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A "Saint" For A Superior General

Sr. Mary Basil Roarke, D.C.



The passage of the post-war steamship MARINE SHARK from New York to Naples in June 1947 was a memorable one for many people and for many reasons. This renowned steamship (a masterpiece of understatement) carried as part of its "cargo" eight Daughters of Charity en route to Rome for the canonization of Blessed

Catherine Labouré scheduled for July 27, 1947. That fact alone produced radiant joy in the heart of every Daughter of Charity; but only a few were invited to cross the ocean in the aftermath of the great war which had ended so recently. The MARINE SHARK, still valiantly decked in some of its military trappings, welcomed a few passengers aboard, the most important of which (according to our standards) were eight Daughters of Charity from the Emmitsburg and the St. Louis Provinces.

What made this voyage especially memorable for the Daughters was a message received in mid-ocean on July 8, 1947. To quote from the diary of the scribe for the trip, Sister Catherine Sullivan, Assistant of the St. Louis Province:

“THE SHARK TURNS ARK! July 8, 1947. Like the dove of the Ark bringing the olive branch of peace over the waters, there came the news of Father Slattery’s election to the highest office in the Little Company. The loveliest things happen in the morning, as our thanksgiving for our Eucharistic Lord’s visit blends into our day’s meditation. It was just at this period that the loud speaker announced that there was a RADIOGRAM for Sister Catherine Sullivan. What excitement — on board the MARINE SHARK! Amid the exclamations, a Sister ran to the office and returned with the news: REJOICING SLATTERY ELECTION.

What rejoicing indeed — and what rapid fire of questions and answers as the St. Louis contingent questioned the Daughters from the Emmitsburg Province. Everyone wanted to know everything about this wonderful new SUPERIOR GENERAL. After the first outbursts and exclamations, we dropped into a meditative mood, thinking that this important word that reached us in mid-ocean was now being flashed around the world. The excited group of Daughters on the MARINE SHARK opened a dialogue on the continuity of the Double Family’s government and the wisdom of Louise de Marillac, whose determination ensured for the Daughters the blessing of having the successor of Vincent de Paul as SUPERIOR GENERAL of the Daughters of Charity.

A radiogram was quickly dispatched to our new “Most Honored Father,” as he was then called, and we planned a “high tea on the high seas” as a great celebration for our *American* Father Slattery. The Emmitsburg Daughters, with Sister Isabel Toohey as spokeswoman, made it very clear that we had now a SAINT for a SUPERIOR GENERAL — a real Saint in the literal sense of the word. The mighty Atlantic waves dashed against the old MARINE SHARK which had once carried its soldiers to battle. We knelt in prayer and thanked God and St. Vincent for having given us a SAINT to guide us during this difficult period in Community history.”

It has been said that Pope Pius XII stated he knew two saints: Padre Pio and Father William M. Slattery, C.M. Anyone who lived in close contact with Father Slattery in Europe could concur with this and strengthen the statement with many examples of sanctity that they observed in his everyday life.

The characteristic marks of sanctity may have been evident in the early life of Father Slattery, but this article deals with his later life, more or less. References have been taken from the events and writings of Father while he was Superior General. It did not take the French Confreres and Daughters of Charity very long to perceive and appreciate the elements of sanctity that marked every word and action of the new Superior General. It would indeed be profitable and inspirational to outline the *holiness* of this great man, but sanctity is not easy to analyze. It is all of one piece. We might want to look for some of the identifying marks that prompt people to say, "he is a saint." In Father Slattery's case, his life was modeled on Christ and His Gospel message, exemplified so covertly in the life of Vincent de Paul, his patron.

