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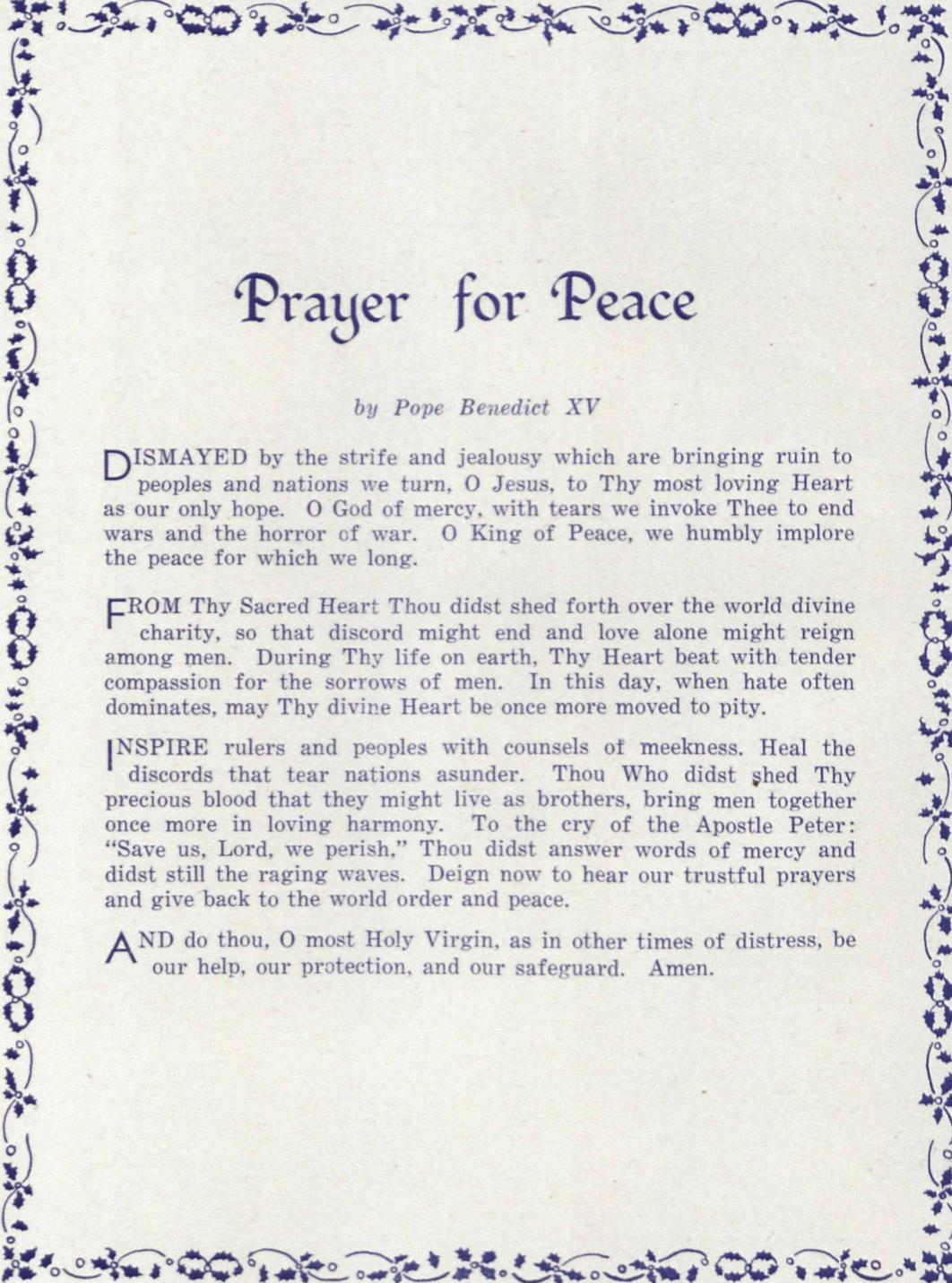
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**Christmas 1942**

**Vol. 19 No. 1**

Outdoor Crib of Our  
Lady of Guadalupe  
Mexican Parish, Chino,  
California.

A decorative border of small blue flowers and leaves surrounds the text.

## Prayer for Peace

*by Pope Benedict XV*

**D**ISMAYED by the strife and jealousy which are bringing ruin to peoples and nations we turn, O Jesus, to Thy most loving Heart as our only hope. O God of mercy, with tears we invoke Thee to end wars and the horror of war. O King of Peace, we humbly implore the peace for which we long.

**F**ROM Thy Sacred Heart Thou didst shed forth over the world divine charity, so that discord might end and love alone might reign among men. During Thy life on earth, Thy Heart beat with tender compassion for the sorrows of men. In this day, when hate often dominates, may Thy divine Heart be once more moved to pity.

**I**NSPIRE rulers and peoples with counsels of meekness. Heal the discords that tear nations asunder. Thou Who didst shed Thy precious blood that they might live as brothers, bring men together once more in loving harmony. To the cry of the Apostle Peter: "Save us, Lord, we perish," Thou didst answer words of mercy and didst still the raging waves. Deign now to hear our trustful prayers and give back to the world order and peace.

**A**ND do thou, O most Holy Virgin, as in other times of distress, be our help, our protection, and our safeguard. Amen.

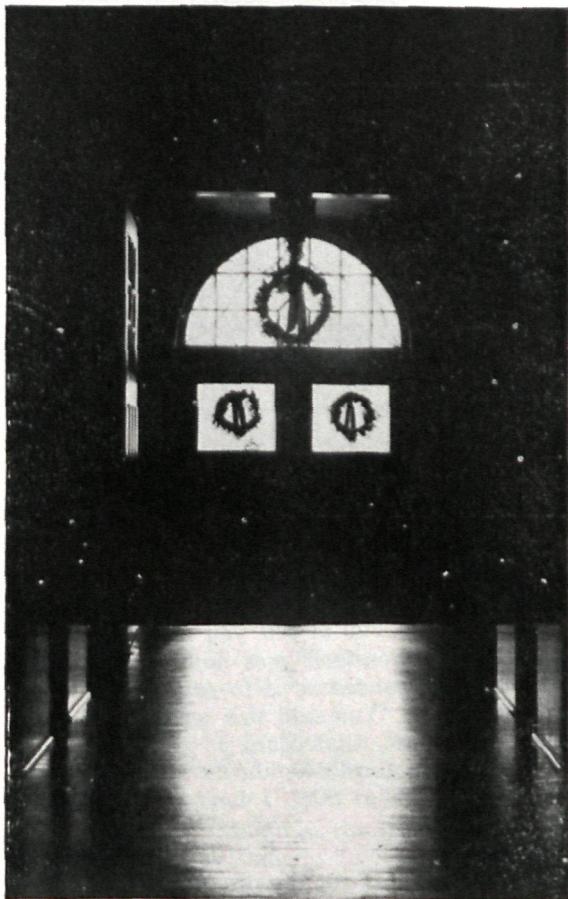
# The Missionary Catechist

Volume 19

December 1942

Number 1

## The Crib and The Cross



*Beyond Victory-Noll's chapel entrance is the snowy patio with its evergreens looking like so many Christmas trees covered with snow and ice and strung with colored lights.*

ARTISTS depicting the Nativity of Our Lord frequently introduce the shadow of the Cross into that joyous scene. The incongruity in such a picture is only seeming for in the divine plan of Redemption Bethlehem and Calvary are not separated. One exists for the sake of the other. Without Bethlehem there would have been no Calvary and without Calvary there would have been no need of Bethlehem. To the Blessed Infant weeping on the straw in the manger of Bethlehem, Good Friday and Calvary were already a painful, though welcome, reality. God, at the Incarnation of His Son, commanded that He should be called Jesus—Savior. That meant bloodshed and the Cross. The heavy clouds of Calvary rising on the joyous horizon of Bethlehem help us to comprehend a little the necessity of suffering in our own lives.

