

Vatican Notes

Volume IX

March - April 1961

Number 5

VATICAN CITY PHILATELIC NEWS



The three-value set of St. Meinrad was issued on Feb. 28th, each of the stamps being inscribed with the dates 861 and 1961 plus the wording 'Jubilaeum S. Meinradi' which translated means St. Meinrad Jubilee. The first two stamps, the 30 Lire and 40 Lire values, were designed by C. Dabrowska. The 30 Lire shows the saint in full length and legend, which translated reads 'Patron of Einsiedeln'. The 40 Lire shows the Virgin of Einsiedeln with the legend 'Thaumaturga Einsiedlensis', which when translated means 'Miracle Worker of Einsiedeln'. The 100 Lire value was designed by P. Grasselini and shows the Einsiedeln Monastery (Monasterium Einsiedlense). The 30 Lire is in Black, the 40 Lire in Lilac, and the 100 Lire in Brown.

Printing was by photogravure on paper watermarked with the crossed keys. Perforation is 14 and the printing is in sheets of 40 stamps.

The Roman Synod set was demonetized as of Feb. 1st and the Piux X set lost its postal value the end of March.

The Michaelangelo set is not scheduled until the later part of 1961.

 OFFICERS

President -----William Wonneberger Jr. 320 First Ave. Stratford, Conn.
 Vice-President ---Rev. Herbert A. Phinney, 377 Walnut Ave. Roxbury 19, Mass.
 Secretary -----Wallace R. Smith, 165-15 Union Turnpike, Flushing 66, N.Y.
 Treasurer -----Frederick J. Levitsky, 13 Lesley Ave. Auburn, Mass.
 Membership-Sec'y -A. Houston Barnett, 341 S. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills, Cal.
 Chapter Co-ord ---John B. Clark, Main Post Office, Finance Station, Cleveland
 1, Ohio.

Pontifical State

Chairman -----Rev. William Fletcher, Box 532, Fairfield, Conn.

Slide Program

Chairman -----Rev. Robert W. Contant, St. Mary's Church, Decatur, Ind.

Sales Department

Chairman -----Open

Translation

Chairman -----Brother Camillus, OSF, 41 Butler St., Brooklyn 31, N.Y.

Circulation -----Patrick J. Conway, 2981 Lincoln Blvd. Cleveland Heights
 18, Ohio.

Editor -----Robert J. Hutcheson, 6606 Odell Ave. St. Louis 39, Mo.

A set to mark the 19th Centenary of St. Paul's Arrival in Rome will be issued near the end of June: probably June 30th.

A single stamp will be issued for the 15th Centenary of the Death of Pope St. Leo the Great. No date has been set but it will be sometime this year.

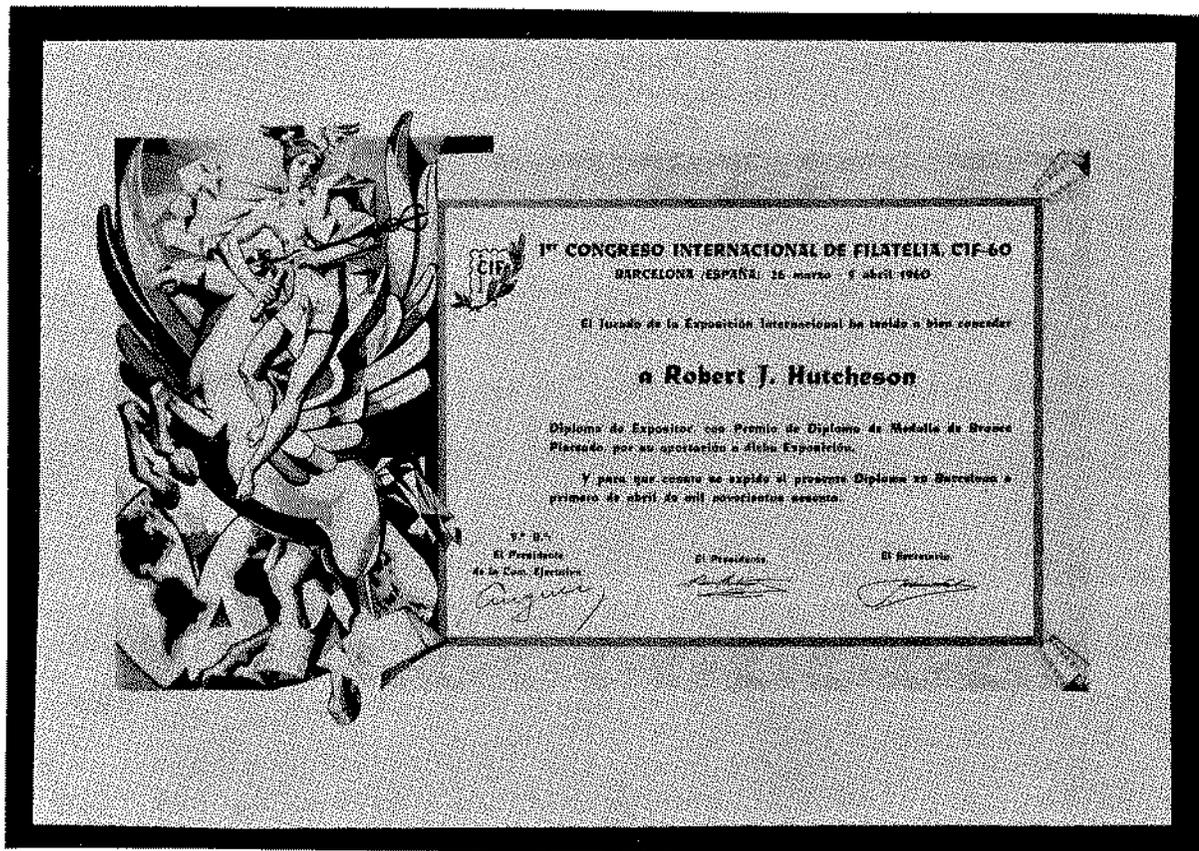
Although not a strict Vatican item we wish to recommend the new COROS publication 'Madonna Stamps'. The checklist handbook has been compiled by Wilfred J. Hoffman, M.A. and lists more than 800 individual varieties of topicals featuring the Madonna. There are more than 175 Madonna stamp illustrations and a check-list and cross index listing the titles of the Blessed Virgin on stamps and the masterpieces of art from which the stamp designs have been taken.