CHRISTOCENTRISM

The vocation of every Vincentian priest is based on the Gospel. In the Constitutions of the Vincentian Community we read, "The Congregation of the Mission, having the Gospel before its eyes . . ." The adherence to this message in its totality is the foundation for holiness. Father Slattery, like St. Vincent de Paul, lived his life with the Gospel before his eyes and in his heart. He seemed to think and speak and act as Jesus did. Although this is the ideal for every Christian, few attain it in this life. Father Slattery was one of those few gifted by God with the extraordinary grace of holiness, that is, sanctity portrayed in the simple actions of everyday life. The virtues of

Monsieur Vincent had been so engraved on his heart that he acted “as if” he were born with them firmly established and rooted in his being. This is far from the truth. Father Slattery *worked at* becoming holy. He applied himself to the imitation of Christ after the example of St. Vincent whose life he strove to imitate in every detail. He lived “as Vincent lived,” due consideration being given to the culture of the different countries. His holiness was in the duplication of all that Vincent did in the direction of his large Community.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In the 1950 *Echo of the Motherhouse* Father Slattery wrote: “The remembrance of the Presence of God helps us to perform our actions in the best possible way. The remembrance of the Presence of God fills us with courage and fervor in the performance of our work. By walking in the Presence of God we are advancing on the road to perfection.” Father Slattery could speak in this manner because he himself always seemed to be “in the Presence of God.”

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Father’s confidence in God equaled that of our Holy Founder. When Father Slattery wrote: “It is said that the last words of St. Vincent de Paul, CONFIDO, sum up and illustrate a whole life,” he could have been referring to his own life. In the midst of difficulties and anxieties about the Double Family all over the world, Father Slattery could smile and generate TRUST in God. “The reason which obliges us to confide in God is that we know He is good, that He loves us most tenderly, that He wills our perfection and salvation.” Father truly believed these words that he addressed to the Daughters.

During his last illness, Father was heard to say in the

midst of his physical and mental suffering: "It's a great puzzle, but the good Lord must have some plan in it all." His constant suffering due to arthritis and his great affliction caused by the loss of his sight kept him far removed from the satisfaction of seeing his friends and enjoying their company. Each movement brought pain. But Father called it a "puzzle from God." Everything he did, he did it because he believed God wanted it this way. God created "the puzzle" and provided its solution. In this belief Father Slattery was a replica of Vincent de Paul. He lived as Vincent lived, by the virtues which the Saint urged his Family, his sons and daughters, to practice.

SIMPLICITY

"We are stupefied at the gentleness and kindness which accompanied the least of the actions of St. Vincent. We bless him for having always remained such a lovable saint with all of his proverbial simplicity." That is what Father Slattery wrote to the Daughters throughout the world. He urged them "to make the exterior a true picture of the interior." Unwittingly, he penned a picture of himself. Father's close union with Christ was seen on his countenance at all times. If the "duty of simplicity is to produce this trait," then Father had acquired it perfectly.

When Father Slattery spoke to the Daughters of Charity about "village girls doing nothing to attract attention," he was unconsciously bringing out one of his own admirable traits. One would never know or even guess that Father was Superior General when he was in the midst of a group of ecclesiastics or dignitaries. He never spoke unless a question was put directly to him. He remained in the background and gave an occasional smile to show that he was "present" to the conversation but not anxious to express his views. When he had to speak, it was in very few

words and right to the point. His simplicity in these instances was disarming. He understood all that was being said, but he expressed his views only when absolutely necessary.

Many are the examples of his humility and simplicity. One of the Daughters of Charity went to see Father Slattery in Paris and told him of her inability "to pray" during the time allotted for mental prayer. Father's response came forth gently but with great conviction: "Sister, I think of the prayer that Our Lord Himself gave us, the 'Our Father'; just take one petition at a time. It must be the best way to pray because Jesus Himself taught it to us." During Father's recent illness, the same Sister reminded him of the advice he gave her regarding the "Our Father" for mental prayer. Although he was weakened by his illness, Father responded with the same spirit: "I still pray that way." What an example of humility and simplicity, what a legacy for his sons and daughters today!

HUMILITY

It might be noticed here that Father had some difficulty in expressing himself in French. This came across as a great lesson in simplicity for the Daughters in Paris. They marveled at his efforts and at his humility — making a mistake here and there and not troubling himself too much about it. God was speaking through him and God understands all languages. Everyone knew what the heart was trying to express and God reached the hearers in his language.

