

The Missionary Catechist



December 1944



To all our subscribers, friends and benefactors, we wish the choicest blessings of our Infant Saviour at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

We pray that those hearts that are lonely because loved ones are following the call of their country, may be sustained by the love of the Christ Child.

We pray that those hearts that are suffering intense anxiety because loved ones are fighting the nation's battles far from home, may be consoled by the coming of the Christ Child.

We pray that those homes which have been saddened by the death of loved ones on the battlefields of the world, may be comforted by the presence of the Christ Child.

We pray that the Christ Child may love, guide and protect our fighting men wherever they may be.

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



The Missionary Catechist

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Gloria



Excelsis

In

Deo

Et In Terra Pax Hominibus

"AND the Angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which shall be to all the people; for there has been born to you today in the town of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.'" (Luke II-10, 11)

FOR four thousand years the Jewish people had awaited the coming of the Messiah. Yet this announcement was not made in Bethlehem to the descendants of David who were gathered there in accordance with the decree of Caesar Augustus "that the census of the whole world should be taken." (Luke II-2) No, it was to shepherds watching their flocks on the hills outside the city, that the Angel brought the glad tidings; the City of David had closed its doors to the Saviour, for "there was no room in the inn." (Luke II-7.)

ALMOST two thousand years later, the peoples of the world, enveloped in the throes of the most terrible war in history, look forward to the feast of Christmas and sigh for peace. But true and lasting peace can never prevail until the peace of Christ reigns in the hearts of men. If the world continues to close its doors to the Saviour of mankind, then it will seek in vain for the peace which the Christ Child came to bring.

IN the midst of a war torn world, let Catholic hearts rejoice this Christmas,—and always—for the Prince of Peace deigns to come into their hearts, bringing with Him that peace which the world cannot give.

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Our Blessed Lady of Victory Press, Victory-Noll, Huntington, Indiana

Our Protectress

By Lieutenant John J. Frawley, Chaplain, A.U.S.

OUR Blessed Mother wrote no books; she painted no pictures; she thrilled no audiences with her eloquence; she inaugurated no great reform. She spent her life in none of the brilliant spheres for which many of our girls seek today. She simply lulled a little Babe on her breast; she pressed Its face close to her mother heart; she went about her household duties there in a Nazareth kitchen; she filled her water pitcher at the well, lighted her fires, and prepared her frugal meals, unwaited upon, unattended by any, save the angels that hovered unseen. Yet through all ages past, and throughout all ages to come, her name is, and will ever remain, the most blessed among women.

WE AS Catholic citizens of these United States have occasion for rejoicing in the knowledge that this "Most blessed among women" is the patroness of our country. It is most logical that she should be our nation's patroness, for she has been identified with our country since its discovery by Columbus. The ship upon which Columbus came to our shores was named the "Santa Maria" and consecrated to the Immaculate Mother. The early history of our country is replete with many instances of devotion to the Mother of God.

IT WAS on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, in 1673, that Joliet, with Father Marquette, arrived on our shores to work among the people of the Mississippi.

"THE RIVER of Mary Immaculate, I name this western stream," said the black-robed Jesuit Father, as the crystal waters gleamed under the wand of the moonlight, and the night birds in the trees sang to the Great Creator their song of jubilee.

SO DEVOTED was Lord Baltimore to Our Lady as "protectress of America" that he named the colony of Maryland in her honor. Our country was officially dedicated to the Immaculate Conception by the Council of Baltimore in 1846.

"TO THE care of the Immaculate Mother I commend this western land," said the saintly Roman Pontiff, and he raised his anointed hand to implore the blessing of Heaven on America's valleys and plains, where freedom greets the exile and hope reigns everlastingly.

FROM the days of Columbus to the present times, devotion to our Blessed Mother has

continued throughout the land. Honor to her has increased on every side. Hundreds of churches bear her name, as well as many rivers, lakes, and mountain peaks. Towns and cities have been named after her, and almost every city has a street bearing her name. The Roman Catholic diocese of Fort Wayne and our own Cathedral are both under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. One of the oldest parishes, St. Mary's, honors her as patroness. One of our three rivers was named for her in the days when the Blessed Mother was "Our Lady of the Indians" of this territory. In our nation's capital city of Washington, D. C., we find the National Shrine of our Immaculate Mother.



DESPITE all this glorious honor paid to our Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception by the citizens of the United States, does it not seem strangely coincidental that our country, her country, should have been plunged into the horrors of war on the very day on which we were imploring her intercession and protection as patroness and guardian of our country? A strange coincidence, indeed; but,

(Continued on page 18)

Christus



Natus Est

"THIS is My Body. This is My Blood." Lo! He is here. He has just been born again in the hands of the Priest. The words of Consecration have brought Him down from the highest heavens. We bow low in adoration, for Christ, the God-Man, is on our altar.

BETHLEHEM once more. Yes, Bethlehem, the Last Supper and Calvary, blended into one. It is the Midnight Mass of Christmas. The Son of God is on our altar, under the appearance of Bread and Wine, just as truly as He was clothed in human flesh that first Christmas night in Bethlehem.

"LORD, increase our faith." We say it almost mechanically. We have prayed these many years for a greater realization of the Real Presence. We have believed from our tenderest years that in every Mass the words of the Priest, the same words that Christ used at the Last Supper, have brought upon our altar the Son of God. Faith, yes, thank God, we have faith; our prayer is for a more living, a more realistic, a more intense faith.

"DOMINE non sum dignus." We strike our breast. Truly we are unworthy to approach the Divine Infant. But was it not He who commanded us to receive Him? "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." (John VI-54.) We need no urging, eagerly we approach the holy Table; we receive Him into our heart; He rests there as He rested in the manger that first Christmas night. He whom the whole world cannot contain has come into our soul. We are wrapped in silent contemplation.

HOW cold and dark was that stable in Bethlehem, how uncomfortable that manger. The Son of God comes into the world and the world knows it not. Bethlehem closes its doors to the Saviour of Mankind. The Messiah for whom Israel has waited and sighed for four thousand years must be born in a cave used to shelter

animals. Ah, but He is surrounded by the most perfect love a creature could give Him. There is Mary, His Mother, bowed in humble adoration as she gazes lovingly upon her Son for the first time. Mary, the most perfect creature ever to come from the Hand of God,—Mary, the Masterpiece of the Triune God, is making up to Him for the coldness of men. Nearby is Joseph, filled with awe at the greatness of it all, uniting with Mary in adoration of the Divine Child. Shepherds come with simple faith and love to adore the newborn King. Unseen angels hover near, adoring the God who has so loved men that he has come down to earth, a helpless Babe.