CHRISTMAS this year is more like Good Friday to the world at war. The shadow of the Cross falls darkly across the Crib. Fearfully we Catholics contemplate the awful spectacle of man in the death throes of a universal war. With the inspired writer we exclaim in dismay, "Sin has done this thing!" and—rightfully—we strike our own breasts. But even now, upon the night of our sorrow, breaks the voice of Holy Mother Church, compassionate, hopeful, glad: "This day is born to you a Savior Who is Christ the Lord."

CHRIST has come and we are His. From the depth of our souls wells up a fountain of peace. Looking beyond the pain and sorrow of this life, we envision the eternal happiness opened to us by our Redeemer, if we but remain faithful, and we "rejoice in our Savior." It is Christmas again and we are glad.

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# My Mother

by Reverend Roger Charest, S.M.M.

THE first snow of winter was beginning to fall upon the church lawn. It was the Feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

A tall, eager-eyed collegiate bounded across the carpet of gathering whiteness to meet the out-coming missionary who had preached that morning on Mary's Immaculate Conception.

"My name is Jack Summers, Father," nervously ventured the youth. "I liked that talk very much."

"I'm glad you liked it," playfully snapped back the young priest; adding with a somewhat roguish smile: "If you're really interested I can even let you read the book I purloined it from!"

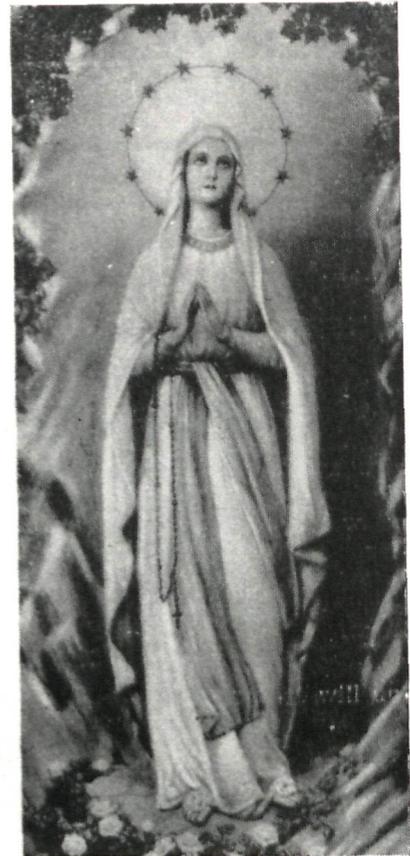
"Oh, don't bother, Father," chuckled Jack, quickly regaining his conversational composure. "Besides, I really don't believe that books could contain such beautiful things concerning Our Lady as those you revealed to us this morning. It seems to me that books of that savor would sell like hot-cakes!"

"Well, Jack, you may be wrong in saying that books of that sort don't exist, but you're certainly right in declaring that they would sell like hot-cakes. The book I'm referring to DOES sell like hot-cakes!"

With a swish of the arm the missionary delved into his right pocket and triumphantly drew out a neatly-bound book, about the size of his hand. "Here it is!" he exclaimed with pride. "Would you like to read it yourself?"

But before the amazed youth could answer, the missionary pursued: "Now, before I let you read it, you must first tell me the object of your kind intrusion. I'm sure you didn't come to me just to stifle me with a few grains of smoky incense."

"You see, Father," stammered the young philosopher, "I've always had devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and in fact I've always considered



her my Mother; but to tell you the truth, I've never really understood *just how* Mary is my Mother." Jack paused as if to catch his breath, then continued: "You said this morning, just in passing of course, that Mary is the Mother of Christ and therefore that she is *our* Mother. I don't see the logic of that. I don't quite . . ." He fumbled for words.

"You don't just get the connection?" chimed in the priest. "You don't quite see how being the Mother of Christ entails necessarily being the Mother of all Christians?"

"That's right," nodded Jack, heaving a sigh of relief and satisfaction. "That's what I've always believed but never really understood."

"Won't you come inside?" asked the priest warmly.

"So I see you're a philosopher, Jack," resumed the priest as he ushered the young man to a comfortable chair in the rectory, while he himself sat down at his desk. "Yes, you said that you didn't quite see the logic of it all. Well, if you want to talk logic, let's do so!"

Again pulling out the little book from his pocket, the missionary quietly thumbed its first few pages. Suddenly his countenance beamed and he cried out with enthusiasm: "Here it is, Jack! the very answer you are looking for. Listen to what Blessed de Montfort says in his 'Treatise on True Devotion to Mary': *If Jesus Christ the Head of men is born in her, the predestinate, who are the members of that Head, ought also to be born in her, by a necessary consequence.*"

"That sounds a little like what I said doesn't it, Jack? Let's see how he goes on to explain this: *One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members or the members without the head; for this would be a monster of nature. So in like manner, in the order of grace, the Head and the members are born of one and the same mother.*"

"Gosh, Father," interrupted the youth as if coming out of a daze, "I never thought of that. It all seems so simple now. I could kick myself for not having thought of that before!"

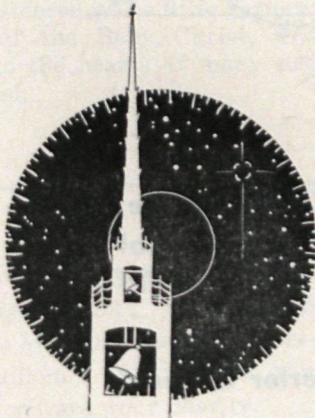
"Not so fast, Jack," cautioned the priest, "save your kicks for the next foot-ball game. Let's see if you really grasp the whole truth. Construct the syllogism for me in three tightly-bound phrases."

"I think it's easy enough, Father, if you let me use Blessed de Montfort's own words. Here goes:

She who is the Mother of the Head is also the Mother of the members.

Mary is the Mother of the Head (of the Mystical Body) which is Christ.

Therefore, Mary is the Mother of all the members of that Body."



"Therefore, she is our Mother!" concluded the zealous priest. "Excellent reasoning, Jack. Your logic is flawless. But I still wonder if you have hit the rock-bottom truth of that reality? Let's see . . . You said that since Mary is Mother of the Head she is also Mother of the members."

"That's right," mumbled Jack, "that's what Blessed de Montfort says."

"Well," continued the priest, "why is it that the mother of George Washington is not also our mother—or grandmother, if you wish? You grant, with legitimate pride, that he was the Father of our Country, don't you?"

The young logician looked puzzled. His features broadened into a smile, then contracted pensively as he placed his right hand under his chin in an attitude of deep concentration. The missionary watched his guest with keen satisfaction. Here before him was a young man, one out of a thousand, who sensed the supernatural and craved to feed upon it.

"I've got it, Father," he shouted and jumped from his seat.

"The mother of George Washington gave birth to the man who afterwards became the Father of our Country. I mean that his mother had nothing to do with the fact that he became the first President of our country. Therefore, she can in no way be called our mother."

"Well said!" beamed the missionary. "That's what I call cogent reasoning. Now, can you tell me why the Blessed Virgin is not in the same case as the mother of Washington, with regards to all Christians?"

Jack began to smooth back his long black hair in meditative silence. Once or twice the priest thought he was praying, for he saw the youth's lips move, but that was only Jack's way of accelerating his thinking dynamo.

After a few moments of deep quiet the thinker shrugged his shoulders and admitted. "I know it's not the same thing with Mary and the mother of Washington, but I don't yet see just where they differ."