One of the General Councillors, who assisted at Council Meetings when Father was present, remarked how strongly he expressed himself when there was question of making an important decision at the Council Meeting. Generally reticent — due to his humility — he was quick to

speak out when duty called for a decision. In these actions, his nearness to God was very evident. He spoke "in the Presence of God." He seemed to be filled with the spirit of St. Vincent and seemed to be asking himself the same question: "What would Jesus do in my place?" After a moment of reflection, his answer came strong and clear.

He was never too busy to answer anyone's call. This applied to all the "tourists" who heard of his name and stopped to call on him for information about subways — where to go for this and that, how to get the train, etc. It was not uncommon for Father to accompany the tourist to his destination and even to carry his luggage. The servant of servants! And he did it all so naturally, as though it were a joy. I believe it was; he was accompanying Christ on the journey.

MEEKNESS

Father Slattery's meekness was unequalled. Regardless of the circumstances on foreign soil, he faced a situation with a radiant smile and an affirming nod. He understood, and his onlookers knew that he understood. One felt secure with Father Slattery because he acted from a supernatural motive always. The meekness of Christ shone forth.

This supernatural spirit struck all those who had dealings with him. It has been said that he *never showed impatience*. That trait alone merits the title of "saint." No matter how irritating a situation might have been, Father Slattery was always Father Slattery. This is all the more unusual for an American who spent a total of twenty-two years in France and Italy. The inconveniences of the post-war period in Europe were many and extremely difficult. But Father smiled through it all and never showed any uncomfortable feeling. He gave the impression of another St. Vincent walking the corridors of Saint-

Lazare. Sitting up all night on a train from Paris to Rome in those days took about twenty-two hours. Father did this frequently with no ill effects. The next day he resumed his work as though he had used a bed the previous night. Saints are like that!

The expression of Father Slattery to the Daughters about "mortification that is imposed by events, people, and things" came from his heart and it was quite normal to suppose that Father suffered greatly from "people and things" of another culture. He always smiled and showed no disfavor when he was obliged to live in another culture surrounded with so much protocol because of the office he held in the Community. The Superior General's office often demanded a certain ceremonious role which was so foreign to the humility of Father Slattery. He submitted to every custom and to all the people who gave him directions. He never showed displeasure or even surprise, although he must have suffered keenly at these times. Later on, when he related these incidents to some Confreres or Daughters, he would have a hearty laugh and really seemed to enjoy it. But in the heart, the hearer knew how hard it was for him. How do saints manage to conceal their feelings like this? Saints are vulnerable but what did Christ show us in the Gosepl? That was Father Slattery's reference book.

"Meekness has the gift of winning the heart of the neighbor." This trait was very pronounced in Father's dealings with the Priests and Brothers at Saint-Lazare. A certain Brother at the front door had the reputation of being a bit abrupt and somewhat "autoritaire." If he were on duty, one often went the other way, especially if the message had to be given in another language. But this particular Brother mellowed at the appearance of the "saint," as he called Father Slattery. Father had the uncanny ability to disarm the person "who was going to

“speak his mind.” Many a person went to him, as Superior General, in the mood of the lion and left him feeling like the lamb. His weapons were from another world — meekness and simplicity. How could anyone attack such a meek man? That’s the effect Father Slattery had on many members of the Double Family whom he interviewed when he was Superior General.

MORTIFICATION

“Saint Vincent does not ask the Daughter of Charity to do anything that he himself did not do every day” wrote Father Slattery. A Sister remarked that his humility could not hide his mortification. After a long morning Council meeting with the Daughters, he would be obliged to interview Sisters in their annual retreat being held at L’Hay, outside Paris. He often went without his dinner in order not to keep the Sisters waiting. He hurried to the subway and went in the direction of L’Hay as quickly as possible.

