May 16, 1936
AVE BELLS
CENTENNIAL ODE
AND
OTHER POEMS

BY
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SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET
SAINT PAUL PROVINCE

Cover Decoration and Etchings
by
SISTER ANNE PIERRE LIMOGES
Some of the poems in this collection, having been written for special occasions, may not have a universal appeal. It is hoped, however, that each reader may find a line somewhere, that offers a crumb of comfort in desolation, or a ray of light in a dark hour.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To all who in any way have assisted in the production of this volume, the author expresses her sincere appreciation and gratitude.

To Superiors and Sisters for kind encouragement and cooperation.

To Miss Edna Hogan for hours of typing service.

To Benziger Brothers, the Sacred Heart Messenger, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill, for our courteous permission to reproduce several pictures.

To Henry Harrison, Poetry Publisher, and the editors of "Contemporary Women Poets" and of "Modern Troubadours" for permission to include poems which appeared in their publications.

To personal friends who financed the book.

Imprimatur
die 28 a Maii, 1936

Joannes Gregorius,
Archiepiscopus Sti Pauli

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TO MARY

MY QUEEN AND MY MOTHER
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AVE BELLS

Dawn! and the bells are ringing
Across the melting shades,
Their Ave story bringing
Before dull care invades.
Bell calling bell,
Bell answering bell,
As dawn in sunlight fades.

For the nonce our souls are wafted
Beyond the hills of space,
By Gabriel’s Sanctus shafted
In light of Mary’s face.
A low, sweet sound!
A world unbound!
“Fiat!” and “Full of grace!”

Noon, and the bells are chiming
Above the fretful sound
Of speeding toilers timing
Their hours in service bound.
Some lift their hearts
From traffic marts,
And the cares their souls behound.
Eve, and the bells are calling
Across the rosing West,
A tired world enthralling
In tranquil hours of rest.
Sweet Ave bells,
Your cadence quells
Life's drab, unending quest.

Dawn, and Noon, and Evening,
Your Ave story tell,
Down sunlit pass, through ebon mass,
In diapason swell
The message glad,
That Gabriel had—
Redeemed! Emmanuel!
DAYBREAK

Waking birds a-twitter,
Screened among the leaves;
Stardust film a-glitter,
Trembling in the breeze.

Panoply of glory
Flung across the sky!
Why so brief the story?
Thabor answers why.
THE GREAT SNOWFALL

(After the drought, 1934)

There's loveliness in snowfall
When calm has settled down,
And wind has hushed its eerie call,
And skies have ceased to frown;

When heaps of downy flakes are piled
On roof, and lawn, and lea,
And all the earth looks undefiled,
In spotless purity.

There's magic in the snowfall
When moon and stars come out,
And startle countless diamonds small,
On trees that stand about.

There's blessing rich in snowfall
That covers all the land,
The hills and vales, and meadows all
That late were packed in sand;

For He who sent great clouds of dust
That choked our crops and kine,
In answer to our pleading trust,
Reveals this hopeful sign.
IF WINTER GOES
(April 1936)

If Winter goes,
Mayhap, who knows?
Spring may come "smiling through."
He made his bow
Three times to now,
Then started over new.

No robins sing,
No tulips spring
To cheer our Eastertime;
There seems no chance
The sun may dance
When Alleluias chime.

If Winter goes,
Drab skies, who knows?
May let the sun shine through.
TE DEUM FOR WINTER

WE THANK THEE, LORD!

For hush of thunder,
Peace from lightning's flash,
And wrathful storm clouds,
Threatening ominous crash.

For white-clad cedars
Etched against the sky,
And wind-harps, strumming
Winter's lullaby.
For stardust spilling
Softly on the snow,
Startling myriad diamonds,
Where the moonbeams glow.

For flippant wind freaks
Hailing from the West,
Routing lonely sparrows,
Crouching in a nest.

For lone, quiet evenings
That leave me to my art
Of spinning rune rimes,
In solitude apart.

For God's best Love-Gift!
Little Baby King!
Sent from Heaven's Curia,
To set earth-bells a-ring!
A PARABLE

Perched atop my window sill
A little robin sings;
As if the world were audience,
His song with rapture rings.

And while I watch him swell his throat,
And tilt his pretty head,
I meditate the story sweet—
"Why robin's breast is red."

'Tis Lent, and Friday—three the hour;
I'm wafted to a Hill!
A sudden flash the darkness rifts!
I see a tiny bill

A-tugging at the cruel thorns
That pierce dear Jesus' head!
Who would not love you, robin dear,
Because your breast is red?
A TRIOLET

There's harmony in triolet,
A strain from zephyr breeze,
Or humble, singing violet.
There's harmony in triolet,
A tiny bud in amber set,
That only blooms to please.
There's harmony in triolet—
A strain from zephyr breeze.
CLOUD RIFTS

There's never a bloom or twig or bough
But makes some woodland brighter;
There's never a gust from sky or sea
But makes some bird flight lighter;
There's never a tint on breaking dawn,
Or glow on sunset leaven,
But helps some weary, drooping soul
To lift sad eyes to heaven.

There's never a smile on human lips
But makes some dark way clearer;
There's never a kind or cheery word
But makes God seem the nearer;
There's never a friendly press of hand,
Or selfless deed, or token,
But lights some path where shadows fall,
Or heals some hearts nigh broken.
TRIFLES

The little things,
The simple things,
The things of no amount,
That all around,
Each day are found,
But do not seem to count;

A little smile,
A stop awhile,
To listen to a friend,
Who is so frail
As to bewail
The frowning of the wind.

These petty things,
These fretty things,
May friendship make or mar,
As on we haste
O'er lawn or waste,
To "crossing of the bar."
STARTLED

Night! majestic silence!
Nature holds her breath!
Celestial gondoliers mount
Through foggy clouds of death!
NIGHT SNOWFALL

Veiled skies are weeping
Lumen tears tonight,
Dappling ebon crannies,
Wrapping earth in white.

