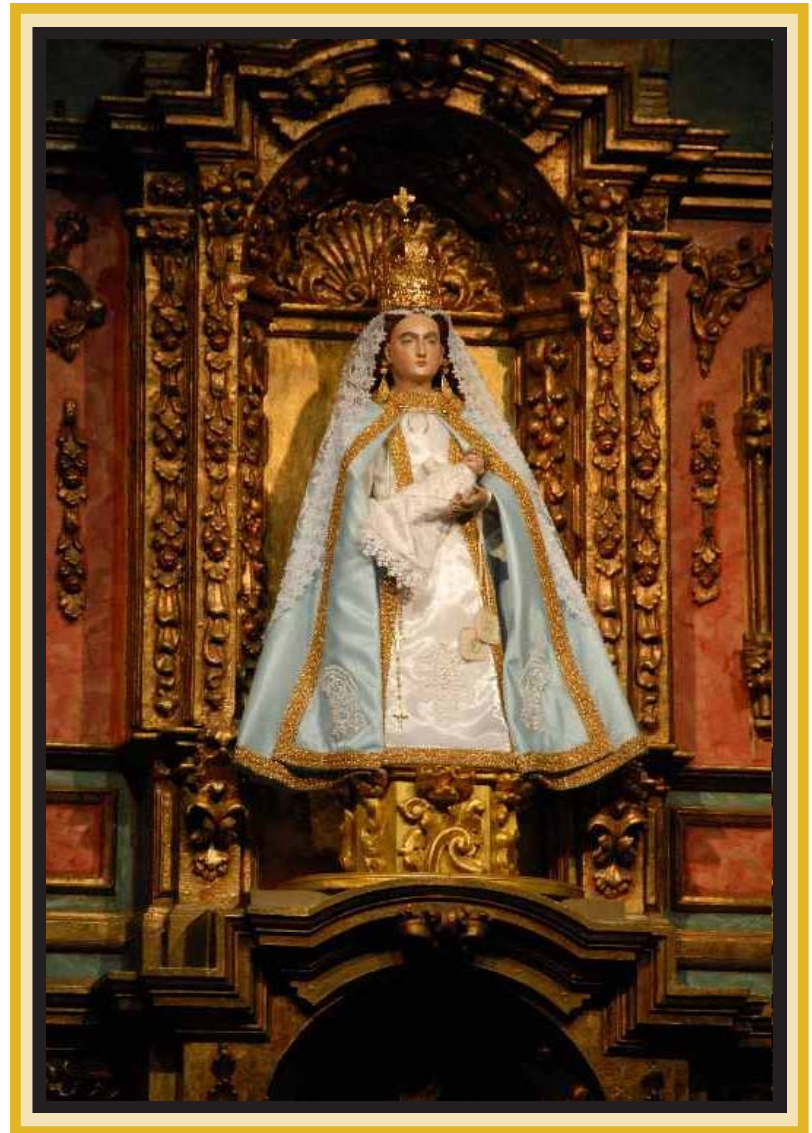


# Behold Thy Mother

A Publication of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Ghost

Winter 2012

Volume 14 Issue 40



*Veni Sancte Spiritus per Mariam!*

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Ghost  
P.O. Box 589 • Veradale, WA 99037

Dear Readers,

It took 14 years and 40 issues before Our Lady introduced herself to us in the sweetest little depiction that I have ever seen.

The Lady Conqueror, La Conquistadora, what an awesome, powerful title, which should inspire in us such great confidence when we pray to her.

Small in stature, yet mighty as a conqueror, La Conquistadora is a Madonna you will fall in love with, for she represents to us everything we have ever known and loved about the Mother of God.

Why, you may ask, was it not widely known that this little replica of our Mother, was the first in our native land of the United States of America? Why? Well, I believe that she has saved herself for a time in our country that we would need Mary more than ever before.

2012 is a year that God is giving us the chance, as Catholics, to begin again, and La Conquistadora, the "Lady Conqueror", is just the strength we need to lean on, in our quest to bring this country back to God. Known by three titles, this great lady will be the instrument needed for victory over sin in America.

As the Lady of the Assumption, she will help us to think of our heavenly home and realize that the way we live on this earth, helps or hinders us in eternity. As the Immaculate Conception, she will crush the serpent's head and help us to lead this nation to purity of heart, mind and body. As the Lady of the Rosary, she will gain for us the graces we need, as a country, to turn our lives around and begin leading God-fearing, God-loving lives, free from every kind of sin. She will lead voters away from approving laws that cry out to heaven for vengeance, such as those of abortion and homosexual marriages.

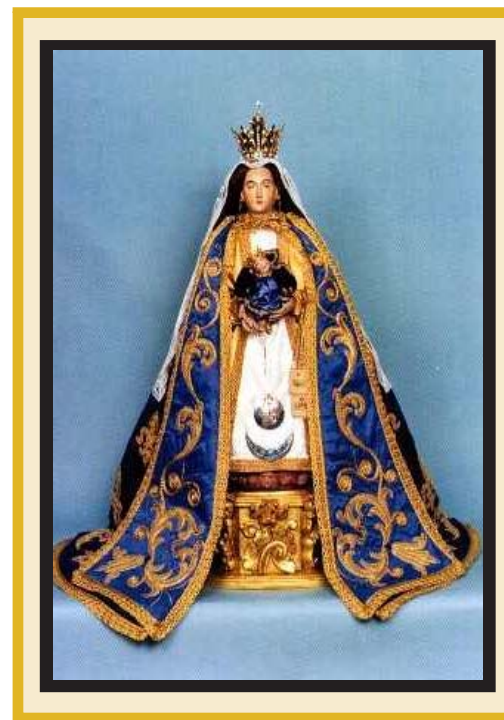
La Conquistadora will give you the strength and courage that you never thought you had, to vote with a convicted conscience. She, along with prayerful, dedicated voters, will once again turn this great Nation, to "One Nation Under God", in the true meaning of that phrase.

My prayers and the prayers of our Sisters are with you. We thank you for your prayers and for your support.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

*Reverend Mother Marie de Montfort, c.m.s.s.*

Behold Thy Mother is published three times a year. Subscription rates are \$16.00 per year within the United States. Foreign rates, \$22.00 per year.