It has often been said that Father Slattery absorbed the French culture so thoroughly that he lived it more intensely than the French in many instances. For him that required a blunting of nature, but he truly believed that St. Vincent wanted it that way. These were the mortifications imposed by duty. Moreover, he would also ask the Daughters: “Do we sometimes take the initiative of an act of mortification in order to assure our interior liberty, to increase in ourselves the spirit of prayer or to help souls?” Only a man imbued with the spirit of mortification, a “saint” whose insights were subject to the influence of faith, hope, and charity could ask that question. Virtue of that type does not come without a struggle. The French Sisters were in admiration of his serene countenance and his extraordinary ability to put the other person at ease.

He was all attention to “the other” while keeping himself in the background.

ZEAL

When a French Sister was asked to give her impressions of Father Slattery, she wrote: “The first impression that one felt in approaching Father Slattery was of being in the presence of a saint, a saint showing great respect for any Sister who had an interview with him. This delicate attention touched the heart of each Sister who had contacts with him in a personal matter. Above all, he was always available, he was *present*; he gave each Sister all of his attention, understanding and sympathy, if the incident required this. He *understood*, and this says everything.”

His zeal for souls knew no bounds. At the Motherhouse there was a Sister who was not quite balanced but who had a generous heart and an unusual depth of spirituality. Because of her bizarre actions, she was often “in trouble.” In times like this she would hurry over to Saint-Lazare and tell Father Slattery all her troubles and the situation in which she found herself. In spite of his busy schedule, Father always had time to listen. He gave not only his time to this poor Sister but all his attention. She left him with her spirits “on high;” the “saint” resolved all her difficulty with such kindness and understanding. To this day, she speaks about her experiences and the consolation that Father Slattery brought to her life.

One day another Daughter of Charity went to see Father Slattery and the Brother refused to call him down to the parlor because he had been called several times that day. The Brother was insistent that the Sister could return another time. Of course, all this was unknown to Father Slattery. The Sister asked if she might phone Father and

say that she was there. The Brother, upset at this request, had nothing to do but comply. When Father heard the story, he smiled and wondered how often this might be happening without his knowledge. He said he would tell the Brother NEVER to refuse anyone, at any time. If ever there was an example of availability, Father Slattery showed it. He was never too busy to answer anyone's call; he saw Christ present in the caller.

The ECHO OF THE MOTHERHOUSE, the worldwide periodical of the Daughters of Charity, abounds in many articles for various occasions written by Father Slattery. Over a period of about twenty-one years the Daughters of Charity have collected these and a perusal of them gives proof of the holiness and sanctity that emanated from this holy man. His words were only an intensification of what he himself was living. His readers knew this; they admired it, but found it very difficult to practice.

Let us reprint some of Father's statements from the ECHO. No attempt has been made to give specific citations for these quotes; in some instances quotes from various places have been combined because of the unity of the subject matter. Let Father Slattery speak to us:

THE EUCHARIST

"Daily we need a revival of fervor and generosity. Every day petitions are addressed to us and intentions recommended to us. People hope that the prayers of the Daughters of Charity will be heard. What better way of presenting these petitions than to have them pass "through Christ Jesus," as the priest says at the end of Mass. Holy Mass, which places within our reach Christ praying, adoring, repairing, asking and thanking, is therefore the "center of devotion" as Saint Vincent tells us. We unite ourselves especially to Jesus by Holy Communion, here we

shall find an increase of grace and strength. Holy Communion consolidates and sustains our spiritual energies which, though not always sensible, causes us to taste the happiness of souls that possess the God they know, serve and love! After a Communion well made, you are ready for all sacrifices, you love your duty, your House, your Companions, your works. Let us communicate well, my dear Sisters, and we shall do everything well. If sometimes during the day we feel discouraged, tired, without taste for virtue, let us go to the foot of the Tabernacle which will permit us to console Christ, will render us vigilant and generous for the road still to be pursued. When the last stage comes, what a joy, what a strength to receive Holy Viaticum that will give us the grace to reach the House of Our Father. Jesus will be our strength and remain forever the pledge of our heavenly happiness and of our resurrection.”

