



# The MISSIONARY CATECHIST

December 1955

for  
Christ  
is  
born  
of  
Mary

## Greetings

In our Christmas Masses and prayers we shall ask the divine Infant Savior to bless your hearts and homes with His love and peace. We shall beg Him, too, through His incomparable Mother, to shower upon you and your dear ones His choicest graces in abundance at Christmas time and throughout the year that lies ahead.

Mother Cecilia  
and  
Our Lady of Victory  
Missionary Sisters



# The MISSIONARY CATECHIST

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**O**UR Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters are a home mission community. They have no institutions of any kind but are employed strictly in missionary work. The sisters teach religion to public school children and do parish census work. They instruct converts, organize sodalities, train altar boys and choirs, and engage in various kinds of youth work.

At Victory Noll, their Motherhouse, the sisters receive their spiritual and professional training for their work. Convents are located in every section of the United States. To answer the many requests for more sisters, vocations are needed.

This is a Marian Community. Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters believe that if souls love and serve Mary, she will lead them safely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Each sister consecrates herself to Our Blessed Mother as her slave of love forever, according to the practice of the True Devotion taught by St. Louis De Montfort.

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**OUR COVER** Little Joaquim Almeida, San Pedro, Calif., found the Communion rail a real help to reaching the Infant Savior—and unwittingly teaches a lesson to all.

## Credits

**Photographs** Hoffpaur Studio, San Pedro, Calif., our cover; Bob Fogata, Fogata Studio, Santa Paula, Calif., pp. 7, 8, 9; Miller Studio, South Yarmouth, Mass., pp. 10, 11; Kelsey Studio, p. 13; U. S. Army photographs, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, pp. 27, 28.

**Y**OU are going to give a subscription to **THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST** as a Christmas gift this year, aren't you — at least one?

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CHRISTMAS is a day of rejoicing and jubilation because it puts man back on the road which can lead him to God. Would that the joy of Christmas might be from the festival, not of vanity, as St. Bernard says, "de festivitate non de vanitate."

Before the Incarnation the human race was in a pitiable state. Original sin cut it off from God. Mankind in this state was a "mass of damnation" (St. Augustine). Of itself the human race could not reunite with its Creator. It was necessary for God to intervene. He could have saved the human race by any one of the countless means available, but He chose what seemed

person offended, and on the other hand, the value of the act of atonement or satisfaction is measured by the dignity of the person making it. Man offended God Who is infinite, consequently infinite satisfaction had to be made. An infinite being could only do this since the satisfaction of all finite beings was worth only a finite satisfaction. Man as man was only a finite being. So an infinite being—God—had to make satisfaction. But since the offense was rendered by man, the satisfaction also had to come from man. And likewise, God as God could not suffer. Therefore, a God-Man was needed who was both finite and infinite to render due satisfaction to God for Man. It was not only

## Thoughts

by *Father Odo, O.S.B.*

## on Christmas

the most perfect and logical way, the Incarnation. Were God to come only in His divinity, He would have nothing in common with man. On the other hand, a simple man would have no claims on God. A God-Man was the solution. St. Leo says:

"In the lowliness of its Lord our Catholic faith must recognize all its claims to glory and rejoice over the mystery of salvation. For if the Word of God had not become flesh and dwelt among us, if the Creator Himself had not deigned to share the nature of His creature and provide human nature with a new beginning by His human birth, death would have reigned from the days of Adam to the end of the world, and the world would have been under an irrevocable sentence of death. The simple fact of being born would have been for all men the very cause of their loss." (Fifth Sermon on Christmas).

Sin is measured by the dignity of the

wretchedness that the God-Man came to remove. His task was to placate the justice of the Father and to restore man to favor with the Creator. The two extremes had to be reconciled.

St. Augustine with an exaggeration born of his enthusiastic joy exclaims: "God became man in order that man might become God." (13 Sermon De Tempore).

"The Son of God was made the Son of Man that the children of man might be made children of God." (St. Anthonasius).

This idea is not convertible. God partook of the substance of human nature; we partake only of the quality of God. The soul of the Son of God has a claim and right to grace. We receive it gratuitously. Likewise Christ could not lose it. We receive it through Christ and can easily lose it. Our sole claim to grace is due to Christ. In baptism we receive the indelible character giving us a perpetual right to it.

In grace we are "as lions whose breath is a fire." (St. John Chrysostom). Grace works like a spark. It increases in the mode in which a fire spreads. As iron thrown into a fire does not lose its nature but acquires the qualities of fire, red, hot, so we, thrown into grace, do not lose our personalities but acquire the qualities of God, becoming Godlike. This quality is the germ and root of a higher life. As a branch grafted on a tree retains its own specific type bringing forth its blossom and fruit through the life of the tree upon which it was grafted, so we too are grafted onto Christ blossoming in our own specific manner but receiving a more fertile juice wherewith to develop.

By the fact that Christ, the Eternal Word, God from God, Light from Light, took a human nature to Himself and joined the human and divine nature in one divine Person, the union between God and man, Divinity and humanity, was so intimate that only the comparison between bride and bridegroom could be used to give approximately in human language a concept of this divine Mystery. All humanity is wedded to the Divinity of Christ. Christ's first public manifestation was at a marriage feast at Cana. There He changed the water into wine, a symbol to be fulfilled in wine changed into His Blood. He definitely changes the wine into Blood to pledge His eternal union with humanity.

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**O**UR Savior, dearly beloved, is born today. Let us rejoice. It is not right to be sad today, the natal day of Life—He Who has dispelled the fear of mortality and brought us to the joy of promised eternity.

—Pope St. Leo, Roman Breviary



**On Christmas Eve at Victory Noll our Advent wreath becomes a cradle for the Infant from which He smiles upon us at one end of our long dining room.**

God on the throne of His majesty and greatness commands our fear and our homage; but in His littleness especially our love. Christ's arms could not reach the whole width of the manger, and yet they embraced the whole world. He could not walk or sit, or even hold up His head Himself. Only a few people knew of His existence and even from these He had to flee. Yet in that little remote stable, He did win the whole world to Himself. The narrowness and smallness of our life need not rob it of its power. It too does effect the whole world. It is a vital member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Properly speaking, it is not Christ, but we, who are reborn to a new and revived spiritual life by our participation in the celebration of the Christmas Mystery. To actualize the fullness of the effect of the historic coming of Christ, there must be a silencing of self and an opening of self so that "to them that receive Him, He (may) give the power of becoming sons of God." Then will the forfeiture of Adam be reversed and the phrase, "This day have I begotten Thee," will be applicable to all of Christ's Mystical Body.



Sister Mary Joan and her pre-schoolers at their St. Nicholas party.—Brighton, Colorado.

## Preparing the Way

by Sister Mary Joan

All for Jesus through Mary  
Dear Mother:

On December 6 the pre-school class will celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicholas. Before then, will you send one of your child's own socks, so it can be hung by the fireplace?

Will your little one also bring a gift valued between twenty-five and fifty cents for the exchange of gifts?

The time will be as usual, from 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Thank You  
Sister Mary Joan

**T**HIRTY tiny socks, fat with goodies, hung by the fireplace as their owners tripped into the classroom for their first St. Nicholas party. Not a word was spoken but eyes were round and bright. Then the socks were recognized. That broke the tension and gleeful clapping and exclaiming filled the room. St. Nicholas had not only filled their socks but had left them each a little Crib scene as well. St. Nicholas, they knew from last week's class, was the kind bishop who did such things for little children.

**T**HE party was a success. Games were played; the pastor paid a visit and the children sang for him; lunch was

served by several of the mothers; pictures were taken; and then came the exchange of gifts. What an exciting time! What happy impressions were being made on delicate characters! Small, inexpensive gifts were treasured like gold.

**T**HAT was what Sister had anticipated and hoped for. Now she could proceed with her program for Christmas. Christ was to be the sole thought and desire of each child's heart. The story of His birth would be told and dramatized as only pre-school children can dramatize. Lacking a doll, the little Virgin would bundle up her sweater and tenderly embrace it as her baby Jesus. All must be in readiness for His coming. Parents were being obeyed as never before; prayers were being said more frequently and more fervently; truthfulness and kindness were the rule of the day. And why? The empty manger in each child's home was being filled with straw — the straws of generous little sacrifices and acts of love. Could any Crib please Jesus more on His birthday!

# Once A Year

by Sister Charlene



Sister Frances directs caroling on the grounds of the city hospital.—Santa Paula, Calif.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if Christmas came every month," sighs Sister Ann Patricia.

It is her first year in the missions. Surely she will enjoy Christmas in the missions as much as at Victory Noll but once a month! that is overdoing a good thing.

I am a veteran of four whole years in the field. With my superior experience I exclaim,

"Once a month! Christmas is grand but once a year is often enough."

November is drawing to a close and we are beginning our preparations for the holidays. We begin almost as early as the stores do their advertising. Sister Frances, our superior in Santa Paula, California, convent, is considering the amount of candy we will need for the children's parties. That is enough to remind us that we must all get busy. Between now and Christmas Eve there are many things to do that will add to the joy of giving and fill us with the spirit of the season. There is much ordering and shopping done, and our closets soon bulge with potential

presents for our children and our poor.

During the last week of school we prepare a bag of candy, nuts, and oranges for each child. Most of this work is done by the ladies of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. They come faithfully to our convent each day to measure candy, count nuts, and clean oranges. The bags are filled assembly-line fashion. Many years of experience have made these good women near-professional.

"You forgot the nuts in these bags," one will remind another.

"Don't you think this orange is rather small?" Mrs. Alvarez asks. "I believe I'll put in two."

"I think we gave more candy last year," someone remarks. "The children may be disappointed."

But the children never are disappointed. They look forward to the last class before Christmas when each receives a bag. The little ones are anxious to see what's in it. The older ones know and open it eagerly. Each child also receives a holy card or cardboard Crib as

a gift. It is not much but they appreciate it more than if we gave them large expensive presents. Even children understand when a gift is prompted by love.

Sister Frances comes home later on Sundays now. She is practicing with the children's choir after nine o'clock Mass. Soon it will be time to visit the hospitals and sing for the patients. The Catholic school bus takes the children to the different hospitals in the city. Often there are stops on the way home to sing for the sick who are confined to their homes. The hospital for tuberculars is reserved for the Sodality choir who sing and pass out candy. We sisters visit the patients and give them a few things to read.

When the public schools close and the parties are over, there is still much to do before Christmas. We clear the convent of candy, oranges, and nuts only to fill it with canned goods, flour, fruit, etc. Now we invite the Sisters of the Humility of Mary who teach in the Catholic school to come over and help us decorate boxes for our poor families. We have a gala time trying to outdo each other artistically. Each takes a large carton and decorates it with gay paper and seals. When filled with food and topped with candy-filled stockings, it makes a very attractive gift-box. We deliver these on Christmas Eve much to the delight of the children who hardly bid us goodbye before they disappear into the house to see what we brought.

**Sister Charlene and Sister Frances put finishing touches to gift-boxes for the poor, assisted by faithful CCD members.**





Sister Frances and members of the CCD pack Christmas bags for the children who attend religion classes.

We are not the only ones who are busy with Christmas giving. All Christmas Eve one sister is kept busy answering the doorbell — receiving and thanking our kind friends for their presents to us. By the time our tree is decorated there are many gifts to put beneath it. These will be opened at our gathering around the tree after midnight Mass. Then we are always touched at the thoughtfulness that goes into the selection of each article for us. No one ever knows what to give sisters and yet all do so very well!

Midnight Mass in our own little chapel is a fitting climax to our seasonal activity. Here we kneel with overflow-

ing hearts to receive Our Lord Himself, the Gift of gifts! and thank Him at His Crib for this foretaste of the happiness of heaven.

