



to thank God for having selected them for such a beautiful and holy way of living.

Among the donations this Institution already had, and which were about \$99,075. Bishop Santacruz increased the fund with \$85,500, ascending the total to \$186,575, which produced an annual rent of \$9328 to support the nuns, who had entered the convent without any dowry and without any servants.

DISCOVERY

On April 3rd 1934, the detective Valente Quintana went to the Attorney General Office, and reported the existence of several convents which were actually functioning in Puebla City,

among which St. Monica was,

On May 17th, 1934, Valente Quintana and a workmate of his, whose name was Florence Gonzalez went to the Federal Public Ministry to show the data they had, because valuable things belonging to various religious institutions in Puebla, were claudestinely going out of the Coutry.

The principal report is attributed to an antiquarian, who DID NOT AGREE WITH PRICE OF SOME PICTURES he wanted to buy from the nuns, got drunk, and began to talk about St. Monica convent. Among the listeners there was a detective who asked him very amply. (1).

⁽¹⁾ After a while the traitor went, as they say, to Valente Quintana himself asking the prize of his report. Full he got angry, and the policemen hit him real hard on his cheeks and nose, bitten by the remores of his conscience, he went to Mexico city where got small post, dying on account of that purtuent sickness.

The judge ordered the searching, and Valente Quintana, accompanied by some of the policemen, went to St. Monica convent on May 18th., 1934, in the morning. Mr. Quintana went upstairs with his workmates, and the first he met was the door keeper Guadalupe Zamorano de Guerrero, who was surprised seeing the poli-cemen. He eargerly looked for a secret door and in this searching, he pushed a flower pot near a closet, the vase fell down showing a bell botton, which he pressed. By magic a secret door in the back of the closet was oponed, and a nun apprea-red. Mother Margaret, who was taking care of the door at that time. Valente Quintana and his followers rushed as far the choir and were surprised contemplating its sumptuousness. The choir had been recently painted by the nuns, because Mother Superior had just come from Rome, the silver pix shone with the votive lamps. the articificial flowers, made by the nuns, gave a beautiful coloring. «You aspire an atmophere of mystery and sanctity», said one the detectives, and telling what happened, he added. «I was in good humor, but before such a spectacle, I got scared, and gave up>.

The nuns refused to give their names; the government gave them 48 hours to go away from the convent, and during this time, the nuns left their house, which had been their dearly beloved retirement.

Once the act written where they certificated the building was a convent, because they found a great number of beds and forniture of

bed-rooms, chapels and religious things, the authorities began the judgement of nationalization.

To sabe the property; Miss Helen Garcia Charles asked the government protection but this was not granted, because by judicial decree, Oct. 27th., 1934, the judge gave faculty to the Federal Treasury Office to occupy the place and manage it, and the final resolution was that the building entered the direct dominion of the Nation.

(In this way the house which had been of the Augustinian nuns, was converted into a Museum of Religious Art.) In this place they put the things found in the convents of St. Catharine, the Capuchins, and that of Our Lady of Sorrows discovered in the same year, in which St. Monica convent was stopped.

(MOTHER SUPERIOR'S OFFICE)

On entering the room which was Mother Superior's office you notice the austerity of the place, the statue of St. Dominic of Guzman which indicated the silence the nuns should observe. Among the forniture you see an old table the top of which is of onix, an arm-chair with red velvet, a little table with a crucifix and two candlesticks of bronze, a desk from the XIX century, a book case with a sculpture of St. Louis Gonzaga, a little table at the corner with the head of St. Augustine, and on the walls the pictures of the principal benefactors of the ex-convent. Among them, you see fahter Vincent Maldonado, steward

tisfacction of the many insults it received from the Jew.

It is said that the Jew Diego (James) de Alvarado bought this crucifix to mock at it; he put it under ground at the entrance of his house to be stepped by the people who came in to see him, and at night he flagelated it among horrible blaphemies. Reported to the Inquisitors of the Holy Office, he was condemned to be burnt alive as an obstinate heretic, the burning having taken place publicly in the garden of St. Dominic in Mexico City.