### La Conquistadora the Lovely Lady dressed in Blue

Lovely Lady dressed in blue  
Teach me how to pray!  
God was just your little Boy,  
tell me what to say!

Did you lift Him up, sometimes  
Gently, on your knee?  
did you sing to Him, the way  
Mother does to me?

...Do you really think He cares  
If I tell Him things--  
Can He hear me if I speak low?  
Does He understand me now?  
Tell me, for you know!

Lovely Lady dressed in blue,  
Teach me how to pray!  
God was just your little boy,  
And, you know the way.

### Morning Offering

(In the spirit of Holy Slavery)

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in reparation for my sins, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day and of my entire life, for all the intentions of Thy Most Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass validly and licitly offered this day throughout the world, the infinite graces and merits thereof to be dispensed in accord with Thy Divine Will for the salvation of souls, the conversion of sinners, and the special intention recommended for this month:

### Intentions for:

**January:** Sancification of home and family, truly Catholic marriages.

**February:** The spread of the true Catholic Faith through the spread of devotion to Mary.

**March:** An increase in pious and holy religious vocations.

**April:** For all of the missionary endeavors throughout the world and unity among the members of the Church Militant.



## *La Conquistadora Queen of the Southwest*

By  
Fray Angelico Chavez, O.F.M.

St. Anthony Messenger  
May, 1948

Suppose the Pilgrim Fathers had been Catholics and had brought a statue of Our Lady with them to enthrone in the first church they built. Suppose that they had taken it out in procession as the Patroness of their Sodality during those cold months when there was so much suffering from the weather and from fear of Indian attacks, and that it had stood on the main table of that first Thanksgiving Day in New England. Then suppose that, some generations later the descendants of those people had borne it in procession during the Battle of

Bunker Hill, and again later on when the Declaration of Independence was drafted and the Liberty Bell was being rung. Suppose still further that George Washington had carried it across the Delaware and had referred his victory at Yorktown to Mary's intercession. And generations later, imagine Abraham Lincoln proclaiming days of prayer for her intercession during the most crucial period of the Civil War.

That statue would be the most prized relic of our Nation's birth and development for being so intimately

connected with every important phase and crisis of our history. The people would feel drawn to it by the very thought that their grandparents and great-grandparents, all the way back to 1620, had seen and handled and honored this very same portrait of Our Lord's Mother. People from all over the country would go to view it in its shrine at Concord or Lexington or in a special Lady Chapel built for it in Boston's Cathedral or St. Patrick's in New York. The Catholic papers would always be referring to it, and all kinds of "shots" of the beloved image would appear from time to time in the illustrated Catholic magazines.

There is such a statue in the American Southwest. It did not come with any settlers of the Atlantic seaboard, of course, but with the earlier Spanish colonists of New Mexico. It may be seen in the north Lady Chapel of the Cathedral in Santa Fe, a lovely little image, about thirty inches tall, very queenly in her real-gold dress and her mantle of old blue brocade. So precious is she in her historical and religious



Our Lady, known as  
*La Conquistadora*,  
"The Lady-Conqueror",  
was brought to the New World  
by Spanish Colonists.

background of more than three centuries, that one cannot for long refer to the charming figure as "it." Every year, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, Vespers are sung in her honor and then she is carried in a mile-long procession from the Cathedral to a chapel outside of town. There an early morning Mass is sung every day for a whole week, at which the faithful attend in large throngs. On the following Sunday Vespers are chanted at the chapel, and again she is borne back in procession to her ancient place at the

Cathedral. Her name is "Our Lady of the Rosary," but for three hundred years the faithful have also called her familiarly "*La Conquistadora*," which means "The Lady-Conqueror." Some translate this long word as "Our Lady of Victory," but this is not correct, for Our Lady of Victory is a distinct title and devotion of Our Lady with head quarters and a shrine in Paris, France, while reproductions of that statue are to be found all over the world.

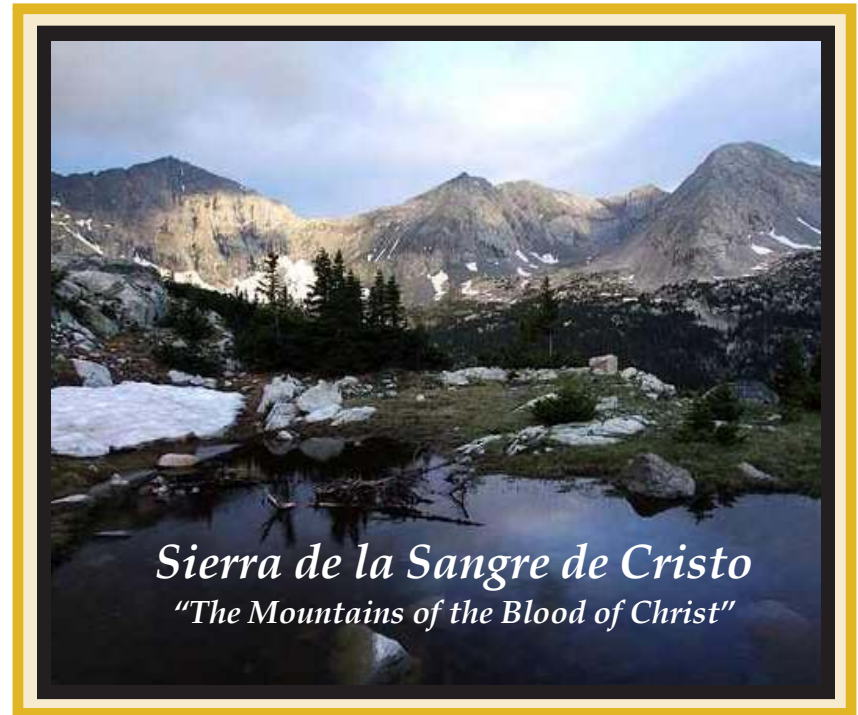
But there is only one *La Conquistadora*, and she got this name from early Catholic settlers of the Southwest because she had come with

the first "conquistadors" or conquerors of the land long before the Pilgrims landed in New England.

