

A SYMPOSIUM

in honour of the

CROWN of THORNS

Published by Editions Pelerin, 10 Priory Road, Tonbridge.
1962.

Price: 1/- or more.

FOREWORD

THE intensely popular devotion to various aspects of Christ's Passion, fostered by the Franciscans and stimulated by the arrival of the Crown of Thorns in France and other Relics from the Holy Land, is an important characteristic of medieval life in Europe. The main purpose of this Symposium is to assist the revival of such wholesome devotion. "In that day the Lord of hosts shall be a crown of glory and a garland of joy to the residue of His people." (Isaias 28, 5.)

Let it be clearly understood that there is nothing superstitious or unscriptural in giving honour to the instruments of the Passion. We do so because of their close association with Him Who thereby wrought our redemption. Our worship is directed to Him alone.

G.F.T.

All original material, not previously published elsewhere, is the copyright of L'Ordre de la Couronne d'Epines.

THE STE.COURONNE in History

St.Paulinus of Nola, writing after 409, refers to "the thorns with which our Saviour was crowned" as relics held in honour along with the Cross to which He was nailed and the pillar at which He was scourged. Cassiodorus (c.570), commenting on Psalm lxxxvi, speaks of the Crown of Thorns among the other relics which are the glory of the earthly Jerusalem. "There," he says, "we may behold the thorny crown, which was only set upon the head of our Redeemer in order that all the thorns of the world might be gathered together and broken." The 'Pilgrimage' of the monk Bernard shows that the relic was still in the Church upon Mount Sion in 870.

If we may adopt the conclusions of M.de Mély, the whole Crown was only transferred to Byzantium about 1063, although it seems that smaller portions must have been presented to the Eastern emperors at an earlier date. In any case, Justinian (d.565) is stated to have given a thorn to St.Germanus, Bishop of Paris, which was long preserved at St.Germain-des-Prés, while the Empress Irene, in 798 or 802, sent Charlemagne several thorns which were deposited by him at Aachen. The subsequent history of several of them can be traced without difficulty. *

- - - - -

[The circumstances in which the Crown travelled from the Holy Land to Byzantium, to Venice and finally to France, are well-known matters of history, needing not to be repeated here.]

- - - - -

St.Louis built the Sainte Chapelle, (completed 1248), for its reception. There the great relic remained until the Revolution, 1791. It was eventually restored to the Church and deposited in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in 1806. Ninety years after, a magnificent new reliquary of rock crystal was made for it, covered for two-thirds of its circumference with a silver case splendidly wrought and jewelled. The Crown thus preserved consists only of a circlet of rushes, without any trace of thorns. Authorities are agreed that a sort of helmet of thorns must have been plaited by the Roman soldiers, this band of rushes being employed to hold the thorns together. It seems likely according to M.de Mély, that already at the time when the circlet was brought to Paris the sixty or seventy thorns, which seem to have been afterwards distributed by St.Louis and his successors, had been separated from the band of rushes and were kept in a different reliquary. None of these now remain in Paris. Some small fragments of rush are also preserved apart from the Sainte Couronne at Paris, e.g. at Arras and Lyons.

- abridged from an article by Herbert Thurston,
in the Catholic Encyclopædia.

* For example, the Benedictine Abbey of St.Pierre at Solesmes "had been an important rallying ground for the Crusades, from which a warrior had brought back the Holy Thorn still among the monastery's treasures".
Patrick Leigh Fermor, in "A Time to keep Silence".

In Art

Thorns and thorn branches signify grief, tribulation and sin. ... The Crown of Thorns with which the soldiers crowned Christ before the Crucifixion was a parody of the Roman emperor's festal crown of roses. The tonsure of the priest is a reverent allusion to this thorny crown.

George Ferguson, in
"Signs and Symbols in Christian Art".

Burpham (in West Sussex) has a very remarkable church. ...The beautiful springing roof of the little chancel with its ribbed groining must be admired, and still more the south transept arch with its chevron moulding unlike anything else in Sussex, of so lovely a design - thought by some to be symbolic of the Crown of Thorns - and so marvellous an example of the stonemason's skill, almost as though stone were a malleable material and had been plaited instead of carved.

from "Sussex" by Esther Meynell.

