the world with original sin, that is, without sanctifying grace which according to God's will we must have in order to please Him. This is taught by St. Paul when he says: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world and with sin death. . ." (Romans 5, 12)

61. Who remained protected against original sin?

The Blessed Virgin Mary was protected against original sin.

We commemorate that privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception on December 8.

62. What would happen to mankind if God would not have had mercy on them?

If God had not had mercy on mankind, not one person would have been able to go to heaven.

63. How did God have mercy on mankind?

Adam, having sinned, God immediately promised to mankind a savior who would redeem them from sin and return them to sanctifying grace.

To prepare mankind for the coming of the redeemer, God chose the Hebrew nation and used to send prophets to them to turn their minds to the coming Messiah.

Practice: Never forget that you are God's child created in His image and likeness. Hate sin because it brings misery on earth. Sin makes nations miserable. Thank God that He did not forever punish mankind as He did the fallen angels.

The Incarnation: #65-68; #72

"And Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary and became man."

65. Who was the Redeemer?

The Redeemer is the only begotten Son of God who became man for us. Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you." (Isaiah 35, 4)

66. What do the words, "God's Son became man" mean?

God's son became man means that the second person of the most Blessed Trinity took on a human body and a human soul. This great mystery of the Incarnation we must recall as many times as we say "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1, 14)

67. How is the Incarnate Son of God called?

He has two names. Jesus, that is, the Redeemer; and Christ, that is, the anointed.

68. Is Jesus Christ God and man?

Jesus Christ is God and man at the same time. He is God from all eternity and man from the time of His Incarnation.

72. Why did the Son of God become man?

The Son of God became man that by His example and teaching He would show us the way to heaven. That through His passion and death He would open the gates of heaven.

If Jesus would not have become man, he would not have been able to suffer and die.

The Passion: #81; #84-88

"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."

81. What did Jesus suffer particularly?

Jesus suffered agony and a bath of blood in the Garden of Olives; then He was scourged, crowned with thorns, burdened with a cross and at last, nailed to a cross. For three hours He hung on the cross enduring indescribable pain and finally, bowing His head, He died.

84. Was Jesus compelled to suffer and die?

No. Jesus suffered and died freely out of obedience to His Heavenly Father and for love of us.

"He was offered because He Himself willed it." (Is. 53,7)

"He became obedient unto death--death on the cross." (Phil. 2, 8)

"He loved me and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2, 20)

85. Why did Jesus want to suffer and die?

Jesus wanted to suffer and die to make reparation to God for faults and in that manner redeem us.

"He was wounded for our offenses and crushed for our sins . . . by His wounds we were healed." (Is. 53, 5) The suffering and death which Jesus bore out of His own free will was an offering which He made for us to the Heavenly Father. (the offering of the cross)

86. From what did Jesus redeem us with His passion and death?

Jesus, through His passion and death redeemed us from sin and hell.

"This is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." (Jn. 1, 29)

87. What did Jesus merit for us by His passion and death?

By His passion and death, Jesus merited God's grace and the right to earn heaven.

88. For whom did Jesus die?

Jesus died for all mankind. (2 Cor. 5, 15)

Application: Meditate often about the great love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Love Him with your whole heart since He suffered the most bitter death for you. You too take your cross and follow Him.

Christ's passion is revered through these devotions: stations of the cross, devotion to the five wounds, holy hour and visits to the holy sepulchre during Holy Week. We also reverence Christ's passion through the sign of the cross and particularly in the sacrifice of the mass.

Exerpts from the Sacrament of Penance: #382-384

382. Why does the priest give us penance?

The priest assigns a penance:

1. that we may atone at least partially for the punishment of sin;
2. that we would amend our lives more readily.

383. When God forgives sin, does He not at the same time forgive all the punishment for sin?

When God forgives sin, He always forgives the eternal punishment, but He does not always forgive all the temporal punishment due to sin.

384. What are the temporal punishments for sin?

The temporal punishments for sin are those punishments which we have to suffer here on earth or in purgatory.

