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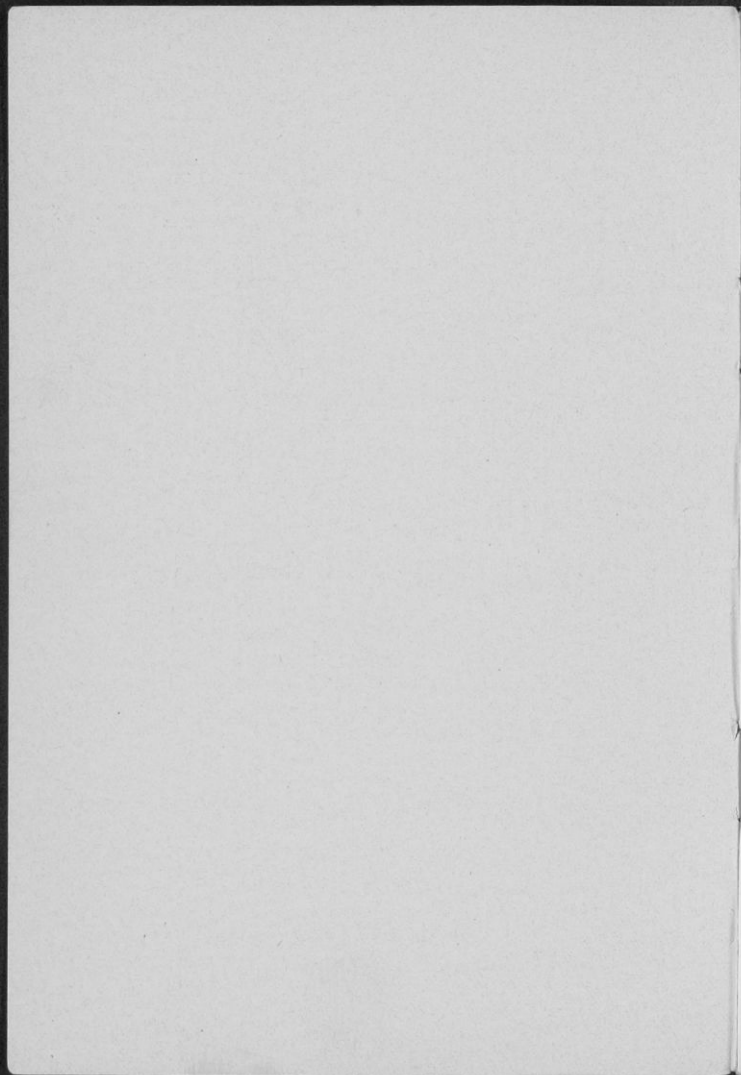
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*One of our little colored children making  
a storm-novena.*

**A SECRET  
OF SUCCESS**



**A  
STORM NOVENA**

**by**

**A CAPUCHIN FATHER**

**at**

**ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR  
MISSION**

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**



**1939**

IMPRIMI POTEST

Fr. Theodosius Foley, O.M.Cap., Provincial  
Detroit, Michigan, November 27, 1939.

NIHIL OBSTAT

Fr. Dominic Meyer, O.M.Cap., S.T.D.  
Censor Librorum, November 24, 1939.

IMPRIMATUR

✠ Archbishop S. A. Stritch,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 29, 1939.