"You've struck a clue when you say that they are not the same," agreed the missionary.

"You're right in saying that the mother of George Washington had nothing to do with the fact that her son became the first President of our Country. Now you should add, 'but Mary did have something to do with the fact that Christ is the Savior of mankind.' In other words, there is an intimate relation between Christ the Head of the Mystical Body and Mary. Mary gave to the world not a mere man, but a REDEEMER Who was a Redeemer from the very moment of His existence in His Mother's womb. Mary said her 'Fiat' to the angel only after she had been assured that He Who would be born of her was to be the Savior of the world, the Head of the Body of which you and I were to be members. That is why the Church calls her *The Cause of Our Joy*, i.e., the cause of our Salvation! That is why in giving life to the Head she also gave life to His members, to you and me. That is why she is OUR MOTHER!"



"I get it, Father," he gasped joyfully. "It is all so simple after all, but I perhaps never would have guessed it myself!" Slowly and fervently he repeated: "Mary consented to become the

The priest paused in his syllogistic tirade to study the face of his youthful listener. That astronomer of divine truth had at last sighted his long-sought star!



Mother of the Redeemer, the Head of the Mystical Body, and that is why she is, in the strictest sense of the word, the Mother of the members of His body; that is why she is MY MOTHER!"

The missionary's heart leaped with joy as he witnessed the light penetrate into that soul. "Here's the little book that will reveal to you many another such consoling truth," he said as he handed Jack Blessed de Montfort's masterly Treatise on True Devotion to Mary. The warm handshake Jack gave him on leaving, spoke volumes of joy and gratitude.

"Christmas is near," murmured the priest to himself as he watched his youthful guest homeward-bound. "There's a soul that will understand better the mystery of Bethlehem."

His eyes were moist with tears of joy as they rested upon the growing beauty without, and his thoughts were of Mary for the snow was now falling in white sheets—pure, immaculate.

*Today Christ is born: today the Savior hath appeared: today the angels sing on earth, the archangels rejoice: today the just rejoice, saying, Glory be to God on High, Alleluia.*

—Antiphon at the Magnificat of Christmas Day.  
Intimate Exchanges



**WE wish you a happy and blessed Christmastide, filled with that heavenly peace and spiritual joy which is the special gift of the Christ Child and His holy Mother.**

**Catechist Catherine Olberding, Superior General  
and  
The Missionary Catechists**

# Christmas Baby

by Catechist M. Kathrine Ley

"I wonder who the Christmas baby will be this year?"

MANY times during these busy days of preparation for the coming of the real Christmas Baby, this query can be heard. This time last year it was the same. One Crusader of St. Theresa meets another and the topic of conversation is always the same—the Christmas baby, who will it be; and the layette for it, those tiny soft garments which stir the instinct for mothering so sweetly planted in the hearts of these "little women."

THE Christmas baby that the Crusaders so excitedly talk about, will be the baby who is born closest to Christmas at our local hospitals here in Ely, Nevada. And when you look at this photo of one of last year's Christmas babies, Richard Anthony Bustos, smiling his best thank-you smile, it is not difficult to understand the Crusaders' enthusiasm.

LAST year the Crusaders provided layettes for two Christmas babies. They had quite a time raising funds to purchase them; but the proceeds from the sale of beautiful folding Christmas cribs, plus the help of some friends of our mission, made the double gift possible. This year, however, because of the financial pressure everywhere, the Crusaders decided to give just one layette. It will be purchased with the *sacrifice pennies* saved by them during the month of November, a penny a day.

WHILE the Crusaders are anxious to know who the fortunate baby will be, it really will not make any difference, because race or creed are not considered. The little garments are given in honor of the Baby Christ, who when He came, found the hearts of many cold, and their charity dead.



Richard Anthony Bustos, Christmas Baby 1941

THIS year, as last, the layette will be on display at one of Ely's leading stores. Then when the Christmas baby has made its debut, the Crusaders, dressed in their distinctive capes and hats, will deliver their gift personally.

THE Crusaders' enthusiasm is contagious. The doctors and nurses at the hospitals are quite as interested as they, and hope that the lucky little one will make its appearance in their hospital.



HAVE you made your Christmas offering for the missions yet? Send it in honor of the divine Babe of Bethlehem, to Victory-Noll, Huntington, Indiana. He Himself will bless you for it, and reward your charity.

BOOKS are lasting and treasured gifts. Among those which should have a place on your gift list is TRUE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN by Blessed De Montfort. Order from THE MONTFORT FATHERS, Bay Shore, New York. Imitation leather, \$1.00.

# A Christmas In New Mexico



DEAR Catechist,

You would never guess what a joy it is to keep the promise I made while you were here about half a year ago, to write you about our Christmas in New Mexico.

NOW that you are a happy novice at Victory-Noll training for missionary work, perhaps a mission appointment will be bringing you back to New Mexico someday—not just to visit but to stay, at least for a while. I know that you are more eager than ever now to hear about “Las Posadas” so that you can be with us in spirit during our Christmas Novena.

NINE days before the feast of Christmas itself Las Posadas begins. On these nine days we must be up early, for each morning a Mass is offered in honor of the Virgin Mary—Las Misas de la Virgen. In the evening we eat our supper early in order to be at the church when the Posadas begin. Our little church is lit up by many, many candles. Everyone holds a lighted candle during the recitation of the Novena prayers, and during the procession which follows. Four altar boys lead the procession, carrying beautiful statues of the Holy Travelers, Mary and Joseph. We sing “Vamos todos a Belen”—a Spanish Christmas hymn meaning, “Let’s all go to Bethlehem, to obey the great command”—until we arrive at the home designated as the first stop on the way. Remaining outside we sing in Spanish the same touching appeal made by Joseph on that memorable night when he arrived at Bethlehem with Mary, seeking shelter: “Who will give shelter to these pilgrims who are tired from traveling.”

A GROUP of singers inside the house responds with the next verse of the hymn: “There is not an empty corner that we can give. But the field is empty and in it you can find shelter.” Thus the procession pauses before one house after another, until all the verses of the Posadas hymn asking for shelter have been sung. At each home we are refused, as were Joseph and Mary. Finally we arrive at a home that opens wide its doors and the family invites us to come in. A beautiful altar has been prepared for the Holy Travelers. We recite a few prayers and then leave the Holy Travelers on the altar, as if still on their journey. We each receive some Spanish cookies and candy, but do not eat the sweets for we are told to keep them until Christmas. Then we will have something to give to children who come to our door to ask a gift on Christmas day.

ON the following evening we go to the home where we had left the statues the day before, and recite the Novena prayers before the altar there. Again we carry the Holy Travelers in procession, going from house to house to ask once again in song for shelter. The same voices sing their sharp refusal as on the evening before, making us understand how dear Mary and Joseph must have felt. At last we arrive at another home which opens its doors and again we are invited in. Once more we see a lovely altar which has been prepared as a resting place for the statues we carry.

THUS do we go in procession, and sing and pray, each evening of the Christmas novena. All too quickly the last day arrives, but happily it brings a still more touching devotion—and the glad feast itself. On this day we do not have to be at the church so early, but we do eat our supper early as usual and go promptly to bed. At eleven o’clock we are awakened, and hurry to the home where the statues of our Holy Travelers are. In procession they are taken back to the church, where the final novena prayers are recited. The Posadas hymn is sung as usual and the church doors are opened wide just before midnight. About twenty little girls dressed in angel gowns, preceded by the altar boys and followed by all the children of the parish, march in singing “Noche de Paz”—Silent Night. They have brought with them the statue of the Divine Infant, and now it is lovingly laid in the crib.