In order that we might shorten our suffering in purgatory, we should of our own free will do penance and patiently carry our daily crosses. In this manner we merit many graces and a rich reward in heaven.

Supplement: #6

6. In illness and contradictions avoid impatience, all the more, do not complain and do not swear or curse. Accept suffering as a special gift of the heavenly Father and offer it to Him along with the sufferings of Christ. In this way, it will become for you a source of rich blessings on earth.

Concluding poem:

Learn to pray and to control;
Learn to try and to suffer;
To forgive and to forget---
To become a true Christian.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Prayer Manuals

A. Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. (1924)

First Prayer upon Rising:

O my God, prostrate in Thy presence, I adore Thy Supreme Majesty, I love Thy Infinite Goodness above all things, and I thank Thee with my whole heart for all the blessings which Thou hast bestowed upon me, especially for having preserved me during the past night. I consecrate to Thee, in union with the merits of Jesus Christ, all my thoughts, words and actions, and all the sufferings of this day. I intend that every thought, word, action and suffering shall be for Thy greater glory and in honor of N. . . (daily patrons) and of N. . . (annual patrons).

I intend also to gain all the indulgences that I can in favor of the souls in Purgatory, I propose to do all that is prescribed by the Rule, for the intention of the Rule, and all else, I offer to obtain . . . (yearly virtue). . . p. 1.

B. Maldu Rinkinelis [Little Collection of Prayers] (1927)

Untitled.

Our works, we pray, Lord, begin with your inspiration and help us perform them so that every prayer and work would always have its beginning in you and that which is begun in you would end likewise. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. p. 97.

"Atsidoukime su visa kuo Viešpečiui Dievui"
[Let us dedicate ourselves to the Lord God]

I give you, Lord, all that I have from you, for all is yours, what ever I possess or could possess. I return to you, whatever today, tomorrow, whatever through my whole life long, I will think, speak, do or suffer; I give you my body and soul, with all my sensibilities and powers, while I live and forever; I give you also my desires today to earn all the indulgences and however I will offer them, for the Poor Souls in purgatory. pp. 98-99.

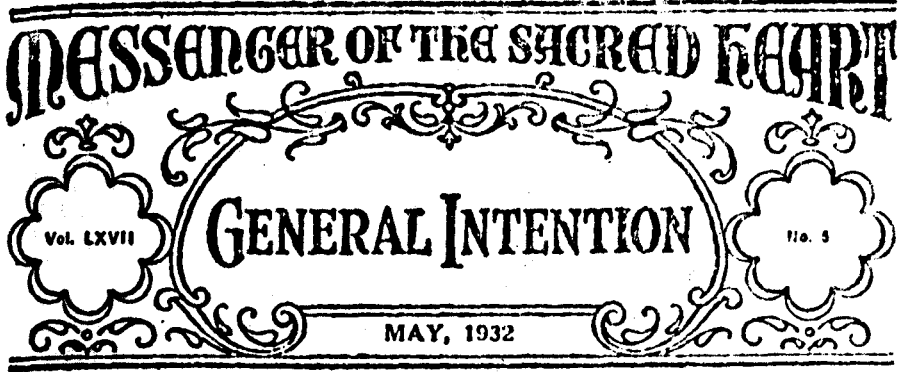
C. Švento Kazimiero Seserų Bendrosios Maldos (1930)
[Saint Casimir Sisters' Community Prayers]

First Prayer upon Rising: identical to 1924 IHM Manual of Prayers p. 1
See letter A above.

"The Apostleship Prayer"---For members of the Apostleship of Prayer, this prayer is not found in the IHM manual, and is among the Congregation's Chapel Prayers, those said in common.

Divine Heart of Jesus, through Thy Immaculate Mother Mary, I offer thee my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our Bishops and of all members of the Apostleship of Prayer, and in particular for the intentions for this month. p. 14

APPENDIX C



Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM J. HAFEY, D.D.

Bishop of Charleston, S. C.

