

from the MATTHEW 10-27 HouseTops

Contents

Serial No. 57 • Spring, 2003

- The Servant of God, Father Nelson Baker** Page 2
Sister Mary Monica, M.I.C.M., Tert. narrates the story of a holy miracle-working priest who built an empire of charity in Lakawanna, New York. The crowning glory of his work is the too-little known Basilica of Our Lady of Victory.
- Saint Mary of Victory** Page 23
Amid the opposing extremes of Judeo-Masonic new-world-order-building warfare on one hand and liberal pacifism on the other, Gary Potter refreshes us by chronicling the history of some just and holy Marian militancy.
- Did You Know...?** Page 43
Catholic Trivia that's not so trivial.
- The Ark of the New Covenant** Page 45
The Ark of the Covenant was the most sacred object in the Old Testament. As with many things in the Ancient Alliance, it was a type, or foreshadowing, of a greater New Testament reality. That reality is the Blessed Virgin Mary. By Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.
- Catholic Wisdom** Page 60
Bite-sized portions of pious food for thought.
- The German Positive School** Page 61
In the nineteenth century, Germany produced an impressive Catholic movement known as the "positive school" of theology. Brother David Mary, M.I.C.M., Tert. outlines its principles, history, and key figures.

Cover: Our Lady of Victory. The image is courtesy of the Shrine Gift Shop in Lackawanna, New York. Artistic design by the Sisters of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Center: An old manuscript illumination depicting the Woman of the Apocalypse. **Special thanks to** Mr. David Dehlinger of the Shrine Gift Shop for procuring the cover image.

FROM THE HOUSETOPS is a Catholic quarterly journal published and distributed by *The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* at Saint Benedict Center. The effort is made possible only by the helpful support of subscribers and donors to our religious congregation. Subscription rate: \$15.00 annually (\$20.00 Canadian; \$25.00 other foreign). Three- and five-year subscription rates also available — call for details. For additional copies, a contribution of five dollars each is kindly requested. Please send subscriptions or tax deductible donations to:

Saint Benedict Center, 95 Martin Road, Richmond, New Hampshire 03470
Telephone: (603) 239-6485

E-mail: info@FromTheHousetops.com
Web: www.Catholicism.org -AND- www.Store.Catholicism.org
Copyright © 2003 by FROM THE HOUSETOPS PUBLICATIONS



The Servant of God, Father Nelson Baker

By Sister Mary Monica, M.I.C.M., Tert.

In these days of Big Brother taking from the pockets of his tax-paying citizens to support millions on the government dole, it is delightful to consider the true charity of the subject of our story, Father Nelson Baker. This tireless priest, whose faith in Our Lady never wavered — not for a moment — accomplished more in his long life of ninety-five years than a hundred average men together might achieve.

Unfortunately for us, the adult Nelson Baker was very reluctant to talk about himself and his family, although he was a talkative and outgoing man — very much a “people person.” Even the year of his birth is uncertain, though it is generally accepted as 1841. He was the second of four sons born to an Irish Catholic mother, Caroline Donnellan, and a German Protestant (probably Lutheran) father. The family lived in the small, but growing, city of Buffalo, New York. Lewis Baker was a retired mariner who took advantage of the increased commerce that the 1825 opening of the Erie Canal brought to the Great Lakes, becoming the proprietor of a grocery and general store in Buffalo’s downtown. As was customary in those days, the family lived behind the store.

Strangely, the child Nelson was not baptized until he was almost ten years old. Since very little definitive information exists from his early years, the reason for that fact is unknown. To be sure, his mother was a devout Catholic, and we do know that as a child Nelson loved to accompany her to Mass.

The childhood of Nelson Baker and his brothers seems to have been a very happy one. They attended public school and had their assigned chores in their father’s store and in the house. But they still found time for boyish pranks, and a tale of one survives. Above Lewis Baker’s store was housed the local Republican Party headquarters, outside of which hung its flag on a pole. Just down the street was the local Democratic Party headquarters, with its flag hung in like manner. Nelson and his younger brother Ransom cooked up a plan to stay awake until the neighborhood was asleep; then when all was quiet, they took down the Republican flag, ran down to the Democratic headquarters, lowered their flag and replaced it with the Republican flag. Then, hastening back to their property, raised the Democratic flag at the Republican headquarters. They quietly went to their bedrooms and slept the sleep of the innocent and the just! The next morning, when the prank was discovered, fisticuffs nearly ensued. It was Lewis Baker who diffused the situation before



the police had to be called.

Lincoln's War

After graduating from high school, Nelson joined his father and older brother in the store. He was bright, good with figures, outgoing, and he had a wide range of interests. His future looked promising.

For a number of years before the outbreak of the War Between the States, the citizens of Buffalo had been involved in the "Underground Railroad," helping runaway slaves from the South make it safely across the border to Canada. In June, 1863, Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his army were on the move in southern Pennsylvania. Fearful that the enemy would soon move into

New York, the state called for 20,000 new recruits. Nelson was one of the first young men in Buffalo to enlist. On the evening of his enlistment, the recruits were sworn in and boarded the train for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The 74th Regiment of New York served with bravery and distinction there, protecting bridges and an aqueduct and forcing the Confederates to retreat.

Since the term of enlistment was only thirty days, the 74th expected to return to Buffalo in mid-July, but a dire emergency arose in New York City when rioting mobs began to loot, rob, burn and create general mayhem in the streets. They were protesting the draft, and in doing so, were hanging or shooting every