The first Spanish colony arrived in New Mexico in the year 1600. The Spanish families formed the little town of San Gabriel on a pretty spot where the headwaters of the Rio Grande and the Chama River meet, while the Franciscan missionaries spread out among the Indian Pueblos, from the neighboring ones of San Juan, Santa Clara, and San Ildefonso, to others hundreds of miles away. Those were naturally hard times, far more severe than the English Pilgrims



*La Conquistadora, being borne in procession.*



ever experienced when they landed at Plymouth many years later. By 1610 the Spanish Governor had founded the Villa or Royal Town of Santa Fe (the Holy Faith) as the permanent Capital of "the Kingdom of the New Mexico," as the colony was called for centuries. Santa Fe stood on a plateau seven thousand feet above sea-level, some thirty miles south of San Gabriel, overlooking the vast expanses of mountains and plains and deserts, and more centrally located than the first settle-

ment. Unlike San Gabriel, it was also situated well away from any Indian village. The snow-capped range directly behind the new City of the Holy Faith came to be known as the *Sierra de la Sangre de Cristo* -- "The Mountains of the Blood of Christ."

In this first and oldest Capital in the United States was founded perhaps the first and oldest Parish in the country, not merely a chapel or a "Mission" as in earlier or later Spanish settlements, but a real canonical parish, to serve the inhabitants of the



Capital. The title of it was *Our Lady of the Assumption*. The original church was not an imposing one, being meant to be just a temporary structure until the royal government buildings and the homes were completed. In the eyes of the Franciscans the work of the Indian Missions was of first importance, so that in many Indian Pueblos really imposing Mission churches were being built, some of which have survived to this day as objects of wonder to those who behold them. It was not until 1626 that the first permanent parish church was begun in Santa Fe, facing the large two-block Plaza from the east and with

the beautiful mountains for a backdrop. In front of it everything took place, from military parades and marketing with Indian tribes, to religious processions and popular fiestas.

The man responsible for this building was Father Alonso de Benavides, the new Custos or head of the Franciscans, who had arrived in December 1625. He was one of those men who think big and like to do things big, as we say, and was also inclined to exaggerate in writing reports. The large new parish church of Santa Fe was one of the many great things that he did accomplish during his brief three year term. With rare foresight he also worked for the establishment of a bishopric in Santa Fe for the better progress of the great Mission program which was soon after hampered by meddlesome and impious Governors. In this, however, he failed. He also had the happy foresight, a little thing then, but important to us now, to bring a beautiful little statue of *Our Lady of the Assumption* for her parish church in the Capital. She was carved out of wood, coated with a thin layer of

plaster over which thick gold-leaf was laid; this bright gold surface was then painted over to give a gold-blue red brocade effect on her tunic and mantle, while the face and hands were done in natural colors.

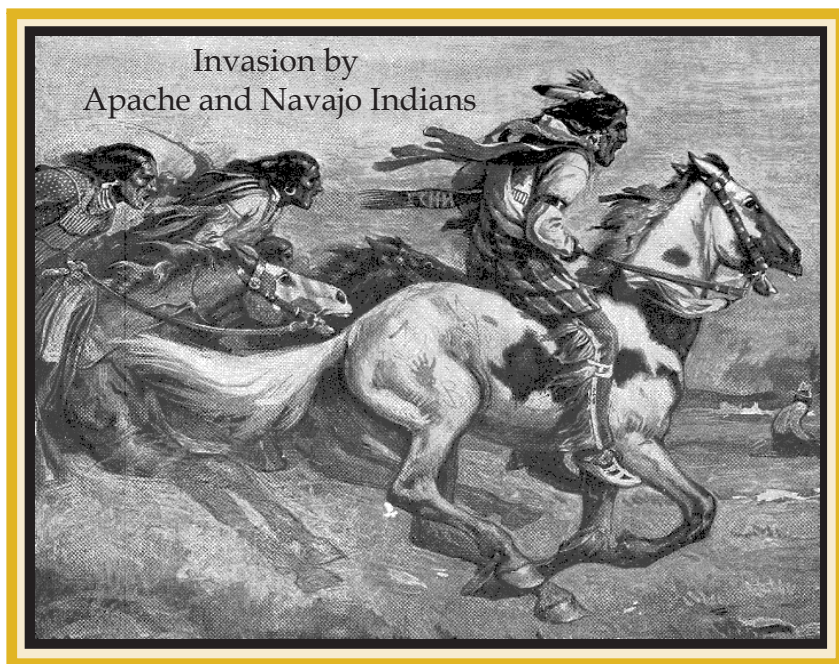
Not only were the Spaniards delighted with her, but the Indians as well. Even wild Apache chiefs who came from the far eastern prairies to barter with the Spanish, stopped in the church to admire her and inquired about the truths of our Holy Faith. The Spaniards in Santa Fe itself, and those who were scattered in haciendas, had formed a Confraternity or Sodality of Our Lady before or after the statue arrived, without doubt the first Blessed Virgin Mary Sodality in this country. Things indeed looked rosy for all concerned and especially for the conversion of all the Indians in the vast surrounding territory. But evil influences were already at work to bring ruin and sorrow. Some of the Governors in those times were fiendishly impious men, fortune-seekers who finding themselves far away from higher authority, looked on themselves as little



**Apache chiefs visited "The Lady Conqueror", and inquired about the truths of our Holy Faith.**

gods. One of them in 1626, went so far as to hang a man on trumped-up charges of sedition simply because it irked him to see the good man so active in the affairs of the Church and the Sodality. Father Benavides himself wrote of a Governor who sent some rival Indians to murder those Apache chieftains who had shown so much interest in the Faith on beholding the statue of the Assumption.