MOTHER of God! can our hearts be colder, darker, more uncomfortable for Him than that stable in Bethlehem? On this night of nights a thoughtless world goes on, unmindful of the birth of its Christ. But we, His chosen ones, we in whose hearts He now rests as He rested in the manger on that first Christmas night, what sort of reception have we given Him? Has He full possession of our hearts; is He the undisputed Master of our lives? What about our gifts? Are we keeping back anything? Ah, let us not refuse Him all the love of our hearts on this Christmas night. Let us unite our love and adoration to that of the Mother of the Saviour.

THE Mass is finished. We kneel on, our hearts filled with thoughts of Mary and Joseph, of the Angels and the Shepherds, who knelt in adoration of their Infant God on that first Christmas night so long ago. But we need not envy them. The same God has, but a few moments ago, come upon our altar, He has united Himself with us in Holy Communion, He remains in the Tabernacle. Tomorrow morning, and every morning, He will be born again in the hands of the priest at the words of Consecration. He will be ours in the Sacrament of His love each day, please God, until that last day when our soul wings its way to heaven to enjoy Him for all eternity.

So This is Christmas --- in Texas!

by Catechist M. Alice James



The Newly-Professed, as she was still known after almost four months of mission life, stood looking out of the window. She did not want to admit that she was disappointed, even a trifle homesick. After all she was a Missionary! But Christmas was two days off and still she was not in the spirit of the beautiful feast. She had thrilled, as usual, to the loveliness of the Christmas Novena, with its pathetic yearning for the brighter day to come; she was grateful the Catechists sang the Novena.

And never would she forget her first Christmas Kermes (bazaar). The babies, as she called her Prayer Class, had turned into serious little men and women as they shrewdly and carefully with the attendance tickets they had received for coming to Religion classes. Wee Pablo had explained to her that his ten precious tickets would buy the coveted pop-gun, but what about Maria and Elena, his two small sisters? With a last longing look at the gun, he turned to the hair bows and picked a red one and a green one for five tickets each. His black eyes sparkled up at her as he told her the little girls needed something pretty to wear for the "misa del gallo" (midnight Mass). No, never would she forget her first Christmas Kermes in Texas!

And the "Shopping Tour!" She was so happy that Catechist had sent her to help take care of the crowd of children this morning. A kind benefactor had sent a special donation to be used for shoes and clothing for the poor. Two days ago she and her Catechist companion had visited some of the poorest homes in El Paso. Tired-faced mothers brightened up as Catechist inquired about the most needed clothing. They promised to have the children ready and waiting early Saturday morning. And they were! Little shivering groups on the various corners! Bigger children held the hands of smaller sisters and brothers who danced in joyful anticipation of the ride in the station wagon.



Juanito almost missed the trip. He came breathless down the street, the broken soles of his shabby shoes flopping at each step. His trousers, too, were hand-me-downs, much too long and baggy. But Juanito didn't complain. He knew there were six others at home to be fed and clothed and his father earned so little.

The trip through the business section had been a babel of excited, happy voices chattering away in rapid Spanish at the sight of window and street decorations. Catechist had to stop the car near San Jacinto Plaza to let them "oh" and "ah" at the great white Christmas tree with its glittering ornaments.

Then the big department store loomed right ahead. Catechist reached for her list as the bigger children helped the eager little ones from the wagon. The kind-hearted manager and several clerks waited to take care of the crowd. Such a hustling and bustling! Older girls smiled into mirrors as a gay colored sweater changed them from drab little persons to laughing señoritas; older boys stood straight and tall as the clerk held neat looking overalls against their shabby, patched trousers.

Tiny Ermelinda was beside herself with joy! The clerk had placed a shiny "patent leather" slipper on her dusty bare foot. Catechist pointed to a pair of brown oxfords decidedly more practical looking. As the clerk began to unfasten the slipper, tears welled up in Ermelinda's eyes. She put out a restraining hand "Please . . . and I will be careful . . . I will not let them get dirty even!" And to prove it she spit on a tiny forefinger and washed away a spot of dust on the shiny surface of the slipper.



The clerk smiled at Catechist and Catechist smiled back. Ermelinda's smiles came back like sunshine after April showers. Her gratitude demanded more expression. Her baby voice went on "and I will pray for you . . . right now!" With eyes closed and black curls bowed, hands folded around the other shiny slipper, she said the Hail Mary, while the astounded clerk blew his nose vigorously and several women clerks grew quite busy with their handkerchiefs.

And the trip back with each child clutching a brown paper parcel and a story book, the latter the parting gift of the Manager. All had promised to keep the new clothing clean and nice for Christmas Mass, and all had laughed merrily as Ermelinda's eyes glowed above her small parcel. The tiny finger was in her mouth as if the cleaning process were to be repeated.

Impatiently the Newly-Professed flicked her veil back from her shoulder. What more did she want? Why didn't she have the Christmas spirit? Surely her missionary work in this busy

Texas mission was the very quintessence of the Christmas Spirit—a constant giving of her labors and herself!

The bright sunshine flashed and glittered as if making sport of her gloom. A yellow rose in the neighbor's yard bowed condescendingly to the flippant breeze. Roses in December! Perhaps that was it! The Newly-Professed closed her eyes. Other Christmas scenes came crashing down in an avalanche of memory; cold, crisp air; smell of Christmas trees; logs in the fireplace; sleigh bells; spicy smells in the kitchen; the home crib; gaily wrapped packages carefully hidden from Tim and Danny; last minute shopping with Mom and Ann; and snow—white and lovely—landscaping all the familiar haunts with serenity and beauty.

"I'm dreaming of a white Christmas," the neighbor's radio proclaimed and the Newly-Professed was seized with a fit of laughter.

"Day dreaming in broad day light, then laughing about it! Such goings-on! And Christmas preparations just piling up," said Catechist Brennan, with mock horror, as she came laughingly into the room at that particular moment.



With eyes dancing with mischief, she steered the Newly-Professed in the direction of the Community room. At the door, she swept the floor in a deep curtsy, hand over heart, and said: "My dear Sister Catechist, since you have served the children of El Paso so nobly during the past week with Kermeses, Shopping tours, and so on, you are to have the privilege of decorating our own Christmas tree."

The Newly-Professed caught her breath at the sight of the great tree, almost touching the ceiling. Two card tables piled high with boxes of ornaments, ropes of tinsel, and heaps of silver icicles waited at one side. The ladder stood at just the right angle for one to reach the tip-top branches.