Lady Moon steps out, now,
With floods of argent light
That decks Earth's ermine mantle
With diamonds, shimmering bright.
RETREAT

Let me ceroon my cares tonight,
And launch my caravel
Upon a lapis sea of dreams,
Where Calleopes dwell.

Now, slip your moorings, caravel;
Head out for tranquil cove,
And anchored there, my advent wait;
No more high seas we'll rove.
A SPARROW

Who regards the sparrow small
Pertinacious, bold?
What his claim on any love,
Save in story old?

Not a color, not a grace,
Not an anything;
Muddy feathers, froggy throat,
Not a song can sing.

Yet He Who notes the sparrow’s fall
To earth, when rudely hit,
Has left its name a parable
Enshrined in Holy Writ.
AT HOLY MASS

A Rondeau

When I am gone, the crowd may say,
"She never walked the perfect way."
But closer friends, who knew me best,
Will pray my soul in peace may rest,
When I am gone, this world away.

And when I go, as go I must,
To add to earth's great mound of dust,
Let not my soul forgotten be
At Holy Mass!

While yet alive, I hope, I pray,
Life's foolish deeds be wiped away,
In Sacramental Food and Drink.
When in that Tide, I plunge, I sink,
Dear friends, bespeak me day by day,
At Holy Mass!
OUR ARCHBISHOPS
TO OUR ARCHBISHOP

His Excellency, John Gregory Murray

(After His First Visit)

We hail our Chief, by Mother Church arrayed
In robes episcopal. Thrice blest the morn
When on your brow her chrismed hands she laid
With seal divine. Most precious gifts adorn
Your altar-soul, where flames an incense light
Of holocaust; where grace has subtly blent
Rare dowerings of the Spirit's love and might,
With nature-gifts, your priesthood to augment.

And dear we hold you for your Christ-like ways,
Your sturdy, bouyant manhood, unafraid
Of gathering mists, or lowering, sunless days,
That now men's souls dismay, men's hopes invade.
Your press of hand, your smile, your cheering word,
Like touch of garment hem, new life have stirred!
ARCHBISHOP IRELAND

Hail, Warrior Prince of God!  
Our first Archbishop of Saint Paul,  
Who, plains and battlefields betrod,  
In answer to the pioneer call.  
God's Champion in the knightly quest  
For Church and State in this great West!

Prophetic Sage! you read the scroll  
Of century beyond your time,  
And sought our statutes to control,  
To keep immune from social crime.  
Great Conqueror, who always won,  
Until your great life's day was done.

Death felled in you a mighty oak,  
A cedar tall, of Lebanon,  
Whose habitat the stars convoke,  
Whose vigil was the rising sun.  
Great Prelate, Soldier, Taps resound—  
Peace! Rest! on God's great Camping Ground!
THE PASSING OF A GREAT SOUL
AN ELEGY

"God is everything, and nothing I!"
Reechoed through the hallowed stillness there,
Where our loved Father felt the coming nigh
Of Christ, his Brother-Priest, his life's Coheir.
Then hush of holy sadness fell on all
Who knelt around to wait the final call.

The end not yet—still dear ones vigil keep,
With Angel guardians hov'ring close around;
When lo! our great Archbishop fell asleep
In Christ the Lord! His dauntless soul unbound!
But oh, the pain when morning message spread
Three poignant words, "Archbishop Dowling Dead!"
How great he was! how human, princely, kind!
With keen, alert, far-seeing vision rare;
A depth of learning in God's love enshrined,
And gentle humor, sparkling everywhere.
Born-Priest—an infant he dream-Masses said,
While angels censered round his cradle bed.

And not in bronze or marble did he build
A monument to predecessor great;
But Halls of Learning where his great heart willed
The children's love and lore of Christ would sate.
And Nazareth Hall, his monumental fame,
Where young aspirants know and bless his name.

He won our love—and words are futile now
To tell the story of our pain and loss,
While to our Father's will we humbly bow
With aching hearts, and stoop to kiss the cross.
But "God is everything, and nothing I!"
In rich, melodious chant resounds on high.
BISHOP SHANLEY

Purple-vested Hierarch,
Prince of Church and State,
Dowered with attributes that mark
God's chosen delegate.
North Dakota's Morning Star
Of faith reascent, shining far.

Mammoth load on you was laid
When from us you went,
Frontier chaos to invade,
And ignorance circumvent.
Dauntless zeal the victory won;
Then peaceful sigh, "Thank God, 't is done."

A living holocaust, your life,
A sacrificial fire,
Fed at flaming altar stone
Of your great soul's desire.
All too soon Death's Angel came,
To rob the incense of its flame!
GOLDEN WEDDING
(Of a Priest’s Parents)

Awake! across the hills of time there steals
A mystic symphony that lures a song
Of love. And angel whisperings reveal
That wedding bells are ringing sweet and long.
With heart, and voice, and lute of soul, I rise,
And haste to greet you, Father, Mother mine,
And lead you to my Mount, my Paradise,
Where daily, God comes down, at words divine.

Adoring here, we each recall a day
When nature warred against the powers of grace
That called your boy to priestly cares, away
From hearth, and home, and warmth of your embrace.
“Magnificat!” Our triple chant today,
That you and I have let God have His way!
A CHRISTMAS SILHOUETTE

Earth is robed in downy white;
Moon and stars shed tender light;
On hill and dale they vigil keep,
While David’s City slumbers deep.

No sight, no sound, no life in view,
When lo! o’er hill came slowly, two!
Below the hill a tumbled cave
To Mary and Joseph shelter gave.

The air grows chill, the sharp winds bite;
Dumb beasts seek shelter for the night.
At midnight there, a Babe is born,
Who gives each year our Christmas Morn!
EASTER
THE FIRST EASTER

Alleluia! breaks the morning
Of the primal Easter day;
Magdalen bearing rich adorning
Through night’s limbus, gropes her way.

But the scene, how disappointing!
Empty tomb, stone rolled away,
Chill the hope of her anointing,
Wake remorse, as for delay.