Price of the handbook is \$ 1.50 and it may be obtained from Miss Marceleine Edger, 409 Darrow St. Albion, Michigan.

Two VPS members have had the honor of speaking, and exhibiting their Vatican collections, before regular philatelic groups.

On Feb. 28th Henry Gieffers showed and described his Vatican collection before the Fair Lawn (N.J.) Stamp Club.

Leo Longinotti displayed and described his collection on April 5th at the Philatelic Society of Cincinnati.



In the May-June 1960 issue of VATICAN NOTES it was announced that our publication had been awarded Bronze Medal Diploma at the First International Philatelic Congress at Barcelona, Spain. It was a long time coming but it was well worth the wait. Although the VATICAN NOTES won the award the certificate, as you will note, has been made out in the name of your Editor. This actually is a joint award to all of the many fine contributors and our thanks goes out to all of them. The overall size is 15 x 21 inches with the center design being 9 x 16 inches.

Again many thanks for the wonderful cooperation of our Officers and Members.

The attention of the entire membership is directed to the last two pages of this issue. These pages are in addition to the usual twelve page edition. Over a period of several years the present Vatican Philatelic Society Constitution and By-Laws has shown the need for changes and any change must be by the vote of the organization membership; for instance -

There is the proposition to eliminate the Associate Membership Class. This idea has not worked out and at present we do not have any such members.

There is the proposition to change the term of elected officers to two years. This is for two reasons: First, giving the officers an extra year will allow for more planning of organization projects and the time to see that that they are fulfilled. Second, at the present time 3 out of 6 yearly issues are taken up with items relating to the election. In one issue the call for any nominations, the second issue the ballot, and the third the results. If the election is on a bi-yearly basis these space and time consuming items will be reduced and more space available for actual news items.

There is a proposition to bring the prescribed method of admitting new members in agreement with the method actually used for years. The original method, in the present By-Laws, is not workable in our type of society.

There is a proposition to establish a firm and democratic system of nominating officers and of conducting elections. The method presently prescribed may not be considered democratic and has never been followed.

There are other comments that could be made but all of the changes are self-explanatory.

The ballot is printed in such a way that it can be cut from the page and mailed without destroying the list of changes so that these may be kept for future reference.

Ballets are to be mailed to Wallace R. Smith, Secy., 165-15 Union Turnpike, Flushing 66, N. Y. so as to reach him by June 15, 1961.

Again we wish to compliment a VPS member on his success in winning an outstanding award. In the later part of Oct. 1960, VPS'er Ed. Lang, of Peoria, Illinois, exhibited 8 frames of Pontifical State Stampless Covers, back to 1450. This exhibit brought him the First Award for Postal History and also the Grand Award of the Show. This was at the joint exhibition of the Corn Belt Philatelic Society of Bloomington, Ill. and the Illinois Federation of Stamp Clubs (known as CORNPEX-IFPEX). On Pontifical State material this makes four Grand Awards, or a total of 7 awards plus 3 APS medals which have been won by Ed. Congratulations.

Those who collect First Day Covers of Vatican City State will note that a new cancelling machine has been introduced by the Vatican City Post Office. The first use was in cancelling the FDC's of the 10 value Werks of Mercy set on November 8th, 1960.