## FOREWORD

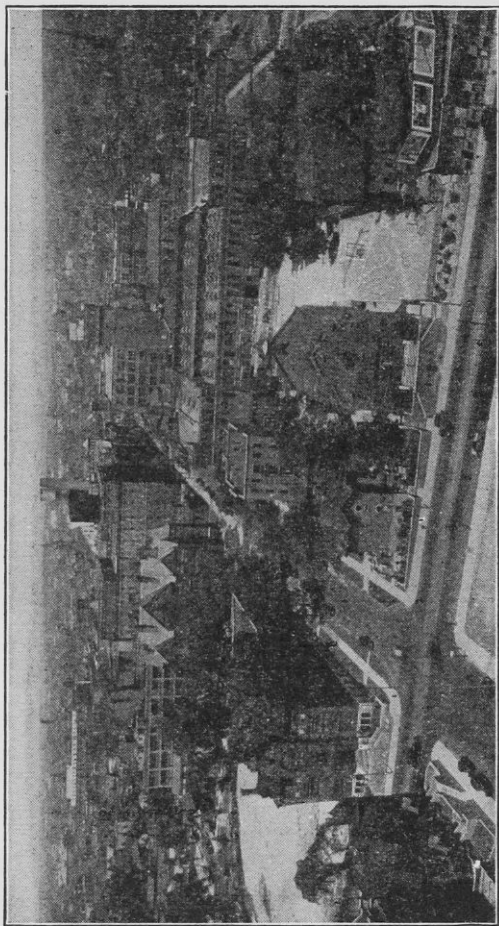
This little brochure is the answer to many requests which came to St. Benedict the Moor during past years for detailed information concerning our so-called "Storm Novenas." To relieve the writer of the drudgery of again and again issuing personal letters, this information is hereby given in print.

Let it be understood that this is not a doctrinal treatise based on dogmatic teachings in an ecclesiastically approved form, but a simple presentation of a new form of an already existing and popular devotion. Storm Novenas have made a wide appeal because of their efficaciousness, and this seems to rest on a concentration of pious and persevering prayer. Instead of spreading petitions over a period of nine days, as is usual in the customary novena, the Storm Novena limits the extent of time to one day's duration, but in that day addresses frequent and fervent appeals to God.

May these few pages prove as much an enlightenment to you and introduce to you as successful a solution of your particular problems as the Storm Novenas have been for St. Benedict the Moor Mission.

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*All references to sainthood, granting of petitions, etc., claim only human credence, and are humbly subjected to the judgment and decisions of Holy Mother Church, according to the decree of Pope Urban VIII.*





## THE STORM NOVENA

ON OCT. 30, 1913, two Franciscan Sisters emigrated from Vienna, Austria, to America, to establish new foundations of their community in our land. In Vienna these Sisters have convents of strict enclosure. Their main task is "Perpetual Adoration." At the time of their coming to the United States they lived under the protectorate of Cardinal Piffli, who also allowed them to introduce nocturnal adoration for men, laborers, students, etc., in their convent chapel, with marvelous spiritual success to his flock. Arriving in this country, they came first to the Capuchin Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi in Milwaukee, to discuss a foundation in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, because they desired to have a Capuchin Father as their spiritual director. The Brother Porter called a Father to interview the Sisters. They presented their plan of establishing convents of their Community in the United States; the first one to be in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Smilingly the Father asked them two preliminary questions: 1st. "Have you already received the permission of the Archbishop?" 2nd. "Have you the necessary funds?" He explained at the same time that financial conditions differ here in America from those in Europe, where pious and charitable people supply all contemplative Orders with the necessary victuals, clothing, etc., for their support. The Father received a negative answer to all this. They had neither the Archbishop's permission, nor even the necessary funds. He threw up his hands in despair,

asserting that they should never have ventured on this trip before these preliminary preparations had been successfully made. However, their reaction was not one of discouragement; on the contrary, the two good Sisters seemed rather amused at his remarks, stating that they anticipated no such problems in these matters, because of their long-accustomed and well-tested confidence in God's divine providence due to their fervent "Storm Novenas." The term "Storm Novena" was entirely new to the Father. He asked them to explain the Novena.

**This is the story the Sisters related:**

In Vienna they were located in the midst of a section of socialists who were commonly known as Church haters. Whenever neighboring pastors had a difficult case, especially that of a dying, impenitent socialist, they reported it at once to the Sisters, who then made the so-called "Storm Novena," with the result that the poor sinner always called for the priest and was reconciled with God before he died. These Sisters made the Storm Novena for many purposes, spiritual and material, and the results were always phenomenal. Their method of making these Novenas in Vienna consists in making nine disciplines during the day, nine visits to the Blessed Sacrament, lying on their face during prayer, arms extended, fasting, and some other penance. When in later years, these Sisters were questioned relative to the origin of their novenas, one of them wrote as follows: "I can only say that many years ago a distinguished lady from Italy called at our Vienna Convent, requesting, and making herself, such a "Storm Novena," as she knew it was the custom in Italian convents to visit a Church or Chapel nine times in one day and saying six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys,



and six Glorias each time. She assured us many favors were granted her and her family through them. And we really experienced this ourselves."

