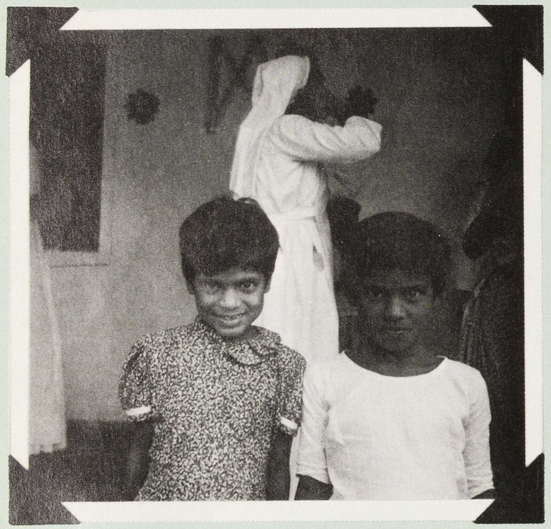
university level education. The Sisters teach about 30 percent of the population although only 2 percent of the entire population is Christian.

After the younger children have gone to bed at Madonna Girls Town, the older girls do their homework. I was very happy to observe that the Sisters make a conscious effort to teach the girls the native culture. On my first afternoon, the girls presented a lovely pageant. The Indian art forms of song and dance are so beautiful, and I felt it was important that the Sisters were helping to preserve this art.

What is the daily diet of the girls at Madonna Girls Town?

A typical meal (served on banana leaves and eaten with fingers) consists of paddy, which is their word for rice; dahl, a lentil based protein dish; vegetables and perhaps some chicken or mutton and a piece of fruit. This is actually a very balanced and nutritious diet.

Although the money that is sent periodically helps to feed and clothe the girls, the Sisters add a considerable sum to cover the costs of maintaining Madonna Girls Town. It costs between $15.00 and $20.00 per child per month for food, clothing and medical attention.



SCHOOL AGE GIRLS AT MADONNA GIRLS TOWN

What about medical care?

The girls receive any needed medical treatment at the general care hospital which is staffed by the Sisters. One child was brought to Madonna Girls Town in the beginning stages of leprosy. She was treated by Sister Agnes who is a doctor. A short time after medication is begun on a leprosy patient, the patient is no longer contagious.

Who cares for infants at Madonna Girls Town? Is there enough staff?

The older children help the Sisters with the younger ones. While I was there I observed a beautiful bond between a twelve year old and the youngest, a six week old baby. Although the Sisters would take the baby for care and feeding, she was always returned to the arms of the twelve year old. Another five month old baby who had been abandoned was the apple of everyone's eye. Everyone responded to her and she seemed a very bright little girl.

There were several toddlers who played together, and again, the older girls helped out in the care of these children.

What are the girls' chances of adoption?

The Joy Sowers of Belgium have an on-going program to find adoptive parents and by 1982 had found homes for 20 girls. As soon as a child is adopted, another takes her place. The Sisters attempt to place the children with Indian families or with families in another country. But some of the girls, of course, cannot be adopted since many have parents or a parent still living but unable to provide adequate care.

If they are not adopted, what kind of life can they look forward to after leaving Madonna Girls Town?

Besides their academic and religious education, the girls have the opportunity to be trained in two trades. One of these is raising silkworms, and the other is tailoring. On the grounds there are mulberry trees, although the survival of the trees is in doubt because of the water shortage. The mulberry leaves are fed to the silkworms which are kept in ten or twelve foot high racks. When they have grown quite fat, the worms are transferred to a circular maze made of reeds where they begin to spin their cocoons — the silk thread which is later unwound for silk. Training in these two trades will enable the girls to find work after leaving Madonna Girls Town. Since Indian law dictates that men may not marry until the age of twenty six and women until the age of twenty one, such skills are quite necessary for an individual's economic survival.

Is Madonna Girls Town funded only from the California groups?

The groups continue to send whatever money they are able to raise from donations, craft fairs, luncheons, and that type of activity. These groups consist mainly of senior citizens who truly give to the girls from open hearts filled with love. The Sisters subsidize the costs for basic needs, but can not provide for additional children, repair of the buildings, or the digging of a new well.

What does the Madonna Girls Town need most right now?

Their most pressing need is for an available water supply — a new well — for cooking, bathing and for watering their garden. Second would be repair work on the roof which does leak.

What was your overall impression of the work at Madonna Girls Town?

The work being accomplished there is absolutely worth the effort and the energy that is expended by all who contribute to Madonna Girls Town. I felt reassured that the Sisters were taking excellent care of the girls, and even more that they were giving those girls so much love which was then also returned to them. I cherish my memories of my short visit with them, and I returned to the United States feeling that I truly experienced the work of God.