Veiled in mist—what was it passed her?
Gardener there she thought to see;
“Sir, I seek my Lord, my Master,
Tell me, tell me, where is He?”

“Mary!” came the soft low answer;
“Hail, Rabboni, I adore!”
With Rabboni and with Mary,
Easter chimes forevermore.
PASchal Vignette

On Judea’s purple slumber
Breaks the Christian Sabbath day!
Vigil stars that night encumber,
Light the holy women’s way

To the place they left Him sleeping,
In that tragic Paschal gloom!
Steeped in anguish for her lost One,
Magdalen stands near empty tomb.

"Weep not, woman, He is risen—
Snapped the chains of death, and fled;
Wrenched the gates of Limbo’s prison;
Seek Him not among the dead."
EASTER DAWN

Myriad filmy starflakes
Falling through the gloom,
Sprinkle mirky pathways
Leading to His tomb.

Day-god softly creeping
Up the rim of night;
Holy women hasting
His burial to make right.

Incense, linens, ointments,
Priceless, costly, rare,
Blent with holy longing
To find Him sleeping there.

Empty tomb! loose windings!
Angels there instead!
“Weep not, He is risen;
Risen as He said.”
A MOTHER'S EASTER CALL

(A True Story)

The Easter bells were scattering all around,
Their joyous Alleluias on the air!
The robins and the blossoms quaffed the sound,
And echoed back in song-tints' magic flare.
First Easter without Mother must be sad!
But each affected innocence of care,
With smiles and jests that sacredly forbade
The blighting of the joy she'd have us share.

A change! our little sister tries to smile,
To hide the pain her ashen brow reveals!
A moment more—her efforts to beguile
Are futile now. A misting pallor steals
All signs of life.—"I'm coming, mother dear!
I'm coming! I can see, and feel you near."
BETHANY

When Christ left home,
Alone to roam
Through dusty streets and alleys,
Up mountain glades, through dingy shades,
Adown dank lanes and valleys,

He had no bed
To rest His head,
When weary day was over;
Alone and sad, no roof He had,
But shades of night for cover.

As on He went
A penitent,
Converted from disaster,
Forsook the ways of sinful days,
To follow Him, the Master.

A noble three
Of Bethany
Became His warmest friends;
When so could be, toward Bethany,
His holy way He wends.

In rapture sweet
At His dear feet,
Poor Mary loved to sit;
And so her name, with quenchless flame,
Is shrined in Holy Writ.
RELIGION
"Art Thou a King?" recalls a tragic hour
When Thou hadst set Thy mind to die for man!
When love unbounded, fettered Godhead power
To free Thee from the Priest's demonic plan.
Pilate and Herod ruled their little day;
But "of Thy Kingdom there shall be no end."
"Thou art no King," some modern Pilates say,
And boastful Herods would Thy Garment rend.

Thou are a King, though cruel is Thy crown,
And dyed Thy garments in the wine of love.
Thou art a King, the endless ages down!
Thou art a King, all other kings above.
"Thou art a King!" intone unnumbered throngs
That quaver Heaven with eternal songs!
THE KING'S MESSAGE

"Go ye and teach," the mandate of our King
Has echoed on since primal Easter Day.
"To every land, to every creature bring
The lessons of the Life, the Truth, the Way."
The martyred Twelve have passed the mission on
To new disciples, princely Levites all,
Whose youthful hearts Christ's brother love has won
To speak their virgin "Fiat" at His call.

To frozen zones where high-flung icebergs groan,
Through jungle wilds where beast and savage roam;
Down sun-parched wastes where mammoth monsons moan,
Brave, dauntless priests have reared His altar home.
On wild-West trees they carved His sacred name,
And gladly paid their lives in savage flame.
SAINT AGATHA'S CHAPEL
HOLY HOUR AT SAINT AGATHA'S

The altar shrine is decked with lights and flowers,
That wait His coming through the curtained door
To be our Guest awhile—this Friend of ours,
This hidden Occupant, Whom we adore.
The organ peals; a unison breaks forth!
Aquina's Sacramental songs we hear;
And dedicated voices tell His worth
With canticles of love, in Heaven's ear.

One hour apart! With angels keeping tryst
In sweet communings near our Guest divine,
While all life's sordid worries are dismissed,
Or brought for holy counsel to His shrine.
In twilight hour, when blending shadows fall,
What peace to be with Thee, our All in All!
SANCTUARY LAMP

Tiny anchored taper,
Set against the dark,
Shedding lucent vapor
Where the angels hark.

Saffron rays a-vigil,
Little twinklings spill
Through the ebon shadows
That the midnight fill.

Happy little taper,
Keeping vigil there,
Take my heart for flame food;
I your watch would share.
A MORNING CALL

Love leads me to your shrine at break of day,
While pulsing silence shadows You around!
Alone, before the dawn how sweet to pray
For dear ones, and the world in travail bound.

In brooding stillness there you seem so near,
So friendly, that I fearlessly unfold
The heart-aches and the cares of loved ones dear,
And mind You of Your promise, made of old,

That trusting faith will not unanswered be;
No favor asked of You can be too great;
That mountains will be tumbled to the sea;
So at Your word, for miracles I wait!

At dawn, at noon, at night when shadows fall,
Love turns my steps to Your white prison gate;
And though I plead, and plead, and call, and call,
Unanswered yet, I trust, I "stand and wait!"
SYMPATHY

Pain lifts my eyes to Thee
Dear Christ of Calvary,
Dying to strengthen me,
In my poor need!

In Thy dear eyes I see,
"Will you not bear, for Me?"
Then how I blush to be
A shaken reed.
MARY OF NAZARETH

O sweet little Lady,
A mother so young,
Your little Man-God
On your every word hung,

As He helped with the dusting,
Or played on the floor,
With little toy crosses
You feigned to ignore.