AFTER the Midnight Mass we hurry home in the bitter cold to a warm breakfast, and then go into the front room where the Christmas tree waits patiently to show off the gay silvery trimmings that hang from its branches. In the center of the room from the ceiling hangs something that looks like a round package. It is a “Pinata,” and what fun we have as each one takes her turn to try, blind-folded, to strike the package and break it open. When at last someone succeeds there is a shower of fruits, nuts and candy. Then what a merry scramble we have as each one tries to secure a share of the sweets. Suddenly we are interrupted by the sound of voices, the singing of children outside our door. We give them some of our Christmas candy, and then quickly don our winter furs in order to join them in singing lovely carols throughout the village.

SIX o’clock has come before we return home, tired but so happy. And now this Christmas I shall have the added happiness of knowing that even though you are far away at Victory-Noll, you are here in spirit praying and singing “Las Posadas” and enjoying “La Noche de Paz” and the “Pinata” right along with us.

Your Mission Friend,

Dolores



# I Want To Be A Star

From childhood  
I had been a movie fan.  
Pictures of film celebrities  
were pasted  
all over my room.  
Circumstances, which I lamented,  
rendered it futile  
for me to aspire  
to the silver screen.  
But if I ever had a baby . . .

My husband proved a movie fan  
also;  
so it was not surprising  
that our baby  
seemed on the way to Hollywood  
while yet in her cradle.  
Among the first words she uttered  
were these:  
"I want to be a star too,  
when I get big."

Years passed quickly.  
Then one December day  
my baby—now six years old—  
was invited to a Christmas party  
sponsored by the Catechists.  
She returned,  
not flushed and hilarious  
but pensive and quiet.

"Mother," she reproached me,  
"Why didn't you tell me  
about the real star—  
the one that led the three Kings  
to the Baby Jesus?"  
I felt a pang of guilt.  
My baby, now no longer a baby,  
had never heard  
the Christmas story  
from my lips.

"You tell me about it, Darling,"  
I begged.  
She climbed into my lap  
and told it all,  
from Adam's Fall  
down to the Star of Bethlehem  
and the three Kings' homage  
at the Crib of Christ.  
A long story that was,  
but it had been woven  
by the Catechist  
into a short, simple act of love—  
God's love for man.  
How it had impressed itself  
upon the heart and mind  
of my child!



After the Show

"After the party,"  
she continued,  
"I asked Catechist to show me how  
I could find the Baby Jesus too.  
Would God light a new star for  
me?"

And Catechist said,  
'I will show you how and where  
to find Him  
If your mother will let you come  
to religion class with  
the other little boys and girls.'

"Mother, may I go?  
And Mother. . . .  
If Catechist leads boys and girls  
to Jesus  
just as the star led  
the three Kings,  
she must be a star too!"

I watched my child's glowing face  
in silence,  
realizing that I had foolishly  
tried to fill a heart which was  
starving for God  
with the dross of earthly vanity.  
She broke in  
upon my painful reflections  
with a familiar refrain:  
"Mother, I want to be a star!  
A REAL star!  
I want to lead all the people  
to the dear little Jesus.  
I want to be a Catechist. . . .  
A living Star of God!"

—Mrs. J. M.





First adorer at the Crib in the mission church of Eldorado, Texas.

#### A Novel Way of Caroling

IN our mission the children from rural districts who attend catechism classes are taken home after class. Our pupils are a happy lot, entertaining the drivers and themselves on these trips with snatches of songs, and gay chatter, from the time they leave the church until the last child is taken to his doorstep. For weeks before Christmas nothing but Christmas hymns can be heard, interposed with bits of conversation, such as:

"I have saved all the holy pictures and prizes that I have ever received in catechism classes. I wrapped them up and put them away."

"I pinned all my holy pictures on my wall; the wall is almost covered with them."

"I pasted mine in a scrap book."

"Catechist, is it true that on Christmas night, at midnight, the cows kneel down?"

"If I don't go to Midnight Mass this year I am going to the barn to see for myself."

And so they chatter and sing until we hear the last goodby and "Thanks for the ride."

Catechist Nora O'Reilly



## In The Home Field



#### A Mission Church Wins A Crib

THE old Christmas Crib from Saint Mary's Church in San Angelo, Texas, was being raffled. Several of our mission churches would have been proud to possess a Crib of such dimensions and with so many figures. A number of people in our different missions took chances on it, hoping to win it for their respective churches.

In our opinion, Eldorado was most in need of a Crib. The previous year shepherds and Kings of paper had surrounded the small, humble statues of the Infant Jesus, our Blessed Mother, and Saint Joseph.

The night of the raffle we were as much interested in the winner as anyone else. Rosa, a young married woman whom we knew well, was the fortunate one. The next morning we went to convey the good news and at the same time to ask her to donate the Crib to the church in Eldorado. We explained how pleasing her sacrifice would be to the Infant Jesus. By giving this Crib to a very poor church many good people would be made happy and their devotion would be increased.

After consulting her, mother and several friends, Rosa agreed to part with the newly acquired treasure which was really too large for an ordinary Mexican home. She would exchange it for a statue of the Sacred Heart, if we could get one for her, since she already had a small Crib for her home. Fortunately, Brother Fidelis had sent us an eighteen-inch statue some time before. I had retouched it and it looked new. Rosa was very much pleased. She reverently kissed the statue and hastened to place it on her family altar.

The people of Eldorado, being very poor, could not buy many chances on the Crib. Yet several good women prayed that, somehow, their church would get it. Their simple faith was not at all surprised when the raffled Crib was brought into their church. They said, "We knew the Infant Jesus would hear our prayers."

Catechist Mary Ann Hitzler



The Missionary Catechist

#### Empty House—Empty Hearts?

TEACHING in the fruit camps was always a pleasure. My classroom—a room in a private home—was not large. The children were crowded, but the beautiful holy pictures and the little altar for the statue of the Sacred Heart, which loving hands kept surrounded with flowers and vigil lights, created an atmosphere in which everyone forgot the lack of conveniences. The Catechists and children had found a sincere welcome in the home of Mrs. Ramon for nearly ten years.

In the second week of December we drove to the camp for "Doctrina" as usual. The children came running with sad news: "Mrs. Ramon's house burned down!"

Yes, there it was—a heap of cold cinders.

"Where is Mrs. Ramon?" we asked.

"Living in an empty house."

We went in search of the Ramon family. What the children had said was literally true; the house in which we found them was empty! Mrs. Ramon met us at the door and invited us in. The room we entered contained one steel-frame cot, without mattress or cover, two empty lemon lugs and a bench.

We listened to the story of the fire. Mrs. Ramon had been alone in her kitchen when she noticed flames creeping along the ceiling. She tried to extinguish them with water and would probably have been lost in the burning building had not a neighbor rushed in and hurried her out. Everything was burned, even the winter clothing recently purchased with the money which the children themselves had earned picking nuts that summer. Mrs. Ramon was calm and resigned. She spoke words the content of which Holy Job had uttered centuries ago, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Could we teach in her house?

"Porque no?—Why not?" She answered with a gesture of her hand which indicated that we were welcome, as usual, to all she could offer.

The children were attentive in class. No one complained. As we talked of that December eve, over nineteen hundred years ago, when there was no room in hearts and homes for our Infant King, the children seemed to sense the fact that He would have found a gracious welcome here, even as we and they did in His Holy Name.

Catechist Theresa Egidy



Catechist Renkey and the chairman of the Sodality Eucharistic Committee select poinsettias for the altar. Note the height of the pionsettias.—Ontario, Calif.