† † †

“If St. Elizabeth on the day of the Visitation expressed the overwhelming confusion she experienced at being visited by the Mother of the Redeemer and exclaimed “whence is it that the Mother of my Love should come to me,” with what greater reason should we say at each Communion we receive “whence is it that my Lord Himself deigns to come to me?” Holy Communion repairs, sustains and increases our spiritual forces. Holy Communion will keep our faith alive so that we shall think, speak, and act in agreement with supernatural principles and motives. It will keep alive the ardor of charity so that we may do everything for the love of Our Lord. It will help us to be more and more filled with the spirit of our vocation, more and more simple, humble, mortified, more and more like Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, like Saint

Vincent and St. Louise. Let us often call to our minds the marvelous fruits of Holy Communion, that admirable supernatural Food of our souls. Holy Communion produces an intimate union of our souls with Jesus Christ.”

* * *

MARY

“The day the Virgin Mary accepted to be the Mother of Christ, the day on which she promised her ‘FIAT’ of the Annunciation, she became the “Help of Christians.” Mary proved to be our help by the sufferings she endured not only during the public life of Our Lord, but also during the Way of the Cross and at the foot of that same Cross on which He died for us. His sacrifice was also hers and both were offered for our cause. Mary is interested in all her children, she compassionates all situations if we have recourse to her with confidence. She has proved it by the apparitions which have marked her Marian history.

Mary will be our stimulus toward our personal sanctification. Mary can not be disinterested in us her privileged children. She reminds us that life is a constant struggle, that discouragement is unchristian, that virtues develop gradually. If Mary was preoccupied at Cana, why would she not stand by you Daughters of Charity who have received the mission of giving daily bread to the aged, of providing for the necessity of orphans, etc. As Mother of Christ and teacher of Mothers, she will give all necessary instructions for men’s moral and religious life. How many Daughters of Charity, while giving hypos or dressing wounds of the sick, have invoked Mary in the secret of their hearts and won souls to God? We must be supernatural! If our intentions are fixed on God, if our actions are prompted by a supernatural motive, Mary will

be with us suggesting the words to be spoken and giving to our acts results blessed by God. Let us be penetrated with this confidence in Mary, entrusting to her our sanctification, our maternal solicitude, our daily work and our apostolate.”

† † †

“Mary teaches us by her example that peace is tranquility of order, and the principle of true peace is in the love of God, friendship with Him by constant union, by recollection, detachment from transitory things, by humility, obedience, resignation and forgiveness. Conformity to His Will Mary teaches in the mystery of the Annunciation. She helps us to accept that “the will of God be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” and that great peace is given when we obey the law of God and the desires of God over us. The permanent recollection of her soul assured this initial peace. Detachment and mortification maintained the peace of Mary. Humility and submission guaranteed for Mary peace in the union of Hearts.

St. Joseph was the head at Nazareth after God. Mary blindly followed St. Joseph who also followed blindly the order of God. In Jesus her mother’s heart loves her child while her soul adores God in all succeeding events. Because she was lowly, humble and submissive, she allows herself to be guided. Mary keeps exteriorly the order which she safeguards within. Because she loved and desired peace, she forgave the executioners of her Son and received with kindness at the foot of the Cross Mary Magdalen in tears. She was the first of the penitents to be pardoned. What peace and security in the soul of Mary broken by suffering, but in no way rebellious. Mary is truly Queen of Peace, of individual peace. She is also Queen of Peace in families and Communities. Mary proves herself Queen of Peace, of

Social Peace, for she loves all her adopted children as the *Mother Co-Redemptrix of mankind*. Like all Mothers she forgives and loves all those who cause her suffering. Mary is the refuge, the haven of peace of the dying. How sweet it will be to have peace at the hour of death when so many memories and apprehensions fill the soul. Mary is at that moment *Queen of Peace*. She helps us to die well as she helped Our Lord on the way to Calvary and on the wood of the Cross.”