Mr. Milton K. Ozaki, the publisher of THE PHILATELIC INVESTOR, P. O. Box 431, Kenosha, Wisc. (who is also a member of VPS) reports in the December 1960 of his magazine as follows: I would like to make note of a discovery I made last month. This has to do with the Vatican City #155a, the souvenir sheet issued in 1952 to commemorate the Centenary of the Stamp. While sorting through some of these sheets some months ago, I noticed that one of the sheets was an odd color. Scott defines the colors as " sepia and bright blue ". Webster says that sepia is " a rich brown; a brown, yellow-red-yellow in hue ". Color definitions usually are confusing, so let me say that most of these stamps are a dark brown--but the one which I noticed was almost a light brown. Compared together, the difference is both astonishing and obvious. Thinking it might just be a case of fading, I nevertheless kept the copy for my own Vatican Collection--but I began to inspect all copies which came my way with special care. Since then, several other copies have turned up, all as part of groups which have been purchased at the same time and stored under the same conditions. The difference in color, then, was not a matter of exposure to sunlight and fading--It was a real color variety, which I have never seen noted anywhere.

Again it is our sad duty to report on members who have died and the sympathy and condolence, of all who knew them, is extended to the family and friends of -

Edward J. Gray, # 53, 2551 Hermosa Terrace, Hayward, Cal.
 Louis K. Sievert, # 1101, 16860 Fenmore Ave. Detroit, Mich.
 C. Coleman Carven, 48-02 43rd St. Woodside 77, N. Y.

Also the Associated Press reported, on Dec. 27, 1960, as follows:

Aurelio Mistruzzi, 80, Papal sculptor and engraver under four popes, died Sunday night of a heart attack. He designed all papal medals and coins in the past four decades, since he was appointed by the late Pope Benedict XV.

