

Vatican Notes

Vol. IV

May 1956

No. XI

SWISS GUARDS DUE

Word has been received this week that the previously announced series to honor the Swiss Guards will be released on May 6, 1956. This report further states that the issue will comprise six multicolored stamps with a total face value of approximately 165 lire.

This set was originally scheduled for release in 1955 which would have marked the 450th anniversary of the establishment of the Swiss Guards as a regular corps of the Holy See. Pope Julius II was the pope responsible for their permanent organization in 1506. No doubt this issue will be released to mark this anniversary, though belatedly.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In the April Notes we promised members a list of candidates for the elective offices of VPS in the May issue. This has been postponed until the June Notes. The editor is making one final endeavor to bring you the Notes earlier each month by putting this issue to press before the printing of the April Notes is completed. We are sure this will meet with your wholehearted approval.

AGE OF MARY

We are proud to reproduce portions of the Age of Mary magazine for the benefit of members. The Rev. A. S. Horn, a VPS member has for a number of years written a regular feature devoted to "The Madonna on Stamps" which is unsurpassed in philatelic knowledge and enjoyment. Father Horn has just completed this series which total more than 200 pages, a large volume in itself. He is now engaged in a new series of articles on stamps which depict churches of the world dedicated to the Mother of God. Back issues can probably be obtained of "The Madonna on Stamps" from the publishers, subscriptions may be entered now for those interested in obtaining copies of the new series.

In addition to Father Horn's articles, there are many more of interest to Vatican collectors. While they are not philatelic in composition, they nevertheless contain important information of use to collectors of Vatican stamps. For members of non-Catholic beliefs, this magazine will repay in philatelic knowledge many times over the small subscription fee of \$3.00. Further information accompanies the text of the articles.

Permission was also freely given to VPS to reprint the article of "Our Lady of Loreto". This is a good example of a non-philatelic article in this publication. While no mention is made of stamps, the data given is of immense value to us in that four Vatican stamps have this as a major design.

VATICAN

Is the name of a new publication of Washington Press, the producers of the White Ace Vatican City and Roman States albums. This brochure should be available this month to all collectors for the small sum of 50¢. It contains the stories behind Vatican City stamps up to and including the Fra Angelico issue. VPS is proud to announce that this booklet was written by one of its honorary members, Ernest A. Kehr. The Vatican Philatelic Society is given special comment in the preface of this work which should reap many new members.

It has been our pleasure to review the manuscripts and proofs of this important contribution the Vatican philately and we find it worth the cost many times over. For those members who purchased "Vatican", the book issued in conjunction with the Vatican-Marian Year Exhibition, and feel this brochure would only be a repeat of existing information we urge them to purchase a copy as there are many new and important facts which they too should know.

READING, PA. EXHIBIT

From the reports received, VPSers didn't leave many awards for other collectors. Rev. A. S. Horn displayed four frames of Biblical texts and was awarded a gold medal. Edward P. Fichter displayed six frames of Vatican City which justly earned him a silver medal. Louis Klien, our Roman States Chairman, displayed ten frames of Roman States covers in the Court of Honor and went back to Atlantic City with a gold medal. Our warmest congratulations to these three VPSers.

A membership list addition is being mailed with this issue of the Notes to keep the roster accurate and current. Why not contact any collector listed residing near you and benefit from companionship in Vatican philately. Better still, why not check the entire list and form a local VPS Chapter in your section.

Pope Pius IX on Vatican stamp which includes "AM" monogram.



The Madonna on Stamps

by ALOYSIUS HORN

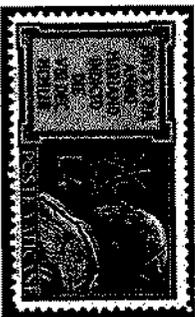
ON MAY 26, 1954, the Vatican issued six stamps of two designs to commemorate the Marian Year which had started in December 1953. Neither of the designs, both by Edmondo Pizzi, picture the Blessed Virgin, but an ornamental "A M" monogram, the symbol for "Ave Maria," appears in both designs.

One of the designs, used for three of the values, presents a bust of Pope Pius IX (1797-1878) with an inscription in Latin which tells us that: "Pius IX, Pontifex Maximus, solemnly defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and also includes the dates: '1854-1954.'"