Now turn to an up-to-the-minute application: In the new Coventry Cathedral, a mosaic of an angel appearing to Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane is seen through a wrought-iron grille representing the Crown of Thorns, (a much repeated motif in this Cathedral), designed by Sir Basil Spence and made by the Royal Engineers. These are jagged, realistic thorns, not the symmetrical, stylised design we are more used to.

Though the Crown is generally believed to have been made from branches of either 'Zizyphus Spina Christi' or 'Paliurus Spina Christi', both Biblical shrubs, another species, 'Euphorbia Milii' is popularly known as the Crown of Thorns plant, from its very prickly appearance. This however, is a native of Madagascar and botanists conjecture that it was totally unknown in Jesus' day.

The Passion Flower must also be mentioned in this context. Drawings and descriptions of this unique plant were published for the first time in Spain and Italy in 1609. Above the pillar of the scourging and the nails, is seen the thorny Crown, surrounded by a veil of threads, seventy-two in number, the traditional number of thorns embodied in the Crown. All very fanciful perhaps, but it may have helped the devotion of simple folk.

THE DUKE OF ORLÉANS' RELIQUARY OF THE HOLY THORN

Under this title, Dr. Joan Evans wrote in The Burlington Magazine, (Volume lxxviii, January-July 1941, p.196), a fully descriptive account of the reliquary now to be seen in the British Museum, London.

As part of the Waddesdon Bequest, it was bequeathed to the Museum by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild in 1898. From her investigations, it appears certain that this exquisite reliquary was made (possibly in Paris, 1395) for Louis, son of Charles V of France, born in 1372, Duke of Touraine in 1386 and of Orléans in 1391; who acquired it between 1389 and his murder on November 23rd 1407.

The reliquary, which bears the Latin inscription,

Ista est una spinea corone
Domini nostri Ihesu Xti,

"travelled into 'terre d'Empire'. The inventory...(made at Blois, on December 4th 1408, when both he and his wife were dead), only states that it had not been taken into Lombardy by the Duchess Valentine. It may have been given to the Emperor Maximilian; it may have been bought by a Hapsburg when most of the jewels of Charles d'Orléans were sold to pay his ransom to the English. At all events ... it was by 1677 in the treasure of the Austrian Imperial House in the Hofburg of Vienna. It remained there until some time in the 19th century, probably after 1860. A modern copy was then substituted for it, and no more is known of it until it appears in Baron Ferdinand Rothschild's Collection in 1898."

A postcard photograph is obtainable from the British Museum, (reference BM 37), clearly shewing the Thorn itself still in position within the reliquary.

HISTORY OF THE FEAST

It was instituted (as we might expect) at Paris in 1239. Here it was kept on 11th August, until the Feast was adopted at Rome in 1831 and the date changed, the Friday after Ash Wednesday being selected. 11th August was the actual date of the Reception of the Holy Crown of Thorns and designated as such in the Calendar of the Cistercian Order.

Cistercian monasteries in France received permission to commemorate the Crown of Thorns, in 1241, only two years after its arrival in that country. The Carmelites of Genoa venerated a thorn from the Crown and a Feast of the Crown of Thorns and of the Holy Lance was prescribed, in Eastertide, by the General Chapter of the Carmelites in 1488. The Feast of the Crown of the Lord, (on 4th May), found a place in the early Dominican calendar, as two members of that Order had been among those persons who escorted the relic from Constantinople to France.

A bewildering variety of dates was assigned to this Feast in dioceses all over France, Italy, Spain and elsewhere, so prolific was this devotion.

Among the Passionists, the Feast dates from 1773, being one of the six feasts of the Passion for which their Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, obtained sanction from Pope Clement xiv. In 1795 the date set for this Feast was the Friday after Ash Wednesday, on which day it remained in the Passionist calendar until 1923, when it was changed to the following Friday, (i.e. the second Friday of Lent). Now, since the 1961 revision, they keep it on the last Friday in August.

Clearly, to remove all such confusion of dates, it would be better for us to revert to the earliest precedent, namely 11th August, the date originally kept in the Archdiocese of Paris.

- - - - -

As will be seen from the English translation which follows, the Proper of this Mass is a very beautiful one, filled with apposite allusions to that Crown which the Roman soldiers of Pontius Pilate put upon Christ's head; some writers who have observed the old Roman pavement still preserved in Jerusalem, with its peculiar markings, consider that the soldiers passed the time by 'playing with' their prisoners their traditional King Game.