When He went out with Joseph
You had a good cry,
But you never let Him see
The mist in your eye.
When your Boy grew to manhood
He left you alone!
What hurt your heart most was
No place was His own!

But now it's all over,
Dear Mother, so sweet,
As you glide through the stars
With the moon at your feet.
MARY'S EYES

Mary eyes, heavenly eyes,
Ever upward turned;
Vigil lamps of Paradise,
Love-oil in them burned.

Maiden eyes, Mother eyes,
Eyes that clearly saw
God clothed in Infancy
Lying on the straw.

Prayerful eyes, adoring eyes,
Bethlehem's candle light,
Chasing mirky shadows chill
From the Holy Night.
Tender eyes, loving eyes
Seeing Jesus grow
Nearer to the Sacrifice,
Till His time to go.

Mother eyes, tearful eyes
Watching on a Hill,
Till dark clouds of Sacrifice
Shroud her Son, so still.

Happy eyes, tearless now,
Smiling "Face to Face,"
On the Vision Beautiful—
Jesus in His place.

Mary eyes, Mother eyes,
Turn to earth, we pray
Lest your erring children here,
Miss the narrow way.
HIS IMAGE

In Mary’s face
I love to trace
The image of her Boy.
Lightsupernal
Peace eternal
A charm without alloy!

Sweet Mary’s face,
In His embrace,
With kiss from lips divine,
When He whispers you
Of His interests true,
O Mary, whisper mine!
HEAVEN WELCOMES MARY

Immaculate! Immaculate!
Celestial throngs repeat,
While heaven’s white-robed legions
Go forth, their Queen to greet.

Immaculate! Immaculate!
The azure dome is rift
By sweet hosannas to the Queen,
For God’s transcendent gift.

Immaculate! Immaculate!
The sun and stars intone,
As Mary walks the mountain tops
Of Heaven, to claim her throne.

Immaculate! Immaculate!
Crowned by her Son, the King,
As Queen of Heaven. O Mother sweet,
Immaculate, we sing!
SAINT JOSEPH

Silent man of Nazareth,
Gentle, sober, just;
Patron of us all in death,
This our salient trust.

Modest as a violet,
Pure as lily fair;
Teresa bids us not forget,
Come to you in care.

Humble craftsman of the wood,
Guardian of a God!
He and Mary by you stood
In the death maraud.

Patron of our Institute,
Father of us all,
Leave us never destitute,
Mind our needful call.
THE LITTLE FLOWER

On Her Bridal Day

Dear Bride of Christ,
Sweet Little Flower,
All hail, your happy day!
The hills and mountains levelled are
That blocked your troubled way
To Carmel, and the iron grill
That stole your heart away.

Smile, smile away
This Bridal Day,
It is your Thabor hour.
The Garden lone must follow soon
For you, dear Little Flower.
The chalice and the loneliness,
The test of Satan’s power.

Gethsemane and Calvary
You’d choose for Love Divine,
With cruel taunts of soldiery,
And draught of gall-drenched wine.
A few years passed; and now, at last
A world kneels at your shrine!
SAINT PHILOMENA

Lovely Princess! Child of light,
Gem of beauty rare;
Oriflamme of papan night,
Philomena, fair.

Tender maiden, child of love,
Early vowed to God;
Diocletian could not move
Plying chain and rod.

Scourged at pillar, like your Spouse,
Tortured in a den;
These no fear in you arouse;
You have “strength of ten.”

Happy little wonder-maid,
Known from sea to sea,
At your shrine our cares we’ve laid,
Pleading trustfully.
HOME
A TWILIGHT DREAM

At shadow time, a-dreaming in the gloam,
I hear soft voices calling from afar;
I saunter down a vesper trail to home,
And find the door of living room ajar.
The shades are high; through lacy drapes I see
The dear ones who made home when life was young.
I hold my breath! I hear my mother call
For music—now I hear old home songs sung.

A bit of Heaven! A sanctum consecrate
To primal love of God, and lore of saints
Is this dear home. How rude the lawless fate
That calls from its beneficent restraints!
Dear God, Who etched our souls with tender ties,
Let not one loved one miss Your Paradise!
TO A SWEET LITTLE GIRL

(Carol Dempsey)

Beauty, dainty, fragile,
Eyes of tender blue,
In whose radiant luster
God is smiling through.

Tender, velvet petal,
Dropped from Sharon’s Rose,
May no chill wind blight you,
Till your charms disclose.

Song from angel chorus,
Artless human hymn,
Chant your psalm at firesides
Where love flames are dim.

Holy, happy song-child,
Harping night and day,
Keep your love-notes ringing
Along our homeward way.
OUR LITTLE JANE

(October, 1935)

The angels wanted little Jane
To help them sing up there;
They almost flew away with her,
Way up the golden stair.

But Father, Mother prayed and prayed,
That God would kindly spare
Their little pet, their angel, till
Some other time and where.

And so He smiled, and let them keep
Their darling Jane, their prize;
And angels flapped their wings and flew
Back Home, through starry skies.
INNOCENCE

(Carl M.)

O darling child,
Sweet, undefiled,
Soft gowned in Mary-blue,
Your angel smile
My cares leguile,
A bit of heaven are you.
A DREAM VISIT

You are ever in our dreams, Mary Ann;
In that vision brightly beams, Mary Ann,

All the beauty, all the grace
Mother-love and sorrow trace
On a lovely Christian face, Mary Ann.

All the charms of that dear place, Mary Ann,
Time nor change cannot efface, Mary Ann;

Home and loved ones fondly true,
Joys and blessings ever new,
Sometimes worries, just a few, Mary Ann.

And our dreams are coming true, Mary Ann;
All the dreams we dream of you, Mary Ann;

That when days of life are spent,
And the mystic veil is rent,
We'll be with you where you went, Mary Ann!
ETCHINGS

Dear Home! deep etched in tendrils of the heart!
Sweet Home! thou hallowed place of Heav'n a part,
Where first God's love was kindled from on high
By saintly mother's crooning lullaby.
Where father's lilting song, and holy sign
Upon our infant lips, wrought faith divine;
Where parents, brothers, sisters, happy all
Round ev'ning fires, were deaf to siren's call.

