

AIR MAIL.

48, Elliott Road,
CALCUTTA - 16.

9th April, 1948.

Dear Fr. Thekaekara,

Many thanks for your letter of the 21st February, and for the pretty picture of St. Catherine Labouré.

As requested by you, I have typed out and sent one copy of each of the four meditations enclosed with your letter to Fr. Boon. I am returning you the other copies and your M.S.S.

The tour which you will be undertaking shortly sounds wonderful and I am sure will prove very interesting. It must be beautiful to be able to visit such famous places. We all hope you will remember us in your prayers on this occasion.

Yes, I shall be only too pleased to avail myself of your kind offer to send me some souvenirs of the different shrines you visit. I wonder also if it would be possible for you to send me a few Sacred Heart cloth badges. These, I understand, are made in France and unfortunately are not available in Calcutta.

With best wishes from my brother, sister
and myself,

Yours obediently,

(Miss) Agnes Noney

ST. JEAN MARIE VEAINNEY.
(Feast Aug. 9).

Your Ars, a God-forsaken place, said they;
But you thought otherwise. You knew that never God
Forsakes the world His love had made.
It was Ars that forsook its God;
It was the Christian folk of Ars who forgot God's love.
To turn your village back from its errant ways,
To change each cold, damp heart
Into a furnace aflame with love
You took as your life's mission, a sacred charge.
To that charge you bent your energies,
And with a will which stuns us into silent awe,
Which made your Ars a beacon-light for France
And you a towering giant among priests.
The poor Cure of Ars, some in pity thought,
With health so frail, and so unskilled in books!
But yours was a learning from deeper source.
Those hours, still like the sculptured marble,
With soul a blazing fire, with pleading eyes and joined hands
You spent before the sacramental Christ,
Were whence you drew the wisdom which
Famed scholarship to your feet humbly came to learn.
Your health was frail; that body of yours
So cruelly misused, with vigils, fasts
And scourgings spurting blood, seemed to waste away;
Waste, but as oil that wastes to feed a flame.
And what a flame! Its piercing rays spread far,
A guide to the distant wanderer,
A sign of hope, a beckoning call,
God's radiance on sin's black night.
"Ars is no more Ars," you once in joy exclaimed;
That was your work, but more, much more.
You came to be for all the world a blazing flame,
A flame that sets souls afire with God,
A lesson on the silent might of sanctity.

M. Thekaekara, S.J.

THE ANGELUS.

From the high belfry that like a sentinel
Keeps watch over the low-roofed, peaceful homes,
There rings at close of day the Angelus.
Its notes metallic, an angel's voice,
To every heart a message sends.
The gathering shadows of the night,
The stillness of the air, the silent trees,
The stars that peep out one by one
From a vast beyond, all nature God's handiwork,
Expectant wait while in Christian homes
Knees bend in answer to the summons of the bell.
There rings the Angelus, three times the triple call;
Our thoughts go back across the centuries,
To another home so like our own,
With toil and care to meet recurring needs,
Reposeful in God's provident love,
There once, her daily, humble tasks achieved,
A maiden knelt in prayer; and an angel's voice
Was heard - for sinful world a message of hope.
"Hail Mary," he said, "Hail full of grace,
The Lord is with you" - greeting strange,
But bringing God's supremest offer to mankind.
The belfry rings the Angelus, of the angel's words
An echo undying, for grateful hearts
A glad remembrance of that day when
The angel unto Mary announced;
The maiden bowed her head in humble Fiat;
The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.
"Hail Mary, full of grace," we thrice repeat;
The angel's words we make our own,
As daily at evenfall in our ears
There rings the call of the Angelus.
We thank Thee, Lord, for the love
That made Thee one of us;
We seek the aid of her whom you for Mother chose,
Bless our home; bless our days; bless the night's repose.

M. Thekaekara, S.J.

TO THE ENGLISH MARTYRS.

Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London is rich in reminiscences of the glorious English Martyrs of whom many spent here their last days. On the stone walls are to be seen prayers and scriptural texts carved by the martyrs during the long days of their torture and imprisonment.

What tragic scenes these ancient walls
Have seen! Enclosed here, time seems to sink
Beneath my feet; this prison carries my sad, proud memory,
To days of heroism of martyrs, my brothers in the faith.
Mine is the faith - how can I forget, standing here,
In this dark dungeon, beside these rough, heavy walls? -
Mine is the faith of Campion, Fisher Moore,
Of scores of others, who here faced the rack,
Confessed the faith, who hence, Te Deum on their lips,
Went forth to scaffold or block, to heaven's joy.
These writings on the walls, oh! thank you,
Dear Martyrs, Saints, thank you for having left us these;
I can read them with tearful eyes,
These precious souvenirs of your lives' farewell.
On stone you wrote, on stone of your confining wall,
Your only book to write on: your pen
Some sharp point by a kindly goaler lent.
Through tedious, prayerful hours you wrought at these,
Your testament to future ages, burning words of love.
In your hearts, deeper than on stone,
Your message burnt; the flames of love rose
To God's throne, carrying the dear holocaust of nearing death.
I think I see you kneeling here, with fingers by long
labour aching
With tired eyes, but will ever firm
Of which these stones, these words bear lasting proof.
From heaven you watch us; give us of your strength;
Teach us with like courage to live our common faith.

M. Thekaekara, S.J.