Matters went from bad to



worse with each year. But all the while the common people clung to their Faith and their devotion to Our Lady in spite of so many hindrances and scandals. The King's court in Spain and even the Viceroy's in Mexico City, were too far away to learn about the abuses in time and correct them; many a time that a bad Governor was being tried for his evil deeds, his successor in Santa Fe was already doing the same thing or worse. There were also years of famine and of invasions by fierce Apaches and Navajos on both Pueblo Indians and Spanish folk. During these

years a change took place with regard to the devotion to Our Lady among the children of those pioneers, not a lessening of their devotion, but a curious transformation in the names and titles that they used. The second generation of Spaniards now called the Santa Fe parish "Our Lady of the Conception" instead of "Our Lady of the Assumption". Already around 1656-59, the Sodality was referred to as that of "Our Lady of the Rosary". And by 1684, some of these people who were still living, as well as their children and grandchildren,



were calling their Sodality and beloved statue "Our Lady of the Rosary, La Conquistadora". It was during this period, between 1620 and 1680, that a big change also took place in the image itself. In order to have her dressed with real clothes to represent "Our Lady of the Rosary," someone cut off the shoulders and gouged out the chest down to the waist, and then put the carved hands on moveable arms, jointed at the elbows and shoulders like those of a puppet. Then dresses and mantles of precious materials

were put on her, as also a little Infant Jesus on her left arm, a Rosary on her right hand, and a gilt-silver crown on her head! It was the style to dress statues this way in those days, and she really did look beautiful dressed to represent Our Lady of the Rosary. But without the dress and mantle she surely presented a sad spectacle as compared with her original carved glory.

The year 1680 was a heart-breaking one for the Franciscan Fathers and the colonists. The troubles brewed up by evil men for

eighty years finally broke into flames, like an explosive fire that burns a house to the ground before the inmates can do anything to stop it. The Pueblo Indians had managed to unite at last in an effort to exterminate the Spaniards. On August 10, they killed twenty-one Franciscans in various Missions and several unprotected Spanish families at their ranches. They laid siege to Santa Fe for several days, finally crowding the defenders into the large courtyard of the government houses; they burnt and tore down the parish church which Father Benavides had built. After many days of suffering and continuous skirmishing, the Spaniards managed to break through the lines, the ranks of soldiers fighting as they went, protecting their women and children in their midst. After a long and arduous journey of more than three hundred miles southward the refugees reached the district of *el Paso del Norte*, across the Rio Grande from the present city of El Paso, Texas. There they joined other refugees from the ranches south of Santa Fe who had escaped the fury of

the Indians. However, in spite of all their hardships the people of Santa Fe did not abandon their Lady-Conqueror. With their old people and their wounded, with their women and their children, they also had saved their Patroness and brought her along. The exiles spent thirteen full years of hunger and discouragement, of having to fight other wild tribes down there, but all the while they kept up their Sodality and devotion of their Lady of the Rosary, their *Conquistadora* who had come to New Mexico in the days of their conqueror grandparents. Some of the Sodality's records have recently been discovered, and these tell us how annual dues were paid, except in extra hard years, by all and sundry, the high-born as well as the humble, even the Mission friars themselves. Individuals donated new dresses and mantles of precious cloth, like Oriental silks and gold lame, while Masses were said twice a week for both the living and the deceased members.

At last, in 1693, the New Mexicans returned to the severe but enchanting land

*Governor and  
Captain-General  
Don Diego de Vargas*

*He carried a battle-  
flag with a picture of  
Our Lady on it.*

*The Governor  
referred to  
La Conquistadora  
as "the Queen and  
Patroness of the  
Kingdom and of its  
Villa of the  
Holy Faith".*



where their forefathers had died and were buried. Their leader was a great soldier and a real Catholic gentleman, the Governor and Captain-General Don Diego de Vargas. He had peacefully received the submission of the Pueblo Indians the year before under the patronage of Our Lady whose picture he carried on the battle-flag. Now he returned triumphantly with the families of colonists and all their household goods, their livestock and their farming implements. And among those

who returned, naturally, was *La Conquistadora*, whom the Governor referred to as "the Queen and Patroness of the Kingdom and of its Villa of the Holy Faith." Writing to the Viceroy, he vowed more than once that the first thing he intended to do was to rebuild her church and personally place on a *new throne* "Our Lady of the Conquest, who is the one that was rescued from the fury of the savages."

All was well when the columns of soldiers and settlers and lumbering ox-

carts reached Santa Fe. On December 16, the Governor and the friars took formal possession in the great Plaza with the ceremonial raising of a large cross while the Litany of Our Lady and the *Te Deum* were chanted. Then the Spaniards encamped outside the city walls because the Governor had given the Tanos Indians a few days to gather their belongings and move back to their Pueblos. Suddenly the weather grew bitter cold and flurries of snow started to descend from the mountains. Seeing this, the Indians barricaded themselves inside the walls and taunted the Spaniards to leave immediately or else die of cold and starvation. Then it was that the Governor ordered his soldiers to attack. The battle lasted for a whole day, the Spaniards having to fight other Indians who had arrived and attacked them from the rear. At dawn the next day, the troops succeeded in scaling the walls and soon the battle flag with Our Lady on it was planted on the highest building; this flag had been all through the fight with the soldiers, while their women and children in civilian camp a good distance

away had prayed meanwhile to their beloved Lady of the Rosary who had been brought as the Governor himself wrote, "enclosed in a wagon."

The Spaniards had so much to do after this victory, and were hampered by other rebellions and by Apache invasions, that the parish church of Santa Fe was not rebuilt until twenty-two years later. This time it was dedicated in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. But the records show that the Rosary Sodality continued as vigorous as ever. The large north chapel of the new church of St. Francis was built by the Sodality and was known there after as the "Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, *La Conquistadora*." Good Governor de Vargas had died in 1704 during an Apache campaign, and so he did not have the pleasure of placing the image on her new throne.