In the cell you are visiting there is a little window from which Mother Superior watched the novices.

(THE PRIVATE CHAPEL)

By a secret entrance discovered by Valente Quintana by taking away a wood box, found in the Mother Superior's bath-room, the tourists go on their hands and knees into the nuns' chapel. Three sculptures, life like, call your atention, St. Monica and St. Augustine, and Our Lady of Consolation. Walking along the chapel, you see some paintings representing Our Lady's life by Espinosa, Puebla painter; St. Christopher. St. Nicholas, St. Rita, St. Clair, St. Rose of Lima, etc. by Villalobos, Pnebla painter too.

Some medallions with paintings of the Stations of the Cross; every Friday the nuns said



Discovery of the convent

The morning of the 18 of May, 1934. Mother Mary Margaret who gave away the secret door to Valente Quintana

entered the convent. She continually suffered, and gladly suffered, because her divine husband told her He liked to see her suffer, though she was more tormented by the world memory, by its glories without victory. She, full of faith, overcame the world, not caring of its glories, because her sufferings were her glory.

The portrait of Mother Eucarnation, and that of Venerable Mother Mary of St. Joseph, one of the foundresses of St. Monica Convent.

A picture representing Mother Superior Christian giving the Constitutions to the nuns of St. Monica's convent with the following inscription: «The dearly beloved Christian here is with her spiritual daughters, and here gives the rules of the religious life. O! what a graceful Virgin, what a penitent, what a humble, how well her name fits her charity and faith!»

The portrait of Mother Hyacinth Mary Niclas of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who (according to a legend) had been the sweet heart of an officer of the King's Dragons, whom she loved affectionately; by a royal order the officer was sent to the Antilles; he kissed her good-bye, and she gave him a relicary with an Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe; she was sobbing and crying forefeeling his tragedy. The officer took the ship, which was sunk, and well known his death, the sweet heart Miss May Hyacinth entered the convent, and when she prayed before the crucifis, it turned into the gallant officer. To give a satisfaction to God, she tortured herself so hard that she got sick and was in danger of death. She

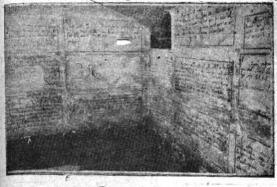
soldiers taking care of the house at night, heard several voices of nuns, and all the doors were terribly swung. Next day they told everything, and didn't want to keep the building any more.

THE CEMETERY

By a spiral staircase you go down to the last mansion of the Augustinian nuns. There is apicture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with Roman numbers, and this inscriptions: «May Jesús live for ever and ever. Archconfraternity of the Guard of Honor». A chest of drowers for the vestments; a confession box, a niche with a photo of Our Lord of Marvels, greatly venerated in St. Monica church.

At the center you see a catafalque for the Requiem masses; in a hole you'll find the cementery itself. On the walls you will see the tombs of the nuns and benefactors.

You can read different records: Here are the remains of R (revend) M (Other) Ann Josephine of the Blessed Sacrament who died on May 19th., 1827, when she was 80 years and 19 days old She was a very fine singer and a nunse. R (equiescat) I (n) P (ace) (Rest in peace). Here is R. M. Mary of the Light of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who died on July 17th., 1848, when she was 77 years old, and 51 of Religion. Se was very virtuous and courageous, because in spite of being very si k since her profession, she was ready to fulfil all her duties; served at the ta-



The cemetery witth the records on the tombs

ble, took care of the wardrobe, was a master of novices for six years, etc. . Here is the body of Most Reverend M. Frances Xavier of the Conception who died, Sept. 24th., 1845, when she was 79 years old and 53 of Religion. She was very exact in the obligations of the Institute. R.I.P. «Jane Josephine of St. Dominic and M. Joachim of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The first died Jan. 4th., 1775, when she was 48 years old; she was very humble, and charitable; being angry naturally, she mastered herselfand was a peacemaker. When this tomb was opened both bodies were found in a perfect state of preservation, with their habits, belts and crowns of flowers. Here lies the corps of R. M. Ann Joachim of St. Augustine belonging to this community. She died on Sept. Ist. 1852, when she was 83 years old and 65 of Religion. She fulfiled all the services, except those of sacristy and accountancy. She was master of novices for nine years; she was very exact, since the early years of being a nun. She was in charge of the choir, because of her beautiful voice. She outshone for her prudence».