Definition of the Immaculate Conception

Pope Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854. What does it mean when we refer to the Blessed Virgin as "the Immaculate Conception"? The text of the official definition answers this question when it states: "We define that the doctrine which teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the very first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved immune from all stain of original sin, is revealed by God and therefore must be

Vatican stamp showing Pope Pius XII and announcement of Marian Year.



held firmly and resolutely by all faithful Christians.

What the Marian Year Commemorated

The Marian Year of 1954 was an observance of the 100th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The second design of this Vatican issue brings our attention to this observance. The design, also used for three stamp values, shows a bust of Pope Pius XII, and a Latin legend which explains that: "Pope Pius XII, Pontifex Maximus, proclaimed the Marian Year on December 8, 1953." On this occasion the Holy Father issued an encyclical letter which started with the words: "Fulgens Corona", in which he recounts the reason for the celebrating of the Marian Year. It states: "The radiant crown of glory with which the most pure brow of the Virgin Mother was encircled by God seems to Us to shine more brilliantly, as we recall to mind the day on which, 100 years ago, Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius IX, surrounded by a vast retinue of cardinals and bishops, with infallible Apostolic authority defined, pronounced and solemnly sanctioned etc."



The Vatican issued the stamp for the end of the Marian Year, 1954. An exceptional picture of "Our Lady of Mercy" which it honors is seen in the larger detail of the original painting.

the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Return to Christ through Mary

In this encyclical Pope Pius XII stated that the observance of the Marian Year

The AGE OF MARY · April 1956

should "urge us to that innocence and integrity of life which flees from and abhors even the slightest stain of sin"; speed the return of men to Christ, through His Blessed Mother; and result in the flourishing everywhere of Christian morality.

Conclusion of the Marian Year

To mark the close of the Marian Year, the Vatican issued a set of three multi-colored stamps, all of the same design, on December 7, 1954. The Vatican postal officials selected as the theme for this design the *Our Lady of Mercy* of Vienna called: "Our Lady of Mercy."

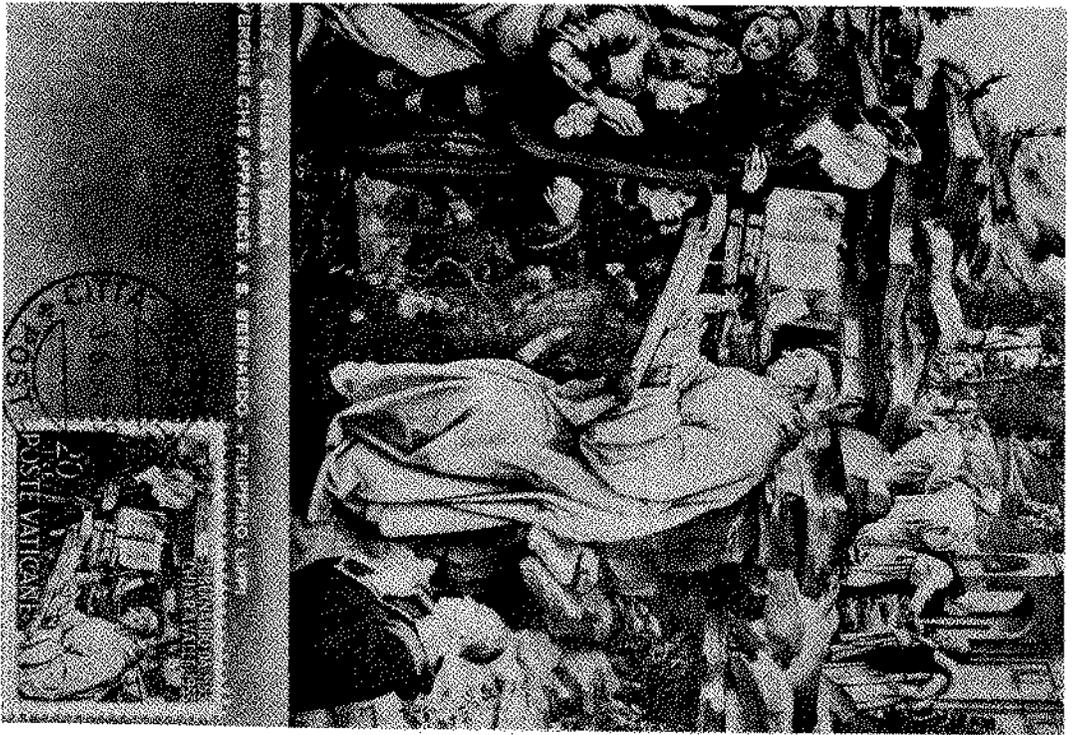
The story of this painting was told on page 38 of the August-September 1955 issue of this magazine in connection with the *Madonna* stamps of Poland.