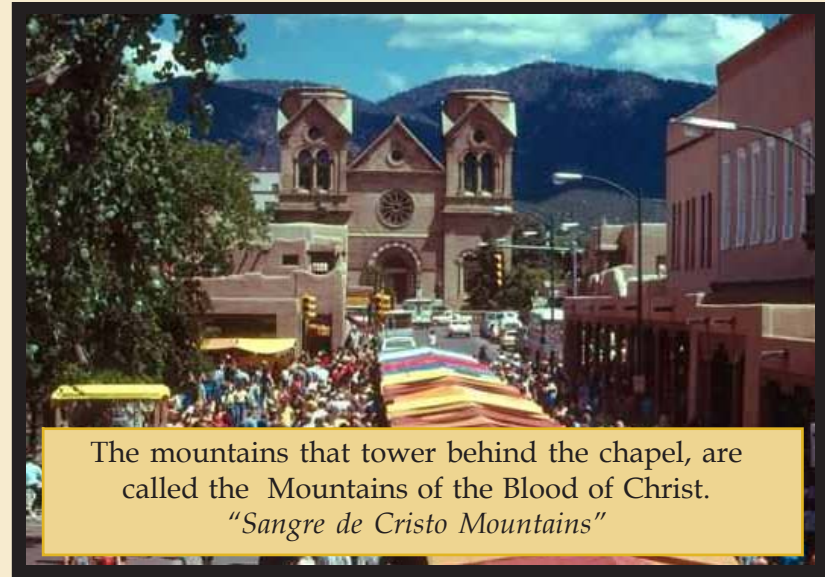
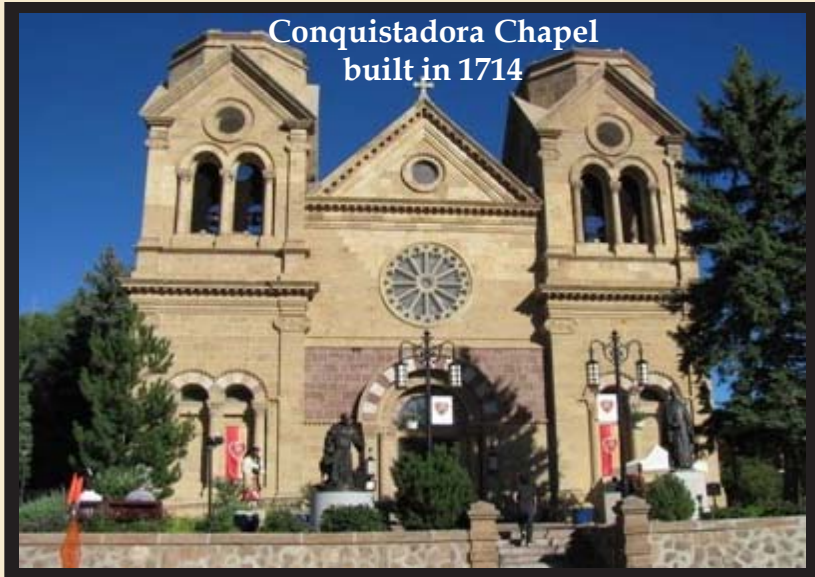
Then something mysterious took place between the years 1726 and 1770. The Sodality not only died away, but it was *completely forgotten* by the latter year. Only the statue remained in its chapel attached to the parish

church, and the people still venerated her under the same long title. But now they thought that she was called "*the Lady-Conqueror*" because she had helped Governor de Vargas reconquer Santa Fe in 1693! In fact, they believed that he was the one who first brought the statue to New Mexico! That's what happens when things are not written down, or when records are lost. We know of this state of affairs from documents relating to this year of 1770, when conditions had become almost intolerable for the people; not only were times bad for farmers and stock-raisers because of drought, but the Apaches, Comanches, and Navajos had become so bold as to raid the settlements year after year, and often several times in one year. No re-inforcements were being sent by the Spanish Government which had its own troubles at home. So the pious people turned to God. In that year they solemnly chose their *Conquistadora* as Patroness of the Kingdom, founded a Sodality, under her name and patronage, and inaugurated a yearly

feast. They really believed they were doing something altogether new when in fact these very things had been started by their forefathers more than a century and a half before, and they had lasted almost that long! Sad to say, it was at this period that someone mercilessly hacked her head so that she might wear a wig of human hair.

We can realize, then, how old this statue and the people's devotion were even at this late period, if we consider that it was six years before the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the California Missions by Father Junipero Serra.

By the end of that century the Blessed Mother's devotees had decided to build a special chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary on the spot where the civilian camp had been during the battle of Santa Fe, thinking that de Vargas had vowed to build a chapel there when he really meant to rebuild the parish church where Our lady had been enthroned since 1626. Father Francisco de Hozio, the Franciscan chaplain of the military garrison in Santa Fe, got the permission from the



Bishop of Durango in 1806, and the chapel, now called the *Rosario*, was finished the following year. At this time, or shortly before, began the double procession and novena of Masses at the Rosario chapel which have been observed every summer to this day. When the famed Archbishop Lamy built his beautiful stone Cathedral around the old adobe parish church, he left the 1714 *Conquistadora Chapel* standing, and some years later it was connected with the new Cathedral to form its north chapel. So now Our Lady of the Rosario has two chapels - the ancient one connected

with the Cathedral, and her "summer country-house" on the outskirts of town which she visits every year. The second Sodality, the one of 1770, died away around 1846 when the United States took over this territory, but the devotion of the people continued as strong as it had been for two hundred years. The beautiful summer processions were never interrupted; although they are relatively modern when compared with the coming of the statue to New Mexico and the founding of the original Sodality, still, when compared with other American institutions, they

are quite old. They will be a century and a half old. *La Conquistadora* is not a Virgin of miracles and prophecies as in many famous shrines throughout the world. She is the traditional symbol of a true Catholic people's undying devotion to the Mother of God in her Assumption and Immaculate Conception as the Queen of Heaven and their own Queen, the Lady Conqueror who not only came with their conqueror-fore-bears and upheld their spirits through wars and pestilence and famine, but also long before that conquered our chief Enemy by

crushing his head with her heel through the Passion and Death of her Son on the Cross. Appropriately, the mountains towering behind her throne are the mountains of the Blood of Christ.



*La Conquistadora*  
patroness  
of  
The first and oldest  
canonical parish in  
the United States.  
also  
The first  
Blessed Virgin Mary  
Sodality in this country.