TO THE millions who would reveal in one word their loving estimation of her, whom Christ gave to us as our Mother, even the title of Queen seems inadequate. Yet, beyond the incomparable titles of Virgin and Mother, human language offers us no word to arouse the imagination or to reveal the wealth of Mary's virtues more expressive than the title of Queen, preeminence amongst women. To aid ourselves in revealing the depth of our love, as well as the reason for Mary's preeminence, we have studded a crown with a litany ranging from Queen of Angels to Queen of Peace and have placed it on her brow as a token of fealty and devotion. One jewel which we or the Church, for we are the Church, have placed in the golden crown has the color of blood. It represents to us Mary as Queen of Martyrs, martyrs not only in the original sense of being witnesses to Christ and to Faith, but martyrs in the more common understanding of the term, those who suffered and shed their blood rather than deny Christ and the Faith.

Universal Queen

ON Mary we bestow the title of Queen of Angels, though Mary herself was not an angel. By reason of her position in Heaven at the side of her Divine Son, Mary ranks higher than the brightest of the Seraphim, and thus is rightly termed Queen by preeminence of position and power, as well as by the signal purity and chastity of her life. By reason of her profound knowledge of Divine mysteries, Mary is the Queen of Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles.

Likewise on Mary is bestowed the title of Queen of Martyrs, and in this instance Mary merits the title, because she herself was a martyr and, of all the martyrs, the one whose sufferings were the most intense, whose pains were the most poignant, whose martyrdom was the most perfect. A martyr was Mary and Queen of all martyrs is Mary, though she shed not a drop of blood, though no hand was raised over her except in blessing, though no harsh or insulting word was cast at her beyond the curt refusal, "There is no room".

About the deathbed of Mary, so different from the deathbed of Mary's Son, there is no evidence of boiling cauldrons, of a burning pyre, or the yelps of ferocious beasts. Indeed the death-chamber of Mary reveals to our eyes the quintessence of peace. Surrounded by the princes of the Church, the hand of the penitent Saint resting on her brow, the Mother of God and of God's children breathes her last breath without agony, as her soul enters the embrace of Him whom she first held to her bosom in a cave of Bethlehem. The Babe Divine died as a malefactor, but the Mother of the Crucified King died as a Queen. The Creator gave up the ghost in writhing agony, while the creature went forth in peace. So God willed to reward in death the Virgin and Mother, whose life had been a martyrdom.

From the pillow, on which the head of Mary rested, awaiting the summons to her throne above, she could peer back to the moment, when she bowed her head to the will of God and when the Angel informed her that His Name would be called Jesus. At that moment did Mary become the participator of the sorrows of the Saviour. At that moment did she prepare herself for the prophetic words of Simeon: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce". For thirty-three years did the Virgin Mother live close to her Child who was also her God, and every moment of those blessed years was shadowed by Calvary's dark hour.

Her Martyrdom

TO delineate in words the incessant sorrows of a loving soul, pierced by the sword of her Son's sacrifice on a gibbet, would seem impossible on the part of a man. Only a woman, and she a mother with a devoted and suffering son, could begin to reveal the agony of heart which Mary endured. What mother, true to a mother's heart, would not joyfully accept in her own body the suffering of her child, rather than endure the sufferings in her heart at the sight of the child in agony? "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (St. Luke xii, 34), our Saviour informs us.

St. Bernard reveals the same thought in other words: The soul is more where it loves, than where it lives. Not only when Mary stood beneath the cross, while her Son's body was being drained of its Blood, did she suffer in her heart the agonies which Christ suffered in His tortured body, but during every hour following His conception, the prophetic vision of the crucifixion was her constant companion. Mary had no other treasure than her Divine Child; in Him she centered every thought of her mind, every affection of her heart. Ah truly, then, if Christ be King of Martyrs, Mary, His Mother, is their Queen.