Original Not Used

The painting which is presented in actual colors on the stamp is not a reproduction of the original at Vienna but rather a miniature copy by the celebrated Polish artist Miss Casimira Dabrowska who is credited with the entire stamp design. A close study of this with a picture of the original will show a few minor variations. Although the stamps are larger than most stamps, the reproduction of the *Madonna* suffers greatly because it is cramped inside a shield-shaped frame. The reproduction on a stamp of this size could have been twice as large and there still would have been room for the inscription "Mater Misericordiae" which appears below.

Rare Photo of Original Painting

One of the "maximum cards" (a card which shows the subject matter of the stamp and to which the stamp itself is affixed and cancelled on the picture side) issued at the Vatican post office shows an exceptional photograph of the original *Madonna*, for here we see a detail of the painting as it appears without the ornate gold plate which usually covers most of the image, that is, all but the face and hands.



Filippo Lippi's painting "The Virgin Appears to St. Bernard," and a detail of same on a Vatican stamp of 1953.

consists of two values, a 20 Lire in olive green and dark violet brown and a 60 Lire in bright blue and olive green. The process was by photogravure. The design by Edmondo Pizzi was adapted from a painting entitled: "The Virgin Appears to Saint Bernard," painted by Filippo Lippi (1459-1504), which is found in the church of La Badia, originally a Benedictine convent in Florence, Italy. This is the most beautiful work ever to come from the brush of this master.

Saint Bernard's Devotion to Our Lady

The picture is often called "The Vision of St. Bernard." It puts into painted form the devotion of St. Bernard toward the Blessed Virgin. He became the second founder of the austere Cistercian Order. But above all his trials, his writings, and his accomplishments, he is best remembered for his intense devotion to Our Lady. This devotion has led to the liturgical use of his Homilies on her festival days. It is said that Our Lady appeared to him several times. The painting we are now considering shows him looking up from his work as he is encouraged by a vision of the Blessed Virgin. The locale is the artist's conception of Clairvaux. On the stamp we see only a detail of the painting, that is, only Our Lady and St. Bernard. The very center of the design shows the Holy Scriptures opened up to a text which on the stamp is not legible, but from the painting itself we know that this is the Gospel of St. Luke, Chapter I, verses 26 to 31 inclusive; that is, from the words: "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God", to "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb." The text is of course in Latin and starts with the words: "Missus est." Just to the left above the head of St. Bernard is a small placard containing his motto: "Substine et Abstine" (endure and abstain). This carries a great deal of meaning when one remembers that St. Bernard was in poor health all his life. Of this saint it is said "he carried the twelfth century on his shoulders, and he did not carry it without suffering."

A Clue to the Artist's Inspiration

On the original painting devils may be seen hiding in the crevices of the rocks behind St. Bernard. This may give a partial clue to the theme the artist desired to depict. During the year 1125, in which during a famine he had often exhausted the provisions of his monastery to feed the poor, Bernard was once again brought to the very gates of death. During this illness he fell into a trance during which he seemed to find himself before the throne of God where the devil himself was bringing charges against him. But Bernard confounded the devil and he disappeared. But in the midst of his troubled trance Our Lady appeared and laid her hands on him, and when he awoke his sickness had left him. The artist no doubt had this vision in mind when he composed his picture. As for another interpretation of the painting it is interesting to read the comments of the French Trappist, Dom Dominique Nogués. He writes that it represents St. Bernard writing his famous Homilies on the "Missus Est" and Mary is turning the pages of the manuscript which speak of her. It is all a work of the artist's imagination, but it well represents St. Bernard's love for Mary.

August 15th. The two stamps of this set do not picture the Madonna but the importance of the event they commemorate and the appropriateness of the inscriptions call for their presence in a collection of stamps devoted to Our Lady. The date to the bottom left on both designs is November 1, 1950, the date of the

definition of the dogma of the Assumption.