MASS OF THE HOLY CROWN OF THORNS

"Egredimini et videte"

INTROIT. Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him, preparing a cross for her Saviour. Ps. With glory and honour Thou hast crowned him, O Lord; and hast set him over the works of Thy hands.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we who in memory of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ here upon earth venerate His Crown of Thorns, may deserve to be crowned with glory and honour in heaven by Him, Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth...

LESSON Canticles 3, verses 7-11, concluding with parts from Cant.4,1 and 8, as follows: How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! Thine eyes are dove's eyes, besides what is hid within. Come from Libanus, O my spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned.

GRADUAL A crown of gold upon His head, wherein was engraved holiness, an ornament of honour, and a work of power. For Thou hast presented Him with the blessings of sweetness: Thou hast set upon His head a crown of precious stones.

TRACT The Lord clothed Him with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice He covered Him, as a bridegroom decked with a crown. The Crown of tribulation has flourished into a Crown of Glory and a garland of joy. He hath received a kingdom of glory, a diadem of beauty.

GOSPEL The Gospel according to Saint John, 19, verses 1 - 5.

OFFERTORY We honour Thy Crown, O Lord; we commemorate Thy glorious Passion.

SECRET Do Thou, O King Almighty, confirm the strength of Thy soldiers; that we who on this race-course of our mortality are cheered by the Crown of Thine only-begotten Son, may, when the course of our warfare is finished, lay hold of the prize of immortality...

PREFACE OF THE CROSS - Who upon the Wood of the Cross didst accomplish the salvation of the race of man: that whence death arose, thence life might also rise again; and that he who by a tree was once the vanquisher, might also by a Tree be vanquished: through Christ, our Lord...

COMMUNION Rejoice, O thou mother, for the Lord shall give to thy head increase of graces, and protect thee with a noble crown.

POST-COMMUNION We humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, that these Sacraments which we have received may, through the Most Holy Crown of Thorns of Thy Son, of which we celebrate the festival (OR commemoration), procure for us healing and strength...

/When the Feast was kept in Ireland, a different Collect from that above was used./

COMMENTARY by St. Bonaventura

The crown of thorns pressed with great severity upon that adorable head... We notice that those sufferings which appear to us to bear most the marks of dishonour were taken by Him as marks of honour.

O good Jesus, Thou King of glory, the crown of all who trust Thee, all who follow Thee, all who fight for Thee, all who share Thy victory, and all who abide in Thee, who could have delivered Thee over to so bitter a bond of shame? Behold 'shame hath covered Thy head and thine adorable face.' The honour of derision in the form of a crown was heaped upon Thee by a crooked and perverse generation. But the pain inflicted by the points of the thorn was truly real. Here we see shame and pain vying with one another. I know not which of them hurts Him most, the mockery of the crown or the pricking of the thorns.

'Go forth, then, O ye daughters of Syon, and behold King Solomon with the crown, wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.' A soul that claims to be a daughter of Syon - that is to say, of the Church - should relinquish all secular business and all vain imagination, and in contemplation behold this King Solomon. This is Jesus Christ, called 'our Peace' because He destroys the enmity and restores the friendship between God and man.

Behold Him, then, faithful soul, crowned with the crown with which His mother crowned Him - His mother being the Jewish synagogue or the Jewish people. O harsh mother, how has thy good Son sinned that He should be bound with these thorny bonds? It is He who 'looseth thy prisoners', who 'raiseth up them that are bowed down', relieving the 'fatherless and the widow'. Does such a man deserve to be bound? Is this His dowry? Is this the mean gift you provide for His nuptials? The day of espousals should be a great day for Him; yet, I say, it is become a day of indignation and blasphemy; a day of tribulation and misery; a day of beating and sorrow; a day of bonds and death.

Such is the day of His espousals; and this is the pledge of marriage, faithful soul, with which thy Bridegroom, 'fairer than the sons of men', has pledged thee. As a 'Bridegroom goes He forth', crowned not with gold and gems, but with thorns.

Had they not intended to add suffering to their mockery of Him whom they had crowned, they could easily have plaited the crown with the withies or twigs of some other tree. But to emphasize the harshness of their conduct, they crowned the Lord Jesus, that most meek Lamb, who is now crowned with glory and honour, with prickly thorns.