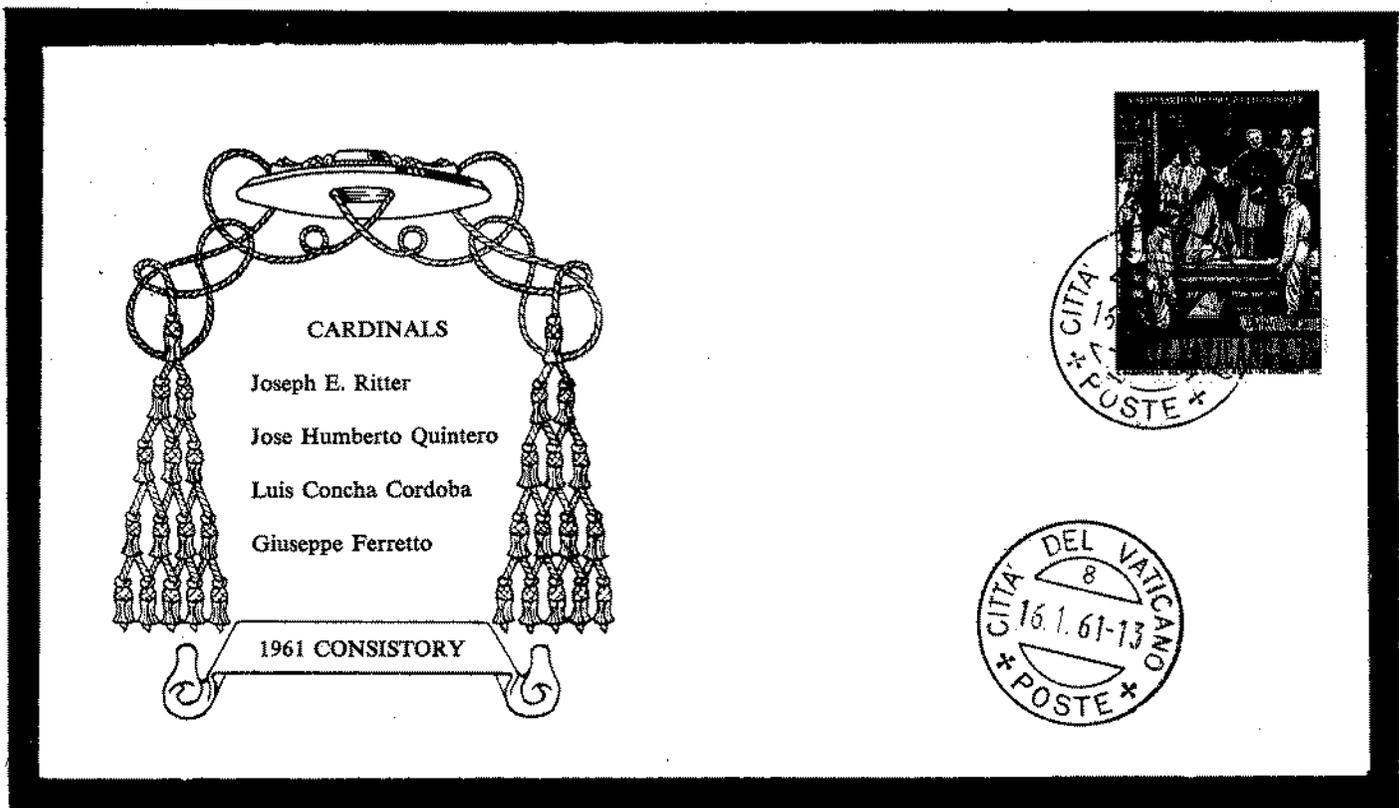
VPS LOCAL CHAPTER NEWS

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER -- We have received copies of the Nov & Dec 1960 issues of ' The Nuncio ', this chapter's official publication. Again they are tops. ' Barney ' Barnett, the President and Waller A. Sager, the Editor, go all-out in making this the outstanding chapter that it is. Practically every month they add one or more members and their programs show the reason why.

SEATTLE CHAPTER -- Collectors, both clergy and laity, were invited to an organizational meeting for a Western Chapter of the VPS. in Seattle, Wash. The meeting was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Walter Winiarski, 19837 Fremont Avenue. We hope to have further information about this new chapter in the near future.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN CHAPTER -- This chapter, which is noted for its varied programs (guest speakers, auctions, discussions and open forums) had its regular meeting on January 8th at St. John's rectory, 802 N. Jackson St, Milwaukee, Wis. All interested collectors are asked to contact the secretary, Robert A. Paliafito, Box 1615, Milwaukee 1, Wisc.

(How about some of the other Chapter Secretaries sending in vital information relative to their chapter. There are plenty of VPS members who would appreciate getting together with fellow members and the only way we can let them know of such activities is by our receiving the news items).



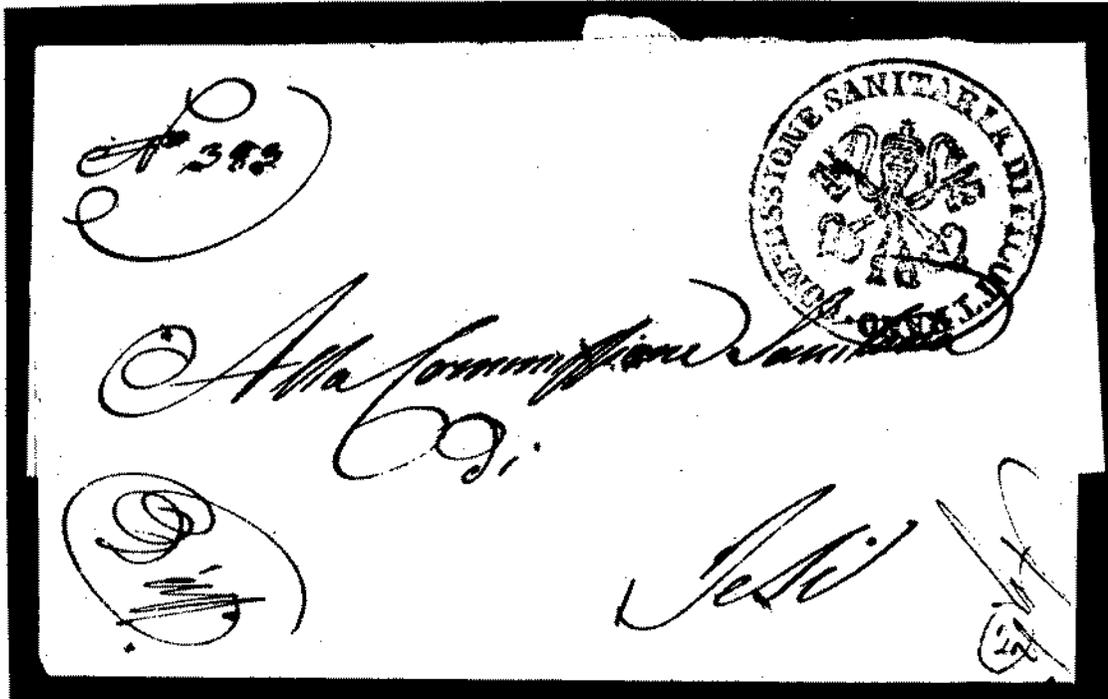
The above cover is illustrated for two purposes: First, at this consistory on Jan. 16, 1961, Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis, Mo. (your Editor's home) became Joseph Cardinal Ritter. For this all of us St. Louisians are very proud. The second reason is to show that special covers, other than First Day Covers or Maximums, exist from the Vatican and, like FDC'S and Maximums, they are of private manufacture. Many collectors do not know that this type of cover exists and, since it is the policy of VATICAN NOTES to not carry dealer ads, such collector may not have an opportunity to obtain them. If any are interested your Editor will be glad to drop you a card giving his source of supply. Just write.