"Just awaiting the magic touch of your sun-burned hand! . . . And when you're finished, sure 'tis a bit of help you could give to my Christmas crib in the Lord's house," and with another curtsy which ended in a series of arm waving and facial contortions, because her heel caught in the hem of her apron, Catechist Brennan departed on a wave of delighted laughter.

Before the Christmas tree was finished various Catechists had paused to lend a helping hand, a suggestion, or a teasing comment. Just like her brothers at home! As she tossed the last silvery icicle up to the highest branch, turned on the blue lights, and stood back to admire her handiwork, she heard a mournful

sound.

Catechist Brennan stood in the doorway, the animal figures from the crib set in her hands.

"Will you be kind enough to leave that creation of splendor, and tell me where to put this donkey and these sheep? I declare my crib looks like an animal convention."

The Newly-Professed followed her to the half-erected crib. Soon she was busily engaged in placing the sheep among the bulges of imitation rock paper. A little bundle of branches placed here and there made the paper hills very real.



Supper bell rang before she was half finished. Her mind was only giving half its attention to the Advent reading during the meal. The other part was concerned with shepherds, angels, animals, and mica snow! By the end of the meal she had the whole manger scene complete in her mind.

The next day flew by on wings. A last minute trip to town to get an over-looked gift; a happy, joyous mingling with Christmas shoppers at the five and ten cent store, where several yards of gay ribbon were bought; a hurried trip home to tie the ribbon on the great box which held the layette for the San Jose Christmas Baby. She prayed it would be some poor little one who would receive the warm clothing sent by some kind Sisters in the East.

"Catechist! Where are you? Lost in a mountain of white tissue and holly and red ribbon! Dear me!"

Catechist Brennan again; this time with a request to go with her to a neighbor's yard for flowers for the Christmas altar. As her scissors cut the stems of crimson roses, she spied the clump of violets. Just the thing for the tiny glass bowl! She could see them near the manger bed, shyly sending their fragrant message to the wee One.

Home again! The Convent was filled with inviting smells. Catechist-Cook was surely proving her claim to her title. Early supper and night prayers at seven! As the last prayers of the Christmas Novena came to an end, the Newly-Professed glanced toward the crib hidden beneath a snowy sheet. Her heart quickened. She was almost as excited as she had been her very first Christmas at Victory-Noll!

11:00 P.M.—Catechist Brennan shook her curtain. That was the signal for the younger members to dress hastily and hurry to the Community Room, where with music and singing they would awaken the other Catechists. Soon the tones of the organ lifted and swelled in the exquisite loveliness of the Christmas Rose; Silent

Night, and Adeste Fidelis! The Newly-Professed thought she would sing her very heart away in the joy and anticipation that were hers.

11:45 P.M.—she knelt with the others in the Jesuit Church of St. Ignatius, while hundreds of men, women and children poured into the Church. With all their love for drama and pageantry, the



Mexican congregation had made the altars a picture of light, color, and beauty. Tiny electric lights, hidden behind stenciled stars, twinkled like real stars in the great blue dome above the altar. Violins added their tones to those of the great organ.

The Midnight Mass grew to a climax of harmony and beauty as the solemn moment of Consecration drew near. The Newly-Professed bowed her head. Swiftly her thoughts flew to the cave in Bethlehem's hills; to the home crib where Mom and Dad and the others would be gathered; to the dear Noll where she had spent three supremely happy Christmases; and, with a stab of pain, to "somewhere in France" and "somewhere in the South Pacific" where Tim and Danny might not hear a Midnight Mass.

The Mass was ended. Everyone paused outside the Church to wish the Madres "Feliz Navidad."

At home, the Christmas crib waited in all its simple loveliness. A little later "Merry Christmas" flew from one to the other gathered around the gaily-decked table. The Christmas breakfast was finished hurriedly and everyone waited in front of the closed door of the Community room. An exclamation of delight went up as Catechist threw open the door. The great tree, in its Christmas dress of blue and silver, shone and glistened in the darkened room. Other exclamations followed as the lights went on and the gifts and stacks of mail were seen beneath the low spread branches.

Such a hubub of sound and laughter! Home news flying across the room in quick snatches! "Just think, Bill is coming home from Burma! A furlough of 30 days." "Dad is much better. The Doctor says he can return to work the first of the year." "Heavens! I'm an Aunt! Phil and Jean have a baby daughter!"

And the packages! "Some of Aunt Ellen's chocolate fudge!" "Look at my new gloves! Just the right size. Trust mother to remember!"

The Newly-Professed put aside a half opened box as a small envelope came flying in her direction.

"Read what is inside, please," directed her Superior.

She removed the small card and read:

"On December 27th,
Despite rain or snow,
To visit old Missions
We all shall go."



The Newly-Professed caught her breath. The old Missions! Ever since she arrived in Texas, she had hoped to see them. Sitting on the floor, surrounded by wrappings and ribbon, Catechist Brennan managed a knowing wink.

"You see, Catechist, child!" she said, "even in the Missions we sometimes don our Sunday best and 'step out' a bit!"

The hands of the clock pointed to three A.M. as a sleepy, but happy Community, gathered up Christmas parcels and mail and started for the Dormitory. After all, there were more Christmas Masses in the morning, and the children to be taken care of at the nine o'clock Masses in the various parishes.

As the Newly-Professed passed the Chapel door, she deposited her packages on a nearby chair. She straightened up just in time to get a second wink from Catechist Brennan. She was beginning to have her suspicions about that one confirmed. She was certain now that Catechist had known all about her disappointment and homesickness.

She knelt for a long time, letting the crib scene sink deep into her heart and soul, while the fragrance of the wee violets came in reproaching sweetness. Then the Newly-Professed humbly bowed before her little King. And this was her Christmas prayer:

"Forgive me, little Lord. I should have known better. After all I belong to You . . . and You are . . . the Giver of all good gifts!"

A Brief Career in the Missions

by Catechist Magdalene Lenges

A CHECK for twenty-five dollars. Yes, that's how I began. I was made payable to the order of the Superior in a small mission center. A small mission, but I soon found out it was a mission with plenty of work. From the letter which accompanied me, I learned my destiny—"to be spent for the poor as you see fit, Catechist. It is a thanks-offering to St. Anthony for a favor received."

THE day I was changed into actual cash, I heard a lot about my possibilities. "There are so many needs for this fund," Catechist thought out loud, "I hope it doesn't dwindle too fast. Half the children here do not have adequate protection against the cold. Perhaps we could buy sweaters with this money, or maybe it would be better to buy shoes. I wonder how it would be to sell the articles to the children for about half their value, or whatever they could pay, and then use that money the same way until there was none left. Would that be better than outright gifts of new clothing? I wonder. Blessed Mother, show me the wisest way."