A hearth-fire, and a candle on the sill
Though far we stray, are burning for us still;
From amber dawn till vesper's waning light,
These quenchless flames will scatter shades of night,
And shine across the pathway when we roam,
Until at end of trail, we meet at Home!
BALLA MACHREE

Have you not heard of Balla Machree,
The dearest home that a home could be?

Just ten minutes out from the busy flare
Of traffic, and honk, and pressing care,
Is the sylvan home of a noble three,
The beautiful Balla Machree.

It's a home that God and the Angels planned
With Gene, and Hilma, and spade, and hand;
And there is no place in all the land
Like beautiful Balla Machree.

The trees, and the shrubs, and the flowers all day
Re-echo the gay birds' roundelay,
As they splashed in the pond and the laughing spray,
Where gold fish gambol, and lilies sway.

A spot that is sacred to God and man,
No dearer place since the world began!
And God and His Angels all love to be
Near beautiful Balla Machree!
MARGARET BALDWIN
A PORTRAIT

Let us paint her as we knew her
When she lived among us here,
Just a sweet and charming schoolgirl,
Who had grown to all most dear.

And this imprint she has left us—
Quiet, gentle, dainty, sweet,
In whose eyes there glowed a friendship,
With a blending of retreat.

And her face was like a lily,
Blushing faintly when she smiled,
And reflecting deep refinement,
With the charm of little child.
Free from flutters and from murmurs,
Taking duties as they came;
Never anxious for the morrow,
Or the making of a name.

And her smile—it seemed half-holy,
As if mirrored from above;
Or from one who met the angels
On their messages of love.

And we know they came to meet her,
When that sudden summons came;
For that night, God planned to take her,
And He sent them in His name.

And her dear ones—while they hunger
For her smile, and sweet embrace,
They would not disturb her Vision
’Till they meet her, face to face.
VALEDICTION
(Requested by the Class of '25)

The light is flashed! The herald now appears
Announcing final scene of "All's Well."
With lonely hearts, and eyes bemist with tears,
Our Alma Mater dear, we speak farewell!
Life's parting hours are tuned to minor chords
That set its music to a silent lute.
Goodbyes! Farewells! they choke the loving words
Which fill our hearts; they render message mute.

The stage is set! Too soon the curtain falls
On all Saint Margaret scenes, so sweet, so rare,
Where rang with mirth through campus, court and halls.
Our life's glad morning song upon the air.
God love and keep you, Alma Mater dear!
Though far we roam, our hearts turn ever here!
VALEDICATION
(For the Class of '26, St. Margaret's)

What rainbow hopes play on the wimpling brook,
The school-girl Rubicon we cross today!
Adown its tempting banks, from sheltered nook,
We glimpse the magic future of our way.
No waning star we view, no fickle gleam;
Our souls are flamed with vestal purpose grand,
As on the brilliant vista it would seem
A group of valiant conquerors we stand.

We bear the torch we lit at holy shrine—
The shrine of love and faith we leave today;
Life's vigil lamp through fogs and mists shall shine
And flare a lustrous trail upon our way.
We vow to keep our vestal light a-trim,
Until upon the waves, we come to Him.
VALEDICTION
(Class of '29)

What mingled peace and pain is ours today,
As from our Alma Mater we take leave,
And turn our barks adown the untried way
That lures where castled dreams so oft deceive!
But 't is no phantom spirit hails us on
To upward, onward streams of hidden fate;
'T is Mary lights the path to her dear Son,
Who waits our disembarking at the Gate.

With buoyant hopes and hearts we now embark
In answer to the call to greater life;
A hymn upon our lips cheers like a lark
At "Heaven's gate," dispelling fear and strife.
A benediction! and a Hail to you,
Loved Alma Mater! This our fond Adieu!
TO THE CLASS OF THIRTY-ONE

God keep you, girls! Blest be the way you take
Along the rainbow trail, your maiden dream.
May simple faith and worthy motives break
A shining pathway onward to the Gleam.
May peace and sanguine joy that service brings,
Attend and speed you on your ardent flight
To God, and keep aloof from sordid things,
Your virgin plans to battle for the right.
Your selfless ways shrine you in every heart,
Whose beatings throb with pain as you depart!
VALEDICTION
(Class of ’33)

Adieu! dear girls, blest be the vistaed way
That star-lit, looms this June day, all a-smile,
On your envisioned path. May naught beguile
The lilied hopes that flood your hearts today,
With rainbow promise for the things you pray.
May no polluted breath of world defile
The vestal gowns that deck you here the while,
Symbolic of your virgin souls’ array.

A candle in the window shall remain
At Alma Mater, that you love so dear.
When shadows fall, and life is touched with pain,
Come home, dear girls; we’re waiting for you here.
Keep virgin-clad, with vigil lamps atrim,
Until, with arm bouquets, you come to Him.
VALEDICTION
(To the Class of '34)

Arise! the morn is lit! the hours enthrall
The happy scenes, dream-woven in your hearts
These youthful years. Hear Alma Mater's call
To greater life. Her blessing she imparts,
As from this heritage, this calm abode,
On God's pacific trail, you hie away.
Imbued with nectared wisdom of His Code,
Go seek your envoy on the King's highway.

Go now, our white-robed children, debonair,
Go change your lithium armor for the steel
That, arrow-like, withstands the foe's sharp flare,
And burnishes your soul with Christ-like zeal.
And may your valiant strife nor faint nor fail,
Until you win the palm at end of trail.
ADRIFT

There's a nook in the Valley of Childhood
Where the grass has a greener hue;
Where the woodland songs are sweeter,
And the sky is a softer blue.

There's a shimmering brook in the wildwood
Which flows to an ocean of strife,
Where we cast all the dreams of our childhood,
To launch on the great sea of life.