Their endeavors for a foundation in Milwaukee failed. However, after many trials the two Sisters found a great benefactor in Archbishop Schrembs of Cleveland, who wanted Sisters for Perpetual Adoration, and who welcomed them to pray and offer reparation for his diocese. They call themselves "Franciscan Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament," and are now located at 4108 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio. The Sisters, as stated above, first applied for admission into the United States in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Though this call at the Capuchin Monastery was without result, it nevertheless proved of great significance for the future prosperity of St. Benedict the Moor Mission.

The Storm Novenas which have been introduced at St. Benedict the Moor are not made with such extraordinary exercises as in Europe; however, we have experienced wonderful results. The main thing we stress is fervor and unbounded confidence in God. It will become evident to every reader that these Novenas are the secret of success at St. Benedict the Moor Mission.

## **STORM NOVENA AT ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR MISSION**

Due to the death of Father Stephen Eckert, February 16, 1922, several losses were suffered by St. Benedict the Moor Mission. Among them may be recorded one of specific interest. A certain Miss M. S.—a teacher he had engaged for the third graders—had come from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to serve his Cause. She highly revered the Father

for his extraordinary zeal and had therefore pledged her service to the Mission during his whole lifetime. When, however, the sad news of Father Stephen's death came, she realized that her promise had been fulfilled. She returned to Pittsburgh on the very sad day of Father Stephen's burial, February 20, 1922. Immediate steps were taken to replace her. The school board — located opposite the Mission center — was contacted for a new teacher. Notice to this effect was served by the school superintendent to all non-engaged teachers, but with no response. Other contacts followed. Again no favorable replies, and this for a span of two long weeks. During all this time the children were without a teacher — and perhaps felt fortunate to forego the drudgery of the classroom. The situation could not continue. Consultations to procure a teacher were finally at an end. Something out of the ordinary had to be done. In this plight the acting Rector happened to recall — and this for the first time after a period of approximately ten years — the noted story of the "Storm Novena." The Sister Superior received orders to conduct one with the third graders, and to make it to Father Stephen. The children had been praying fervently to him before on their own initiative, i.e. without having been instructed or solicited to do so. Even while his body was lying in his casket, at St. Francis Church, they had placed their medals and rosaries on his hands and preserved them as precious relics. Their natural intuition seemed to tell them that their former Rector was a Saint, now in Heaven and able to obtain favors for them. Instinctively, therefore, they had been praying *to* him after his demise for personal favors instead of *for* him. There was, however, little optimism in the mind of the Rector as to the favorable outcome of this Storm Novena. Nevertheless, he gave it a

trial. The result of this novena was, therefore, all the more amazing and gratifying when that very night two long-distance phone calls and one telegram arrived from Chicago from parties applying for a position as teacher. The very next morning, March 9, 1922, one of these teachers and five other local teachers applied in person. Let it be noted that none of the three teachers who applied from Chicago were aware of the fact that a teacher was needed during this second semester of the school year which was now far advanced. Two of these teachers were now engaged to replace Miss M. S.

## **THE SECOND AND SUCCEEDING STORM NOVENAS**

Father Stephen's death brought further success to the Mission. The new Rector was not content with the existing situation and the humble condition of the Mission grounds and buildings as they existed at the time. The Chapel and classrooms were not adequate, nor in accordance with the building code requirements, and certainly were no attraction for prospective converts. The matter was thereupon presented to the Father Provincial who whole-heartedly endorsed the move to acquire additional property and replace the old edifices by new ones. Steps were immediately taken to acquire the properties adjacent to the Mission. But here the Mission encountered unforeseen difficulties, in spite of the fact that two of the properties, one of which was most suitable for our purpose, were on the market. One of the owners was approached, but no favorable response was obtained. On the contrary, he informed all the property holders in the block of our endeavors and induced them to

enter into an agreement with him not to sell their property to the Colored Mission. This difficulty led to another Storm Novena. After due consideration, a building committee, not of contractors, financiers, or bankers, but of Saints in whom the Mission staff had the greatest confidence, was first selected. They were: Sts. Joseph, Jude, Anthony, Conrad, Benedict, Roch, **Dominic, Francis, the Martyrs of Uganda,** and Theresa. We also included Father Stephen.