I DIDN'T hear anything more for a few days. Then there began such a hustle and bustle,—it seemed like housecleaning time. And so it was—housecleaning for Christmas. There was a boy who cleaned windows on the outside, and a young woman who helped inside, besides all the Catechists cleaning and scrubbing in every spare moment. But there weren't many spare moments, because teaching and visiting went on as usual.

WHEN the windows were washed and the cleaning done, Catechist took me out, and I heard the lad say: "But, Catechist, I don't want you to pay me for my work, I was glad to help you out."

"I KNOW, Joaquin," and she must have been thinking quickly to have so diplomatic an answer, "but someone sent us this money to be used for those who need it, otherwise we wouldn't have any money. And you know your family needs it."

"THAT'S true, Catechist. Many thanks, but any time you need anyone to wash windows, or anything a boy can do around here, just call me, and don't worry whether you have any money or not."

I HAD to smile broadly when the young woman said almost the same words, "O, Catechist! I

couldn't take money from you!" And Catechist again explained the difficulty away.

THERE began to be the ring of Christmas in the air. "Hurrah!" I thought to myself, "I'll be used to spread Christmas cheer." Wrong!

"THANKS to Jesus and Mary," the Superior said to the Catechists, "we have enough Christmas donations this year, so it won't be necessary to use this St. Anthony fund. We will have that for emergency calls."

IMAGINE my surprise when shortly after I again saw daylight. In a grocery store, I grew smaller in exchange for milk and baby foods.

"YOU should have seen those children," Catechist explained to her companion. "The baby was so thin and sickly, she looked as if she wouldn't last a week unless something was done for her—and quickly. They are such a nice family too. But you know how their work pays, and when the father was sick a few weeks the money just didn't last. Now there is a new baby and the mother is in the hospital. They are delighted with the new baby, though Maria isn't two yet, and they weren't complaining,—still anyone could see they hadn't enough to eat."

FROM then on I dwindled rapidly, until one cold wintry day the last of me was exchanged for three bags of coal. It happened this way. The Catechists visited two old people, the woman was just recovering from pneumonia, and the man had a heavy cold.

"I TRY to keep warm for her," he said, "but, Catechist, the wood burns up while I sleep, and then it gets very cold. The wind has been trying to blow the house down the last few days."

"I KNOW," replied Catechist, "but wouldn't coal hold until morning?"

"YES, but we haven't any. By the time we pay rent, buy food, and once in a while shoes or something, our pension is used up. I go up to the mountains and get the wood for nothing."

AS soon as we left that house, Catechist said to her companion: "We must get them a little coal. There isn't much of that St. Anthony fund left, but we couldn't use the rest of it for a better purpose."

THE Catechists stopped at a coal company on the way home and there I ended my brief career in exchange for three bags of coal.



The Scouts Take Over

"This is the last basket, Catechist, and it's practically finished," said Juana, as she tied a piece of evergreen to the handle.

"Fine," responded Catechist who had just come into the room, "it has been a big job to get those baskets ready, hasn't it?"

"No, Catechist, it's been fun," Flora replied energetically. "What time are we going to deliver them?"

"I think seven o'clock will be early enough. That will give us more than an hour to deliver them and get back to Church in time for the Posadas."

"All right, Catechist. We're going now. See you at seven. Come on, Maria, let's go to confession."

"Oh, we can go to confession after the Posadas; let's go home now," responded Maria.

"Oh, no, we can't go after the Posadas. Children are supposed to go in the afternoon."

"Children! What do you think? We're not children; we're young ladies, aren't we Catechist?" Maria appealed to Catechist.

"You may be, Maria, but really you have plenty of time to go to confession now, it is only four o'clock. Better leave the time after the Posadas for your mothers and fathers who are busy this afternoon."

"O.K. Catechist, we'll go now," replied Maria cheerily. "See you at seven on the head."

"A las siete en punto," translated Carlota, fearing Catechist might not understand Maria's slang.

Promptly at seven the girls returned. During the afternoon they had made up six very attractive Christmas baskets and now they were eager to distribute them. The girls were Scouts and this was their Troop project. They had decided that they would do their caroling as they went from house to house, but would sing hymns at the various homes. They knew the people would enjoy their Spanish hymns much more

than they would the English carols.

"Garza's house first?" asked Maria. "They live the farthest."

"Yes," Juana chimed in. "Theirs is the prettiest basket, too. Look at this doll on top, isn't it cute? And look at that big red ball; it makes the basket so pretty. And there are lots of good things beneath; we wanted those Garza children to have a real Christmas. Just think, Catechist, ten children and no father."

"It's a pretty big basket, girls, I think we had better put it in the trunk of the car. Carlota and I will drive to the homes; these baskets are too heavy for you to carry."

"O.K., Catechist, but don't get there ahead of us."

"No, we will stay behind you, and you may take the baskets out of the car. Two girls at each house, remember."

"Yes, Catechist. Look, here is Don Juan's basket. It's nice, too, isn't it, girls? We couldn't very well put a doll in for Don Juan and his wife," explained Flora, "but we did put a big red ribbon on it."

"We got it out of the rummage, Catechist,



and I washed and ironed it. Isn't it nice?"

"This basket is Elvira's," continued Flora. "Poor Elvira, she helped us deliver the baskets last year and this year she can't even go to Mass."

"No, but Father will bring her Holy Communion in the morning," Catechist told them, "and she is very happy to think Jesus is coming to her when she cannot go to Him. Elvira is suffering a lot, girls, we must pray hard for her."

"That's right, Catechist. Do you think she will get well?"

"The Doctor thinks she may, but it will take a long time."

"We fixed her a nice basket, didn't we? And we put in something for everyone in the family," continued Flora.

"We had to, or Elvira would give everything to her sisters and brothers. She's a swell girl, isn't she Catechist?"

"Yes, Elvira is wholly unselfish," Catechist answered. "You must take a few minutes to visit her tomorrow, girls. She will be missing

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The Giver of all Good Gifts

"There isn't any Santa Claus, is there, Catechist?" five year old Elena asked earnestly.

"Yes, there is," responded Maria, before Catechist could reply, "I saw him when I went to town last Saturday."

"Oh, that's just a man wearing those funny clothes," came from Anita, another one of the five year olds.