#### Why Not?

IT seems that little children get the Christmas spirit early. During the first week of November I was giving a review of the first lessons in the catechism. "God is everywhere," I began. Without raising her hand, Joan, five years old, said: "Yes, and Santa is just around the corner." Four-year-old Ann agreed, adding, "And the Guardian Angel takes care of old Santa because he is good."

Catechist Marie Murphy

WE had the whole universe spread out before me, Jack and I. The sun and moon were shining brightly, and all the stars were golden.

"Now," I said, "you take the blue crayola, and go over the whole thing, like this. Make it quite dark, to look like the sky at night. But just go around the stars, don't go over them, or they won't be so pretty."

But Jack, listening with all the attentive earnestness of an interested six-year-old, was a little worried as to what he might do to God's wonderful world. As I concluded my demonstration he inquired confidently:

"Catechist, would you mind doing it for me? I'm afraid I might scribble on the stars!"



# To You

## Our Associate Catechists of Mary A Blessed Christmas!

**C**H R I S T M A S is everybody's feast. It is a feast that touches everyone's heart, even that of the most wizened old Scrooge. Love of the little Savior who is born makes us embrace all in our charity,

somewhat as did the Price Hill Sewing Ladies when giving donations from the proceeds of the mission-benefit party held early in the fall.

Mrs. J. J. Gries is president of this lay organization in Price Hill, Cinn., Ohio. It is she who tells us of the missionaries helped by their undertaking, a courageous one in these times.

"THE party was a grand success, thanks to the prayers offered for it. I am enclosing a donation for your Superior General, Catechist Olberding, to help her with the many calls from the mission field. Like donations are being sent to a Franciscan Father at Smith Lake, New Mexico; to a former assistant priest of our parish who is now in charge of a colored mission in Ohio; to St. Mary's Hospital and to St. John House affiliated with a work of charity among the poor. A home missionary, Father Meyer, likewise shared in the proceeds, as well as Catechist Leven in Los Angeles and a Maryknoll Sister in New York who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Puls of Cincinnati. She just returned from the Far East and by the way, as you know, has a sister, Catechist Clara Puls, with you. We likewise replenished our own treasury, and have promised Catechist Kaiser that the first linen bought with the money will be made into an altarcloth for your convent chapel in Goshen, Indiana.

"It doesn't take long to make disbursements; there are so many worthy mission causes! But we feel that a little to everyone helps matters along." You may be sure that we are deeply touched and grateful for the truly generous share allotted to us.

IT seems to have become a custom to include Little Flower Band II, Chicago, on our December ACM pages. But then it is the natural thing to do. Mrs. Helen Garrity and her loyal members are not only working hard to complete Holy Child Jesus Burse, but play "Santa" as well to countless mission poor all the year round. Mrs. Garrity's letters breathe the spirit of charity in which the work is carried on.

"As I write your retreat is over and now you are glad to begin another year in the service of the Queen of Heaven. One of our good members, Mrs. Noack, sponsored our last party and I am enclosing the proceeds. Every bit means a great deal nowadays, and our friends are so generous in helping. God bless their charity."

★ ★ ★

ANOTHER contribution has come to our ACM office from the Florentine Mission Society, St. Louis. Mrs. Katherine Krueger is promoter of this active group, and a member, Regina Connors, sent their latest donation towards Catechist Leuchtefeld's Burse. Some of the members have the distinction of being enrolled in two ACM clubs, for they are likewise active in the Mother of Perpetual Help Band. May their loyal charity bring down God's blessing upon their boys in the service.

★ ★ ★

THE Thirteenth Annual Card Party was sponsored by Little Flower Mission Circle, Chicago, in September. As in the past a very successful one it proved to be. Miss Veronica Foertsch, Promoter, sent us the proceeds for the missionary they are sponsoring, Catechist Siegfried. She writes, "I received your recent letter regarding THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST magazine and note the arrangement to send it monthly to ACM Band members. We appreciate this very much, and trust that the efforts of the Bands will continue to increase, thereby aiding you in your work."

Our heartfelt thanks to you, members of Little Flower Mission Circle, for your generous effort to do so.

## A "Merry" Welcome to ACM!

FIRST ACM Band to be enrolled after activities were taken up again in the fall was St. Mary Philomena Band, Steven Point, Wis. Mrs. Philomena Levenduske is both organizer and promoter. It is a joy to welcome her and her co-workers among our Associates, and to share with them the spiritual benefits granted to active members.

Mrs. Levenduske thus described their first meetings: "I am enclosing the amount which we made at a card party held on September 21, after we had organized our newly formed Band in August. It was our happiness to have Catechist Margaret Campbell with us that day, and she talked to a group of twelve women, all members now of this Band. We have agreed to meet once a month at one of the member's homes, and play cards and bunco. Each one will donate twenty-five cents, to be sent to you for your mission work. Many thanks for our membership cards. The prayer to be said daily for the Catechists is a beautiful one."

### Christmas Box

THE Srillians of Our Lady of Sorrows, Cheviot, Ohio, and the four members of St. Bridget Band, Bellevue, Ky., (Grace M. Kern, promoter) are working together again on their Christmas box for our El Paso mission, as they did last year. Rita Busche, promoter of the Srillians, tells us what a gala time they had last Christmas getting it ready for shipment:

"Altogether we had sixteen girls here. Clothing and beads covered the table, and the soft stuffed dogs we had made covered the desk. All in all we wound up with four boxes to send to El Paso Mission; newly made acquaintances, and happy hearts.

"Then we had our Christmas party on the eighteenth. First of all we packed a box of goodies as our Christmas gift to the Catechists in El Paso. Later in the evening we played games and then had refreshments. This was our third Christmas party since our Band organized, and we enjoyed it as much as our first and second; but then we always enjoy our meetings. You may be surprised at the enclosed money order, and think we made a mistake. But part of the donation is our Christmas gift towards Catechist's Burse. The rest is our regular contribution."

December, 1942

WE have already told you about Blessed Virgin Sodality's "Shower of Stamps" for our missions; now our new Sodalist-Associates in Our Lady of Good Counsel Band, Granite City, Ill., seem like old friends. Though our file overflows already with ever welcome correspondence from this zealous group, they were only recently formally enrolled among our Associates. Miss Melba Reis is Promoter, their first member is their pastor, Rev. Michael Costello, and Rev. J. V. Dineen is Director of the Band. They are sponsoring Catechist Radler as their missionary, and have already made her feel the warmth of their charity. May we enjoy many years of happy work together for the mission cause!

★ ★ ★

COMPLETE reports have not yet been received at the present moment of the two ACM Parties sponsored by our Chicago Associates (these December pages are being written in October). However, we are happy to say that both were highly successful, thanks to the loyal and generous cooperation of our ACM members in and near Chicago. We hope to give you a detailed report in the January issue.

### Christmas Angels

OUR ACM members have a big share in the Catechists' Christmas celebrations, not only in spirit but often by helping make them a bit more beautiful for our people. Last year St. Anne's Band, in St. Joseph, Mich., contributed towards Christmas joy in our Tulare, California Mission in a special way. Mrs. M. M. Wright described their activities when she wrote soon after



the feast:

"Our Band has been working steadily, making Sacred Heart badges and mounting holy pictures. At these meetings we also held a shower of baby clothes, so that by Christmas we had a nice box to send to Catechist Josephine Miller. Catechist asked if we would make costumes for their "angels" to wear at the Midnight Mass and during processions. We held a Bingo to raise the money, and when buying the material explained what we wished to use it for. We were kindly given a reduction and no tax was charged. The costumes were lovely when finished, so rich looking. Our own Christmas was all the happier for having done our bit to help make it a happy one in the missions."