From this meditation on the dolorous life of Mary, so inextricably linked with the suffering and the supreme Sacrifice of our Saviour and Redeemer, there follows a truth, bitter to our fallen human nature, yet most consoling to souls endeavoring to walk in the footsteps of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is a truth, shining forth from the sorrowing lives of Jesus and Mary, which was and still remains the stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, yet which explains what is ever an enigma to the worldling; why the Church of Christ and the loyal members of Christ's Mystical Body look upon sorrow, suffering, yes, unceasing persecution as evidences of God's love and the unfailing signposts to the true Faith. Christianity without its Gethsemani and Calvary is as unthinkable as Christ without His Cross.

Devotion to the Queen of Martyrs

That even the Mother of Christ was not spared, indeed, that she should be asked by Her own Son to suffer more than any other is at once a prophecy and a summons: a prophecy that all the loyal members of Christ's kingdom must expect to live under the shadow of the cross; a summons to "look and make it according to the pattern, that was shewn thee in the mount" (Exodus xxv, 40), the mount where the Blood of Christ mingled with the tears of His Mother, the Queen of Martyrs.

The World-Crisis

WITH special emphasis does our Holy Father in these days of world-disturbance and forebodings call upon the faithful to look upon the Mount of Calvary and recall the circumstances attendant upon our Saviour's crucifixion. When the tragedy of Golgatha reached its culmination and the Victim spoke the final word, "It is consummated", we are informed that "there was darkness over the whole earth" and "behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and rocks were rent" (St. Matthew xxvii, 51); and, preceding the death of the God-man, we read that "they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: 'Vah, Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross'" (St. Matthew xxvii, 39-40).

A hurried glance over the pages of the world's recent history reveals the fact that the men, who scoffed and blasphemed and taunted Christ, begging Him to come down from His Cross, have had their counterpart in the generation preceding the present world-crisis. Scoffers of Christ and Christianity have had the ear of a pleasure-seeking, sensuous world. An educational system, with Christ and His teachings positively excluded, has not failed in begetting a new paganism with Venus and Croesus as its deities. Even the Scribes and Pharisees have been heard again in the persons of ministers of religion demanding that the revealed truths of Christianity be toned down to meet the approval of a degenerate philosophy of life. Atheism and Red Communism have openly and ruthlessly declared war on Christ and His Mystical Body.

Christianity Attacked

IF less publicly, no less actively have the forces of Masonry lent themselves to the crucifixion of the Catholic Faith. To them the Cross of Christ has been foolishness, and they have called on Him to come down from His Cross. Need we wonder, indeed, if the earth is shaken with a world-wide economic depression, with millions in every land idle and starving? Need we be surprised, if the world groans beneath the constantly growing armaments of warfare, and that the sun of Catholic Faith is obscured by the persecution, hidden and manifest, which the Church of Christ is suffering in every land?

"To restore all things in Christ", and to beget the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ through the re-assertion of Christian principles in every sphere of life and its activities, is the object of Catholic Action, and in the ranks of Catholic Action should every true member of the household of the Faith be enlisted. At the same time each must gird himself for a conflict, which will require the fortitude and constancy of the martyr. Woe to the Christian who has not learned how to suffer persecution for justice' sake!

With the vigor of pressing reality do we hear the prophetic words of Christ, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away", and it was Christ who said: "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me".

Needful, indeed, in this our day is the intercession and no less the example of Mary, the Queen of Martyrs, whose constancy and fortitude in her life-long martyrdom are our inspiration and solace. Only by uniting ourselves, as willing victims, in the sacrificial life of Mary can we hasten the resurrection of the world from its pitiable plight to the glorious rebirth of Christian civilization with its attendant gifts of peace, justice, and distributive prosperity.

Not many weeks hence, pilgrims from all parts of the world will journey to an Emerald Isle in the Atlantic for the Eucharistic Congress. Well might all the faithful in memory return to that land, which above all others reveals in its history the blessings of the Faith preserved pure and unsullied by the martyrdom of its sons and daughters in the centuries of Ireland's travail. In every nation there have been martyrs, but to Ireland belongs the title of a martyr nation. For centuries did Ireland bear the yoke of persecution as she saw her children robbed, driven from field and home, their minds darkened by enforced ignorance, all their rights violated, their hopes crushed, the victims of a savage code of extermination and hatred usurping the code of justice and law.