† † †

THE ROSARY

“Every time we say our Chaplet, we ask God that His Name be hallowed, that His Kingdom come and that His Will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Thus we aid the missionaries who work for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. We ask Him also to give us daily bread, that is, Bread of Life in Holy Communion, as well as the material bread of which so many people are deprived. Finally, we ask Him to forgive our offenses and not allow us to yield to temptation but to deliver us from evil. We need graces and blessings for ourselves, our Double Family, and the entire world, especially at the present time. What an excellent means of obtaining these graces and blessings. We desire to love Our Lord with our whole heart, to have many vocations in our dear Community, to walk steadfastly in the footsteps of Saint Vincent and St. Louise. What a treasure in our Rosary which allows us to obtain help in all these intentions. Every day, thanks to the Chaplet, we place a crown of spiritual roses at the Blessed Virgin’s feet as an expression of our filial affection.”

* * *



DISTRACTIONS IN PRAYER

“The most fervent souls and the holiest are importuned by distractions. Persons inexperienced could become discouraged with distractions, especially if they are persistent. What is important is never to give way to discouragement, and to discover whence springs the distractions, and what the most practical means of overcoming them.

Distractions seem to come from three sources. First, they may be attributed to an habitual lack of recollection. Almost without realizing it we are inclined to become too engrossed in our work. The danger is lurking for us to become too absorbed by pressing demands. Saint Vincent urged us to be recollected from morning rising until our night’s rest and also to mortify our senses dwelling on the importance of holy modesty, observance of the rules of silence and the practice of the Presence of God. How easy it is to drive away distractions when we realize that we are in the presence of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Saint Vincent, although constantly dealing with people of all conditions, attached great importance to recollection, as did Saint Louise. It is not surprising that both were able to pray with so much recollection as may be judged from their writings.

A second cause of distraction is the malice of the devil. He does all he can to prevent us from meditating because he knows that meditation is a priceless remedy against any evil. He cannot completely turn us from meditation, but he tries to do so by distractions. If we call upon the help of God, we have nothing to fear. He is powerless to harm us if we trust in the protection of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin.

The third cause is from the weakness of our poor

nature. An efficacious remedy is the recalling of God's Presence, reminding ourselves that we are in conversation with God. This should be done gently, calmly, without any anxiety or precipitation.

Aridity could be very discouraging. Sometimes spiritual dryness comes from carelessness in keeping recollection of heart and mind. Even when we have no neglect with which to reprimand ourselves we may suffer. Sensible consolations are often useful to our spiritual life, but they are not always necessary. In the natural order, God dispenses days of sunshine and days of rainfall to cause the growth of trees and plants and the ripening of fruit. In the supernatural order, He makes us grow in holiness so as to increase our union with Him, by sending us sometimes sensible consolations and again periods of dryness. In times of aridity we realize how little we can do of ourselves and how entirely dependent we are upon the grace of God. It is then we make progress in humility, detachment from the things of earth, and progress in other virtues, and this far more often than in times of consolation. It is a time of trial during which God tests us and gauges our firmness, the purity of our intentions, and our generosity. St. Francis de Sales says that a king or a governor are satisfied with the mere presence of their courtiers when they say nothing to him and that likewise God is pleased with our presence at meditation, even if on account of spiritual dryness we have few thoughts or affections.

We must never become discouraged or neglect our meditation or our spiritual exercises on account of dryness. Another help is to make use of external means of stimulating devotion. In a general way, abandoning ourselves to Divine Providence, humbly asking that His Will be done. We must humbly thank God for giving us so enlightened a guide in the person of our Founder. Let us

ask Saint Vincent to intercede for us so that we may make our meditation in a way more like his own, productive of fruitful results. In this way we will progress daily in holiness and become fit instruments in the hand of God as were Saint Vincent and Saint Louise.”

† † †

MENTAL PRAYER

“My Sisters, if we wish to safeguard our personal sanctification which is the first purpose of our vocation and wish to aid the neighbor, we must follow the example of Saint Vincent and be faithful to prayer even though we may think we are overloaded with work. We must never lose sight of the essential which gives us a reserve of supernatural spirit; I mean the exercises of piety. Without them our life will become too natural.”

