

A SONG OF MAY (CONTINUED)

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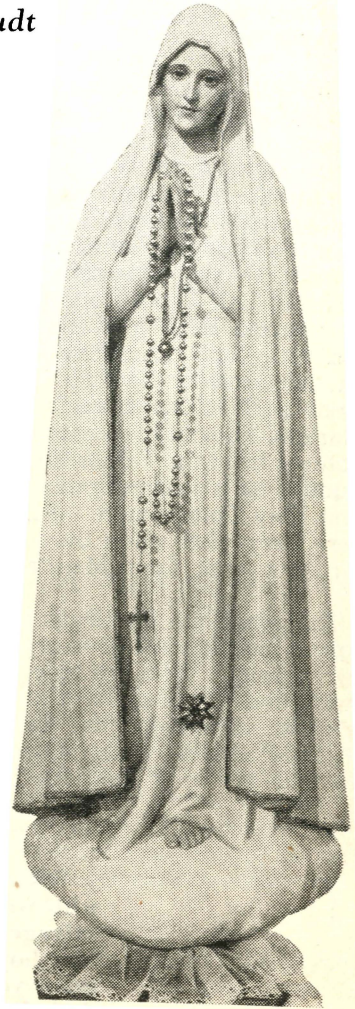
The night faded into a shining daylight and the first of May emerged as from the dark.

Aniwan had greeted that bright day with a joyful "Ave Maria." He stood in front of his small hut in Agpay while his eyes roved round the verdant leaves and gaily colored flowers soaked wet with morning dew. His thoughts rushed back to all his boys in the valley. Yesterday he had told them, "Welcome the month of May with a 'Hail Mary' when you awake."

It was May and an extraordinary joy shot through Aniwan's heart. Yes, he could have wept for happiness. And yet, he felt that the light of his life was almost spent and soon he would die in his poor hut in Agpay. But he also felt the Good Master's invisible hands were leading him every moment nearer to Him and sensed His loving whisper, "Poor man, I love you." Aniwan's heart pounded wild with joy at these words. He discovered with the unfolding of each new day, the truth and reality of God's infinite love... His surrounding was permeated with the sweat perfume of that love and Aniwan whispered within him, "This small corner of the mountain land is also the happy home of God and we live with Him."

The days of May were also the days of the Good God, Aniwan thought. But they were more especially the days of Our Blessed Mother. He understood why in Mary's honor, nature was clothed in all majesty and splendor, why chalice-like lilies studded the green mountain-sides, why the wind blew so gently over the yellow rice fields, why the sky was so beautiful and clear, why the streams and rivers were ever singing, ever merry.

One lovely Sunday morning in May, there was a feast in the mission church in the valley. At the break of dawn, the church bells pealed



HAIL.....HOLY QUEEN,
MOTHER OF MERCY,
OUR LIFE, OUR SWEET-
NESS, AND OUR HOPE.
TO THEE DO WE CRY
POOR BANISHED CHIL-
DREN OF EVE...

wildly. Mary's altar was a throne of freshly-gathered flowers. The children had decorated the statue of their loving Mother with the blue Dangla flowers and yellow Allangigan and Andadasi flowers. Long reeds of the violet Anii and Banava, green and yellow Alinaw flowers and light red Bakag plants adorned the altar. The statue was hollowed out in a golden fire of flickering candles.

A huge crowd had gathered in the mission church; at every moment while the number grew, the words, "Hail Mary, full of grace..." resounded louder.

On that Sunday of May, the priest ushered in the church two long rows of children while he sang "Beati Immaculati in via..." "Blessed are the pure of heart and those who live in God's commandments."

Reverently the children followed the priest who led them before the altar. They were poor, mountain children. They each held in their hands a white lily, their pure eyes focussed on the lovely statue of their Mother. Yes, they have come to lay before her feet these white lilies.

Their young hearts beat wild with happiness at the thought of their Heavenly Mother whom they loved so much.

This was their big day, this happy day when Jesus, Mary's own loving Jesus, would come for the first time into their pure hearts. It was their First Communion day, this Sunday of May.

Among those present in the church there was one who thought he would have died of joy. With tears in his eyes, he lovingly gazed at the children in a long procession... they were the children of his

heart, these children to whom he had so often related about the Good God, and Mary, Queen of May. Their hearts were pure and very soon Jesus would come to make His solemn entrance there. And when Aniwan saw in the communion bench the children with hands reverently clasped upon their breasts, their pure bright eyes directed towards the priest who held the Sacred Host as he prayed, "Behold the lamb of God..." his heart burst out in sweet prayer, "Ah, my Lord Jesus, You can do it... keep the hearts of these children pure and good. Lord Jesus, do not permit that any of them be lost."

When Holy Mass was ended, and the people had left the church, the excited children lost no time to look for their dear old friend, Aniwan. But Aniwan remained in the church, lost in prayer, before the statue of Our Lady. He was asking this loving Mother to offer up his Mass and Communion to Jesus, for all the children of the village. In all simplicity he was talking to this Heavenly Queen. He wanted her to help him love God more and more and to lead others to

Mary is as it were the heavenly canal by which the waters of all graces and gifts flow down into the souls of wretched human beings.

Benedict XIV

love Him. He asked special graces for those who had received Jesus for the first time into their hearts.

And when he heard the children outside calling, "Where is old Aniwan?" he quickly stood up, but before leaving addressed himself to Our Lady, "Mother, it has been a happy day for you, a happy day for your children and for me, your old Aniwan. Dear Mother help us always, keep our souls pure like the May flowers which now adorn your statue."

"Where is Aniwan?" One more

children's voices were heard outside the church plaza.

"Dear, Mother, your children, they are calling for me. I promise to care for their souls. I will teach them to love you more and more."

As soon as Aniwan appeared at the church door, the happy children rushed to him, while the older people watched in blank astonishment.

"Today is the most beautiful day of May, my dear children, and you are the angels of May."

"Today, Aniwan, and also tomorrow," excitedly chorused the children.

"Yes, tomorrow too, my dear children, and the day after tomorrow, . . . all the days of your life, as long as you keep Jesus in your pure souls."

The listening throng increased; not only children but men and women as well gathered closer to hear Aniwan's words.

In the dazzling light of that May morning, in the small church plaza, God . . . His own loving God, also listened. The angels were also there, bowed in silent and breathless adoration before God, Who lived in the pure hearts of those little souls. Mary, Queen of May, was also present.

Teacher: **What is an autobiography?**
Pupil: **It is the story of the life of an automobile driver.**



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had sealed those little foreheads with the sign of the cross.

The heavens above the valley and mountains of Pagdan were blue and pure like Our Lady's Mantle.

This corner of the mountain lands was a veritable Paradise, where the people loved God and His Blessed Mother . . . where the sun-kissed flowers blossomed in the thick forests and around the picturesque mountain slopes, where the cool winds

rustled gently over the golden rice fields . . . where the hearts of those who loved God throbbed with great joy!

Love is reverently silent . . . But love can also find its utterance in joyful song

And that day in Pagdan, there hovered the sweet and lingering echo of the Beautiful Song of May

Chemistry Teacher: **When water becomes ice, what is the greatest change that takes place?**

Student: **The price.**

Mountain Echo

Husband: **What happened to my whiskers' brush? I wonder why it is hard and stiff.**

Wife: **I do not know, either; it was smooth and soft when I painted the bird's cage.**