Pontifical State Sanitary Commission Cachets

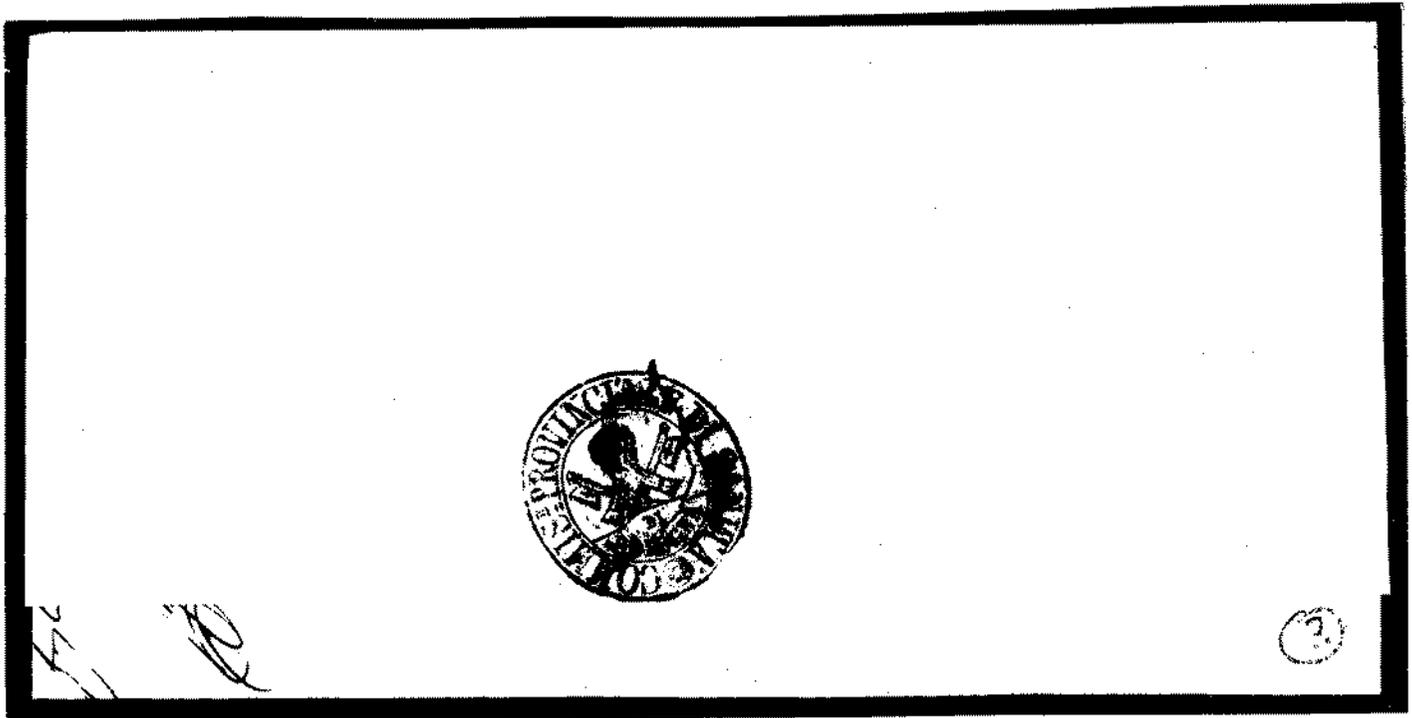
 We are again pleased to offer an article through the courtesy of Karl F. Meyer, MD.. His previous article on Pontifical State Disinfected Mail Covers was well received by the VPS membership. This information is published here for the first time and should interest those collectors who are interested in the stampless covers of the Pontifical State. You will note that the second and third covers, although bearing the cancellation of a Sanitary Commission, are not disinfected covers. This will clear up some ideas of numerous new collectors who were under the impression that having a Sanitary Commission cachet meant the cover was also disinfected.