The next Vatican design which pictures Our Lady was issued in honor of the eighth centenary of the death of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), and appeared on November 10, 1953. The set

Our Lady and Saint Bernard

The next Vatican design which pictures Our Lady was issued in honor of the eighth centenary of the death of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), and appeared on November 10, 1953. The set

Our Lady of Loreto

THE HOLIEST HOUSE on earth, which is also Christianity's most ancient sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the shrine known to all Catholics as the *Holy House of Loreto*. It was in this house that the Archangel Gabriel brought the Annunciation to Mary; it was in this house that the most stupendous mystery of all time, the Incarnation, happened; it was in this house that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived at Nazareth. And the sensational thing about this House of the Holy Family is that it is not at Nazareth at all, nor even in Palestine, but many hundreds of miles to the west—on the western shores of the Adriatic Sea.

House of the Holy Family
From earliest Christianity the house in Nazareth of Galilee that had been the home of the Holy Family was a place of venerated pilgrimage. St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, built a church over this House of the Angelic Salvation. The gentle mystic, St. Francis of Assisi, went there to pray. There are historic documents to prove that St. Louis, King of France, heard Mass at Nazareth in 1253—"in the exact chamber where the Virgin Mary was declared the Mother of God." It is certain, therefore, that the Holy House was still at Nazareth under the basilica at that date.

But darker days descended upon the holy places shortly after. In 1263 the Sultan of Cairo set Nazareth on fire, but strangely enough spared the Holy House. Twenty years later, however, Moham- medan hordes were overrunning the whole of Palestine, butchering Christians, ruthlessly defiling and destroying their most sacred shrines. The Holy House would have met the same fate, had God not chosen to preserve it for many suc-

ceeding centuries. Suddenly one morning on May 12th, 1291, it was seen no more in Nazareth.

On the same morning some shepherds at Tersatto, a small town in Dalmatia on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, found a cottage in a field where there had been no house or building materials the night before. They called their parish priest, Don Alessandro di Giorgio, who came to examine it. Inside he found an altar, a Greek cross, and a statue of the Madonna and Child. Immediately he knew that this was the Holy House of Nazareth, because in a dream the night before he had been told of the origin of the cottage. The Governor of Dalmatia, Nicolo Frangipane, sent investigators to Nazareth and they reported back that the Holy House had indeed disappeared from there. They also testified that the length and breadth of the walls of the strange house at Tersatto corresponded with the foundations in the Basilica of the Annunciation at Nazareth.

While this investigation was going on the Holy House disappeared from Dalmatia and reappeared again across the Adriatic Sea at a place called Laurum in Italy. There it is today, in the small town of Loreto (Laurum) a few miles south of Ancona. It is from this phenomenon and this town that we get the title *Our Lady of Loreto*.

From Nazareth to Loreto
Many a sceptic, particularly in the 19th century, has scoffed at the Holy House of Loreto. Two of the most noted of these were Catholic priests: 1) Canon Chevalier in his book *Noire Dame de Loreto* published in Paris in 1906; and 2) that incredible and omniscient English jack-of-all-trades Herbert Thurston, S.J.

The arguments of both, however, are slim and far-fetched. Neither merits a rebuttal in this particular script.

We have collected quite a bit of material on the phenomenal transfer of the Holy House from Nazareth to Loreto and we have no doubt whatever about its authenticity. Our chief arguments against professional sceptics like Chevalier and Thurston are the following:

1. Pope Boniface VIII sent investigators to Nazareth, Tersatto, and Loreto in 1297 A.D. After studying the data compiled by them he declared that the history and traditions of Loreto are "most worthy of belief."
2. Many popes from Julius II in 1511 down to our own day have approved the tradition.
3. More than 47 popes have in many ways honored the shrine.
4. Many popes have called it "the first sanctuary of Christianity," a phrase they would not have used were there any question of fraud.
5. Ten popes proclaimed that the *Holy House of Loreto* is identical with that of Nazareth.
6. It has been acknowledged and venerated by many Saints, among whom were St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Peter Canisius, St. Bridget of Sweden, etc.
7. Several years before the phenomenal transfer St. Francis of Assisi, who died 65 years before it happened, looked towards the wooded hills of Loreto and prophesied that a shrine "to me with anything in the Holy Land" would one day soon be located there.
8. There is a fresco at Gubbio, which art authorities assign to the year 1350, which shows angels transporting the *Holy House of Loreto*.
9. For centuries many miraculous cures, rigorously documented, have taken

place at Loreto. Even the sceptical Montaigne acknowledged this fact in 1582.

10. The stone, mortar, and cedarwood of the Holy House are of a type not found in Italy. They are, furthermore, chemically identical with the materials found in Nazareth.

11. At Loreto the Holy House does not rest, and never has rested, on any foundation. This was formally investigated in 1751 under Benedict XIV.