"Yes, there's a Santa Claus, all right," Jose, the one man of the group, explained with a wisdom far beyond his five years. "An' he's got toys and candy and everything. But he's not coming over here, he's American and he gives all his things to those kids who live across the tracks."

"There isn't either any Santa Claus Catechist," said Juana,



Elena's seven year old sister, coming to her aid in the discussion. "My mother says it is the Infant Jesus who gives gifts to good children at Christmas."

Margarita had been silent up to this time, but now she broke into the conversation, settling the controversy with her usual diplomacy.

"Maybe all these kids are right, Catechist," she began. "I think it must be the Infant Jesus who gives us gifts because He is God, and everything that is good comes from God. And maybe there is a Santa Claus; I saw him in town, too. But even if the Americans have a Santa Claus, it is God who gives the gifts to him to give the children."



Associate Catechists



AS the joyous Christmas bells ring out with their jubilant hymn of gladness, our hearts turn once again in loving gratitude to our Little Infant King, beseeching Him to grant to our Associates the most peaceful, blessed Christmas they have ever known

Be assured, dear Associates, that you are all remembered in a very special manner in our

Christmas Novena, in our Christmas Masses, and in our visits to the Crib. And a special prayer is being whispered for all the loved ones who are spending their Christmas in the service of their country.

God love you!—Catechist
Viola Wopperer.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Catechist,

Enclosed you will find \$10.00—our first contribution to your missionary work.

At our last meeting we read and discussed your letter and the pamphlets which you sent to me as secretary of our Tip Top Club. We were referred to you by Marian Mueller of the Srillians Band.

At present, due to long hours at work, Red Cross, etc., we will contribute money rather than make articles for the missions. Perhaps later we may have a better opportunity to add to this.

Sincerely,

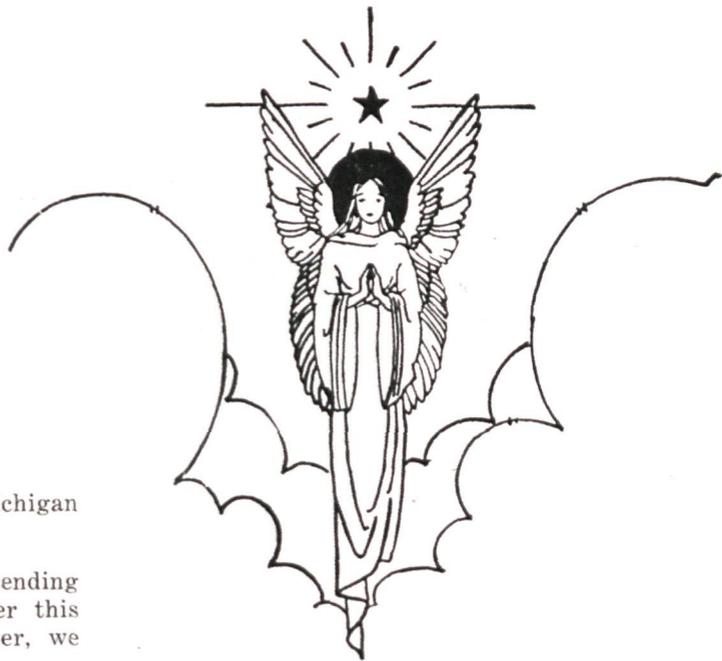
Irene Stanley, Secretary

Welcome Tip Top Club Members into the ranks of the Associate Catechists of Mary! We are most happy to number you among our faithful auxiliaries and to extend to you all the spiritual benefits enjoyed by the other members of our Mission Bands.

The Goodwill Mission Club of Carrollton, Kentucky, was the only A.C.M. Band in Kentucky for many years. They have always made a good showing. Mrs. Caspar Hill, the Promoter, is to be congratulated upon keeping the Club together during all this time. Many thanks to you, Mrs. Hill, and to your faithful members. May you continue your good work.



of Mary



Detroit, Michigan

Dear Catechist,

Enclosed please find \$15.00. I delayed sending these dues hoping we could get together this month, but it didn't work out. However, we collect our dues regularly each month.

I received a lovely letter from "our" Catechist a short time ago. She seems to be very happy but also, very, very busy. She makes me feel as though I'm doing nothing!

May God bless you always.

Lillian Dunne,
Immaculate Conception Band.

Indeed you are doing much, faithful members of Immaculate Conception Band, when you on the "home front" supply the ammunition (checks, money orders, etc.) which enables our Catechists to carry on their work on the far-flung Mission front of our country. Thanks to you and our other Associate Catechists of Mary we were able to open TWO new Mission Centers in untouched areas this Fall!

A.C.M. BAND DONATIONS

September 18 to October 24

Adrian Band, Chicago, Miss Florence Dietz	\$25.00
Charitina Club, Chicago, Katherine Hennigan	7.50
Child Jesus Band, St. Louis, Adelaide Fitzgerald	3.00
Dolores Band No. 2, Chicago, Mrs. J. Bechtold	12.00
Holy Family Band, Chicago, Mrs. Wm. Murphy	20.25
Les Petites Fleurs Band, Chicago, Elsie Jachmann	6.00
Little Flower Band, Chicago, Mrs. H. Garrity	33.50
Mothers and Daughters Club, Chicago, Mrs. M. Leuthkenhus	8.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help No. 1, Chicago, Mrs. F. Ahner	50.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, No. 2 Evanston, C. Henrich	27.00
Our Lady, Queen of Angels, Los Angeles, Mrs. J. C. Sauthier	5.00
Our Lady Queen of Poor Souls, Los Angeles, Mrs. A. Meng	5.00
Poor Souls Band, Berwyn, Ill. Mrs. Alma McGovern	10.00
Sacred Heart Miss. Club, Newark, N. Y., Miss Ann Cassano	25.00
St. Ann's Band, Ft. Wayne, Anna Brink	6.25
St. Anthony's, Los Angeles, Calif., Mrs. Anna Meng	5.00
St. Bridget's Band, Bellevue, Ky., Grace Kern	2.75
St. Helen's Band, Dayton, O., Margaret Karas	5.00
St. Irene's Band, Chicago, Miss May Walsh	7.00
St. Joseph Miss. Club, Baldwinville, N. Y. Mrs. M. Bucci	20.00
St. Joseph Martyr Band, Chicago, Mrs. F. Kiefer	8.00
St. Katherine Band, Chicago, Mrs. Katherine Hammer	25.00
St. Mary's Band, Chicago, Mrs. Annie Hansen	40.00
St. Raymond Nonatus Band, Chicago, Mrs. T. Quinlan	4.00
Strillian Band, Cheviot, O., Miss Marie Gadzinski	4.00

Dear Catechists,

Enclosed you will find a small gift for your wonderful work but sent with a great deal of love.

