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THE POCKET OF
OUR LADY

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Mulville

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The little things Our Lady can't do without; the precious things she wants to save; and the important things she can put her hands on at any moment, all these Our Lady keeps in her pocket. The soft lining is bright with sunlight and warm with love, and whenever Our Lady wishes to make the Child Jesus especially happy, she reaches down into her pocket and gives Him one of her treasures. The lovely things, the special things, the valuable things: these are all her patients, old and young, and her pocket is the Sisters' Infirmary at Saint Mary's Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Each room, each door, each window is consecrated by a living faith which enables those who care for Our Lady's treasures to guard them tenderly for her. The beautiful Infirmary Chapel is the center of the unfailing love that hallows the sick. Here the compassionate Christ receives the homage of perpetual adoration. Here the little old blind Sister kneels, her sightless eyes fixed on Him Who is the Light. Here the gnarled, arthritic hands that were once slim and strong and gifted, now weave far sweeter melodies on the worn, brown rosary that speaks Our Lady's constant presence. Here the Sister who has spent a lifetime in the kitchens of the community guides her wheel chair to a sunny corner of the chapel where the scent of blossoms mingles with the sweetness of the Bread of Life. Here the hospital Sister who has spent years in the nursery now rests her crutches beside her as she holds the Child Jesus to her heart. Here the old missionary from India or South America still mends the nets of Peter as the precious beads slip through her feeble, quivering fingers.

But some there are who cannot come to Him. And so the gentle Christ goes to them. He goes with infinite tenderness to those whose total dedication has included a sudden halt in the midst of activity. His compassionate glance strengthens the bedridden: the aged grade school teacher who, even in her dreams, is still drilling children in arithmetic and reading; the former high school or college administrator whose mail brings accounts of the joys and heartaches, the marriages, and births, and deaths of those whom she has counseled through the years; the infirm superior with a heart still young, sweetened by the consecration of years of responsibility and selflessness.

“The chief aim of the Sisters of the Holy Cross is to study the glorious standard after which the Congregation is named, and to become living copies of the Divine Mother who stood by it on Calvary.” They all remember it so well — the first rule they had to study in their new black Rule Books. It seems like yesterday that they were novices. The joy has grown with the years, while youth’s eager enthusiasm has given place to the deep love inseparable from total consecration to Our Lady and to her Son.

On sunny afternoons in spring, if a Sister is strong enough, she may go to the Chapel of Loreto doubly dear with all it holds of memory. On warm summer mornings or in the late afternoon she may make her way to the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and stop to visit again with old friends now at rest in God’s green acre, encompassed by the outstretched arms of the Christ on Calvary.

One of the Community’s choice blessings consists of those sweet and gracious patients

in the Sisters' Infirmary. It is to their prayers that the Sisters in the hospitals attribute conversions. It is to their prayers that the Community attributes some of its greatest favors.

Visiting the sick is one of the traditional joys of the members of the Community, who find an unfailing source of inspiration and strength in these lives where suffering is no unwelcome stranger, but is rather Jesus in disguise.

And the visitors look at the old Sisters a bit wistfully and marvel at the deep peace which radiates from eyes still young with innocence. The words of the psalmist: "I will go unto the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth" is for them a basic reality.

For a lifetime they have washed their hands among the innocent. They have achieved that spiritual childhood, with all it means of littleness and dependence. They are the clean of heart who even now see God. They are His treasures. That is why He has given them to His Mother. She guards these precious souls, losing not a one. They are valuable beyond measure, and that is why Our Lady keeps them in her pocket.

The twenty-ninth of May of the Marian Year, the date of the canonization of Saint Pius X, marks the dedication of a beautiful new convent and infirmary at the Mother-house of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Here, through Mother M. Rose Elizabeth, Superior General and her council, the munificence of God has provided a home for every Sister when her time comes to slip into Our Lady's pocket. Here she comes home to Mary's holy land.