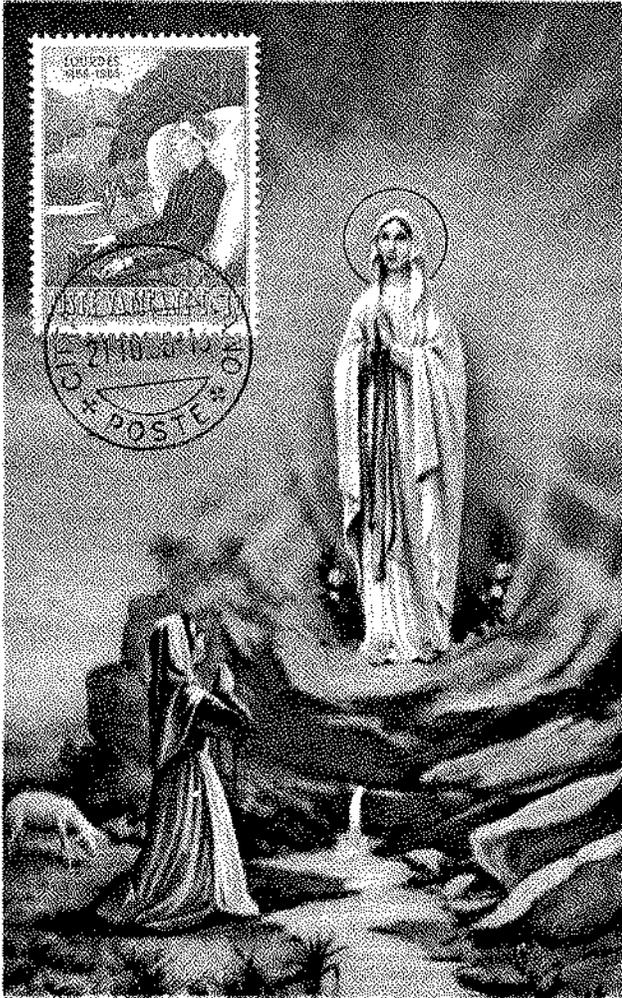
Oval single lined cachet, 37.5 x 32.5 mm., black, 1855 with Papal Coat of Arms surrounded by legend " DELEGAZIONE APOSTOLICA DI MACERATA ", below the crossed keys " COMMUNE DI CIVITANUOVA " and ornament. The office cachet applied on front and back over folds of an official wrapper from Civitanuova to Bologna dated 29 August 1855 served as a certificate of disinfection; four horizontal slits and the rare 'gingerberry oval' disinfection cachet in use by the Public Health Office of Bologna for the period of August and September 1855 (only two months).



Circular single lined Public Health cachet, 39 mm., black, 1836 with Papal Coat of Arms surrounded by legend " COMMISSIONE SANITARIA DI FILOTTRANO " on back and front of official letter from Filottrano to Public Health Department in Iesi/Ancona dated 18 September 1836; (not disinfected).



Oval double frame single lined Public Health cachet, 31 x 33 mm., black, 1836 outer frame legend " COMMISE PROVINCIALE DI SANITA "; center special Papal Coat of Arms and below line " DI/BOLOGNA " on official wrapper apparently mailed within the city: not disinfected. Cachet is over the wax seal of the folds.

The Lourdes Centennial (Part 1)

Marie Bernarde Soubirous was the first of 9 children born at Lourdes to Francois Soubirous and his wife, Louise Casteret, and entered this world on Jan. 7, 1844. Since by error her names had been inverted at Baptism, Jan. 9, 1844, the family called her the dialectic form of Bernadette. Because of the poverty of the family, at the age of 10 months the child was sent to the home of Marie Aravant-Lagues at Bartes, 2 miles away, the first of several soujourns there. The family had fallen from comfortable means to poverty, and only four of the nine children survived. Fram a miller, Francois Soubirous became an occasional worker, but managed to raise his family in the fear and love of God, even though living in a single room of a former jail called the Cachot. Bernadette was stricken by an epidemic of cholera (1854-55) and her health was poor. Her education was neglected because of her poor health and because she stayed at home to help her mother. At the age of 14 she could neither read nor write, and because of this, and her small size, her First Holy Communion was delayed. She was sent to Madame Lagues at Bartes in 1857, where Bernadette had spent most of her

childhood with her foster mother, and received instructions preparatory for First Holy Communion, but the priest was transferred and no replacement came. Bernadette returned to Lourdes Jan. 28, 1858 to join the First Holy Communion class there.

Francois Soubirous was accustomed to stay in bed when not working, to allay the pangs of hunger, so that his family could have whatever food was available. on Feb. 11, 1858, his wife sent her daughter, Toinette, and her friend, Jeanne Abadie, to seek firewood and Bernadette begged to go. At 11:00 A.M. they left Lourdes by the Forest Gate and crossed the River Gave near the Fort of Lourdes (in background on the 15 and 100 Lire stamps) by an old bridge which dates back to Roman times. Urged by Bernadette they followed a canal which served as a mill stream to near its end. Across the canal was the rock, Massabiele, a bare hill 90 feet high, a spur of the mountain of the Espelugues, which dropped down vertically to the Gave. In it was a grotte 39 feet wide and 27 feet deep, framed by an irregular arch from 12 to 15 feet high. At the right of the arch was a pointed niche about 14 feet above the ground, from which fell a curtain of shrubs and a wild rose bush

Toinette and Jeanne crossed the canal and left Bernadette behind them. As she began to take off a stocking, preparatory to following them, she heard the noise of wind about her. Raising her head she saw that the leaves were motionless in the trees. She stooped to take off her second

stocking and the noise was repeated. She looked at the trees which were still motionless, but in the grotto the shrubs and rose bush moved and a golden cloud covered the niche. In the midst of the light stood a young girl, whose feet rested on the bush, with arms extended toward Bernadette, whom she saluted with a smile and a gentle nod of the head. Frightened, Bernadette tried to make the Sign of the Cross, but was powerless. The Vision blessed herself and then Bernadette was able to do so and her fears vanished. The Rosary was said, Bernadette reciting the prayers and the Vision passing the beads through her fingers. When the Rosary was finished the Vision made a sign for Bernadette to approach, but Bernadette did not move. The Vision bowed, extended her hands and disappeared into the niche. The light persisted for a moment and then disappeared also.