Today (Feast of Our Lady of Snows) must have been a joyous occasion for you at Victory Knoll. The ceremonies must have been lovely and impressive. I would certainly enjoy being there sometime to witness them, but with everyone working such long hours now and with gas so scarce it is hard.

Sincerely in Christ,
Kathryn Hall, Promoter

Our Lady of Snows Band, Elkhart, Indiana, never fails to send us a donation on the feast of Our Lady of Snows (August 5th) which title they have chosen for their Band. There is another Feastday too, on which we are never forgotten—that of the Immaculate Conception—which is striking evidence of their devotion to Our Blessed Mother and her Catechists.



"Las Posadas -- Just for Pedro"

by Catechist Marguerite Scill

SMALL Pedro was worried about Big Pedro. It all began with Big Pedro's bad cold. Although he had stayed in bed for several days, he still had a racking cough not pleasant to hear. He dragged himself very slowly around the small room that was his home.



SMALL Pedro and Big Pedro were neighbors, a boy of nine and a man of seventy-seven. Their poor homes were side by side in the squalor of Saragosa Alley. The squalor stopped at the doors of the two adobe homes as if afraid to enter, for these homes were poor, but spotless.

SMALL Pedro's grandparents had come from the same part of Mexico as Big Pedro. Often he had heard them speak together of the fiestas and the village life. And then, when Big Pedro had gone to his one room, there had been the usual shaking of heads and murmured prayers for Big Pedro.

SMALL Pedro knew the reason for the sadness and the prayers. When Big Pedro was a boy of eighteen he had been the outstanding young man of the village. Somehow he had managed to get a little more than the usual village education. He had bought books with his small earnings. Everyone knew that someday Big Pedro would be *someone*.

AT THIS point of the story, with a look of mischief in her dark, bead-like eyes, Abuelita (little grandmother) always enlarged upon the description of Pedro's handsome features and soldier-like carriage. But Abuelito puffed away contentedly at his pipe, and refused to be disconcerted. After all, Abuelita had chosen him, not Big Pedro!

ALL WENT well for Big Pedro until a Protestant sect came to the small village. With a wealth of financial backing, this group built a spacious Community Center; opened a Mission school; and began the usual program of proselytizing. And Big Pedro had succumbed. To the protests of Padre Miguel, he had answered that this was his chance to complete his education; he would not pass it by. In spite of relatives and friends, Big Pedro eventually joined the sect. Shortly afterwards he left the village.

HIS youth, and his knowledge of the language and customs of his people, made him invaluable to his benefactors. The young people responded to his winning personality. He was an acknowledged leader.

FOR a time he had corresponded with Abuelito and then suddenly the letters stopped. Big Pedro's patrons had sent him to the United States.

SHORTLY after their marriage, Small Pedro's grandparents had come to this Border Town and their children were all born on American soil. Through the years they had remembered and wondered about Big Pedro, but no news of him ever came. Then one day Abuelito met with an accident on the railroad, where he worked as a section hand. He was taken to the hospital. The ward was filled with other men. In the bed next to Abuelito, lay a tall bearded man with eyes strangely familiar. Abuelito watched and pondered. The stranger seemed puzzled about him, too.

THE day came for grandma's first visit. She told about it afterwards. The tall patient took one look and then sat bolt upright in his bed.

"ANITA y Fernando! Mis amigos! Gracias a Dios!" he cried, with something like a catch in his voice.

SUCH a happy reunion with Grandma, Grandpa, and Big Pedro, laughing and crying at the same time; and trying to cover the span of time with all the happenings of the intervening years.

THE two patients left the hospital the same day, and Big Pedro moved into the one room in the house next door to Abuelo. He mentioned briefly the small pension that kept him from want; but no more. Big Pedro wanted to live in the *past*. He had no use for the *present*. That is why in the evening he joined his old friends around the kerosene lamp. In its fitful light they relived the village days and Big Pedro was content. He never mentioned religion, and he never went near a church.

SMALL Pedro had hinted several times as they walked to and from town, that the old man might like to stop in church for a brief rest. But his friend had refused with a gruffness that his small companion had never before seen. Grandma took pity on Small Pedro's distress.

"PRAY, my little one," she said. "Some day in God's own time Pedro will come Home."

LITTLE Pedro had prayed, oh, so earnestly, and he had made many, many little sacrifices, too. Catechist had said in class that sacrifices please God so much that He just has to give something in return. But He hadn't given Big Pedro the grace to come back. And each day his old friend seemed to grow more feeble.

"AYE! Saragosa Keed! Aye! Saragosa!"

SMALL Pedro's head came up with a jerk. That call was from his beloved gang, the dozen or so youngsters from the neighborhood who acknowledged him as their leader. "Saragosa Kid" was their name for him; they called him Pedro only when his mother, Dona Anita, was near at hand. She had no liking for such titles as "Saragosa Kid." He opened the door and six of the gang filed in. With looks of admiration on faces none too clean, they stood around the table. In its center stood a quaint little group. A gray burro, with head patiently bent, lifted one foot as if to continue on its way. A tiny lady in a Mexican peasant dress of red, white and green, sat upon his back; a blue mantle was draped carefully around her small figure; a white mantilla rested on the real hair which framed the sweet face; she carried a raffia basket covered with a dainty linen handkerchief.

BEHIND the donkey, and prodding him gently with his staff, stood a kindly-looking man, dressed as a Mexican laborer, in baggy trousers and striped shirt, with a gay colored serape over his shoulders, and a straw sombrero resting on his back.

THE little group was very real and life-like in the gleam of the light from the kitchen stove. And the gang's eyes shone with love and reverence. For this was the group used every year for "Las Posadas." For nine evenings before Christmas, the small figures of Maria, San Jose, and their little gray donkey, would be carried through the large Church, while with music, song and drama the children reenacted the story of the Blessed Ones, wandering through Bethlehem's deserted streets to find a room in the Posada (inn) where Jesus might be born.

DONA Anita had spent several days dressing the small statues, and even the gray burro had been touched up with a bit of fresh paint. Now the gang was to have the happy privilege of taking the carrier back to church, for tonight "Las Posadas" would begin.

VERY carefully four of the boys lifted the carrier to their shoulders. Pedro opened the door. In the stove's light which made a path into the dark alley, he could see a few flakes of

snow drifting down. He smiled delightedly at the gang. Snow was a rare thing in this town of the Southwest. As they started through the alley, the inspiration came!

