

CHIMES
for the
Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame
Generalate, Rome

1967

March

MOTHERHOUSE GREETINGS

...In the first 'half of the month of March the International Union of Superiors General held a convention in Rome, and participants of all countries attended. The convention was opened on February 28 with a Mass of Concelebration in St. Peter's, to which all the Superiors General residing in Rome, together with their Council, were invited. One of the participants from our Motherhouse reports thus about the event:

"Very early in the afternoon of February 28 we went to St. Peter's... We received good places in the apse, where the Holy Sacrifice was to be celebrated. The first tribunes were reserved for the Superiors General, the others for the Assistants, while the places in the middle, in front of the altar, were for the joint schola of the Institutes Regina Mundi, 'Maria Assunta', (teacher training faculty for Sisters), and the Pontifical Institute for Church Music. This combined schola under the direction of Reverend Father Cardine, O.S.B., was responsible for the singing of the Mass.

The time of waiting was really not long. After we had finished our evening prayers in quiet, the apse began gradually to fill up with Superiors General from all over the world. All races were represented: besides the Europeans there were Negroes, Indians, Mongolians, and others present. Many of those coming in we knew personally; others were unfamiliar. Others perhaps we would have recognized, if it had not been for the changed habit. A Superior General from Pakistan wore a white sari, which covered the head like a veil, the other part of it being draped in the usual manner. 'How fine,' said Mother Mary Iniga, 'just like a Vestal!'

Shortly before the beginning of Holy Mass we all sang Credo III. As different as were the habits, the languages, the color of skin, we were all one in faith. Here the words of St. Paul found full and complete verification. 'ONE body and ONE spirit, even as you were called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and throughout all, and in us all' (Eph 4:4-6). This unity was emphasized even more and made more expressive in the Holy Sacrifice, which was celebrated by His Excellency Archbishop Philippe, O.P., Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, in concelebration with Father Edward Heston, C.S.C., Father Giovanni Battista Andretta, S.J., Father Elio Gambari, S.M.M., Father Anastasio Gutierrez, C.M.F., Father Bernard Ransing, C.S.C., and other representatives of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

The Bidding Prayers at the Offertory were read by six Superiors General - each in her own language, which we naturally did not understand, yet we all joined wholeheartedly in the intercession at the close of each prayer with a fervent 'Kyrie eleison!' It was also not difficult to guess the content of the prayer when it was seen who had been chosen to make these intercessions. First came the already mentioned Superior General from Pakistan, then a Negress from Rhodesia, then followed a representative from Vietnam, from Egypt, from Jugoslavia, from Latin America.

The common singing during the Mass - chant - was beautiful, reverent, and dignified. With an enthusiastic 'Salve Regina' as the concelebrants left the altar, this sublime function came to an end. Slowly, almost pensively the participants left the basilica; certainly they were all conscious of the great task which modern times have placed upon them and of the heavy burden which rests upon their shoulders; and yet their features beamed with a supernatural strength which they had taken from the Eucharistic celebration in the heart of the Church - an expression of their confident trust in Him from whom they expect light and aid."

On March 7 the Holy Father received in special audience these Superiors General who had come from all parts of the world, as well as those residing in Rome, Our Reverend Mother, too, was present for this audience. The Holy Father addressed words of encouragement to those present, first in French, then in English, German, Spanish and Italian. He closed the audience by imparting to the participants his paternal apostolic blessing "for themselves, their Sisters, their novices and postulants," as dear Reverend Mother related to us in the evening...

Your faithful Sisters in the Motherhouse in Rome

For your enjoyment: Here's a photo of Pope Paul VI. greeting some of our sisters on July 5, 1967. Who recognizes them?



from left to right: Sr. Mary Elisabeth Ruffing, Toledo, USA; Sr. Mary Kevan Seibert, Covington, USA; Sr. Mary Luke Arntz, Chardon, USA; and Sr. Mary Kamala (now Sr. Mary Prema D.) Jamalpur, India