Already on the following day, one of the owners notified the Mission that his property was for sale. No time was lost in making the proper approach, and immediately an option was taken on the property. Another Storm Novena brought the property directly north of this into our hands, and every following Storm Novena helped us acquire additional properties.

After the options on the first three properties had been paid, before the deed was signed, a verbal permission had been granted to the Mission by the owners to use the grounds in the rear of their buildings to proceed with the building of the Chapel. However, excavation had hardly begun, when one owner retracted his promise and started rumors to the effect that he would bring suit against the Mission. This took place on June 1, 1923. The situation was very critical, disturbing, and perplexing, and, as was later discovered, due to sheer jealousy on the part of a person apparently deeply involved and interested in the Mission's affairs. The person in question felt that the matter should have passed through her hands, though she was only a social worker connected with the Mission. But before delving deeper into the matter, all the Mission children were engaged in a fervent Storm Novena, and that same afternoon the owner

relented and permitted proceedings to continue without any further interference.

The next Storm Novena was then made for funds to pay for the tremendous debts incurred by the purchase of the various properties. The very next day brought the donor for our new Chapel. This was beyond the expectation of every one interested, and had the good effect that our confidence in the Novenas increased all the more. Now there could be no doubt as to their efficacy. Naturally, Storm Novena continued following Storm Novena, and thus the other necessary funds were also received, enabling us to liquidate the entire debt. Similar problems — that always intermingle in Mission activities — were likewise solved by them.

### **STORM NOVENAS SPREAD**

The general public soon took notice of the great power of these novenas and likewise began to beg for the prayers of our children in their own interests and in the solution of their own problems. Not only did they apply at the Mission door to beg for them, but appeals also were, and still are, sent in by mail, phone calls, and even telegrams from the distant parts of the Union and foreign lands. Other communities, especially Sisterhoods, started making Storm Novenas. It has come to our notice that at present even a great number of individuals are conducting them privately.

It proved very encouraging to receive responses from practically every applicant that the Novenas met with success, and hardly a day passed by without one or several requests for more. No doubt, it is, above all, the great and absolute confidence that people place in prayer that produces

these results. "This ought to fetch us something," one of the little Negroes said one day to the Sister in charge, after a fervent Storm Novena had been made, and it did. It brought new donors.

This is our secret of unfailing success. At times — when in need — individual groups among our own school children make their own private Storm Novenas. An illustration: Vacation had brought the permission for many children to go home for the Christmas Holidays. One boy who was very anxious to go home received notice to stay at the Mission. When all had left he did not give up hope. He gathered a few friends who made a Novena with him. Barely had they made all the visits when a telegram brought the permission. Similar incidents could be added.

### **WHAT IS A STORM NOVENA?**

A Storm Novena consists of nine visits to the Blessed Sacrament *in one day*, praying on one's knees, and with outstretched arms, to obtain a speedy and unfailing answer to prayer. The Franciscan Sisters mentioned above define it in these terms: "Storm" means a sudden, forceful assault on heaven in the shape of ardent prayers at the Throne of our Divine Lord, so that He will take immediate notice of and answer them readily. One, so to say, storms Heaven with implicit confidence, in accordance with the Gospel story recorded in St. Luke, 11, 5-13, which reads: "At that time: Jesus said to His disciples: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer, and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are

with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him." Thus man has power over God.—It is performed on our knees to indicate our total helplessness and dependence on God; with extended arms—similar to Moses, who, as long as he prayed with extended arms, sustained his army in fighting successfully; then also to remind the Heavenly Father of His divine Son on the Cross—in virtue of which all our prayers have their power, whether they be expiatory, reconciliatory, adoration, or pleadings for help. Praying with extended arms was a favorite manner of prayer employed by St. Francis of Assisi, in memory of our Crucified Savior. When St. Gertrude asked our Lord to teach her how to pray so as to commemorate His Passion, our Lord answered: "When you pray, spread forth your hands so as to represent to God the Father the memory of My Passion, in union with that love with which I stretched out My hands on the cross; and if you do this habitually, without fear of ridicule or reproach, you will pay Me an honor as great as is shown to a King when he is solemnly enthroned."