For more information about Madonna Girls Town of Southern India, write care of P.O. Box 1141, North Highlands, California, 95660.

"Open The Doors To The Redeemer"

Some Final Considerations On The Meaning of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption

by Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, M.I.C.

It seems as though we've hardly had a chance to warm up to it . . . and it's already ending — history's only second Holy Year Jubilee commemorating the Anniversary of the Redemption of the human race.

If we consider the external characteristics of a Jubilee Year celebration, two things stand out more than anything else. One is the ceremony of the Opening and Closing of Holy Doors at the beginning and end of the special year, together with the practice, in the time between those two acts, of entering specified churches through them by the faithful who indicate by that act their intention of gaining the Holy Year Indulgence. The other is the fulfillment of the three spiritual activities that serve as a readily understood sign of assurance of pardon: sincere repentance, expressed by confession of sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation; participation in the Sacrifice of the Most Holy Eucharist, with a devoutly conscious reception of Holy Communion; and the offering of prayers for the intentions prescribed by the Chief Bishop of the Church Universal.

The Sacred Scriptures contain many passages dealing with doors and gates and entrances as means of access to places or to someone's presence, or of exclusion from them. But by far the most important entrance in the Old Testament was the veiled one between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in Moses' Tent of the Covenant and later in the Jerusalem Temple. It marked the access to the place where God made His presence in the midst of His People perceptible to their human senses. But only one person on earth, and only once a year at that, could go beyond the veil without incurring instant death. The purpose for that entry was to sprinkle, on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant found beyond the veil, the blood of atonement for the sins of God's Chosen People, so that He would be able to keep them safe from the punishment to which they exposed themselves by a year of transgressions.

Under the Old Covenant, holiness was safeguarded and maintained by separations. Only the high priest, who in his person as mediator represented and carried the entire people, could, under very precise conditions of attire, purity and worthiness, approach God's presence beyond the veil. His death upon entering there, or his exit alive would be the sign whether or not the people were to be spared punishment. For this reason he was obliged to avoid anyone or anything that would make him ritually impure.

It was Jesus — not by the sprinkling of the blood of a heifer and goat but by His own sin-free life offered in the place of all humankind — who entered the very Holiest Place of All in heaven (of which the earthly tabernacle was but a type and shadow). There, laden with the transgressions of all — not separated from them but in strict solidarity with them — He not only bore the brunt of, but *exhausted* upon His own human soul and body, all the punishment that would ever be deserved by the first to the very last sinful human being on earth. The result of this action was symbolized, as reported in the Gospels, by the tearing from top to bottom of the "veil of the temple" at the moment of Christ's death. The Epistle to the Hebrews would have us know that this happening was the external sign of the inauguration of a new and living way into God the Father's presence. It was the signal that holiness is no longer a matter of separations but of union. The rent veil that made possible this union was Christ's own flesh torn by suffering and death, especially His pierced Heart from which flowed out in gift the source of divine union and life — the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the Blood and Water that gushed forth from the pierced side of the Lamb after He obediently fulfilled the Father's loving will toward sinful humanity. This stream gives believers free, continuous, bold and confident access to God, to the throne of Grace, that they may receive mercy and find help just when they need it (see Heb. 4:16); for by it they have true hearts, sprinkled with Christ's Blood to be rid of an evil conscience, in full assurance of faith and bodies washed by clean Water (see Heb. 10:22). The power of this stream is, from then on, the content and activity proper to Christian Sacraments.

A door or gateway, guarded by Cherubs with a flaming sword, played a symbolic part at the time our redemption was promised. A veiled entrance also figured symbolically at the carrying out of the promise of redemption with the inauguration of a new and everlasting covenant between God and humankind with Jesus as the Mediator. Likewise, a gate will play a part when the work of redemption will be brought to conclusion with the fullness of salvation that is to be accomplished with the return, or "Second Coming," of Christ, according to the promise made by the two men clothed in white who appeared on the scene as He ascended into the heavens: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken from you into the sky will come back in the same way that you saw him go into the sky" (Acts 1:11). The Returning Messiah will then cry out, "Open to me the gates of Justice; I will enter them and give thanks to the Lord. This gate is the Lord's; the just shall enter it" (Ps. 118:19, 20).

Isaiah's prophecy already announced this: "The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken. On that day it will be said: 'Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the Lord for whom we looked: let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!' On that day they will sing this song in the land of Judah: 'A strong city have we; he sets up walls and ramparts to protect us. Open up