

A.M.D.G.

Dear Mother Superior and Sisters,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole mind, and with thy whole soul, and all thy being. And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Because of our deep gratitude to each and everyone of you, we wish to share our great joy of October 7, 1962.

The long-awaited day arrived. A combination Cornerstone Laying, Federation Kick-off Luncheon, and House Feast, scheduled for October seventh, had occupied the minds of all the Sisters at Lofetto Wheaton for some time. A casual observer might wonder how our lovely home expanded to entertain the many Sisters and friends who attended to offer their congratulations, support and have a most enjoyable day.

The astoundingly beautiful natural decor was borrowed and brought inside for the day, after the novices and postulants had completed a spic and span treatment of every corner of the house. A transformation of the chapel, parlor and juniorate, achieved by attractively arranged bouquets of leaves and fall flowers, established a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pleasant touches were added to the outside area near the new House of Studies from the neatly arranged St. Francis auditorium chairs to the shiny, be-ribboned silver trowel used during the ceremony. With newly-learned psalms in their hearts and sincere smiles on their faces, the Sisters were ready to express their gratitude to everyone who added to the success of the day.

The community of forty-two awoke to the sound of thunder, so quick prayers arose for a bright, clear day. The day began with our usual Sunday High Mass, celebrated by Father Roman, a Benedictine monk from St. Procopius Abbey. After a recreation breakfast and meditation, made to the tune of "testing one, two, three," (the outdoor microphone was being installed) all busily put finishing touches on a house soon to expand for a number beyond count.

A twelve o'clock High Mass of the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost was celebrated in the convent chapel. Reverend Father Hartnett, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake Church, officiated and sisters and Federation members alike listened to Father's inspiring words. He spoke of the role of the teacher in the salvation of souls, of ultimate peace and joy in her love and service, and concluded by encouraging all to continued support, especially through prayer. The welcoming doors of the chapel, beautifully adorned with white mums and golden cattails, were flung open wide that each person, so much a part of the Mary Ward House of Studies, might offer special thanksgiving, to God and His holy Mother on her feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary!

The smiles of all of our sisters and friends were not the only brightness of the day. Shades of yellow dominated the Juniorate Room (formerly the Noviceship and Study Room) where about fifty "out-of-Wheaton" Sisters joined us in celebrating our House Feast. Sr. Jonathon's bulletin board with fall leaf-letters and a leaf-man greeted everyone with a big "Welcome to Wheaton".

The first thing to be seen was a shrine in honor of Our Lady at the front of the room. It had a yellow drape background and one huge vase of cattails beside the statue. Simplicity makes beauty! Two buffet tables were beautifully decorated with a fruit basket in the middle and Indian corn and gourds on the side. Cardtables with yellow tablecloths and flower centerpieces were sprinkled around the rest of the room.

When the luncheon was over Sister Catherine Joseph gave a little thank you to all for being the pillars and heart of our new building. The novices, postulants, and Junior professed then sang two very appropriate songs—"No Man Is an Island"

and "Bless This House".

The Loretto Federation Luncheon, planned by caterers, was served buffet style. The food was artistically arranged on the tables in the refectory, while the chef, dressed in his fresh white uniform and high hat stood at the end of the table making omelets for the people as they came for their food. After taking their lunch from the various assortments the guests made their way through the cozy crowd and ate at tables on the porch and in the parlor. The caterers, dressed in black and white French maid aprons, pleasantly went from table to table pouring coffee and replenishing the guest's plates with seconds. All were delighted with our display of gratitude. One woman was heard saying: "Whenever the Ladies of Loretto do anything it is always the best."

At 2:50 the Sisters assembled in the Chapel for the procession preceding the blessing of the cornerstone. The crossbearer and acolytes, followed by the choir, sisters, clergy and laity, processed out of the main door of the Chapel, down the steps and across the lawn to the new building, while singing Father Gelineau's Psalm 135. Everyone sang the antiphon "Great is His love, love without end", with hearts brimming with joy and gratitude.

As the congregation took its place near the front entrance of the House of Studies the choir began to sing the beautiful Ave Maria of the Immaculate Conception Mass composed by the late Monsignor Ronan. The concrete stone previously prepared was set on special rollers ready to receive the important documents and relics of Mother Mary Ward.

Before the cornerstone laying could take place the bronze metal box that fit inside had to be filled. The articles, a relic of the dress of Mary Ward, a handful of soil from the site where Mary Ward is believed to be buried, and the names of all those presently living at Wheaton were neatly arranged and the box was ready to be fitted into position. Mother General lifted the bronze box and placed it into the cornerstone. It was so fitting that Mother would be the one to place the cornerstone, as she was the one who has magnanimously supported us in this great endeavor, against almost insuperable difficulties. After these few momentous minutes, the stone was blessed, rolled into place and cemented with the sterling silver trowel.

"Mary Ward House Of Studies, A Gift of Friends". These are the words on the cornerstone and also the theme of the sermon given by Father James Lynch, pastor of St. Michael's in Wheaton. Father spoke of our House of Studies as a great preparation for the future. Our gratitude for this "gift of friends" extends to all who have contributed anything--spiritual, material, or the gift of a lifetime!

After approximately twenty-five minutes outdoors, the choir led the Friends of Loretto into the chapel for benediction singing Psalm 99. Monsignor Murray assisted by Father Lynch, our good pastor, gave the benediction to as many of the people who could find place in the chapel. The choir's "How lovely is Thy dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts" was echoed by the congregation's "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name."

"In our religious life we must strive to act with the invigorating stimulation of self-dedication." This vital dynamism of every Lady of Loretto has been instrumental in the realization of our beautiful new building. Every grace and blessing resulting from this great endeavor will be shared with you all in the years to come.

Your loving Sisters in Christ,

Loretto Wheaton