† † †

“At meditation you prepare the day. At meditation the saints are formed; there, one receives more graces; there, God enlightens and gives necessary strength for the work of sanctity which we must untiringly pursue for ourselves as well as for the works which absorb most of the time of our life. Often there is produced a progressive encroachment on nature. This is the battle that continues between the world and us, between the human and the divine, between selfishness and detachment. Fortunately, we have mental prayer. Here we revise our actions, thought and reactions under the eye of God. We consider the path to be followed. We review our practice. The whole terminates with an ardent prayer, a fervent supplication that God may

not abandon us. To be human and supernatural, to be in the world but not in it, to live in the world, yet not to allow oneself to be possessed by its spirit, this is our program, my dear Sisters, and we shall perform it on condition that we are persons of prayer.”

* * *

HOLINESS

“Be “holy,” especially in these chaotic times of misery and hatred. You must be saints on account of your vocation, on account of the exceptional graces that have been bestowed on you and which are being lavished upon you here. The world expects sanctity from you to counterbalance the increase of duplicity, of pride, of moral licentiousness, so that our lives may draw down the graces of Heaven and attract vocations to the Community. Be “Catholic,” that is, generously ready for all the works of the Church, sharing all her concern, mindful of all the sufferings and joys of that Universal Church, anxious to spread her reign everywhere, to help her exercise her liberty indispensable in doing good to souls and continue the mission of Christ. Be “Apostolic” in relieving the sufferings and infirmities of your Sisters by the prayers you are saying for all our Sisters all over the world. Be “Roman,” all of you are vibrating with the same love for the Pope, the Church of Rome. Romans you will be in a still stronger degree, in listening to that voice, its messages, its counsels, its urgings because beyond the Holy Father, behind him, you perceive Christ Himself saying to Peter, “Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.”

= † † †

My dear Sisters, if you wish to resemble those pioneers, Sister Marguerite Naseau, Sister Barbara Angiboust, etc., if you wish to resemble a host of other good Daughters, I shall propose one thing: to be docile instruments of the grace of God, souls of good will, souls who aspire after perfection with the teachings of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise de Marillac, souls eager for the instructions and directions of Superiors, souls who give their hearts and their energies to the poor, to children, to aged, while enriching their own souls with the virtues necessary to good Daughters of Charity. Read over the beautiful conferences of St. Vincent and the previous instructions of St. Louise. Thus you will acquire the Spirit of St. Vincent; and in both communities, that of Heaven and that of earth, there will be great joy."

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In writing on holiness, Father Slattery mentioned to the Daughters: "You must be SAINTS on account of your vocation, on account of the exceptional graces that have been bestowed and lavished on you. The world expects sanctity from you. What is sanctity? It is the retrenching and removing the things of earth and, at the same time, a clinging to God and union with His Divine Will."

The Daughters of Charity know what the world expects and they are now better able to meet these expectations because of their "saintly Superior" who has preceded them in the Presence of God. Father Slattery understood holiness, but more importantly, he lived it. Let us pray to "our saint" for the Double Family, asking him to assist us in the life-long process of obtaining holiness, so

that one day we will join him where Christ “the Holy One” has reserved a place for us.



It is necessary that you so labor to acquire the spirit of your state that you may not share any other spirit or methods which, though good in themselves and suited to those who make a profession of them, nevertheless could not but be hurtful to you and wholly contrary to your profession.

St. Vincent de Paul

I beg our Sister often to renew their desire of doing all their actions for the sake of God and for His love, and to think of the great grace which His goodness has bestowed upon them in calling them to so holy an employment.

St. Louise de Marillac



Pope Paul VI welcomes Fr. Slattery to the Vatican. One of his last acts as Superior General was to lead the delegates of the General Assembly of 1968 in paying their respects to the Holy Father.



Fr. Slattery waiting to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the time of his sixtieth anniversary of ordination to the Priesthood. On this occasion he celebrated in the chapel of the offices of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal.