

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

Vol. XLI, No. 75

Friday, May 11, 1962

Notre Dame, Indiana

OUR LADY'S TUMBLER

There is a charming story that was told often by our forefathers in years long gone by, concerning a certain professional tumbler and the Holy Saint Mary, Mother of Jesus. We certainly do not say that it is the greatest of all stories, but we think it to be a very nice one that deserves to be told again.

The tumbler was a handsome young man whose time was very successfully occupied with his profession. His great accumulation of horses, robes, and money attested to his unusual competence. He was not learned, however, in any of the liberal arts of his day.

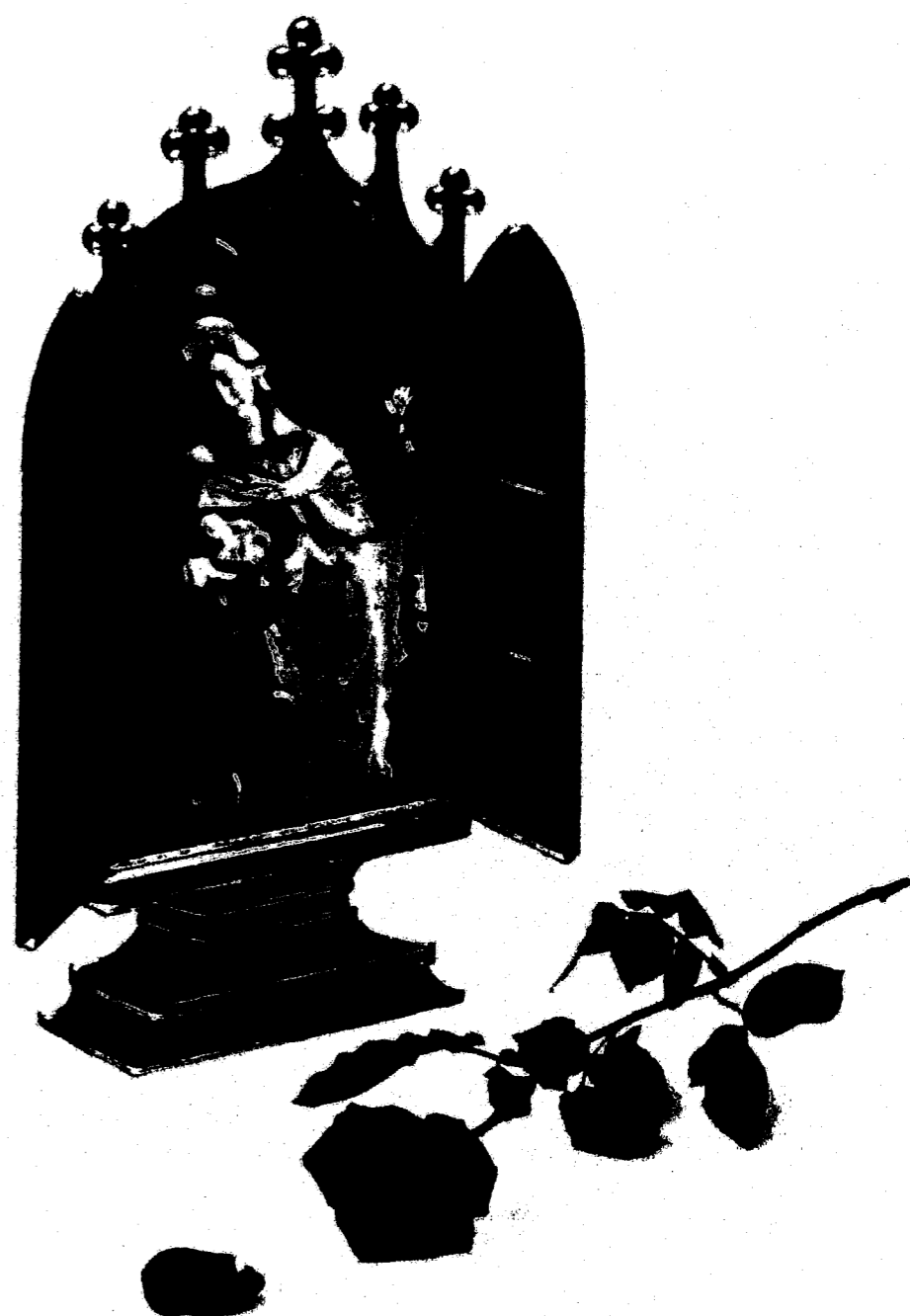
As the years passed over him, he became aware of the superficiality of many of the hopes and desires men set their hearts upon. His worldly success did not in any measure prevent him from divining a fate other than destiny and a world other than this. At last, when he could tolerate his way of life no longer, he gave all that he had to the poor and afflicted and applied for sanctuary at the Holy Order of Clairvaux. Thus we are come upon again by that unexpected truth--**MAN'S FIRST REAL QUEST OF THE PROMISE OF A MORROW COMES WHEN HE FINDS HIS SOUL AND NOT WHEN HE LOSES HIS PURSE.**

