



The
International
FATIMA
Rosary Crusade
NEWSLETTER

HELP OUR LADY REACH OUT TO MILLIONS OF FAITHFUL SOULS

Volume 6 - Issue 17 - June, 2003

*St. Philomena,
Virgin, Martyr*

Feast Day — August 11

While searching for the graves of martyrs in the catacomb of St. Priscilla, workers discovered, on May 24, 1802, the tomb or loculus of a girl martyr. It was closed by three earthenware slabs or tiles on which a legend was written in red paint, which when rearranged became *Pax tecum Filumena* — "Peace be with thee, Filumena." The name Filumena or Philomena ("Beloved," in Greek) was taken to be the old name of the martyr whose skeleton was found inside the tomb. It was that of a girl about fourteen years and was entire except for the skull which was broken. The cement held a small vial with traces of what seemed to be blood and on the tomb were various symbols: two anchors, two arrows, a javelin, a flower or torch, and a palm. The tomb dated from the latter half of the 2nd Century.

For three years her sacred remains were preserved with other relics in Rome, and then in 1805 the pastor of Mugnano, near Naples, asked for the relics of the saint, hoping that through her intercession and by her presence in his church his parishioners would be restored to religious fervor. The relics were solemnly transferred to Mugnano and enshrined under an altar of the church. Soon numerous miracles occurred, and

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her fame spread through Italy, then to France and the rest of the world, bringing thousands to her shrine. Among these was Venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot, foundress of the Propagation of the Faith, who was miraculously cured of a hopeless illness and who brought St. Philomena to the notice of St. John Baptiste Vianney, the Curé of Ars. He in turn erected a shrine of the saint in his church and recommended her warmly to his clients. He called her his "dear little saint," his "agent in Heaven," and ascribed to her the miracles which others attributed

to him.

In 1837, Pope Gregory XVI authorized the



eneration of the saint and permitted the clergy of the Nola diocese to celebrate Mass in her honor, a privilege soon extended to other dioceses. In 1855, Pius IX approved a proper Mass and Office for her feast. This Office states that though "her life, her acts, and the kind of martyrdom she suffered have remained hidden," St. Philomena was "a virgin and martyr," who came forth from the darkness of the catacombs and the obscurity of the past to adorn the altars of the Church. ■

Miraculous Medal Story

Many extraordinary graces have been obtained through the instrumentality of the Blessed Mother's Miraculous Medal. Evidence of the devotion to Her Immaculate Conception is found through the distribution of Her Medal throughout the world, and Our Lady has surely rewarded such zealous devotion.

We see the Miraculous Medal used as a powerful instrument of grace in the United States, even as early as the Civil War. The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul ministered to the wounds of fallen soldiers, but it was the salvation of souls that was their ultimate concern. Here is just one of the many accounts of conversion obtained through Our Lady, extracted from a letter written by an American Sister of Charity:

"A soldier, William Barrett, scarcely twenty years of age, was almost in a dying condition when brought to the hospital. After doing all I could for the relief of his poor body, I inquired very cautiously as to the state of his soul. Alas! It was deplorable; not that he had committed great crimes, but that he was entirely ignorant of everything relating to his salvation. He had never said a prayer, and he hardly knew of the existence of God. My first conversation with him on the subject of religion was not altogether pleasing to him, for he did not understand it; but when I had briefly explained the principal articles of Faith, he listened very attentively, and begged me to tell him something more. When I told him that Our Lord had loved us so much as to become man and die on a cross for our salvation, he could not restrain his tears: 'Oh!' said he, 'why did no one ever tell me that? Oh! If only I had known it sooner! How could I have lived so long without knowing and loving my God!' I now prepared him to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, and tried to make him sensible of God's great mercy, in bringing him to the hospital, that he might die a holy