*La Conquistadora*  
America's  
Oldest Madonna

Excerpts taken from:  
*The Autobiography*  
*of an*  
*Ancient Statue*  
by  
Fray Angelico Chavez

*Did you ever wonder what it would be like to sit at Our Lady's feet and gaze up into her eyes and listen to her soft voice? Have you ever wondered what she would say? Well, sit back and enjoy this wonderful story as it is told by Fray Angelico Chavez, as if Our Lady is telling you it herself.*

I am a small wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, dressed in real clothes of silk and gold braid like a Spanish Queen of old, and I have been in this country for more than three hundred and twenty-five years. Every single year of that long span, I have been taken out in

procession, and not a day has passed without someone breathing a tender prayer to the Mother of God in my presence. This not only makes me the oldest representation of Mary in this nation, but also one which has continually received daily homage as an unworthy proxy of heaven's Queen. Since the day I came, I have never been consigned to an attic or a storeroom; I have always been in the midst of my people, in their joys as well as in their sorrows -- yes, even in battle.

My name for centuries has been "*La Conquistadora*." This is because I came to the

Southwest with the Spanish pioneers who called themselves conquistadors. Such an endearing term cannot be put into English without losing their color and flavor. "The Lady Conqueror," for example, is quite literal, but much too cold. The most correct rendering is "Our Lady of the Conquest," but, while it carries all the color of Spanish arms, it does not convey the warmth of Spanish hearts. So you might as well call me, as you would spell it, "La Con-kees-tah-dorah."

Nor do I mind being compared with actresses, for, like one, I have played the part of Mary in different glorious roles. In the beginning I was "Our Lady of the Assumption," then for a short time "The Immaculate Conception," and finally "Our Lady of the Rosary." In these titles I was regarded by my people as Queen of New Mexico and of Santa Fe, but all the while, as with a beloved actress, I have been popularly known as *La Conquistadora*.

As I said at the start, I have been in this country for more than three centuries and a quarter, but I am much older. Exactly how old, only the

Lord and I know, and a lady, even a wooden one, will not tell her exact age. All I can say is that long, long ago, there was a big willow tree in a far away land. On the meadow all around it bloomed flowers of every color and shade, and the willow wept because it was always green, while the meadow wore dresses of every hue as the seasons varied. Then one day a man came and chopped the tree to the ground. Both the bole and the branches were to be cut into smaller parts, and these split into smaller pieces, and all would be burned to ashes in somebody's hearth. This was the end, the willow knew, and it was just as well, for this was the usual fate of trees.

Every bit of the willow went into the fire when the pieces had dried out, all except one. And this was because another man picked up a small section of trunk and took it home, to his little shop filled with chisels and mallets and unfinished statues. From the moment he saw it, the wood carver liked this piece of wood for being so light and firm, as well as flawless and easy to carve.



Then one day I was no longer a short willow load, but a beautiful woman standing on a graceful pedistal. Beneath my feet was a cloud from which peered the chubby faces of three happy cherubs.

My long gown showed only at the hem in front and for a short space above my left foot, and at the narrow sleeves of my entire right arm and up to the elbow of my left arm. The rest was covered by an Oriental scarf wrapped across my breast, and by a large gracefully folded mantle that dropped lightly from my head down to my feet. One edge of the large veil fell over my left ear onto my left shoulder and

breasts, and was caught in folds under my bent forearm. The other edge fell behind my right ear to cover my entire back, and then was brought over my right thigh and slightly bent knee to be tucked with the other folded edge beneath my left arm.

All the garments were first covered with velvet-smooth plaster, which was painted crimson and then covered with gold leaf. On this golden surface were traced tiny scrolled and ribbed designs, arabesques, in red orange, and blue. It was a unique dress, not the classic gown and mantle usually seen on pictures and statues of the Virgin, but rather the costume of Moorish prin-

cesses who once brightened the halls and courts of the Alhambra -- truly, the dress also of a Lady of Palestine.

My two slender hands were held folded before my breast. My light brown tresses showed slightly above my clear brow and again, revealed themselves at the sides of my neck underneath the ears. With my head raised a little, faintly smiling, I gazed heavenward in expectation. On seeing me complete for the first time, the good sculptor's wife recognized me right away and exclaimed: "How beautiful! How precious! It is the Assumption of holy Mary into heaven!"

If ever you should come to Santa Fe, you will find me in my same old Conquistadors chapel in the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi. It is not a sumptuous shrine, but the venerable adobe walls and the curved round ceiling are napped with soft rich memories. The dust beneath the flooring is all that remains of many, who centuries ago, paid me living tribute and in death keep me faithful company. From the living you will find tokens of humble remembrance, like a



**"How beautiful!  
How precious!  
It is the Assumption of  
holy Mary into heaven!"**

burning candle or a bunch of home-grown flowers, the quiet presence of an aged woman or a young man praying. If there are bouquets of more costly blooms about, you can be sure that some happy bride left me the flowers from her wedding that morning.

You will now find me dressed in the attire of an ancient Spanish Queen, as in the days of Ana Robledo and Diego de Vargas, though what the color of my mantle may be at the moment I cannot say, for I have several. The favorite one is of a



pale blue brocade, made from what was left of a two-hundred-year-old cope, and the dress that best goes with it is one of white and silver figured silk embroidered with minute roses, and bordered with a brilliant gold braid that never tarnishes, though centuries old; this dress once belonged to an image of the Virgin in Guatemala. Or I may be wearing a reddish mantle of Chinese figured silk edged with bright silver lace; this is one of my old mantles that survived: it was done over again and strengthened with a new sturdy lining. My newest and costliest dress and mantle are of cloth-of-gold brocade, with golden cords and tassels on the back and a family crest embroi-

dered in front; they were made for me last year in the German city of Speyer.

Also changeable without notice are the Sevillian lace mantilla that covers my hair and is held in place by a crown, and the earrings showing beneath it among my dark locks. Or I might have my little Infant Jesus on my left arm, which is fastened to my mantle, or both my hands might be empty save for a rosary of gold colored beads.

My imperial crown is of stamped brass, but handsome, with imitation stones. This is for everyday wear. A precious one of filigree is now being made for me.