"There are, of course, many persons for whom it is hard to believe that the 'translation' of the Holy House from Nazareth to Tersatto, and thence to its present location, is not *pure fantasy*. There is certainly one extraordinary proof to sustain the tradition. No house could stand for a long time—and certainly not for centuries—on the surface only, without having any foundation. Yet the fact remains that the house is not artificially sustained and has no foundation at all. This can be proved by anyone who visits the shrine. During World War II, the shock of airwaves destroyed many more solidly built houses, ancient and modern, as well as castles. The vicinity of Loreto and the city of Loreto itself were bombed several times during the conflict. But the House of Nazareth, where the angel announced that the Word would be made Flesh, still stands erect and unshattered—the keystone of Christianity.

—*Shrines to Our Lady Around the World* by Zolt Aradi

12. In the jubilee year of 1300, only nine years after the translation, nearly all the pilgrims to Rome went also to Loreto—which they called *The City of Mary*.

13. Dalmatians still claim that the Holy House belongs to them and since the early 14th century have been making an annual pilgrimage to "their shrine." They have also built a replica of it at Tersatto.

14. The Feast was inserted into the Martyrology in 1669 under the name "*Translation of the Holy House.*"
15. A proper Mass and Divine Office for the same feast was approved in 1699.
16. In 1894 Pope Leo XIII in an apostolic brief on the sixth centenary of Loreto wrote:

"The happy House of Nazareth is justly regarded and honoured as one of the most sacred monuments of the Christian Faith: and this is made clear by the many diplomas and acts, gifts and privileges accorded by Our predecessors. No sooner was it, as the annals of the Church bear witness, miraculously translated to Italy and exposed to the veneration of the faithful on the hills of Loreto than it drew to itself the fervent devotion and pious aspiration of all, and as the ages rolled on, it maintained this devotion ever ardent."

17. On the eastern facade of the Basilica at Loreto is a 16th century inscription which reads:

"Christian pilgrim, you have before your eyes the Holy House of Loreto, venerable throughout the world on account of the Divine mysteries accomplished in it and the glorious miracles herein wrought. It is here that the most holy Mary, Mother of God, was born; here that she was saluted by the Angel, here that the eternal Word of God was made Flesh. Angels conveyed this House from Palestine to the town Tersatto in Illyria in the year of salvation 1291 in the pontificate of Nicholas IV. Three years later, in the beginning of the pontificate of Boniface VII, it was carried again by the ministry of angels and placed in a wood near this hill, in the vicinity of Recanati, in the March of Ancona; where having changed its station thrice in the course of a year, at length, by the will of God, it took up its permanent position on this spot three hundred years ago (now, of course, more than 600). Ever since that time, both the extraordinary nature of the event having called forth the admiring wonder of

the neighboring people and the fame of the miracles wrought in this sanctuary having spread far and wide, this Holy House, whose walls do not rest on any foundation and yet remain solid and uninjured after so many centuries, has been held in reverence by all nations."

A Hallowed Spot

The Holy House itself is 31 ft. long by 13 ft. wide by 14 ft. high. It has no ceiling or roof, and no floor of its own. At first sight it would appear to be made of bricks; actually, however, it is of stone construction throughout. The stones are of equal height, but vary in length, and they are blackened by the soot from the countless candles that have been burned in the Holy House over the centuries. Here and there the stones are polished to brightness by the hands and lips of reverent pilgrims. The entire Holy House is covered on the outside with white Carrara marble of exquisite workmanship. Bramante, one of the architects of St. Peter's, designed this sculptured jewel box. Sansovino left some of his masterpieces in these Carrara bas-reliefs. The original house of the Holy Family had only one door. Because of the press of pilgrims Clement the VII opened four new doors. Over the four doors are Latin Diphthongs proclaiming that there is no spot on earth more hallowed than this—where God took flesh.