WITH tense, terse commands, such as his favorite movie star used in moments of great drama, Small Pedro whispered: "Queek! In front of Don Pedro's door! Put the Holy Ones . . . and hide!"

WITH a precision and carefulness which would have delighted the heart of an older commander, the gang carefully lowered the carrier to the ground in front of the door, then scurried to the protecting shadow of a dismantled wreck of a car on the other side of the alley.

SMALL Pedro knocked hard. One! Two! As shuffling footsteps started towards the door, he, too, ran to hide.

BIG Pedro stood framed in the doorway, his tall figure slightly stooped; eyes peering into the darkness. All at once he gave a startled exclamation, "Madre de Dios!" For a split second, as if unable to prevent himself, he leaned toward the appealing little group. Then he straightened. Another smothered exclamation and the door slammed hard.

IN THE darkness, Small Pedro could feel the questioning eyes of the gang. Had his strategy failed? Very quickly they resumed their walk to church. The silence was heavy with wonder and doubt, and Small Pedro walked with head slightly lowered.

IT WAS Christmas eve, and the last night of the Posadas. Pedro was hurrying home. He had just sold his last paper. The gang would be waiting. They managed to get prominent places in Church all during "Las Posadas." At Midnight Mass they would be robed in spotless surplices and red cassocks, for all the gang were faithful acolytes.

"AYE, mi amigito!" a familiar voice called out of the dark.

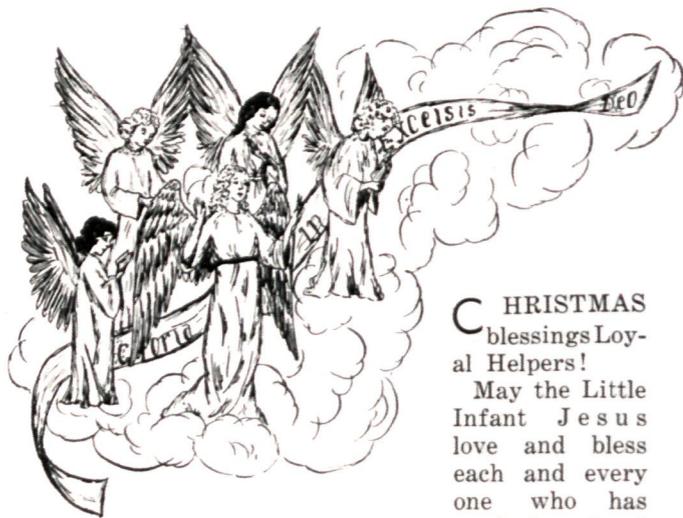
SMALL Pedro stopped short. He had not seen Big Pedro for several days. The old man stepped from the doorway. He was dressed in his Sunday best. A happy smile was on his face.

"AYE, mi amigito! . . . Long have I been waiting! . . . It is the last night of the Posadas. We must not be late."

HE reached for Pedro's hand; his clasp was warm and reassuring. Small Pedro's heart stood still; then it began a joyous hammering,—Abuelita's prophecy had come true.

SMALL Pedro looked up at all the wintry stars; and all the stars twinkled down at Small Pedro,—twinkled as if to say:

"IT worked! It worked! Las Posadas—just for Pedro!"



CHRISTMAS
blessings Loyal
Helpers!

May the Little
Infant Jesus
love and bless
each and every
one who has
worked so hard

and so faithfully during this past year! We are proud of all the good work our Helpers have done, and are still doing.

The following letters show that the prayers of Mary's Loyal Helpers are being answered, as many new Helpers are joining the ranks. But—we want many more!

Dear Catechist,

I am sending you \$1.00 to renew my subscription. I like your magazine very much. In one of your magazines I read that you wanted stamps, so I am sending you some.

I am 13 years old, the oldest in a family of seven children.

The part I like best in THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST is "In the Home Field." I take the magazines to school with me, and pass them around to the other girls.

Rose Marie Sefcovic (Fraser, Mich.)

Dear Catechist,

My Sunshine bag was filled to the top by the end of my vacation. Now I will try to fill it again during my school term.

I am enclosing Five Dollars for the missions. I am in the second grade.

Mary Anne Huber (Dayton, O.)

Dear Catechist,

Would you please send me a Sunshine Bag? I will fill it as soon as I can. We would like very much to help the Missions.

Maureen Sherlock (Worthington, Iowa)

Mary's

Dear Friends,

I received my Sunshine Bag and my membership card and am saving my money.

I haven't a picture of myself right now but I am going to get my picture taken soon and I will send you one.

As soon as I can I will send you a list of names of those who want to become members. How many would you want? If I get started at it I would have around 25 names to send to you. As soon as I can see these girls I will ask them.

Well, I will close.

Your friend,

June Monnin (Houston, Ohio)

Dear Catechist,

The enclosed check indicates the savings of our little fourth graders for Victory Noll. I am sure you can use it.

Sister M. Zachary,
St. Ann School,
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Catechist,

Here is our donation of \$2.00 for Mary's Loyal Helpers. We really enjoyed filling our Sunshine Bags with pennies.

We may be a little late, but we also save our pennies to buy Defense Stamps, so we share our savings with your mission work and Uncle Sam.

May the Infant Jesus help you in your good works.

Magdalen & Mary Lucy Molohon
(Curdsville, Ky.)





Loyal Helpers

Dear Catechist,

I really was delighted to have a letter from you. I would be only too glad to join Mary's Loyal Helpers.

Now I will tell you something about myself. I am 13 years old and I have just started to go to High School here in McKeesport. The name of it is St. Peter's. I am about 5' 7" and am a brunette. I think that is enough about myself.

I would like to know more about your work.

Lois Elbert (McKeesport, Pa.)

Dear Catechist,

Ann will not be with us this year so I am elected to take her place. She left the 25th for the Convent.

The money (\$2.00) I am enclosing is for Theresa, Francis and myself in the organization called Mary's Loyal Helpers.

May God bless you.

Monica Manternach (Cascade, Iowa)

Dear Catechists,

I would like to be one of Mary's Loyal Helpers. Please send me one of your Membership Cards, also a Sunshine Bag, a Sunshine Bank and a Mite-Box. Also please give me information about Victory-Noll. I would like to get a group of children started working for you here.

I seem to be asking a lot but will try to repay in prayers and good works for you.

May God bless you in your good works and thanking you I remain your Mary's Loyal Helper-to-be.

Mary Louise Dinek (Birchwood, Wis.)