This crowning was meant as a mockery; yet in their ignorant derision they, in effect, gave witness that He was a crowned king, for is not any crown part of the insignia of a king? So He was declared king by men who did not recognise His kingship, but the thorns revealed the malice of those who crowned Him.

The Crowns of Christ

From a Homily by ST. BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux

Daughters of Sion, behold King Solomon... a figure of our true Solomon, Jesus Christ... the Universal King - gentle in His exile, righteous in His judgment, glorious in His kingdom; lovely in His exile, dreadful in His judgment, worshipful in His kingdom. Behold Him now "with the crown where-with His mother crowned Him". This was a crown of mercy, and therein He may be followed. But His step-mother also crowned Him with a crown of sorrow, and therein He was made a reproach. By His step-mother I mean the Synagogue which showed herself not as His mother, but as His step-mother.

His household will crown Him with a crown of righteousness, and therein He will be dreadful. His Father crowneth Him with a crown of glory, and therein He is lovely. Let sinners gaze upon Him in His crown of sorrow, the Crown of Thorns, and let the pricks thereof enter into themselves. Let the daughters of Sion, the souls that love Him, gaze upon Him in His crown of mercy, and follow in His steps. The wicked shall gaze upon Him in His crown of righteousness, and they shall perish. The Saints shall gaze upon Him in His crown of glory, and they shall be blessed for ever. Others also that have followed Him shall be crowned after Him, but that by earnest working by the help of His grace.

Used as parts of the 7th and 8th lessons
in the old Office of the Crown of Thorns.

- - - - -

The first 'Shewing' to MOTHER JULIAN of Norwich, with which she begins her Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love, (in May 1373), was of 'His precious crowning with thorns' - "right as me thought that it was at that time when the garland of thorns was thrust on His blessed Head. ... I saw that this was strength enough for me, yea for all creatures living that should be saved, against all the fiends of hell."

- - - - -

KING OF KINGS

A naked man, covered with sweat and dirt and blood, exhausted and beaten, hanging on a gallows in front of a mocking crowd, dying in agony - a wreath of sharp thorns piercing his brows. That is the Crucified Christ - that is Christ the King. That was the end, so they thought, of a trouble-maker; that was, in fact, the most glorious victory the world has ever known.

We know now that the Cross, the shameful gibbet, was in fact a royal throne; we know that the dirt and sweat and blood were the purple robe of empire; we know that that defeat was victory. We know that the mocking crown of thorns was the glorious diadem of the King of King and Lord of Lords. And, abashed and confounded, we kneel in worship and veneration.

For this confounds all the values of the world - as indeed we might expect, for is not the wisdom of this world foolishness in the eyes of God? Earthly monarchs live in honour and are robed in state, crowned with gold and jewels: but what need has true royalty for such trappings? Our Lord needed none of these things, and the greatest of earthly rulers have not needed them; no wonder that Saint Louis preferred a crown of thorns to a crown of gold.

It is not the habit that makes the monk; and it is not the crown and sceptre and purple robe that make the king. True royalty is that exemplified by Christ: authority, yes, but also humility, service, obedience, and - this above all - perfect love. These virtues shine more brightly than any material jewel, appear more splendid than any velvet robe: and if they lead through suffering, even death - can earthly pomp and honour avoid that?

The Crucifixion is the lesson and model for all kings: and by virtue of our Baptism we - yes, even you and I - are kings; kings and priests; a kingly priesthood. May we, united in the Order of the Crown of Thorns, keep those Thorns always before our mind's eye: let us never be led astray by the false standards of the world, but in humility and obedience and love do the will of our Blessed Master, until we are worthy to receive a crown of thorns, with all its suffering, and in so doing bear in our lives the marks of the Lord Jesus, sharing in His redemptive work, until at last our crown of thorns on earth is exchanged for the halo of sanctity and the crown of glory as we reign with Him in heaven.

G.P.T.P.K.

Prelat-Commandeur, O.C.E.

In venerating the Holy Crown of Thorns, we Christians of the twentieth century often tend to lose sight of the original purpose of this sacred relic - namely that of an instrument of unspeakable mockery and scorn. Its achievement as an infliction of physical suffering was almost incidental, although it undoubtedly succeeded in this and in no small measure besides.