When Toinette and Jeanne returned they found Bernadette on her knees deathly pale, unconscious of her surroundings. They called to her and after a while Bernadette came to, and waded across the canal. She reproved them because they had told her that the water was cold and she found it warm. They felt of her feet and found them warm. Bernadette asked them if they had seen anything, and they had not. On the way home, taking Toinette aside, Bernadette told her sister of the apparition. At home Toinette told her mother. Both girls were spanked and from Bernadette that evening her mother drew a promise that she would not return to the grotto.

The news spread through Lourdes. That Saturday, in confession, Bernadette told Fr. Pomian, who received from her permission to inform the parish priest. February 14th year was Quadragesima Sunday, and Forty Hours Devotion for the parish. After High Mass a group of girls came to the Cachot and obtained permission for Bernadette to visit the grotto with them. They went armed with a bottle of holy water in case the apparition was not from God. This first pilgrimage followed the Forest Road which lead above Massabiele. Bernadette scrambled down the slope and was kneeling in prayer when the others arrived.

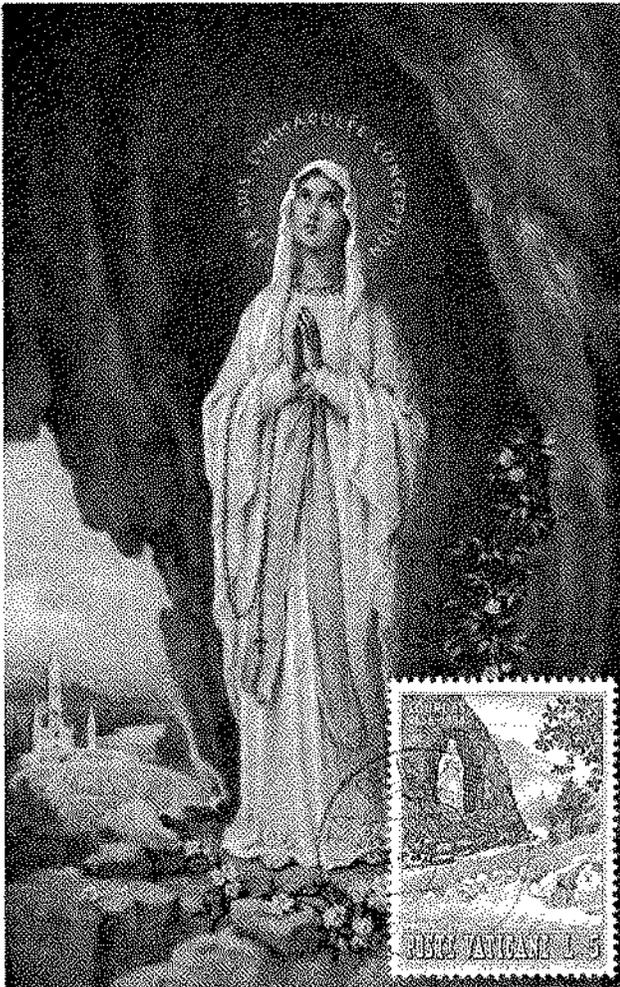
The Vision appeared again and Bernadette stood and walked toward the grotto, sprinkling the niche with holy water, reciting the first half of the invocation " If you come from God, stay (if you come from the devil, begone) ". Reassured by a smile she left unsaid the second part, and she returned to her place of prayer and fell into ecstasy. Alarmed by her paleness, her companions shook her and called her name, getting no response. They ran to the mill of Savy, 300 yards away, and Antoine Nicolae, the young miller, came and led the resisting Bernadette to the mill where she came out of her ecstasy. Her mother arrived, stick in hand, but was prevented from using it on her daughter. At home the Soubirous decreed that Bernadette should never return to Massabiele.

Two responsible women of Lourdes suggested to the family that an early morning visit be made to check the truth of Bernadette's statements. With family permission Bernadette and the two women attended 6:00 A.M. Mass on February 18th and set out secretly for the grotto. At the summit of Massabiele Bernadette again ran down the slope and the two women joined her. Shortly Bernadette said: " She is there ". Giving her writing materials the women told her to ask the Vision to write down what she desired. Going to the grotto Bernadette said: " Miss, will you be so good as to write down what you want from me? ". The first words by the Vision were then spoken: " It is not necessary ".