My expression, you will note, is somewhat sad. Almost all Spanish Madonnas

are sad. But my wistful look is also the result of so much damage and poor repair down the centuries. Several years ago a fine sympathetic artist of Santa Fe was asked to restore my features, but he merely repaired the parts that were crumbling and repainted my face exactly as it appeared at the time; for he rightly felt that I ought not to look according to his own fancy, but as the years and my people had brought me to look. And I myself might as well reflect in my expression the many sorrows that my people have bravely undergone these many long centuries, and also appear as though I am always thinking of my loving knights and courtiers who are no more.

But at the same time I manage to keep the triumphant air of that Lady conceived without sin being borne aloft into eternal glory. Neither age nor mishandling have erased the dignity and poise that belong to a Conquistadora, a Lady who has conquered.

Beneath my feet may also be seen a small gold-painted pedestal, which replaces the one sawn off and lost long ago. Though it is covered

with antique rococo molding to go with my ancient self and the style of my garments, it is really a modern work of precision underneath; it is an eight-sided block of white pine that was cut and fitted together, and purposely, in the humming shops of the atomic city of Los Alamos, not long after the first bombs went off at Alamogordo, then at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For, as I myself am, allegorically speaking, a prayer to her who crushed the infernal serpent's head, so this pedestal under my feet represents a continual prayer that Mary may hold vanquished underfoot, whatever there may be of evil in atomic power.

Every year, on a late Sunday afternoon in June, as my procession winds slowly down the narrow streets of Santa Fe to my chapel at Rosario, I can make out the atomic city against the blue mountain flank, a thin white blur that turns into a necklace of lights as darkness falls. And the soft Spanish syllables of the Ave Maria go up to heaven pleading in a haunting old Spanish melody: "Santa Maria...ruega por nosotros



"I would love to visit their great skyscraping cities someday, and go into their precious churches, from the coast of the Atlantic all the way across this vast continent to the pacific shore."

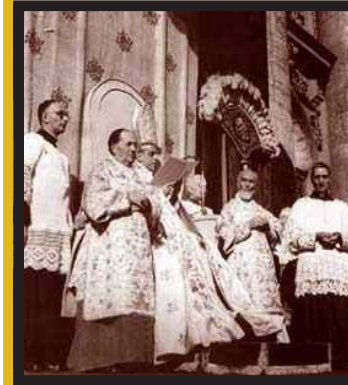
pecadores..."

Borne high on the slender shoulders of white-veiled girls, I see in my bearers, and in the thousands of persons forming my entourage, the same people who took me out year after year these three centuries and a quarter. Like their forefathers, they bear uninterrupted witness to my glory, and I bear witness to their ancestry. And now, besides them, there are other people here, new faces that increase with every year. They are those who revered the Mother of God in other places, and whose forebears rendered her homage in other lands. Having come to live in this my land and love it as their home, they also love its Queen. They, too, are mine

and dear to me.

For this reason, and because my old kingdom is a sister state of all the other United States of North America, whose faithful Catholic subjects long ago placed themselves under the mantle of Mary Immaculate, I would love to visit their great skyscraping cities someday, and go into their precious churches, from the coast of the Atlantic all the way across this vast continent to the pacific shore. Now that men can travel overland in as many days as it look oxcart months, now that they can outfly the eagle and even the eagles own scream, this wishful dream could well come true.

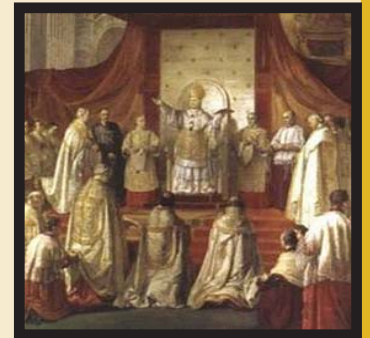
*La Conquistadora*  
*Known by Three Titles, Beloved to All Catholics,*  
**Our Lady of the Assumption, Our Lady of the Conception, and Our Lady of the Rosary**



The Assumption was proclaimed a Dogma on August 15, 1950 by Pope Pius XII



Pope Piux IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854



Our Lady gave the Rosary to St. Dominic in 1214, and proclaimed herself "The Lady of the Rosary" at Fatima in 1917





*"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."*

Yes, "The Lady Conqueror" was spoken of for the first time in the garden, when Adam and Eve had succumbed to the snares of the devil.

Mary is our life, our sweetness, and our hope especially in our hour of temptation. If called upon, she will help us conquer sin and temptation. If we are her faithful child, she will ever be there ready to

support us with all the graces we need, for God grants His graces through her Immaculate Heart.

Sometimes sin overpowers us, but, as foretold in Sacred Scripture, she is waiting to crush the serpent that is tempting us, if we but call upon her in that hour.

As St. Louis de Montfort tells us in his great work, *True Devotion to Mary*, "It is principally of these last and cruel persecutions of the devil, which shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist, that we ought to understand that first and celebrated prediction and curse of

God pronounced in the terrestrial paradise against the serpent. It is to our purpose to explain this here for the glory of the most holy Virgin, for the salvation of her children and for the confusion of the devil: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.": (Gen. 3:15)

God has never made and formed but one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and grow even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil -- between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin, and the children and tools of Lucifer. The most terrible of all the enemies which God has set up against the devil is His holy Mother Mary. He has inspired her, even since the days of the earthly paradise -- though she existed then only in His idea -- with so much hatred against that cursed enemy of God, with so much ingenuity in unveiling the malice of that ancient serpent, with so much power to conquer, to overthrow and to crush that proud, impious rebel, that he fears her not only more than all the angels and men, but in a sense more than God Himself. Not that the anger, the hatred and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited; but first, because Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from

being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the divine power; and secondly, because God has given Mary such great power against the devils that -- as they have often been obliged to confess, in spite of themselves, by the mouths of the possessed -- they fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her threats against them more than all other torments.

...God has not only set an enmity, but enmities, not simply between Mary and the devil, but between the race of the holy Virgin and the race of the devil; that is to say, God has set enmities, antipathies and secret hatreds between the true children and servants of Mary and the children and slaves of the devil. They have no love for each other. They have no sympathy for each other. The children of Belial, the slaves of Satan, the friends of the world (for it is the same thing) have always up to this time persecuted those who belong to our Blessed Lady, and will in the future persecute them more than ever; just as Cain, of old, persecuted his brother Abel, and Esau his brother Jacob, who are figures of the reprobate and the predestinate. But the humble Mary will always have the victory over that proud spirit, and so great a victory that she will go so far as to crush his head, where his



**La Conquistadora**  
*"The woman shall conquer."*  
**One day through her Rosary and Scapular, the world will be saved!**

*pride dwells. She will always discover the malice of the serpent. She will always lay bare his infernal plots and dissipate his diabolical councils, and even to the end of time will guard her faithful servants from his cruel claw.*

*But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially shine forth in the latter times, when Satan will lay his snares against her heel: that is to say, her humble slaves and her poor children, whom she will raise up to make war against him. They shall be little and poor in the world's esteem, and abased*

*before all like the heel, trodden underfoot and persecuted as the heel is by the other members of the body. But in return for this they shall be rich in the grace of God, which Mary shall distribute to them abundantly. They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other creatures by their lively zeal, and so well sustained with God's assistance that, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil and cause Jesus Christ to triumph."*

Yes, we need *La Conquistadora*, the "Lady Conqueror", today, more than ever before. Just like those early conquistadors, we must fight side by side with Our Lady, for the truths of our Holy Catholic Faith. We must fight fearlessly, even being ready to shed our blood, as the early Franciscans did in Santa Fe, and the early Christian martyrs did in so many parts of the world.

Under the banner of our Mother, *La Conquistadora*, let us fear nothing. Remember what she said at Guadalupe to Juan Diego, "Am I not here who am your Mother? Is there anything else you need?" Under her banner, let us follow her command from La Salette, "Fight, my children of light..." and fear nothing, for your Mother will conquer all.



**America's  
 Oldest Madonna  
 La  
 Conquistadora**

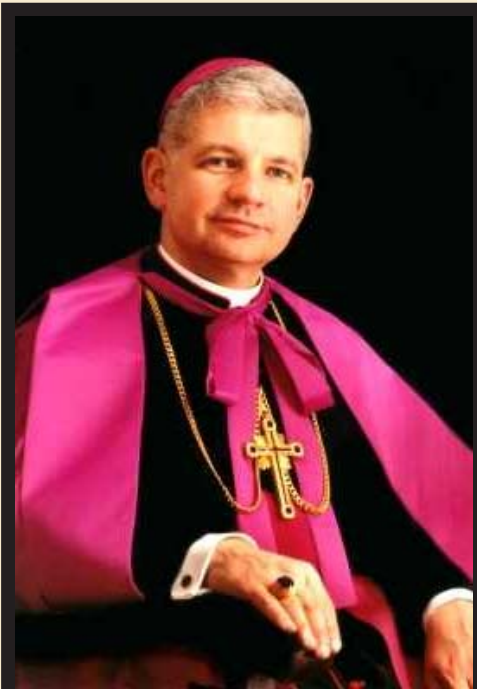


*Let us draw near to America's oldest Madonna brought by Fray Alonso Benavides to the Royal Villa of Santa Fe in 1624, and found in this magnificent Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi.*

*Let us beg her, during this election year, to shower blessings upon our country, dedicated to her Immaculate Conception.*

*Let us implore her to help each and every American to conquer sin, and bring our beloved country back to the Christian principles, on which she was founded over 200 years ago.*

*May La Conquistadora, the Lady Conqueror, guide each one of us back to the Heart of her beloved Son.*



*His Excellency,  
the  
Most Reverend  
Bishop Daniel L. Dolan*

## A Special Thank you!

We could not close this issue without a very special thank you to the person that introduced us to such a wonderful Madonna, *La Conquistadora*.

How grateful we have been to come to know a source of every single Marian devotion wrapped in one "little Lady", yet such a "conqueror!"

*La Conquistadora* represents to us the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Dogma of the Assumption, the Lady of the Rosary,

and her mighty Queenship, as she holds the scepter in her hands. She is a reminder to us of the power of the Scapular, as it hangs so gracefully, along with the Rosary, in front of her. Finally we see depicted the crescent moon, a powerful reminder of all she stands for, the conqueror over sin and the devil.

Thank you, Bishop Daniel Dolan for leading us to such a powerful devotion, most necessary in our times, especially for our beloved homeland, the United States of America. As *La Conquistadora* is America's oldest Madonna, let us pray for our country, during this election year, that this "Lady Conqueror" will conquer the hearts of men and women and lead them to vote with their conscience, the voice of God!



*Please pray for the  
repose of the soul of  
Mary Theresa Fournier,  
mother of our  
Mother Foundress,  
Reverend Mother Marie  
de Montfort, CMSS,  
who passed away  
August 7, 2011.*



Nothing happens in life, "just by chance". Divine Providence lovingly unfolds the details of each and everything that takes place in our life, moment by moment, day by day. We just need the courage to accept things as they take place, with loving patience and resignation to the Will of God. In this light, we look at the timing of the death of Mary Theresa Fournier, on August 7. Mary was a very staunch defender of the Roman Catholic Faith, a leader, not just in her home State of Michigan, but throughout the Nation, in spreading Catholic truths, unaltered, without compromise. The Church was her life, so it was no small thing that she died on the feast of St. Cajetan, also a staunch defender and lover of the Catholic Church and Her rites and ceremonies, as well as the first to introduce Forty Hours Adorations of the Blessed Sacrament. It is no small matter that this is our first issue since her death, as she had her children pray, in their daily Rosary, for a young seminarian, Daniel L. Dolan, that he would become a good and holy priest. Yes, that is right, the same Bishop Daniel L. Dolan that introduced us to this wonderful little Lady, *La Conquistadora*. Coincidence? No! Divine Providence, for *La Conquistadora* is in the hands of the Franciscans of Santa Fe, and Mary was a Third Order final professed Franciscan, who loved Our Lady so much, that one could say, after the Church, "Mary was her life"! Mary was able to defend the Mystical Body of Christ, for she had a burning love for what we have come to know in this issue as, "The Lady Conqueror", *La Conquistadora*!