At one end of the Holy House is a small altar and in the wall back of it is a niche containing the wooden statue of the Madonna and Child. The figures of both the Virgin and Child only about three feet high over all, are of ebony black. The original statue, which was transported with the Holy House, was made of Cedar of Lebanon. In 1797 the French Revolutionaries carried off the statue to Paris and there exhibited it profanely and in mockery. Napoleon Bonaparte restored it to Pius VII after a period of reparation in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. In 1921 the ancient statue was destroyed by fire. Pius XI ordered a new

one, and on September 5th, 1924, in solemn services in the Sistine Chapel he blessed the replica and placed crowns of gold and precious stones upon both the Madonna and Child. On September 6th the new statue was carried in solemn procession to St. Mary Major's in Rome and on September 7th it left for Loreto, where it now rests in the niche behind the altar. In large Latin letters you see inscribed on the altar the words:

"HERE THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH"

Over the Holy House and its exquisite jewel box of Carrara marble is the magnificent 15th century Basilica of Our Lady which dominates the town of Loreto. The first impression one gets is that the building is really a fortress-church. Actually, ages ago, soldiers were quartered on the roof of the Basilica to defend it against the Turks. Surmounting the sacred edifice is a magnificent dome crowned by a gigantic statue of the Virgin. The interior of the dome is a dream of Beauty. To describe it adequately is almost impossible. It is the work of Macari of Siena and took seventeen years to complete. The visitor, upon looking up to the immense dome, is almost stupefied by this art depicting the titles of the *Lady of Our Lady of Loreto*. Prophets, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, angels singing *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*, whiz by him. In this pictorial

poem the artist has left us the most stupendous work of art of the 19th century. It was Bramante who designed the twelve side chapels, of which the Spanish Chapel is the most beautiful. The Basilica of Our Lady of Loreto, together with its adjacent buildings, belong to Vatican City. They are the most cherished of the Pope's "extra-territorial" properties.

Patroness of the Skyways

It should be of interest to contemporaries that Our Lady of Loreto is the Patroness of aviation and aviators. The implication is obvious. Many centuries before the advent of the Wright Brothers she performed the greatest feat of aviation known to history. And she did it without engines or wings or jets; and instantaneously. Rightly therefore is she *Patroness of the Skyways*. The Feast of Our Lady of Loreto is celebrated on December 10th, date of the miraculous transfer from Tersatto to Loreto.

Sceptics continue to laugh at the Holy House of Loreto. Yet, while it is not and never will be certain that the miracle is authentic, disbelievers must prove otherwise. The weight of tradition, and even scientific investigation, are abundantly in favor of the Holy House of Loreto. The ridicule of one-half of the world and the devotion of the other half have made famous the strange story of its translation. (TV script Dec. 5th, 1955)

This is a reprint of the Vatican portion of Madonna on Stamps written by Reverend Aloysius S. Horn for The Age of Mary magazine. This is but a small part of the best philatelic material yet printed in a magazine. Though the magazine contains many articles other than philatelic, the collector will find that the Madonna on Stamps alone is well worth a subscription. Many of the stories included contain data of great interest to the collector for data related to various stamps.

Subscriptions are \$3.00 a year and it should be sent to: The Servite Fathers, Inc.— 3121 West Jackson Boulevard Chicago 12, Illinois

The Vatican Stamps

Although it would seem that the Vatican would be rich in Madonna issues, such is not at all the case. Of the eight designs which in one way or another honor the Blessed Virgin, only three of them picture Our Lady at all, the others are

merely texts or inscriptions which refer to the Blessed Virgin in some manner. All in all these constitute only 17 stamps.

Patroness of Aviators

The first of the Vatican designs related to the Blessed Virgin were two for air mail use and they have as their theme



"Our Lady of Loreto" and the "Holy House" on Vatican airmail stamp of 1938.