## HOW WE MAKE OUR STORM NOVENAS

The first visit is always introduced by an act of Perfect Contrition, "O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen," to which are then added the following invocations at each visit:

1. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us and grant us our request.
2. Our Lady of Perpetual Help — pray for us and obtain our request. "Memorare."
3. St. Joseph — pray for us and obtain our request.
4. St. Jude — pray for us and obtain our request.
5. St. Anthony — pray for us and obtain our request.
6. St. Conrad — pray for us and obtain our request.
7. St. Benedict — pray for us and obtain our request.
8. St. Roch — pray for us and obtain our request.
9. St. Dominic and Blessed Father St. Francis, pray for us, etc.
10. Ye Blessed Martyrs of Uganda, pray for us, etc.
11. St. Theresa, the Little Flower of Jesus, pray for us, etc.
12. All Ye Holy Saints and Angels, pray for us, etc.
13. A Hail Mary to Father Stephen (it being considered a private devotion).

Our children are constantly reminded of the great power of prayer, by means of which God shares His creative power with man. The quality of a good prayer and its efficacy are



based on God's infinite willingness to hear every prayer. No request is ever refused, so that, when once we enter the portals of Heaven, we will find that not a prayer sent up to Heaven remained unanswered or unrewarded.

**The various invocations of the Saints are explained somewhat in this style:**

The *Sacred Heart of Jesus* and *Our Lady of Perpetual Help* are the main mediators between God and man. Reference is here made to the twelve promises our Lord made to St. Margaret Mary, and the beautiful "Memorare" of the Bl. Virgin.

How inspiring and full of confidence are not the words expressed herein by St. Bernard: "Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any-one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided." Even if every one else should desert us, and no matter how desperate our difficulty, our Mother never fails us. She has our welfare more at heart than we ourselves. Mary invites all to trust in her, saying: "Come to me, all ye that desire me. I am the mother of fair love. . . . In me is all grace . . . all hope of life and of virtue." (Ecclus. XXIV. 24 sq.)

*St. Joseph* is the Patron of builders and the provider for the poor. Somewhere it is related in the life of St. John Vianney how he procured, miraculously, ten thousand dollars through the intercession of St. Joseph.

*St. Jude* is the Patron of desperate and hopeless cases, the Saint of the Impossible. We are told that this holy apostle once appeared to a devout client and lamented that so few Christians availed themselves of his merits or sought his

protection, because his name "Jude" recalled the name of the traitor Apostle, Judas Iscariot. Unlike other Saints, patrons of particular cases and virtues, he comes speedily and sweetly whenever his aid is invoked. In return, he requires only our confidence, love, and gratitude. If our requests are not answered precisely according to our ideas and wishes, then they surely will be granted sooner or later according to the designs of God.

*St. Anthony* is the great world-known worker of miracles — even calling the dead back to life.

*St. Conrad* had died in the odor of sanctity at Altoetting in Bavaria, in the year 1894 on April 21st. The erection of a large pilgrimage church at Altoetting had long been under consideration. In 1908 it was decided to proceed with the project. However, the difficulties were found to be so great, that the idea seemed impossible of realization at that time. Then one day a pious old lady came to the superior and said to him: "There is one in the crypt below who will help you in your difficulties. I mean Brother Conrad. You may confidently go to him." From that time on the Father Guardian paid a visit to the grave of the servant of God each morning after his Mass, praying with great fervor for help in the building project. And strange to relate, all the difficulties seemed to vanish in a short time.