Because of the terrible blasphemy to our Lord and King committed by this humiliation, we, in our noble Order, make it one of our principal aims to pay perpetual recompense to Him through performing chivalrous acts as are most expedient to the needs of the age, and our current means. Those today especially needful of our love and service are the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the aged and the bereaved. Our great Monarch is always readily discovered amongst all these afflicted. Thus when we give loving service to them, we honour Him in a form that is surely worthy and acceptable. Can there be any one of us to whom many needful causes are unknown and these in our own country alone? Further still, with the world in its present chaotic condition, how can we possibly permit our sight to rest solely on the home scene?

He is the King of all, Christian and Pagan alike and just because His Kingdom knows no boundary, we may never impose one upon our field of service. May the chivalrous spirit of humility epitomised by the Crown of Thorns rest upon all the members of our Order and may He give us the grace and strength to bear our noble burden the more bravely.

Sebastian Marten, O.C.E.

- - - - -

An Irish poet, Joseph Mary Flunkett, has written of Christ's immanence:-

"All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree."

With the eye of faith, we see Christ, on His Cross and in this troublous, God-forsaking world, as the "rose among thorns". One lesson that our Lord's Crown teaches us is not to be surprised by suffering and hardships. That was how the world and the powers of darkness treated Him, in cruel mockery of His eternal Kingship; what wonder if His servants are also maltreated? The servant is not greater, or more privileged, than his Lord and the world has not grown less cruel. Worldly rulers still fear the power of the King of Kings. The faithful Knight cannot avoid suffering in some form. He whose head was once so encircled is now beyond the power of physical suffering, but Christ is Himself the Head and we are

His members and bodyguard. Our wayfaring is far removed from "those holy fields over whose acres walked those blessed feet which were nailed for our advantage on the bitter Cross", (a xvth century phrase); yet we have our share in His Passion and its fruits. If we try to re-make the Kingdom of God according to our own image, are we not rejecting His Sovereignty and pressing the thorns of derision and pride upon His brow? Such would indeed be an act of treason in those who claim to be His bodyguard.

Milman in volume vi of his "Latin Christianity" portrays to the full the austerity of St. Louis' personal life; which makes very good reading for us at those times when we feel that life is difficult and unrewarding. His tremendous devotion to the Passion of Christ was no pious hobby; it was his way of life. Can we imagine any ruler of a state today undertaking such fastings and mortifications, such personal charity to the needy?

G.F.Tull, O.C.E.

Some Prayers

O Christ, Who by the thorns pressed upon Thy brow hast drawn out the thorns from the pain of this world, and crowned our sorrows with peace: make us so bold as never to fear suffering, nor to suffer without cheerfulness, in Thy service...

O Christ, the King of Kings, Whose sinless and venerable head we crowned with thorns: grant us with Thee to seek no other diadem than that which crowneth victory over sin...

from "A Procession of Passion Prayers"
by E.Milner White, (1950).

O Jesus, by Thy head crowned with thorns, take my mind. Cleanse it from all gross or frivolous thoughts. Help it to think deeply and attentively, that with full vigour it may work to Thy glory.

R.L.Barnes, C.R. 1930.

MORE GLEANINGS FROM HISTORY

Several Orders of Knighthood have been associated with the illustrious name of St. Louis, though the two which he actually founded have long since been defunct. He instituted the Order of the Broom Flower at Sens, on the occasion of his marriage with Margaret of Provence: he having chosen the Broom Flower, the emblem of humility, as the badge for his new Order, he adopted a motto suitable to it - Exaltat Humiles. During his reign this Order was highly esteemed, but soon after his death, it fell into disrepute and became extinct in the xvth century.

The Order of the Ship, (or Double crescents - so called from the design incorporated in the collar), was instituted by St. Louis in 1269, after his return from his first expedition into Egypt. The Order became extinct in France a few years later, after his death at Tunis, though it flourished for three centuries in Naples and Sicily, where it was introduced by the King's brother, Charles of Anjou.

We find no trace in old documents of the holy King having founded an Order of Knighthood in honour of the Crown of Thorns, but it is known that he wished to preserve the memory of this great event near his Court, by giving to his barons a souvenir or representation of the famous relic. What we believe, and moreover what tradition has preserved for us, in spite of all changes and political revolution, is that Philippe le Bel, grandson of St. Louis, laid the first foundations of the O.C.E. about the year 1308.