# Alice's Christmas Present



by Catechist Bernadette Doiron

THE arid little out-mission lies white in the sunshine. The rays of the sun are reflected back from dusty roads, from rocky yards and the yawning expanses of deep gravel pits. A few miles away are mountains cool with shade and icy tumbling brooks. Perhaps twenty-five miles farther the waves of the Pacific lap gently against the shore. But here one sees only dust and rock and a blinding light over all. The little village does not "bask" in the sunshine; it does not bake nor broil; it just lies there, laconic. And sometimes, we think, in that it reflects its people. Over them "God's light lies large," and yet most of them seem indifferent, lethargic, in regard to His laws and His love.

BUT oh, His love shines down upon this little village, serene and calm as the sunlight. It is the same yesterday, today and forever: the same love that made a white lily of the Little Flower of Jesus, and a blue 'forget-me-not' of Mary's little flower, Bernadette. It shines now upon our little Alice.

SHE lives in a home as poor as that of Bernadette. Perhaps two rooms, with a lean-to at the side for the battered car. Here, too, the children play. There are a few boxes of chickens and ducks in the backyard, plus a goat or two in narrow pens.

QUIET, timid, bashful, Alice came to the prayer class. She said little. She did not know her prayers, and her learning was painfully slow; yet she listened intently to every instruction. With her she brought her little brother, Felipe, a good child of five but mentally below the level of his age. Slow in all else, Alice watched over Felipe with the quick tenderness of a little mother. She seemed to understand his inability to care for himself.

THERE was, for instance, our Christmas party. It was held in the vestibule of the tiny church. We had decorated as well as we could with the poor materials at hand, had put out on display our supply of prizes, holy cards, medals, cookies, candy. The children received tickets according to regularity in class attendance, and with the tickets they might buy any of these articles. Oh, it was an exciting event! One guarded one's tickets carefully, and thought over all "purchases" well before spending one's precious "money"! Felipe was there, wide eyes tak-

ing in everything, "buying" some medals and holy cards, but above all—candy! Oh, yes, much candy. Nice, sticky candy! Busy with the others, suddenly I noticed him, eyes blissful but hands (nice and sticky too, by now) holding only a few pieces of Christmas candy. Momentarily worried, wondering if he had innocently spoiled and thrown away his good prizes, I asked him, "What did you do with your pictures, Felipe?" But the "little mother" was hovering near, and quickly Alice's hands were opened to show me: she was guarding both her own and her brother's precious treasures. Felipe could enjoy the party in blissful, sticky content. Little sister was caring for him.

AND yet—it was not really Christmas for Alice. Alice did not belong to the Baby Jesus. Alice had never been baptized. Here was that tragic lethargy staring back so indifferently into the sunshine of God's Love. The little soul for whom the Child Jesus came down to earth did not belong to Him—yet. But He has a way of seeking His own.



"CAN'TSHA wait . . . till tomorrow?" Big and burly her father stood by the door, a little unsteady on his feet, but momentarily sobered by the realization that serious things were happening. He spoke thickly. Maybe Alice wasn't so sick. Maybe tomorrow . . .

"YOU can wait until tomorrow to drink if you want to." Mrs. Garcia's usually pleasant voice was thin with scorn and quick with urgency. "But this child is going to be baptized today. I'm taking her right now." Carrying Alice's slight form in her arms, the good neighbor and madrina-to-be, admonished the weeping but unresisting mother, "It won't take long and we'll be back before the ambulance comes," and passed to the car where her son was waiting to drive her to the parish church.

IT had been a hard decision to make. Alice might be baptized at the county hospital to which the doctor had ordered her; but she might die on the way. The patient little face, weakly

trying to smile, could not hide the gasping breath, the twinging pain: leakage of the heart, the doctor had said. Mrs. Garcia was not lethargic now, thank God. It was time to act, and she was going to act. Praying that the ride might not harm the poor little patient, they drove the three miles to the parish church. Father Ducoyne was not at home. The housekeeper did not know just what time he would return.

WITH set lips, Mrs. Garcia spoke to her son: "Drive to Lawndale." He understood, and no word was spoken as they drove another four miles to the nearest town. The pastor was at home, and a few words of explanation brought him hurrying down to pour the precious waters of salvation upon Alice's head, to say over her the saving words that bring the God of Love into His chosen home of love—a human soul. Alice's human heart continued doing unnatural things, and her pale face and sobbing breath made her good madrina wince interiorly. But sanctifying grace had flooded all the corners of her Heart of Love—and what else mattered? If she died, she would go straight to Heaven.



Alice didn't die. When she finally fell asleep that night between clean white sheets, with a strange but very nice girl in white doing things to help make the pain stop, she found herself in a different world,—true, but not in Heaven. The Child Jesus was content just to exchange Christmas presents, to give Himself to Alice, and to give to Himself the gift of Alice! It was also a gift to His Catechists. We had been praying for this family for several years, but little expected such a sudden and dramatic answer to our prayers during the peaceful Christmas season. It was cause for Magnificats!

WHETHER it was the powerful grace of Baptism, or the temporary sojourn in that "other world" of quiet and cleanliness and kindly care—probably a combination of both—Alice was a different little girl when she returned to doctrina some weeks after classes had resumed. A gay little girl who came to meet me as fast as she could—not running, for the doctor had forbidden that, and Alice might not run nor play very strenuously for a long time. But eager to talk, laughing and smiling, seeming for the first time really cognizant of the joy of life and the

innocent pleasures of childhood. It was a joy to watch her; and more, it was a pleasure to teach her. For the dull little mind seemed wonderfully to flower in that precious gift of the Child Jesus. She learned her prayers quickly, and not only listened intently to the instructions, but retained them well. Soon she will be ready for her First Holy Communion; she never misses Mass on Sundays, and often she is the only member of her family to attend. Yes, it is sweet to see the light of God's love shining down upon Alice, His little "desert-flower" of California.



Mexican children visit the Crib in one of our missions near Santa Paula, California.



## "Mary" Christmas

To Mary's Loyal Helpers  
And Our Boys and Girls Everywhere!

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THERE is no better way to begin an undertaking than with our Blessed Mother. With her, then, we begin (and almost fill) these pages devoted to you, the boy and girl readers of our magazine. Like the story of Christmas, the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast we celebrate December 12, has often been told. Yet like the Christmas story—the most beautiful True Story ever told—its lovely simplicity makes us want to hear it again and again.

THIS true narrative holds a special interest and fascination for us Catechists. Much of our mission work is among the very people who are countrymen of Juan Diego; and Juan Diego is the hero of Guadalupe. Our Blessed Mother made herself visible to his eyes, and spoke with him in his native language, in Mexico just four hundred and eleven years ago. Juan was an Indian, fifty-five years old, unlettered and unworldly. His pure, simple heart won for him the affectionate love of the Queen of Heaven. To him she confided her desire to have a shrine built to her honor, where she might succor her people in the New World.

GUADALUPE is really the name of a picture of our Blessed Mother, but the church where the picture is kept and the town around the church are also called Guadalupe. The town of Guadalupe is in Mexico, only three miles away from the capital, Mexico City. As for the picture, there is not another like it on earth. No man or woman artist can claim the honor of having painted this masterpiece. The picture was executed by none other than the Mother of God herself.

THE story of Guadalupe begins on the morning of December 9, 1531. Juan Diego made his way hurriedly down the hill of Tepeyac towards

the city three miles away, anxious to be on time for Mass. It was a Saturday, the very day which the Church has consecrated to our Blessed Mother. Suddenly he stopped short, confronted by a beautiful Lady. She spoke to Juan reassuringly and asked him to take a message for her to the bishop. Juan did so, succeeding after much difficulty in getting an audience with Bishop Zumarraga. But when Juan, a poor unlettered Indian, told him that the Mother of God wanted a church built on the hill of Tepeyac, on the very spot where she stood while speaking to him, the bishop thought Juan was imagining things and would not give consent. That same evening and again on Sunday evening Mary made herself visible to Juan on Tepeyac Hill, to get the bishop's answer. Sadly Juan had to tell her that the bishop did not yet believe him, and would not promise to fill her request for a church.