But we pause on the brink of the Future,
Looking out from the landward side,
Watching the surging billows
That blend with Eternity's tide.

Then a smile, and a prayer, and a blessing
Enthrall our spirits brave,
For our Pilot is He, Who on Galilee,
Had stilled the angry wave.

Now adrift on life's great ocean,
A-sail for our goal at last!
O Star of the Sea, shine brightly,
Shine on till the danger is past!
SWAN SONG

Happy days,
Dearest place,
Blessed ways,
Home of grace,
Adieu!

Quiet life,
Golden hours,
Blessings rife,
Friendship bowers,
Adieu!

Velvet lawns,
Cozy nooks,
Benches drawn,
Inviting books,
Adieu!

Teachers dear,
Girl-friends sweet,
Often here
May we meet
With you!
Mary, three years old, makes the vow of virginity

THE CALL

One sweet Communion hour, She felt the Gleam—
Her name, in soft low tones—Was it a dream?
It came distinct from Sacramental Guest,
By name He lures her to the holy quest.
A ravishing desire to follow Him
In hidden service sets her soul a-vim
With thirst for abnegation’s lowly way,
And fuses into pain, each hour’s delay.

A silence like a benediction lies
On her resolve to make the sacrifice.
His choice of her infuses holy trust,
With mingled joy and pain; for go she must.
As round the home you see her pass along,
Betimes, you catch the fragments of a song—
“Laudate” and “Magnificat” are heard,
And Mary’s “Fiat” at the angel’s word.
GLORY
EVENING

Spacious splendor, dying day,
Travesty of shade and light;
Listening hilltops bent to pray
A requiem on the winds of night.
OUR SISTERS
MOTHER SERAPHINE IRELAND

Intrepid soul! You were pre-eminent
Among the leaders sent to point our way!
Your strength was prayer! Your stately form was bent
In fervent whisperings near Him, day by day.
A friend and mother to the Priests of God,
Your great heart compassed care of all the Fold
Of Christ! A reverence born of Saintly Sod,
An adamantine faith, your ways controlled.

Though gone from us, your memory is shrined
In schools, and homes, and hospitals you planned.
And paramount in works you left behind,
Saint Catherine’s Halls in sylvan beauty stand.
God called you home! We hope you linger near
In prayerful vigil for your Sisters here!
MOTHER ROSALIA

Rosalia! Name and voice still echo round
The campus and the corridors where you,
For many years in our best interests bound,
A loyal friend and mother kind we knew.
And though you went away, we sometimes feel
That still you walk beside us where we go,
While often, unawares, there seems to steal
A flash from those black eyes that thrilled us so.

You left us. We have lost a worthy friend
Who sympathized and cheered us day by day;
Now, daily many prayers for you we send
To Christ, your Spouse, the while we go our way.
Sweet voice! with eyes uplift we hear you sing,
"Eternal Alleluias to the King!"

(Requested by her friends.)
"VENI SPONSA"

(Sister Anne Louise’s Golden Jubilee)

"Veni Sponsa", whispered lowly
More than fifty years agone;
Whispered by the Master holy,
To His little cherished one.

Words with holy rapture thrilling
All the powers of heart and mind,
Of a little maid, so willing
All the world to leave behind.

"I would follow Thee, dear Master;
I would be Thy little lamb;
I would count it great disaster
Not to give Thee all I am."

To the convent, off she hurries—
To Saint Joseph’s on the Hill;
Spurning human cares and worries,
There to do His holy will.
Months and years have tripped so lightly
In the joy of service sweet,
With the soul-fires burning brightly,
Where the spouse and Master meet.

True, some days were dull and dreary,
When the cross was hard to bear;
Still she followed, never weary,
Never seeming much to care.

For the peace and joy of serving
In her quiet, gentle way,
All in need, tho' undeserving,
Brought her comfort day by day.

Fifty years! how rich the treasure
In the keeping of the King,
Who returns with lavish measure,
All the gifts His children bring.

Treasures to be her adorning
At the end of time and tide,
When the Bridegroom waits at morning,
For the coming of His Bride!
THOSE FIFTY YEARS
(Written for Mother Jane's Golden Jubilee)

Arisel Awake! the golden dawn is breaking
In radiant splendor on this glorious day!
And angel choirs, their home of bliss forsaking,
Are hastening to the scene in grand array!

"Veni Sponsa!" low, the Bridegroom whispers
As soft He whispered fifty years today,
When first you came among Saint Joseph's Sisters,
To follow Him along the chosen way.

When life was glad and young the vows were spoken,
That pledged your heart to Him forevermore;
And by that virgin troth the ties were broken
Which held you to your home, on foreign shore.

Full Fifty Years! how bright the record shineth
Upon that page where all life's deeds are penned!
What hidden works of love the Master findeth,
To crown His faithful one, when life shall end!

We meet today in joyful jubilation
To honor her to whom is honor due!
With one accord, in gladsome exultation,
Our paeans swell our jubilant Hail to You!
GOLDEN JUBILEE GREETING

The Jubilee Joy Bells are chiming to-day,
To call you awhile from your duties away;
Just hear the sweet tones that their golden tongues ring,
While gladly we join in the welcome they sing!

REFRAIN

With sweet music ringing,
Our warm welcome bringing
To you, friends, our true friends,
Who come here today.
And fondly we greet you,
So glad here to meet you!
Our hearts ring out,
Our souls sing out
Our joyful lay!

'T is Homecoming greeting, in music and song,
Our hearts beating time as the notes float along;
And the walls of St. Agatha's echo the strain,
In soft, soothing notes, over hillside and plain.
FADEOUT

I shall fade out as the sun fades,
Over the rim of the West;
Over the changing horizon,
That blends with the infinite quest.

And dear ones may not cease yearning
To meet when eternity breaks;
But no one shall hail my returning
Till Gabriel’s trumpet awakes.
ST. AGATHA'S IN GOLDEN JUBILEE

A METRICAL SAGA

Down memory Halls
An echo falls,
Like notes from Angel lyres;
In mystic song
It wafts along
To scenes of old "home fires."