death. He understood this and much more, for grace had spoken to his poor heart, so truly penetrated with sorrow for sin. 'I wish to love God,' said he, 'but I am such a miserable creature! I would like to pray, but I do not know how. Sister, pray for me, please.' I promised to do so, and offering him a medal of the Blessed Virgin, I told him that by wearing it, he would secure the intercession of the Mother of God, Who is ever powerful with Her divine Son. He gladly accepted the medal, put it around

his neck, and repeated, not only the aspiration, "O Mary! Conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee," but other prayers, to obtain the grace of a happy death. He then asked me when I would have him carried to the river, for he was under the impression that he could not be baptized without being immersed. I explained to him the manner in which the Catholic Church administers this Sacrament, and the dispositions necessary for receiving it. Listening eagerly to every word I uttered, 'Pray with me, Sister,' said he, 'come nearer, that I may hear you better, for I do not know how to pray.' He repeated with great fervor all the prayers I recited, and thought only of preparing himself for his baptism which was to take place on the following day. From that time he

wished to converse with the Sisters only. If his companions or the attendants came to him, he answered them in a few words, evidently showing that he desired to be alone with his God. One of the officers asked him if he wished anyone to write to his family. 'Do not speak to me of my family now,' said he, 'the Sisters have written to my parents. I wish for nothing but to pray and be baptized.' And the words ever on his lips, were these: 'O God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Towards evening he became so weak, that I thought it best to remain with him. At three o'clock in the morning, fearing that he was in his agony, I administered the Sacrament of Baptism;



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The Devil's Weapon

"The tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison. By it we bless God and the Father: and by it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceeded blessing and cursing." ... James 3:8-10

Backbiting (malicious gossip) is "denigration of a neighbor's reputation by means of secret words" according to St. Thomas Aquinas. The sin of the tongue is eminently destructive for it robs a man of what is most precious to him: his reputation.

This sin can be carried out in eight specific ways:

1) Because of vanity he imputes things against his neighbor that never happened or adds to the truth imaginary circumstances that are either a lie or a detraction.

2) When he makes known a hidden or unknown fault. He is telling the truth but he should not be saying things to hurt his neighbors reputation.

3) By exaggerating a crime. This is most common when we talk about the vices of others.

4) Relating something that in itself is not evil but suggesting it was done for evil purposes.

5) By praising someone with coldness or reticence.

6) By shaking your head or rolling your eyes so as to have it understood that the person being praised does not deserve it.

7. Especially when being questioned about a neighbor, by your silence, implying your neighbor is blameworthy, when, in fact, he is not guilty and you know it.

8) By denying guilt when publicly accused, thereby making the accuser seem like a liar. You should justify your actions in some other way.

MIRACULOUS MEDAL STORY

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he lived till seven o'clock. The fervor with which he united in the prayers was truly edifying; even when scarcely able to speak, he tried to express his gratitude to God for His goodness and mercy to him. He was most anxious to quit this world, that he might go to that Father who had admitted him into the number of His children, and whom he so earnestly desired to see and know." ■

— Story taken from *The Miraculous Medal: Its Origin, History, Circulation, Results* by Father Aladel.

Watch out for the person who begins speaking of another with praise, then changes to criticism and finally ends with pity. Backbiting inflicts great harm and is very hard to heal.

Backbiters harm themselves, for the stone he casts will almost always fall back upon himself; he harms his listener by pouring deadly poison in his ears; he harms the reputation of the person he is speaking about.

No One's True Friend

We have an instinctive propensity for criticizing other people's behavior. Everything that seems blameworthy in our sight turns into vice at once. This rashness of judgement is often accompanied by envy. The envious person tries to calm his bad temper by disparaging others.

By telling listeners "don't reveal what I say," you are no less guilty. Why do you ask him to keep silence? You should have kept silence first. You have not remained silent, and you would shut other people's mouths.