The Martyr-Nation

BY apostasy could Ireland have had all that makes life dear to men. But Ireland and Ireland's faithful souls chose to serve God rather than Mammon. Through the long years of Ireland's journey up Calvary's rough path Mass was still heard on the mountainside; the catechism was still taught by the hedgerow; faith and purity remained the jewels of her children under the thatched cottage-roof. But the nation that was a martyr has lived through it all and in the day of her resurrection she stands forth triumphant and resplendent before the nations of the world, as she prepares herself to become again the Isle of Saints and scholars. Through the bearing of her cross, has Ireland become the beacon-light of the modern world; through devotion to Mary and through loyalty to Mary's Son and His Holy Catholic Church, Ireland has become the sign and symbol of a world's hope in its battle against the marshalled forces of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Yet another test must the children of Ireland face. Shall Ireland, that failed not in the long years when the green of her fields was reddened by the blood of her martyrs, now succumb to the lurking dangers, hidden beneath the mantle of peace? As between the conflict entailing immediate death and the bloodless conflict of living martyrdom, the latter requires the greater courage. More than ever will the sons of Erin need the inspiration born of Mary's dolorous life to preserve the Faith, purchased by the blood of their fathers.

To the sons of Erin, who live in the great melting pot of the world's nations, no less than to the sons of others who emigrated to America's shores from all the nations of Europe, comes the warning that the pearl of great price may be saved in the face of the gallows, but lost in the killing atmosphere of modern cynicism and religious indifference. To bear witness to Christ on the field of battle is less a martyrdom than to live the life of

The May Mission Intention

Christ's doctrines day after day in the theatre of our worldly existence, in the face of a scoffing and worldly-minded generation.

The opportunities of bearing witness to Christ, of being a martyr as Mary was, though she died a natural death, are manifold and ever at hand. The mother who welcomes God's little ones to her home is a martyr in the presence of Herod and Herod's brood of unnatural birth-controllers; the maiden who treasures honor and purity is a martyr in the presence of profligate youth; the business man who values honesty above riches is in a definite way bearing testimony to his Faith; the individual who refuses the honors of the world or the highest office within his nation, offered at the cost of apostasy, is a witness to Christ as truly as any one of Nero's victims. These acts of martyrdom may not be heralded to the world, but they are written in the same book of life, that records the dolors of the Jewish maiden, who now reigns as Queen of Martyrs in Heaven and on earth.

During the month of May, the month of Mary, the children of Mary will renew the ardor of their love for her, whom Christ bequeathed as Mother of us all. During this month the exigencies of the time implore us, as our Holy Father Pope Pius XI implores us, as the example of Ireland counsels us, to honor Mary as the Queen of Martyrs and to beg her intercession, that we may emulate her in sharing the Cross of Christ, that we may be true witnesses to Christ and to the standards of Christ and thus win the battle over sin and death for time and eternity.

The Morning Offering.

O JESUS, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee my prayers, works and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our Associates, and in particular for devotion to the Queen of Martyrs.

The May Mission Intention

Associations for Mission Studies.

Last July at Niagara University was held the seventh National Convention of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. There were present between 1,200 and 1,500 delegates. Seminarians, college men and women, high-school boys and girls mingled in a happy fraternity to discuss the problems of missionary work, both at home and abroad, and to hear from experienced missionaries and directors of missionary associations an exposition of what can and should be done to promote the interests of the Sacred Heart in all parts of the world. It was announced that senior units of the Crusade numbered 901 and junior units 1,517, representing a total enrollment of half a million.

It is most encouraging to report the enthusiasm of these young people for missionary studies and missionary works. And we are happy also to report that similar work is going on in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, India and Australia. We are invited to pray that there may be no slackening of zeal for this holy cause and that the same spirit of zeal may spread to all parts of the world, bringing countless blessings not only to the missions but to the Crusaders themselves.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Linda Strozdas, S.S.C. has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

16 November 1983

Date

J. Patout Burns

Director's Signature