It was Christmastide, in Eighty-Five,
In those blizzard days of old;
Of that time and place
There are few alive
To hear the story told.
To you who are here,
With a smile and a cheer,
Let Pan the tale unfold.

A dwelling place, a house, but not a home,
Was first St. Agatha's, we now revere;
Yet in the annaled records of the tome
We read of calm content and kindly cheer.
A score of nuns, most happy in the plan,
And Mother Celestine to lead the van.
Tradition clusters round this place today,
And memories kindle into life anew,
A form, a figure, who for long did sway
The destinies, St. Agatha's, of you.
Our Mother Celestine is vistaed there,
In life's glad morning, joyous, debonair.

As in her primal days, we see her smile,
While in her charming way she breaks the news,—
"The Palmer home is ours, the deed on file;
We'll move tomorrow, Sisters, if you choose."
And though the blizzard sprites were howling round,
Not one dissenting voice our Mother found.

The signs of Christmas deftly disappeared;
The gifts, the sweets, the messages from home,
Were safely tucked away in nooks revered,
Or trusted to the vigil of some gnome.
And when the day had faded in the west,
The packing fever cheated needed rest.

AN INTERLUDE OF TWO WEEKS
A home at last! Tomorrow it will be
A Tabernacle where the Angels swing
The censer, burning vows that render free
The Virgins wise, who wait upon the King.
The morrow dawns! The MASS! The liquid bell
Announces He has come! EMMANUEL!

A convent now—St. Agatha's of old,
Cenaculum of music, art and song;
A human hive, with projects manifold,
That sometimes called for vigils, late and long;
For Mother Celestine, with tactful art,
Gaged every nun to do her utmost part.

A Kindergarten course, a feature new,
She added to the music and the art,
To train young hearts, and aid finances too,
While luring little minds from sin apart.
But ever and anon the music called,
"More room!" then claimed the Kindergarten halls.
As if by magic, art and music grew;
St. Paul was interested in all the arts;
Piano, Voice, Expression ever drew
Aspirants from the schools and busy marts.
The Palmer home had thrice outhoused its space;
Green lawns were sacrificed to building place.

Time was when music echoed through these halls
From amber-tinted dawn to purple eve;
A thousand—yes, and more, that time recalls,
Invaded practice rooms without reprieve.
St. Agatha’s attained its cherished aim—
In music, art, and song, a classic name.

Then savage war, assassin of all art,
Despoiled its templed altars for the nonce;
Enfeebled since, it plays a minor part,
While votaries await its renaissance.
But embers of the first “home fires” still burn;
In their undying glow we read, “Return.”
This stately building, dignified, complete,
Is monument to Mother Celestine,
And her co-workers in this prime retreat,
This human beehive, in the days pristine.
With spirit mansions, not of brick or stone,
They complemented it, near God’s White Throne.

Majestic panorama! Fifty years!
An epic saga, writ by God alone!
The opalescent dreams, the hopes, the fears
Of consecrated hearts, unseen, unknown.
What mattered then, if all for God were done?
What matters now, if they the crown have won?

In Jubilation, now, we greet you all
Who came at Mother Carmelita’s call,
To reminisce, to visit, and to pray;
To live again the years now passed away.
A Thousand welcomes to our happy home—
St. Agatha’s, our own, our “home, sweet home.”
A TRIBUTE

We've come with music, prayer and song
To greet you, Mother, kind and true;
May angel harps the strains prolong,
That sing our paean glad to you.
Our friend sincere you've proved to be,
In every mood our hearts may know;
And always you seem glad and free
To hear our story, weal or woe.

REFRAIN
God love and bless you, Mother dear,
And spare you long to guide our way;
And all through life, though far or near,
We'll hum this song we sing today.

Your smile is like a touch of grace—
A gleam from heav'n with holy charm;
And when we meet you round the place,
Its magic scatters all alarm.
We lift our hearts in prayerful plea,
That God may keep you smiling on,
Until His Face divine you see,
And hear Him speak the sweet, "Well done."
THE VOICE OF THE FALLS

Come stand again today beside the Falls
Where Hennepin, Sioux captive, stood that day,
And hear the rushing stream's prophetic calls
To pioneers upon their westward way:—
"I hold within my depths the secret power
To turn the mighty mills that nations feed;
A gift of God am I; a matchless dower
For men of vision who, my message heed."

And some there were who heard the voice, and came,
And chained the power within the destined Falls.
Soon, hut and cabin dotted many a claim
That seekers of a frontier home enthralls.
And thus began the the City of our pride,
By men of faith, with God alone for guide!
CENTENNIAL HISTORIC ODE
SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH OF CARONDELET
1836-1936

TO THE MEMORY OF
MOTHER SAINT JOHN FONTBONNE
Mother Saint John Fontbonne
CENTENNIAL ODE

Seraphs, wake the lyre!
Intone majestic song!
Ten thousand hosts inspire,
In diapason to prolong
Across the hills of time,
Our theme sublime!

But not to us the glory
That "runneth thus" in story.

Years, vanished years!
Three hundred years, a-nigh
Re-echo back to old Le Puy in France,
Where saintly Bishop wise, and holy Priest,
Athirst with zeal God's kingdom to advance,
To group of lily maids, their plan released.

They knew the Voice—to each the call rang clear,—
"Arise My love, My dove, Come follow Me."
Then bartering human ties we all revere,
For deeper, holier bonds that set them free,
Aglow with zeal, they face the upland trail
With lamps atrim, and faith that knows not fail.
Twelve weeks, or more, the holy Bishop trained
His ardent little band of Fleurs de lis,
In all the ways the Master had ordained
For those who heed the challenge, "Come and see."
On mid-October, Avila's sainted day,
They vowed their pure young lives to Christ away.

No names of these dear Sisters can be found*
In archives, records, lists of church or state.
With convents plundered, leveled to the ground,
Or by the Reign of Terror confiscate,
To us forever nameless they must be,
Until we hear their welcome, "Come and see."