When he became a novice,

When he became a novice in the order, he found his orientation much more difficult than he had anticipated. First of all, this tonsured group did not talk. He assumed therefore that they could not speak, and he felt sorry and prayed for them in his own way. Later, when he learned that they were not mute, but that their speech was sometimes forbidden as penance, there was a little humor at his expense. Still more humor followed when he himself tried, for the first time in his life, to remain silent for an entire day. His second item of confusion arose much later when he heard their lamentations. "Holy Mary", he said, "what is wrong with these people? Some great sadness must have come to them to make them so humble." But when he learned that they were praying for God's mercy and forgiveness, he said, "Dear Father, forgive me most of all. There is no one here so unhappy that he does not serve you with some occupation. Yet I can do nothing. Some read lessons, others sing hymns, and still others write chronicles. The simplest among us pray at the altar. But I can do nothing. I know no prayers, no songs, nor can I read nor write. I am worthless to the order and to my God. Oh, Holy Mary, help me. Beseech your sovereign Father that he hear me and send good counsel, so that I may learn to serve Him. I am doing wrong in taking bread here without deserving it, but I do not wish to leave. Oh, Holy Mary, Help me,help me,help me,"

He grieved thus for many days. At last, in the early dawn of an enchanted morning in May, when the chill of the winter was over, and spring had fallen upon the land, he arose from a deep slumber. Guided by the wings of the morning, he explored some of the innermost recesses of the great church where he had never gone before. And, still guided by those unseen pinions of hope, he came upon a small crypt in which there was an altar and a semblance of the Virgin Mother. In deepest reverence he fell to his knees, and with eyes upward, became transfigured by the divine loveliness of the Holy Mary. In a little while, he was moved from his silent prayer by the sound of the Angelus bell. He jumped up, dismayed and ashamed, but the sharpness of his early grief had vanished. "Dear Lady", he said, "all will be saying their verses, but I in Thy presence can say nothing sacred. If you will forgive me, I will do the only thing I know how to do--I will serve God by displaying the only talent I have. Others will sing and pray. I will tumble.

He removed his cape and laid it upon the altar, but kept on a light garment that would not hinder him. He fastened his belt and prepared himself. Then he turned back to the image. "Lovely Lady, I commend my body and my soul into your keeping. Do not despise me for what I am. I shall perform for you my finest acts." Then he began to make artistic leaps--small ones and great ones--first farther away and then nearer--up and over. He jumped and did the marvelous "vault of Metz". Afterwards, the "act of Champagne". Next the elaborate "Brittany", and then the beautiful "Lorraine". He danced on his hands and whirled on his feet. As a grand finale, he made a great vault that had no name. "Lady", he said, "in the name of Our Father, I never did that one before! It is no ordinary feat, and is completely new in this world." Then he beat his breast and wept tenderly for he knew of no other way to pray. "Dear Mary", he said, "I can do no more. But when the bell calls all to prayer again, I will return and be thy servant with this, the only gift I have."



He led this secret life for a long time and was very happy. There was never a day when he was too weary to perform before the image. And God in Heaven was well pleased, because the service was inspired by love. God cares little for earthly treasures. He searches only for the true love in men's hearts.

(To be concluded.)

IN YOUR CHARITY

Please pray for the following. Deceased: Mother of Rev. Roman Ladewski, C.S.C.; Prof. F.W. Kervick, former head of the Architecture Dept.; mother of Bob Carlton, Off-Campus; mother of Prof. Rufus Rausch of the English Dept.; mother of Nora Gushwa (ND telephone operator); grandmother of Mike Mashuda of Pangborn; father of Bill Carson, '56; Joseph Pleck; John S. Burke, Jr.; Mrs Walter J. Murphy. Ill: Grandmother of John Rynell of Howard and Mike Rynell of Keenan; grandfather of Dave Trigiani of Fisher. Three special intentions.