In the same sacristy there is a bone-depository, discouvered in 1936, containing 49 skulls of nuns. The record contains the date, August 1st, 1835.

At the corner there is a door leading to St. Monica church, from which the priest came into the convent to lead the spiritual services for the nuns.

MEDITATION ROOM

On entering, it is pitch dark, until the guide puts the electric light on. Then you see the meditation altar with a crucifix, a skull and nearby a pillar with the passion instruments of Our Lord. In the center there is a figure kneeling down with a crown of thorns seeming to meditate. The scene is thrilling; you are scared before the symbol of death.

Here the nuns used to have their spiritual and monthly recreats. They had to meditate all alone and the in dark, and afterward they flage-lated themselves.

On either side of the figure there are some pictures with some inscriptions:

cI cried and prayed, Oh sinner! Death is terrible! What a great your fear will be; what will your lot be? We carry a very heavy bundle: we carry the sins of the people. Read also please; hold your steps in silence; watch these pictures carefully, and after you have observed them, you will say if our way of living, is heavy on you. It is not as the world thinks: a lazy way of living, in which we waste the plenty of time we have; morks and nuns do not live in laziness; to work is absolutely necessary for everybody. We sleep very little; we do penance; we fast duite often; we suffer poverty; we work real heard: walch all our monuments scattered all over the world; and we do something, you don't

do: we pray for you, so you can get what your weakness takes away from you: your own eternal salvations!

Also you read:

«In continual and eternal prayers, we ask pity on the blind world. We are thirty, because you drink the dirty waters of bad love and good living».

There you see a bookcase with many books of the «Loving Devote», used by the nuns for their spiritual retreats.

On the walls there are some paitings representing religios subjects. On a long rack are the habits, the leather belts and at the back of the long dark room you see a large Crucifix, life like, before which the nuns kept the dead bodies of the nuns, before taking them to the cemetery.

They say they hear horrid screams; they say prayers in a low voice; they see phantoms of nuns flying in the air; they hear sudden noises of dead nuns and noises of the habits and the beads of rosaries. They say that an outsider guide of North-Americans felt a cold hand on his face and the group went back scared to death.

NOVICES LIBRARY

There are some pictures symbolizing the fifth commandment: «Thou shalt not kill, offend others or challenge. The eighth: «Avoy detrac-



The notices court yard

Many figures with wings, representing nuns, float in the air

There is miniature altar made by the nuns; it is very cute: the little glass globes. the little angels, the little chandeliers, candles and candlesticks and everything perfectly well proportioned. In another niche you see the filigree of a little guitar, out of silver, played by Child Jesus, the divine Sheperd; you see a little hill full of little animals. The copper jugs and wash tubs were used for the ceremonies on Holy Thursday. In some glass cases there are some beautiful wax works done by the nuns to decorate altars. There are also some flowers pots, very nice, Louis XV, style. They are not exhibited now on account of the repair of the ceiling they had to do.

THE EXIT

Before going out you see in the nuns yard a little altar. «The Tepeyac», built by the nuns to remind the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Dic. 12th, 1531, to Juan Diego (John James). Our Lady of Guadalupe, is the Patron St. of the Mexican Republic.

The last door found by the detective. Valente Quintana, and now is the exit. By this door the nuns got the big bundles for the kitchen. The other side was concealed with a poor landscape, which was disguised with flower pots with

honey suckle, palms, etc.

This is the history of the ex-convent of St. Monica. Puebla, Pue., Mex., with its mystic paintings, chapels, plastered doors, secret entrances and fantastic legends, now turned into a Museum of Religious Art.

Translator, Ambrose Villalpando The End