

175 PASSENGER JET AIRLINER:

A 707 for OUR LADY!



by John M. Haffert

We had planned to take the International Pilgrim Virgin around the world beginning at the very time this issue of SOUL Magazine is reaching its readers.

However, the cost of chartering a plane for such a long trip suddenly increased beyond our expectations.

The Nagging Thought

But one thought kept nagging me: Father Joseph Slaby had written from Korea several times to say that they were looking forward to the coming of the Pilgrim Virgin to Korea on its flight around the world so that they could have a special ceremony at the Freedom Bridge—the most explosive point of contact between the free world and the Communist world at the present time.

More Important than China

Last year The Blue Army in Korea conducted an All-Night Vigil at the Freedom Bridge. More than 10,000 participated for the entire night, in pouring rain, to the astonishment and confusion of the Communists of the north. Even the Cardinal of Seoul participated, as did many priests and bishops from all over Korea.

Now they longed to have the "Queen of Peace" come to Korea (So far the International Pilgrim Virgin has never visited there.)

"Even if we are not given entry into China," the thought kept nagging, "we ought to take *Our Lady around the world and behind the Iron Curtain at this time* if for no other reason than to have that ceremony at the Freedom Bridge."

And then Our Lady seemed to give me an extraordinary sign.

Sign from Heaven?

I had gone to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis—St. Paul to help with an All-Night Vigil last September and as I walked into the church I met Father Joseph Slaby from Korea at the door! He had come just a few days before with some orphans, and had taken advantage of his coming to visit his family in the Twin Cities. He made the All-Night Vigil with us, celebrating the closing Mass of the First Saturday. I shared with the Vigilers my concern about taking the Pilgrim Virgin around the world and that I had been particularly thinking of the celebration at the Freedom Bridge in Korea, and that now that Our Lady seemed to have sent Father Slaby to us on this particular night of prayer—the very priest who had been writing to me from Korea about this project. Did this indicate that we should go ahead no matter what the cost? I begged them to please pray that we would find a solution.

That same day, at a dinner in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., it was decided that a private group would buy a 707 "for Our Lady."

The plane will be painted in Our Lady's own colors with the symbol of The Blue Army (the praying hands holding the Rosary) and named "Queen of the World."

"Can Hardly Believe..."

After all, Pope Pius XII said of the Pilgrim Virgin: "In 1946 I crowned *Her Queen of the World* at Fatima, and the following year *She set forth as though to claim Her dominion* and the favors She performs along the way are such that we can hardly believe what we are seeing with our eyes."

It was just 30 years ago that I was privileged to be one of those who accompanied the International Pilgrim Virgin from Fatima and I remember the Bishop of Fatima saying: "We never believed we would see the wonderful things that we have seen."

Now, 30 years later, as I realize that we have taken the decision to actually buy a 175 passenger Boeing jet for the "Queen of the World"—as though in fulfillment of the prophecy made by St. Catherine Labouré over 100 years ago—indeed we would never believe the wonderful things we are seeing.