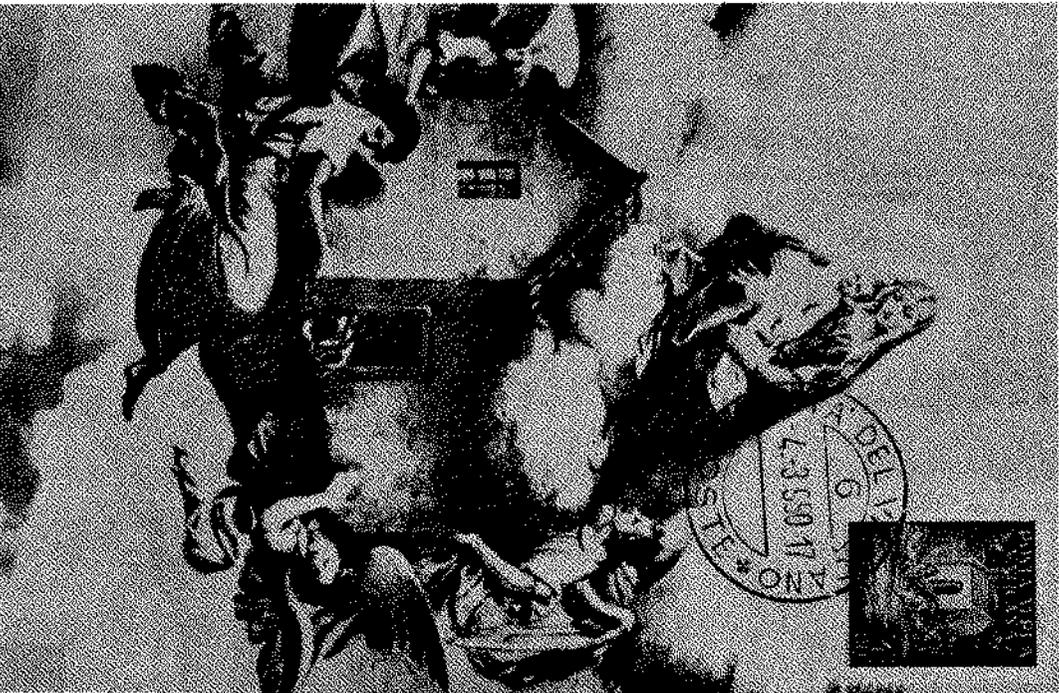
the Holy House of Loreto. Both were designed by Corrado Mezzana (1890-1952), who was in the Italian and Vatican stamp circles designated as the "stamp artist extraordinary." The first design shows part of the statue of "Our Lady of Loreto" and the "Transportation of the Holy House." This was issued on June 22, 1938, with a set of airmail stamps and appeared on two values, a 80 centesimi dark blue and a 10 Lire dark brown violet. The stamps were of a very small format and engraved. The inscription below reads: "Virgo Lauriana Succurre Transvolantibus," that is: "Our Lady of Loreto, protect (succor) those who fly." This is a reminder that "Our Lady of Loreto" and her connection with the Holy House being transported by the hands of angels, is the patron of aviators. This was made official by a decree of Pope Benedict XV dated March 24, 1920, when Our Lady under this title was made patroness of aviators, and at the same time the Congregation of Rites issued a special formula for the blessing of flying machines which has now been inserted in the Roman Ritual. The other design does not include a

picture of the Madonna but merely presents an artist's conception of the "Transportation of the Holy House." Two stamps contain this design, a 4 Lire dark brown, and a 25 Lire dark blue green. Issued on November 10, 1947, they were produced by photogravure.

The Holy House of Loreto

The "Holy House of Loreto" is actually the House of the Holy Family

which originally stood in Nazareth. On the Basilica of Our Lady at Loreto in Italy will be found an inscription which refers to this house and here we read: "It is here that the Most Holy Mary, Mother of God, was born; here that she was saluted by the Angel; here that the eternal Word of God was made flesh"; for within the Basilica is now enshrined the Holy House of Nazareth, now known as the "Holy House of Loreto." The



An artist's conception of the transportation of the "Holy House" to Loreto. In the upper right, Vatican stamp of 1947 showing version of the scene.

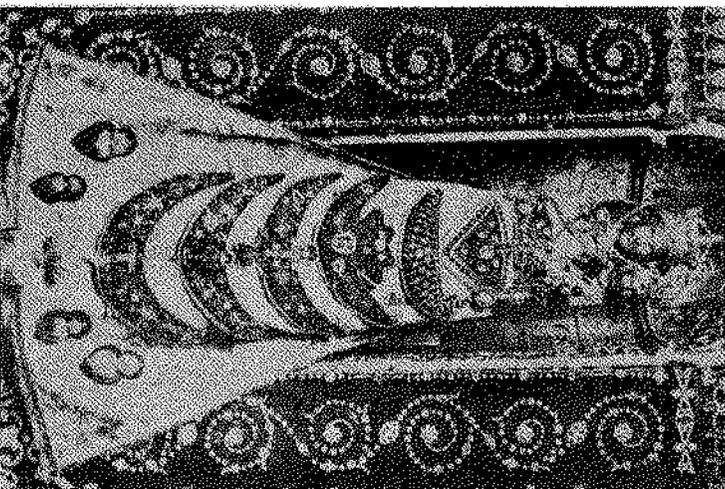
complete story of the Holy House of Nazareth is quite long, but it is recorded that during the Pontificate of Pope Nicholas IV, in order to preserve the precious building from destruction at the hands of the Saracens, the Holy House suddenly disappeared in Palestine and appeared on the coast of Dalmatia on a hill called Raunizza, between Tersatto and Fiume on May 10, 1291; and then suddenly on the 10th of December, 1294, it was transferred to a flat wooded place near Recanati, Italy; and a short time later it was transported once more, this time to a place about a mile away, to a hill on which there was a grove of laurel. Here the Holy House now rests, but over it has been constructed a beautiful church. The House itself has been completely covered with marble carvings.