Then the vision said: " Will you have the kindness to come here for a fortnight? " Bernadette promised, subject to the consent of her parents. The Vision again spoke: " I cannot make you happy in this world but I promise to do so in the next. " Then the Vision vanished.

On the next visit to the grotto, Louise Soubirous accompanied her daughter. Friends accompanied them at first and on later visits many people from about Lourdes went. Before the two weeks was up, more than 20,000 people were present at the grotto at one time, some through curiosity, some through devotion. Bernadette refused to make any identification of the Vision until the time fixed by God to make this known but her description of the vision was detailed.

She saw a girl of her own age and height with a robe of brilliant white and extreme fineness, drawn high at the neck by a hem from which hung a white ribbon: the dress fell in folds to the bare feet, each of which bore a golden rose in full bloom. The sleeves of the robe were long and narrow, and the robe was held by a girdle ' bluer than the sky ', whose ends fell well below the knees. The head was covered, so that the hair could scarcely be seen, by a white veil which fell over the shoulders and down to the bottom of the robe. On one arm hung a rosary with large white beads, having a golden chain and crucifix. When the hands were joined they were palm to palm with fingers closed together. The face was oval and pale, the eyes blue. Bernadette received the impression of grace, majesty, tenderness and beauty. All that the other visitors saw was Bernadette, a little girl in typical Pyrenean dress, who made the Sign of the Cross and recited the Rosary.



On Friday, Feb. 19th, Bernadette went to 6 AM Mass and then directly to the grotto. As soon as she fell into ecstasy she heard angry voices, as if from a brawling mob, with one voice dominating them, all crying out: " Begone! Begone! " This was directed toward the Vision and Bernadette. With a single glance, the Vision quieted the voices.

On Saturday, Feb. 20th, the fifth apparition, the Vision taught Bernadette a prayer which she said daily for the rest of her life.

On Sunday, Feb. 21st, the Lady instructed Bernadette: " You will pray for sinners ". This same Sunday the officials of Lourdes conferred to form a plan to stop what they considered a danger to public order and religion. They agreed that the best way was to unmask the visionary as a fraud or the victim of hallucinations by adroit questioning.

Jacques Dutour, the District Attorney for Lourdes, summoned Bernadette to his house and questioned her. He was convinced of her sincerity, against

his will he dismissed her and did not forbid her to visit Massabiele.

Jean-Dominique Jacomet, Superintendent of Police, hearing of this failure, took Bernadette to his house and questioned her before two witnesses, but did not move her. Bernadette's father came into the house at this point. Having had an encounter with the police over the 'stealing of a piece of wood found by the side of the road', he promised he would end his daughter's visits to the grotto. Jacomet then decided to post gendarmes each morning at Massabiele. Forbidden even to go to morning Mass, Bernadette went to school and then returned home to lunch. Then she was drawn to the grotto on Feb. 22nd, where the police followed her. There was no vision.

Tuesday she felt the urge to go to the grotto and her parents defied the police and gave her permission to go. So, on Feb. 23rd at the grotto, the Vision appeared and gave her three secrets which she was never to reveal, but which she said were very useful to her. She was told that she would die young and that she would enter the religious life.

February 24th, Wednesday, while she was kneeling with a lighted candle in her hand, she passed it to the nearest person and advanced toward the niche where she knelt in sadness and tears. Rising she repeated the words she had just heard: "Penance! Penance! Penance!"

The ninth apparition, on Thursday Feb. 25th, caused Bernadette to be despised and ridiculed by some of the onlookers. The Vision commanded her "Go drink at the spring and wash yourself in it". Bernadette saw no spring near the grotto, which she approached on her knees, and turning started to crawl on her knees toward the River Gave. Her attention was directed by the Lady to a small dirty pool of water in the grotto. She scraped a hole in the dirt and a little water appeared. After several tries she drank a bit and washed herself in it. Then the Lady directed her "Go eat that plant which you will find there". Then as Bernadette ate it some of the watchers called her mad. But from this spring came forth the miraculous waters of Lourdes, revealed by the obedience of Bernadette in performing exercises of penance and humiliation directed by the Vision.

On February 26th there was no apparition, but Bernadette came and prayed at the grotto that Friday morning. The spring which she had dug was now running in a steady trickle.

The tenth apparition occurred on Saturday, Feb. 27th, and Bernadette was directed to another penitential exercises "Go kiss the ground as a penance for sinners". She was also directed "You will tell the priest to have a chapel built here". The only person of whom Bernadette was really afraid was the parish priest, Fr. Dominique Peyramale. Fr. Peyramale was impressed by the message of Bernadette but assumed a gruff attitude. He told Bernadette to find out who the Lady was, and if she had a right to a chapel then she should make the rose bush in the niche immediately bloom.

(to be continued)