(From "The History of Knighthood" by Hugh Clark, 1784 and the History and Regulations of the O.C.E., printed 1922.)

We need not be disturbed by the seeming obscurity of our foundation when we consider in parallel the history of the Order of the Garter, (the O.C.E. claiming about 40 years seniority). In Sir Ivan De la Bere's words: "Though the story of the foundation and origin of the Order (of the Garter) ... has been discussed and disputed by innumerable antiquaries during the past four hundred years, it still remains obscure. In fact it is not possible to state with certainty either the exact date of the foundation or the precise cause of its institution, because all the annals of the Order for the first two hundred years of its existence are both imperfect and unreliable." If that is so with the Garter, it may well be true also of the O.C.E. In addition, there have been various wars when documents and whole libraries may have been lost, damaged or destroyed; and later still, the French Revolution. For the Order to have survived all that is in itself something of a miracle!

A major reason why the O.C.E. now has so little historical data in its possession is that much that was irreplaceable was lost in a disastrous fire on the then Grand Master's premises, about 1918. Other items disappeared on his death in Paris in 1929. Unfortunately, the photostat and microfilm techniques for copying valuable documents had not then been perfected.

"No better contrast between the earlier and later Crusades can be found than that between Godfrey of Bouillon refusing to wear a temporal crown in the city where his Master had worn a crown of thorns, and Frederick II, excommunicate from the Church, himself taking the crown from the altar of the Holy Sepulchre, and with no religious ceremony crowning himself King of Jerusalem."

Dr. Joan Evans.

"Every century brings a change of manners and habits, and each century has its own particular duties, its own special mode of encouraging, protecting and rewarding labor, courage, devotion and good works. The Orders of medieval chivalry were a glorious symbol of courage, faith and Christian love.

"In our days, the Orders of chivalry should be a pledge of fraternal union among the people and the recompense due to merit and great and noble virtues of the intellect and of the heart."

From the pen of Mar. Timotheus,
the first American Grand Master
of the O.C.E. Dated Sept. 21, 1922.

Message from Prince Edmond I de San Luigi

When I was privileged to assume the office of Grand Master in 1929, I had to start on a long and weary road to improve both administration and membership.

Fortunately I was in a position which made it possible for me to make the right contacts in a number of countries, and thus a number of people of high standing and good reputation became interested, so that eventually our Order took its place amongst the recognized independent Catholic Orders of the world.

In several countries chapels were made available for Order services and Masses, and others were in the process of organization, when the last war intervened and stopped progress.

In more recent years my constant illness hindered things seriously, not least because it became impossible to keep proper track of representatives and Priors. Money was always a problem, but in those earlier days, I was able to provide for actual necessities, but had to leave the desired Abbey of St. Louis, and other good works, so necessary to justify the existence of a reputable Order.

I hope at least some of those things may develop under the direction of my Successor.

Mgr. Edmond II is a much younger man, and while Grand Chancellor showed good signs of the ability to obtain the adherence of people of standing and repute. I hope and pray that God will bless his efforts in every way, not excepting financial. Large sums of money will be needed if a modest Abbey is ever to be built.

May our present Chevaliers do all in their power to help God and him accomplish something really worthwhile.

Edmond I
Grand Master Emeritus
(2nd American Grand Master)

...."who seeks the constant prayers of the Chevaliers in England and elsewhere for continued devotion to the Catholic Faith and with hopes for the blessings of Life Eternal."

June, 1962.

Message from the present Grand Master of the San Luigi Orders

In this materialistic life, some of us note the need for a re-evaluation of the Christian principles which sparked the motives of our well-beloved King - Saint Louis IX.

Let us never forget that it was this noble King who in his bare feet over 13th Century roads carried the very thorns that rested on Our Lord's head, as an act of genuine devotion to his Saviour.

While it would be impossible for most of us to demonstrate our faith such as did St. Louis, we can re-state our vows to that Order of Chivalry, the Order of the Crown of Thorns, that was founded in memory of his great act. There is, as our first American Grand Master said "No more glorious symbol of courage, faith and Christian love than Knighthood."

The Order of the Crown of Thorns, which harks back to those days of sacred devotion, can now give us the courage to face each new problem, if we but remember that He who wore that Crown is the source of all love and understanding.

Mgr. Edmond II.
3rd American Grand Master.