Backbiting should be avoided like the plague. How painful to have to retract what you said and undergo the shame of such a restoration. It is easy to return clothing, money, or personal property unjustly acquired; but restoring a reputation, what a burden. If you try to praise someone you have previously denigrated, you are wasting your time. What you said has taken root too strongly, and too many people know about it.

The backbiter considers it a pleasure when he finds something to criticize in others. He is filled with joy when he can invent and relate things that do not even exist.

As St. Augustine says, "since you get angry with others when they speak evil against you, get angry with yourself when you speak evil against someone else."

"Oftentimes those who reveal the crimes of others are more sinful than those who commit them," says Guillaume Perald.

When Theocritus was asked what is the most ferocious animal of all, he answered, "In the mountains and forests, I think it is lions and bears. In the cities and towns, it is money-lenders and backbiters." The backbiter often delivers great blows while making little noise. The wounds he leaves are scarcely visible, but he inflicts mortal damage to the reputation of others. Beware of him! Run from him! The backbiter is

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Readers' Mail



Editor's Note: In a letter from the *Ecclesia Dei* office in Rome, dated September 27, 2002, Monsignor Perl assured a traditional Catholic letter writer that attendance at Mass offered by priests of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) does, in fact, fulfill one's Sunday Mass obligation and that one is even justified to contribute to the collections at a SSPX chapel. The pertinent excerpt from Msgr. Perl's letter follows below:

Dear Mr. ...

We wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 14 August 2002 addressed to His Eminence Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos along with the enclosures.

In our letter to you of 7 November 2001 we provided you with important information about the status of the Society of St. Pius X according to the law of the Church and told you that we cannot recommend your frequenting their chapels, but you indicate that you are not satisfied with our responses and have raised three more specific questions. We will deal with them in logical order.

1. In the strict sense you may fulfill your Sunday obligation by attending a Mass celebrated by a priest of the Society of Saint Pius X.

2. We have already told you that we cannot recommend your attendance at such a Mass and have explained the reason why. If your primary reason for attendance at such a Mass were to manifest your desire to separate yourself from communion with the Roman Pontiff and those in communion with him, it would be a sin. If your intention is simply to participate in Mass according to the 1962 Missal for the sake of devotion, this would not be a sin.

3. It would seem that a modest contribution to the collection at Mass could be justified ...

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Camille Perl, Secretary

This letter shows that the SSPX are not in schism. If they were, a Catholic could not go to their Mass.

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Novena Prayer to Saint Philomena

O faithful virgin and glorious martyr, Saint Philomena, who works so many miracles on behalf of the poor and suffering, have pity on me. Thou knowest the multitude and diversity of my needs. Behold me at thy feet, full of misery, but full of hope. I entreat thy charity, O great saint! Graciously hear me and obtain from God a favorable answer to the request which I now humbly lay before thee. (Here specify your petition.) I am firmly convinced that through Thy merits, through the scorn, the sufferings, the death thou didst endure, united to the merits of the Passion and Death of Jesus, thy spouse, I shall obtain what I ask of thee, and in the joy of my heart I will bless God, Who is admirable in His saints.

Amen.

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deadlier than a snake in the grass, and there is practically no remedy for his venom. "A person who backbites performs the devil's work. Backbiting is an unruly demon," says St. John Chrysostom.

Killing someone with the pen is no less a homicide than killing him with the sword.

Duty of The Hearer

Take heed not to lend an ear and listen to backbiters willingly. On the contrary, let them see that you do not care for this sort of conversation. If you lend a favorable ear to a gossip and spur him on to speak, you incite him to proceed with still greater freedom, boldness and excess. "Where there are no listeners, there are no backbiters," observes St. Jerome.

If you cannot interrupt the backbiters' conversation, at least try to temper it. Presume the good intentions of those who are absent by saying "we never really know all the extenuating circumstances. Rumor always blows things out of proportion." A sincere friend not only avoids backbiting, but also does everything he can to bring it to a halt. ■

— Taken from *Sins of the Tongue* by Father Bélet