Lorito Derived from Latin Word

The Latin name for Loreto is *Laurentum*, a word derived from the Latin name for Laurel, and the term was applied on account of the laurel grove which once covered the spot. For those who would like to know more about this famous place of pilgrimage there is a splendid article in Volume XIII of the Catholic Encyclopedia under the heading of "Santa Casa di Loreto," and an interesting account of Loreto starting on page 37 of Volume I of Gillett's: "Famous Shrines of Our Lady." Those who have visited the Holy House of Loreto and who have devoted some time to on the spot study of the place, as I have, will discover two things: first, the materials of the building, the stone, mortar, etc., are of Palestinian origin and not materials found in the vicinity of Loreto; and second: the building rests on the ground; there is no foundation under it.

Our Lady of Loreto

Our Blessed Mother, as venerated at Loreto, is known under the title of "Our Lady of Loreto"; but this is especially the title of the statue of the Madonna and



The new statue of "Our Lady of Loreto", blessed and crowned by Pope Pius XI on September 5, 1922.

Child which is found in a niche above the altar in the Holy House itself. The original statue of "Our Lady of Loreto" represented the Blessed Mother holding the Infant Jesus in an almost standing position on her left side and was only a little more than three feet high. Carved of cedar of Lebanon wood, according to ancient tradition by St. Luke, the statue is said to have arrived at Loreto together with the house. A disastrous fire broke out accidentally in the Holy House on February 22, 1921, and at this time the original image was entirely consumed by the flames. Pope Pius XI at once ordered a new statue to be carved of cedar wood from the Vatican Gardens. This statue was blessed and both Our Lady and the Infant were crowned with precious

crowns, gifts of the Holy Father himself, in a ceremony in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican on September 5, 1922. After the Pope had crowned the statue it started on a triumphant journey to Loreto. The statue was placed in the niche where the ancient statue also stood on October 8, 1922. In the meantime the entire interior of the Holy House had been completely renovated and redecorated.

Proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption

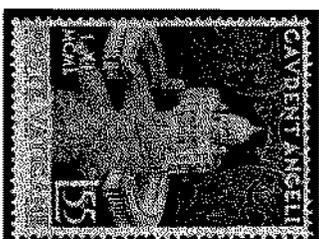
On May 8, 1951, the Vatican released a set of two stamps to commemorate the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven, an event of November 1, 1950. The scene of the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, praying immediately after the reading of the papal Bull proclaiming the dogma of the Assumption, is shown on a 25 Lire stamp produced in chocolate by photogravure. The scene is at the temporary throne set up just in front of the



Pope Pius XII proclaiming dogma of the Assumption on Vatican stamp of 1951.

grand portico of St. Peter's. Two Cardinal Deacons attend the Pope. To his right is Nicola Cardinal Canali (b. 1874) and to his left Giovanni Cardinal Mercati (b. 1866). The design by Corrado Mezzana was adapted from a photograph.

Colonnades of Bernini Embrace the Faithful
The 55 Lire value of this set in dark blue, also designed by Mezzana, shows St. Peter's square crowded with thousands of Holy Year pilgrims listening to



"The Angels Rejoice" Vatican stamp of 1951.

the reading of the Papal Bull of the Assumption. St. Peter's towers in the background and the colonnades of Bernini seem to embrace the immense throng. Etched into the solid blue background are angels, two of them playing on harps, an allusion to the inscription above: "Gaudet Angelis", ("The Angels Rejoice.")

Complete Text Taken from Feast of the Assumption

The inscription at the top of the first design reads: "Assumpta est Maria in Coelum", that is: "Mary has been taken into heaven." The two texts together: "Mary has been taken into heaven, (and the entire host of) angels rejoices", will be found as part of the Gradual for the new Mass for the Feast of the Assumption. (S.R.C. 31, Oct. 1950). Priests will remember the exact Latin wording on the two stamps from the Antiphons for Vespers and Lauds for the Feast of the Assumption as well as the Verse for the Second Nocturn of Matins. Through the centuries the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin has been kept on