The twenty-first of April, 1911, was the seventeenth anniversary of Brother Conrad's death. That morning the Guardian went as usual to the grave in the crypt and prayed thus: "Brother Conrad, if you are a saint, I beg to procure for me this day one thousand marks, because I am in great need of money." In the afternoon of that day the Brother Porter came to the Father Guardian and told him that a gentleman at the door wished to speak to him. When the

Father Guardian appeared, the man arose and said to him: "Father, I wish to make a contribution towards the building of the new Church, and for that purpose I have deposited one thousand marks in the bank at Munich, which you may draw whenever you need it." Here was a clear proof of Brother Conrad's powerful intercession with God. It gave the Father Guardian new courage, and he entered into an agreement with the saintly Brother, saying, "If you help me to build our new Church, I agree to promote your process of beatification." And Brother Conrad did help. The work was begun at once and was rapidly brought to completion, so that the new Church of St. Anne, one of the largest churches in Germany, could be solemnly dedicated to God's service on October 15, 1912. It now became the duty of Father Guardian to keep his promise to Brother Conrad by taking active steps for the process of beatification of Brother Conrad. Brother Conrad was canonized on Pentecost Sunday, 1934, by Pope Pius XI.

*St. Benedict the Moor*, who as Patron, is always the special protector of the Mission.

*Blessed Martin de Porres*: For a number of years we had been begging the Rector for a gymnasium in which the children could play and expend some of their surplus energy. It would prove a great benefit even spiritually, since the children must spend all their time—day and night—at the institution. We made a promise to name the new gymnasium in honor of Blessed Martin de Porres, and continue to honor him, if he heard our prayers and made it possible to put up the building. Whenever the Rector was approached on the question by the Sisters or children, he merely smiled or at times answered that this would be very difficult to do especially because of the depression. The Rector himself

secretly promised Blessed Martin to place a relic of him in the most prominent place of the building if he would help us make it a reality. Finally, after many Storm Novenas and prayers from the Sisters and children new hope seemed to be in store. Although no real great donation came our way, yet many small ones made it possible to start; and, as the work progressed, more donations followed.

One benefactor especially seemed to be sent by Blessed Martin very shortly after the building was started — for on his Feast Day, November 5th, a lady stopped at the Monastery and asked the Rector if he had enough money to pay for the gymnasium. He said "No, but the good Lord will help us out, as he has done heretofore." "Would you accept a small donation?" said the lady, and handed him two thousand dollars.

*St. Roch*, born of noble family, became poor and humble for Christ's sake, and was renowned for miracles, especially in his power against epidemics. This is of great importance in an institution of children.

*St. Dominic and Blessed St. Francis*: Patrons and Founders of the two religious Orders engaged in the work here at the Mission.

Martyrs of Uganda — Twenty-two youths — to protect our colored youth.

*St. Theresa — Little Flower of Jesus*. Everyone is aware of her great intercessory power, and the little, wide-spread ejaculation: "Little Flower, show Thy power."

*All Ye Saints and Angels!* Hereby we call on all Heaven to stand by us with their pleas.

Finally a "Hail Mary" to *Father Stephen*. Reasons for including him have already been explained in the body of this booklet.

Daily this *little novena litany* is added to our night prayers for the welfare — both spiritual and temporal — of St. Benedict the Moor Mission. There is little doubt in the minds of the Mission staff as to the fact that St. Benedict the Moor Mission *was built up entirely on prayers.*

## REPLIES FROM OUTSIDERS

A certain Mrs. C., who owned an apartment, wished to sell it so that she could leave the city. After giving up all hope of selling it, she asked our children to pray. They prayed, but with no success. A few weeks later Mrs. C. came again and begged us to pray once more. This time her prayers were answered. She sold her apartment and gave us an offering in gratitude.

Mrs. K. had a brother who had lost his faith. He drank heavily and also had incurred a serious disease. His family and friends tried for years to bring him back to the Church, but to no avail. Our children made a Storm Novena for him. Soon after this he became seriously ill and died, but before his death he called for a priest and was given the last rites of the Church.

A certain lady had two daughters who both had teachers' degrees, yet they were unable to get any positions besides substitute teaching. The mother came to us and asked us to pray for their intention. Soon after one of her daughters was given a position in the public school system, which will in all probability, remain permanent. The other daughter was interviewed recently for a parochial school position and was chosen over many other applicants.

There are many cases similar to the above.

## NOTICE

Concluding, let it be well noted that to make a "Storm Novena" one may select one's own prayers. They may be short or long. The Franciscan Sisters of the Bl. Sacrament in this country write: "On account of want of time we say sometimes only short prayers, and our Lord seems not to mind it. We get the favors anyway."