When in that orphan chapel, far away,
Their sweet oblation made them His alone,
Thus spoke the holy Bishop of Le Puy,
"You, Sisters of St. Joseph shall be known."
And there began our Congregation dear,
Which now outcounts ten thousand, far and near.

Cherubs, hymn your glad hosannas
Through heaven's pillared halls,
Until they echo back to earth,
Down vibrant jasper walls,—
"All hail, Saint Josephs, hail to you!
For you the wide world calls!"

*Since this Ode was written, an old French volume has been found, giving names.
Through sunny France, all Catholic Europe, too,
To teach, to nurse, for little ones to care,
Our Sisters went, God's mercy work to do,
Till Revolution spread its murk despair.
And then in slimy cells, with reptiles lined,
For months, for years, they languished, suffered, pined.
And daily, Terror leaders led to death
Frail, gentle nuns, whose souls with fever burned
To shed their lives for Christ of Nazareth,
And prove that for His love all else they spurned.
Seven went to death with courage rare;
The rest were saved by fall of Robespierre.
The news of freedom had no joyous ring
For Sisters longing for their turn to die;
Our valiant Mother hoped the dawn would bring
The crown of glory for which martyrs sigh.
"We were unfit," she grieved, "our lives to pay;
Our sins, our weakness blocked the envied way."
Dear Sister Martyrs, long the years between
Your agonizing death by guillotine,
And this glad day. Hail! turn to earth, we pray,
And join the song triumphant of our day.
Ye Hosts of Heaven, a psalm intone!
A rapturous paean raise
To God's most high, embattled Throne,
In jubilant song of praise!
Released from prison bars, as peasants guised,
For years among the poor they came and went.
The sick they nursed, the children catechised,
The crushed, the wronged, they prayed to be content.
And then our Mother brave, Saint John Fontbonne,
Our scattered nuns brought home, and made them one.

Now many handmaids came to serve the King
In leading back proud France to His sweet fold.
In convent towers anew was heard the ring
Of Ave bells, that tell the story old.
Poor, fallen France, gone mad with passion free,
Now welcomes home her virgin Fleurs de lis.

O Mother dear, beloved Fontbonne,
Who, when the blood-storm passed,
Brought our dear Sisters, every one,
To a convent home at last;
Lean out today from Heaven’s bars
With our white-robed Sisters all,
Mid “birthday candles of the stars,”
Lean out, and hear our call.

Yes, hear your children’s call today
Above the bells that ring,
That we may keep the little way
That leads to Christ the King;
That we may follow close to the Lamb,
And join the song you sing!
First Reception of the Sisters of St. Joseph, at Le Puy, France, October 13, 1650.
Episode in the French Revolution
Flight with the Blessed Sacrament
In the Prison of St. Didier,
Awaiting to be released by death
July, 1794.
Sister Alexis Aubert and Sister Saint Julien Garniers were executed by the guillotine June 16, 1794.

This group of pictures is reproduced from "Gleanings in Historic Fields" by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
THE CALL OF AMERICA

When all was calm, and prosperous, and blest
In twice one hundred convents over there,
A message hailed from out the untamed West,—
A call for nuns, God’s mission work to share.
Soon, brave, unfettered souls were on their way
To where wild beasts, and savage tribes held sway.

Four thousand miles across the trackless main,
For days, two score and nine, they watch and pray
That holocaust of lives be not in vain.—
Saint Louis welcomed them on Lady Day.
From then to now, one hundred years a-gone,
What work for God, what countless souls they’ve won!

Our Mother Province spread her missions far
Across the mountains, deserts, wind-swept plains;
North, East, South, West, her institutions are
A noble monument of holy fanes;
And colleges of science and of art—
Fontbonne among them, bears a noble part.
THE CALL OF THE NORTH

Four score of years and five have sped away
Since saintly Bishop Cretin sent his call
For Sisters who would teach, and work, and pray,
To help him keep for Christ, his children all.
Carondelet was prompt with glad response,
"Our Sisters will be missioned there at once."

Four days the steamer challenged weather pranks,
With great ice boulders choking up the way
To this far field. A matin hymn of thanks
The morning silence broke on All Souls' Day.
Then home! a frame-built hut, neglected, small,
Was our primeval convent in St. Paul.

Through changeful years, what marvels have been wrought
By Sisters working hand in hand with God,
To save to Him the precious souls He bought
By toil and labor while on earth He trod.
The candle lighted in the Bench Street home
Sheds radiant beams from Learning's sacred dome.
Inspired by great Arch Leader in the cause
Of culture, and the God-like things of life,
His zealous Sister knew not fear nor pause
On pioneer trail. Courageous was her strife!
Great Irelands, each with keen prophetic soul,
Intrepid were, God's honor being the goal.

A knightly dream they had, of Learning's Grail,
A college on a wooded, upland plain;
A fane to Truth, a cenacle to hail
And lure young womanhood from things mundane.
They lived to see their project well begun,
And gloried in the prestige it had won.

And valiant women, dauntless in the quest
Of this fair dream, this rendezvous of art,
Have made Saint Catherine's queen of East and West,
A pharos in ambrosial fields apart.

May all our institutions, great and small,
Be His alone, Who is our All in All!
No East, no West, no North, no South,
No lines divide today;
With God above, in bonds of love,
All boundaries fade away.

No East, no West, no North, no South,
The double twain have met,
And Heaven greets Earth
In holy mirth,
With the Cross for the Calumet.

And here we stand today, ten thousand strong,
Alert against the gray, abysmal tide
Of sin-polluting codes. We challenge wrong,
With Christ, our unseen Victor at our side.
For world of crime, for universe of pain,
Dear God, let not oblations plead in vain.

Ring out, ye bells of Heaven, our joy reveal!
In pulsing, vibrant notes, ring peal on peal
To earth, to Heaven, to all the throbbing spheres,
Our Grand Te Deum for Our Hundred Years!