Dear Catechist,

We enjoyed seeing the children's picture in the February issue of the magazine. They have saved the enclosed amount, in their Sunshine Bag, and Timmy (the four-year-old) is eager to get it off to help "feed the little folks out there." He is very intrigued with the idea of saving for the missions, and I hope the twins will follow suit.

Please continue to remember us in your prayers. God bless you.

Mrs. H. McGrath (Chicago, Ill.)

*"O children bend low and adore Him today,
O lift up your hands like the shepherds, and
pray."*



OUR PROTECTRESS

(Continued from page 4)

perhaps, one planned by Divine Providence to bring the prodigal children of her country back to the feet of their Mother. A strange coincidence that may have occurred to make this wonderful nation of ours true to its dedication—until Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean, becomes identified with Mary, the Star of the Sea, and the colors of Old Glory symbolize the red of the Sacred Heart and the white and blue of Mary.

AS PROTECTRESS of the armed forces of our country, may our Blessed Patroness be with them day and night, whether they be fighting on land, on ships, or in the skies. As these strong young men are stricken unto death, they cry in anguish, "Mother!" But woe for them. No mother's hand may now smooth the earthen pillow; no mother's soft caress can reach the fevered brow; no mother's voice can soothe the suffering spirit. Lying in battle's dread abyss, each one of these youthful victims of the nations' wrath craves his mother's kiss upon his dying lips. O Mother of God, although their lips may frame no prayer to thee, no tribute to thy power, when each poor lad invokes his mother's name, be thou his Mother in that last dark hour.

○ GREAT and glorious Patroness of our country, with destruction, suffering, and death before us, we turn to thee, our Queen, as our only aid. Remember your own torn, bleeding heart, that nearly broke with grief on Calvary; and by that most gracious love which you hold for all mankind, present our plea, beseech your Son to hear our prayer that all the leaden thundercloud of war may by thy intercession be dispersed. And having united every nation of this storm-tossed earth by the bonds of justice and charity, may they truly hail thee as Queen of Peace.

○ MARY, our Mother, when the lights go on again all over the world, and when the candles lit by mothers, wives, and sweethearts, before your shrine in the chapels on the hill, have melted into nothingness, may the peace they have prayed for through your intercession be a just and lasting peace.



THE GIRL SCOUTS TAKE OVER

(Continued from page 11)

her Scout activities of other years."

"We're all going to her house after nine o'clock Mass, Catechist," Maria said, as she closed the trunk of the car. "No more room in this trunk; we'll have to put the other three baskets in the car."

"This basket is for old Mrs. Brown," said Juana, as she and Carlota lifted it into the car. "We put that nice warm sweater you gave us in her basket, Catechist. She's going to like that. And Maria's mother gave us a wool mantilla for her. There's a lot of food in there, too. I bet she'll be happy when she sees this basket."



"Oh, Juana, you know she can't see that basket," objected Maria.

"Maybe not with her eyes, Maria, but she can see it with her fingers. She sees everything that way."

As four of the Scouts brought the last two baskets to the car, Juana continued her narration.

"And this basket is for the Sanchez children," she said, "and this other one is for the Nunez children. And they are both super-elegant."

"They've surely had the sickness this year, haven't they, Catechist?"

"Yes, Our Lord must love them very much when He sends so many crosses. Mr. Sanchez hasn't been able to work for three months, but the Doctor says he can work half days beginning the first of the year, if he continues to improve. And Mrs. Nunez just heard today that the orthopedic hospital will take little Corina next month. So maybe she will be able to walk some day."

"Car's loaded," announced Juana, as she slammed the door.

"Then we'd better get going, girls," Maria called out. "You know we have to walk faster than Catechist drives."

The merry group started out with songs and laughter, and it is difficult to tell who were happier, the Scouts who prepared and distributed the baskets, or the poor who were the recipients of their girlish generosity.



Addresses of Our Mission Centers

Please send your mission boxes directly to the Catechists in the mission centers. Address THE MISSIONARY CATECHISTS and add one of the addresses listed below:

St. Coletta's Mission, Box 679, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Refuge of Sinners Mission, 512 Soldano Avenue, Azusa, California.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission, Box 1356, Brawley, California.

Good Shepherd Mission, Box 336, Coachella, California.

Infant of Prague Mission, 2321 Opal Street, Los Angeles, 23, California.

Little Flower Mission, 1143 Fifth Street, Los Banos, California.

Mary Star of the Sea Mission, 598 Laine Street, Monterey, California.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission, 537 East G Street, Ontario, California.

Our Lady of Sorrows Mission, 13958 Fox St., San Fernando, California.

St. Peter the Apostle Mission, 563 O'Farrell St., San Pedro, California.

Precious Blood Mission, 222 South Eighth St., Santa Paula, California.

St. Joseph Mission, 120 South F Street, Tulare, California.

Regina Angelorum Mission, 306-14th Ave., Greeley, Colorado.

Mount Carmel Mission, 3868 Block Avenue, East Chicago, Indiana.

Sacred Heart Mission, 4860 Olcott Avenue, East Chicago, Indiana.

St. John the Baptist Mission, 1401 W. Washington Blvd., Fort Wayne, 2, Indiana.

Holy Ghost Mission, 416 S. Third St., Goshen, Indiana.

All Saints Mission, San Pierre, Indiana.

St. Anne Mission, 1009 E. Dayton Street, South Bend, 14, Indiana.

Holy Trinity Mission, Ida, Michigan.

St. John Bosco Mission, 290 Arden Park, Detroit, 2, Michigan.

Our Lady of Lourdes Mission, Box 671, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Blessed de Montfort Mission, 514 Valencia Street, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Our Lady of Victory Mission, 435 Guadalupe Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Visitation Mission, 403 North Williams Street, Paulding, Ohio.

St. Joan of Arc Mission, 405 N. Scurry St., Big Springs, Texas.

Immaculate Conception Mission, 1001 East San Antonio Street, El Paso, Texas.

Holy Family Mission, Box 1317, Lubbock, Texas.

Queen of Angels Mission, 27 West Avenue N, P. O. Box 1125, San Angelo, Texas.

St. Anthony Mission, 1321 El Paso St., San Antonio, Texas.

Mary Queen of Peace Mission, 1206 West 2nd South, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission, 704 Court Street, Elko, Nevada.

Ave Maria Mission, 551 Murray Street, Ely, Nevada.

Our Lady of the Snows Mission, 338½ Melarkey Street, Winnemucca, Nevada.



The Lord is Nigh



The audience chamber is always open where the King awaits us with eager Heart and outstretched Arms, and all His children are invited. (Fr. Mateo.)

Come, Let us adore Him