ALL day Monday Juan Diego was kept at home, nursing his uncle who was seriously ill. No remedy helped him and early Tuesday morning, December 12, Juan once again hurried to the city. This time he went to call the priest, that his uncle might receive the last Sacraments before he died. To avoid being delayed by the Lady he purposely took another path. But a Mother cannot be deceived by her children. Mary knew. She crossed over to where Juan hurried along and said to him, "Son, what road is this thou takest?" Then she told Juan not to worry about his uncle. She would take care of him, but she wanted Juan to go again to the bishop with her message. Mary spoke with so much tenderness that Juan got up courage to tell her Bishop Zumarraga would believe him only if he received proof that she was really the Mother of God.

"GO to the rocks and pick roses," Mary told him, pointing to a rocky pile at the top of Tepeyac Hill. Juan knew that roses do not grow in such a place, nor was it the season for flowers. But without hesitating an instant he obeyed. And sure enough he found roses, more beautiful than any he had ever seen. He picked many and

carried them back to the Lady. Our Blessed Mother arranged them with her own hands and told him not to let anyone see them until he reached the bishop. There, kneeling before Bishop Zumarraga, he opened his cloak and the roses fell out upon the floor. Much to his surprise the bishop and all who were in the room knelt down, overcome by reverence and awe. Juan looked down. On his cloak, glowing in bright colors, he saw the life-size figure of the Virgin Mother of God, just as she had looked when she stood before him on Tepeyac Hill.

THE picture was kept in the bishop's chapel until the shrine Mary had requested was built. Then it was carried there in procession, and though from time to time more beautiful and costly shrines have been built, the picture of our Lady of Guadalupe remains the same. It may be seen and venerated today, still on the same coarsely woven cloth where Mary "painted" it with her own hands more than four hundred years ago.



IF you have had an opportunity to hear the Baroness von Trapp and seven of her ten children in one of their concerts, or have heard them on a radio program, then you know what a great pleasure and privilege it was to see and hear them in person at the National Catholic Rural Life Conference held in Peoria early in October.

THE Baron and Baroness von Trapp brought their children to America just four years ago, after their beloved Austria had fallen under German domination and it was no longer possible to remain loyal Catholics at home. The Baroness, in her first talk before an audience, told of their Catholic home life in Austria and of the heart-rending decision to leave home and country that they might continue their Catholic family life in a free land.

AMERICA is truly a favored country to have had such a family come to her shores. With them the Von Trapp family brought beautiful Catholic customs, carried out for years in their Austrian country home. One of these is a practice for Advent—a lovely one that you will want to try out with your own family at home.

ON the Saturday evening before the first Sunday of Advent the family gathers around the table which is bare, except for a large bowl in the center. Father reads the Gospel which the

priest will read at Mass on the following morning. (This is done, by the way, every Saturday throughout the year.) Then he says a few words about the lesson or advice it contains straight from the lips of our beloved Savior. If any of the sons or daughters think of something to say about it, they feel free to speak too. Then their attention is turned to that mysterious bowl which stands in the center of the table.

MOTHER hands it to father, who takes from it a little slip and then passes the bowl to Teresa who sits at his right. She too takes a slip of paper from the bowl, then passes it to the one next to her. Thus does the bowl go around the table until everyone has a bit of paper in his hand. All look at their slips, but no one tells anyone else what his slip says.

YOU see, on each small bit of paper is written the name of one member of the family. Let us say, for instance, that mother takes from the bowl a slip which reads "Mary," one of her daughters. Now, all during the four weeks of Advent mother must do little kindnesses and helpful, loving things for Mary. The other members of the family are doing the same thing for the one whose name was on their slip of paper taken from the bowl. Then on Christmas eve the family gathers in front of their small replica of Bethlehem and the stable where Jesus was born. Each one reveals the name that was on his slip. "And oh," the Baroness said, "how happy we are as each one hugs and thanks the one who was especially kind to him all during Advent for love of the little Savior."

THIS is only one of the Austrian customs that the Trapp family has brought to America. But I'd like to see it become an American custom too, wouldn't you? We can make it ours, by introducing it into our own family this Advent.

### It Isn't Too Late

You may still send for your special Advent Sunshine Bag, by filling out this coupon and sending it to "Mary's Loyal Helpers," Victory-Noll, Huntington, Ind.

Drop your sacrifice pennies into it during this holy time of Advent, to help our missions. A beautiful Christmas gift will be sent to you, our way of saying "thank you" for your Advent gift.

Your Name .....

Your Street .....

Your City .....

Your State .....



Someone's back yard makes a pleasant classroom for Catechist Conroy and her "angels". They are praying for their benefactors.—Ontario, Calif.

#### Much Gratitude for Little Gifts

ONE of the nicest things about our Christmas parties in the missions is the children's gratitude to God and to our benefactors. Every year we have fresh evidences of it. I recall an especially touching expression of thanks from a nine-year-old girl, Romelia by name. Last year I was preparing for our Christmas party at Upland and Romelia was helping me. The child feels very close to us since she has never known a real mother's love. Her own mother died at Romelia's birth. Suddenly Romelia paused in her work of packing the car with Christmas toys and goodies to ask:

"Catechist, where are all the good people who remember the little children you teach, and help you to buy such pretty things for them?"

I explained that those "good people" are all over the United States and that they give to the missions because they love God and want to help others love Him. She pondered for a while and then exclaimed:

"Do you know, Catechist, this morning I went to confession and tomorrow, for the Birthday of Jesus, I am going to give Him a light! And I am going to light it myself for the five pennies that I have been saving the last six months. And then, when He comes to my heart in Holy Communion, I will tell Him, 'I gave You a Birthday present, didn't I? Now, you must give me one. Do you know what I want, dear Baby Jesus? Please bless all the people who help the Catechists be good to us, and take them all to Heaven when they die'."

Catechist Sophia Renkey

*The Crib of Bethlehem in which Mary laid the Infant God was the first of our tabernacles, the bands in which she wrapped Him our first sacred linens.*



*It was a great thing for God to make Himself our Brother; a greater to become the Price of our Redemption; the greatest of all to give Himself to us as our Food in Holy Communion.*

—St. Thomas

#### IN MEMORIAM

AS our Society of Missionary Catechists grows and extends its activities we realize more and more what a debt of gratitude we owe to our first friends and benefactors—to those who sponsored us from the time of our Society's inception, through the days when its existence was a precarious thing, until now when its missionary efforts have multiplied its needs as well as its accomplishments.

Among those faithful first friends was Miss Ameiia Wolf of Elmhurst, Illinois, whom God called to her eternal reward on October 7. Miss Amelia Wolf, her sister Helen, and brother George were staunch promoters of our Community from its beginning. They gave every possible assistance to our missionary enterprise and were among the first to contribute generously toward the support of the pioneer Catechists and toward the establishment of mission centers. Throughout the years their friendship never failed. Our needs were considered among their most important interests. Their encouragement and help were always generously and cheerfully bestowed even when that meant great sacrifices on their part.

Our Society has lost a genuine friend in Miss Amelia Wolf. With her family and friends we mourn her passing, but we find consolation and joy in the fact that she has gone to the Judgment Seat of God with hands overflowing with spiritual treasures. One who has unselfishly sacrificed for Christ in the person of His mission poor will receive an exceedingly great reward for all eternity. God is never outdone in generosity.

