

Edel Quinn

Legion of Mary

By Another Legionary of Mary.

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EDEL QUINN — THE INNER SANCTUARY

[For a brief over-view of Edel's life, please consult the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland pamphlet No. bh661a (1960) — *The Story of Edel Quinn*.]

Edel Quinn left nothing in the way of a real spiritual journal or autobiography though urged to do so. "Not for publication" was a phrase that often occurred in her letters from Africa and she jokingly suggested it as an epitaph for her tombstone. There are a few notes but they are almost impersonal and quite lacking in introspection or self-analysis. Yet the fewness and character of these notes are in themselves most revealing. They confirm the impression of complete self-forgetfulness that she made on everyone who had contact with her. Her gaze was always away from self, always fixed on God and supernatural realities, on other people seen in the light of God.

There is a certain getting away from self which is just the dissipation of self in external activity — escapism, the fear of being alone. Then there is the self-forgetfulness of the true contemplative who is absorbed in God. Edel Quinn's was of this kind; it was due not to preoccupation with work, but to preoccupation with God. For, with all her immense activity, she was first and foremost a contemplative and all her life long was haunted by a longing for silence and prayer, a longing to be alone with God. Her early dream was to enter a contemplative convent. Even when incurable illness showed that that was not her vocation she still did not give up the essence of her hope. If her life could not be hidden at least her heart would. Everybody sensed a mysterious reserve behind all her gaiety and activity. She tried to keep the inner sanctuary always inviolate. Yet it is clear enough that her spiritual life centred on certain great mysteries of the Faith — the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, the mystery of the Mystical Body that is built up and sustained by the Eucharist, the Mystery of Mary, 'Sacrament' of the Holy Spirit, Mother of Christ and Mother of His Mystical Body. The great facts of the Mass and Real Presence, of the Christ-life in souls bringing a sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity, of Mary's loving care and our complete dependence on her — it was her vivid grasp of these truths that made her the perfect legionary of Mary, for it is on these truths that the Legion is built. They had already been forming her before she joined the Legion but it was the Legion that made them fully operative in her life.

JUDGEMENT ON EDEL'S WRITINGS

Two Theologians were appointed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to examine the writings (letters, diaries and notes) of Edel Quinn. Most of the writings consist of the letters, of which there is a vast number. The reports of the Theologians or Censors have been published by the Holy See — two independent reports in one 35 page booklet. They contain fairly long analyses of the

writings, both as regards subject matter and the character revealed in them. The final summing up of each censor is as follows:

First Censor:

1. The writings of the Servant of God, Edel Quinn, contain nothing contrary to faith or morals.
2. Many passages, especially in the reports of the apostolic work undertaken out of obedience and carried out with intense charity, give clear evidence that her practice of the virtues reached a heroic degree. From the day she arrived in East Africa her whole life, year after year, was consumed in the work of the apostolate. Her last will and testament proves that she possessed to perfection the poverty appropriate to a virgin dedicated to God. But her works follow her!

Second Censor:

It can truly be affirmed that this Servant of God, Edel Quinn not being able to realize her longing to enter a monastery and consecrate her life totally to contemplation, chose under the influence of the Spirit of God a life and an apostolate that were in some ways even more fruitful. One stands amazed at this simple woman who, armed only with an immense love for Mary and an overflowing charity towards her neighbour, crossed oceans and continents to carry to thousands the sweet balm of Mary's name. It can be said of her that in a short life she fulfilled a long time.

THEY KNEW HER

The Secretary:

"She was highly intelligent, most exact and conscientious in her duties and conducted the affairs of the office with courtesy, diligence and devotion. I realised that I was more than blessed in securing her invaluable services. Then there was that frank and winning smile and abundant sense of humour which made things so pleasant for me and for my customers. She was always smiling, and her smile was something to remember; it was something bright and frank, wholly attentive and understanding; it shed light around her. Edel had a wonderful gift of establishing friendly contact with everybody with whom she had to deal: her charming looks and open personality made an obvious impression on all those who conducted business with her.

"I can testify that during all the years since I left Dublin I have benefited by the protection and influence of Edel in many difficult and even dangerous circumstances, and on occasions when I seemed to be at the parting of the roads. In a life spent in various countries, in my happy married life, in the dangers and risks which faced us during the war years and in severe illness (all of which our children escaped), I received outstanding graces and blessings through the intercession of Edel Quinn.

"Hence, my sense of gratitude to her knows no bounds. I have experienced the strength of the spiritual links that bind and unite souls together and the remarkable efficacy of fervent prayer. I sincerely thank Providence for having permitted me to travel some of the road of life with Edel Quinn.

"I know that when my last hour comes and before my dear wife closes my eyes, I will make a last effort to pray: 'Edel Quinn, come to my assistance'. May the innumerable hearts which have been touched and influenced by the example, grace and virtues of this heroic lay missionary of the Legion of Mary address the same prayer to her now and always." (This is from Pierre Landrin who became Edel's employer when she was nineteen. See Chapter 3 of Cardinal Suenen's *Edel Quinn*)

THANKS TO EDEL QUINN

"A BAD LITTLE BOY"

"As a legionary I read with interest the small leaflet about Edel Quinn which chanced to come my way. I read the part about favours and thought of a lad who seemed to be a really bad little boy (in fact he had stolen 4 toys from my young daughter that very afternoon). He was in trouble all the time and seemed a hopeless vandal — his family were much the same and I thought if only that boy would show some little sign. . . . Two days later the boy knocked at my door and offered the toys back. I can't tell you how strange an occurrence that was, strange enough to make me write to you anyway". (From Wales)

DOCTORS GAVE NO HOPE

"Recently I read of favours received through the intercession of Edel Quinn. I too would like to tell of her help in obtaining a wonderful answer to prayer.

"Some years ago my husband, who had been suffering from severe stomach pains, underwent a major operation. For a while before that, I had been praying to Edel Quinn for him. After the operation I was most distressed to be told that his condition was much more serious than at first thought and that he had only six to twelve months to live. Yet even then I felt sure my prayers would be heard. All of those who were told the news — priests, nuns, legionaries — we all prayed and had masses offered that Edel Quinn would intercede for us.

"Time went by and my husband came home and improved in health, thank God, until one day, about a year and a half later, pain returned. I prepared myself to accept the worst but somehow I felt sure all would be well. After the usual tests, he got the wonderful news that all was clear and that his latest complaint was nothing more than a severe bout of indigestion — which, incidentally had by then cleared up.

"I write this because I sincerely believe that Edel Quinn did, and does, intercede for us and that she is heard. And I ask that anyone who reads this may pray for her canonization, that God may be further glorified through her." (From U.S.A.)

A LIFE TRANSFORMED

"I wish to tell you this marvellous miracle through the intercession of Edel Quinn.

"I had the most worrying four years with my daughter, now 19 years old. She was involved in bad company, even missing from home. Then she suffered from 'nerves', she was paralysed with fear. She couldn't get employment — she didn't work at school! She was terrified to go out — she wouldn't go out; it was pathetic! I was begging the Sacred Heart and His dear mother for years. Then I was given a leaflet about Edel and I prayed to her. Immediately my daughter was given the address of a job in an office. It turned out to be a lovely job with a wonderful firm in which she is completely happy. She got her confidence back and now she is a fulfilled happy girl. I cannot say how grateful I am to God and His Blessed Mother and to dear Edel Quinn. I have now joined the Legion of Mary." (From England)

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