May her soul rest in peace.

# Family Christmas 1942

A story by Anabel Wethington



Granny-Mom knew that the day before Christmas is no time to give way to indolence. Resolutely she drove her reluctant feet hither and yon about the big, comfortable house, from one to another of the countless household duties. For twenty Christmases she had hustled about in a similar manner, making happiness for her five boys.

Yes, it was exactly twenty Christmases ago that her daughter and son-in-law had been killed in a motor accident, leaving behind them their five forlorn seedlings whom Granny-Mom had taken at once to her heart and home. Dickie was six then; Donny four, the twins two, and baby Larry scarcely three months old. Heads and tongues wagged freely as neighbors sagely observed that five boys were "too much work and trouble" for an old lady. That was true, but too much work and trouble were just what Granny-Mom had needed to smother the grief and loneliness of her bereaved heart.



The five were a house full—and a heart full. Granny-Mom watched them grow up into splendid manhood with the jealous pride of parent and grandparent combined. Dickie had called her *Granny* at first. He had learned to do so while his parents still lived. Then the younger of the brood began calling her *Mom*, and it looked as though there would be trouble in camp. Donny, always the peacemaker, hit upon the happy compromise of calling her *Granny-Mom*. It sounded like the music of her singing, he said. That pleased everyone, especially Granny-Mom, so the name was unanimously adopted and it wore well throughout the years.

As memories of those first days with the children crowded in upon Granny-Mom she worked feverishly at the preparation for Christmas. There were so many things to be done. The house must be gone over; the furniture dusted. The tree must be decorated; the wreaths hung, and a candle placed in the window so that its light might guide the Infant King on His way. The table must be spread early. She herself must tidy up and be fresh and sweet as she presided at the evening meal—that meal which had been such a love-feast on each of the happy Christmases past.

The soft gray of the December twilight was shifting into darkness when Granny-Mom at last slipped quietly into her place at the table and folded her hands to say grace.



The dining room was more beautiful than it had ever been on any of their previous Christmases. The best silver was laid out extravagantly over the fine linen cloth. Crystal goblets and glasses and precious old china dishes smiled back at the candles which glowed with seemingly suppressed happiness as they stood expectantly amid the pine and holly sprays that formed the table decorations.

Granny-Mom sat silently waiting, with folded hands, herself the lovely, white-crowned center of all that festive beauty. Then a slight tremor shook her frame. She raised her head and looked about startled, like one suddenly awakened from the realms of happy dreams to the grim realities of life.

Staring across the exquisite spread before her she counted the empty chairs around the table—one, two, three, four, five! Then her eyes sought the window opposite her chair. A pendant hung above the candle which gleamed brightly there to light the way for the Little King that Christmas Eve. Illumined by the light below it, the stars sewed on the front side showed darkly through the white flag. Mechanically she counted them—one, two, three, four, five!

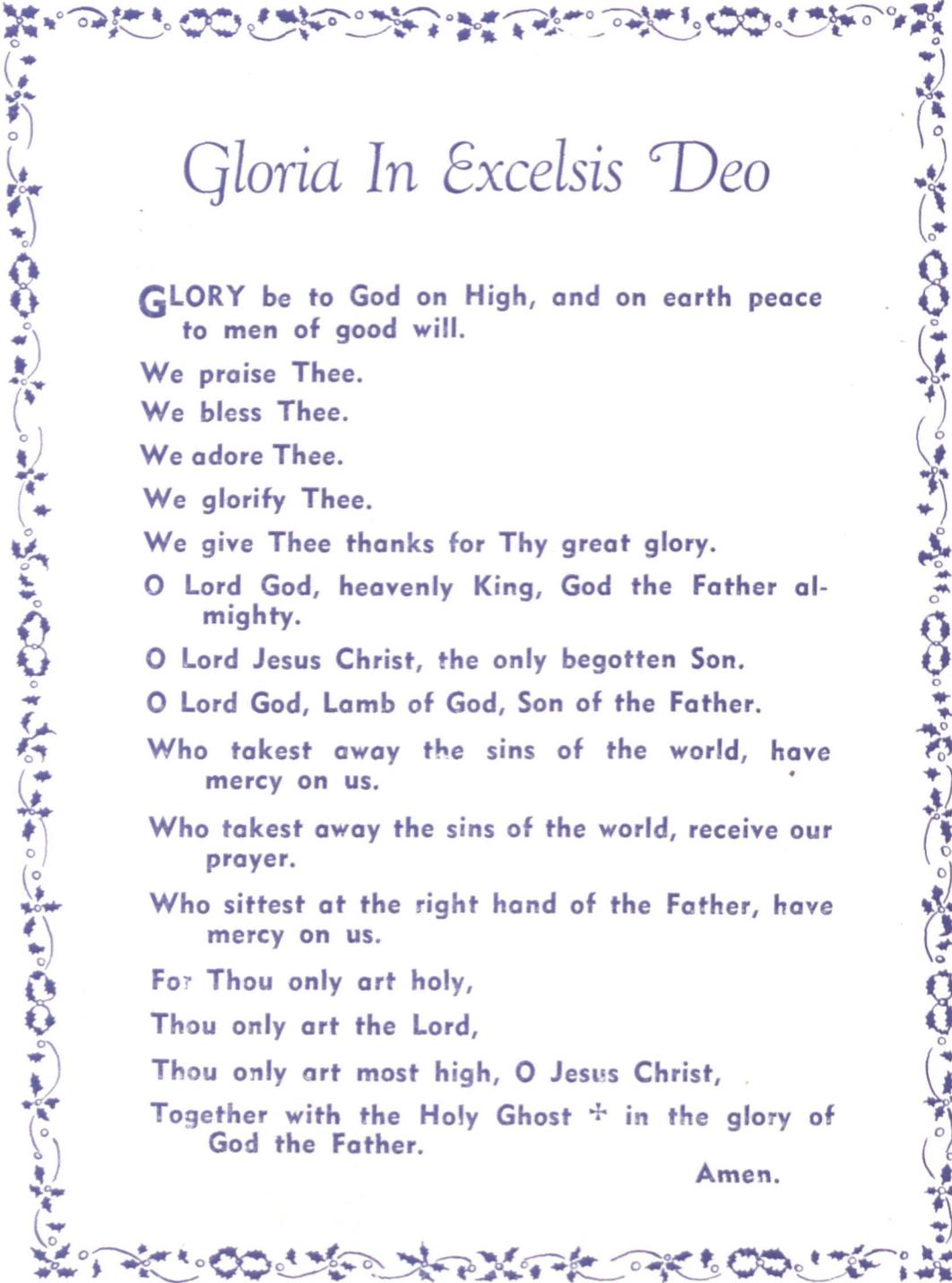


The candle, the Christ-light below the service flag sputtered, breaking the tense silence, and Granny-Mom's lips parted in a strange prayer.

"God, my Savior King! You took them all away to protect our land—Your land—and Your rights. Fill their empty places at my table and the void in my heart with Yourself . . . as You only know how."

Granny-Mom buried her face in her hands, then jerked it up with a triumphant gesture. A soft knock was sounding on the outer door!

The End

A decorative border of small flowers and leaves surrounds the text.

## *Gloria In Excelsis Deo*

**GLORY** be to God on High, and on earth peace  
to men of good will.

We praise Thee.

We bless Thee.

We adore Thee.

We glorify Thee.

We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father al-  
mighty.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Who takest away the sins of the world, have  
mercy on us.

Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our  
prayer.

Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have  
mercy on us.

For Thou only art holy,

Thou only art the Lord,

Thou only art most high, O Jesus Christ,

Together with the Holy Ghost † in the glory of  
God the Father.

Amen.