The unselfishness of the true Christmas spirit shines forth gloriously in our mission. We give to the poor, knowing that they cannot give in return. Our friends give to us, without a thought of material exchange or reward. God gives to us all, and who can ever even remotely approximate Him in generosity!

**N**OW is the time to send in your intentions to be included in our Christmas Novena.



# Venite Adoremus

by Sister Mary Brigid

A ZEALOUS and competent committee had been at work; now well prepared plans were being carefully executed and five hundred edified townspeople formed an appreciative audience. A new Nativity Scene — life-sized and beautiful — erected on the public school grounds and shared by all the community, was being lighted at an official ceremony in South Dennis, Mass.

Gazing upon the image of the “Babe on the straw” could provoke such thoughts as: The Christ Child, Who was born over nineteen hundred years ago, is truly God and truly man. He can be visited “in Person” by a stop at the Catholic church. The offering and co-offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the particular way in which His heavenly Father wishes to be worshipped. During that Sacrifice, wonder of wonders, the God-Man actually comes to one in Holy Communion.

To how many was the privilege of such wonderful thoughts a reality?

Surely many hearts and minds of those present were lifted to God, but as He looked into the souls of others, He may well have said, “I would have you know Me better. I would have you be members of My one true flock, the Catholic Church, wherein you will find your way to your heavenly home without confusion or error.”

That all may be one, even in this single gathering, what changes need be wrought! Please God, a tiny advancement was made during this ceremony. A Catholic priest asked God’s blessing and bestowed his priestly blessing. A Catholic sister directed a children’s chorus which sweetly sang Christmas hymns. A Catholic girl’s choir sang, very beautifully, several hymns of the season. For some, observing such Catholic participation in a community affair must have been an awakening experience. May it not be their last contact with Catholicism so that finally these members of His Church in potentiality may become members of His Church in actuality.

In the foreground, left to right, are the Rev. Arthur B. Clark of West Dennis Community Church; the Rev. Father Kieran Rush, S.S.C.C., and the Rev. Father-Finbarr McAloon, S.S.C.C., of Holy Trinity Catholic Church; and Fred C. Curtis, President of Dennis Chamber of Commerce. The chorus of children who sang were trained by Sister Mary Regina.





Outdoor Crib on Ezra Baker School grounds, South Dennis, Mass., whose lighting ceremony occasioned the community gathering about which Sister Mary Brigid muses on the opposite page.

## Let's Go Caroling

by Sister Dorothy Louise

WHAT comes to your mind when you hear someone mention caroling? Do you picture a scene of rosy-cheeked carolers with shining eyes and small o-shaped mouths forming the words of cherished Christmas songs? Do you almost hear the familiar notes as they drop into the crisp winter air? Do you notice the exquisite background for the group of soft white snow; and if you look more closely, do you catch the illusive snowflakes zigzagging to the ground? Of course you do, for this is the classical picture of caroling and carolers.

It would not be far wrong to say that pictures such as this crowded the imaginations of Sister Mary Regina's boys and girls at Chatham ever after it was announced, during choir practice a few weeks previously, that they would all go caroling on the last class day before Christmas vacation. I was as jubilant as they when Sister called on me to join her that day. It was Saturday noon; instead of seeing the door close on the last homeward-bound student, voices buzzed unharmoniously through the parish hall. The boys and girls were eating their box

lunches hurriedly, and drinking the hot chocolate Sister had prepared for them. Finally, when their talk had reached a high crescendo, someone shrilled,

"Quiet! Remember, Sister told us to save our voices for caroling."

"Isn't it wonderful that we're going to the homes of the shut-ins!" one youngster remarked enthusiastically, waving her sandwich.

"And to the hospital. Don't forget that."

"I'd rather carol to the sick than to anyone else," said one. "Many of them won't be able to be up and around for Christmas."

"That must be tough," answered an energetic youth who was now thoughtfully appreciating his vigorous ability to "get around."

Two of the girls had taken their stand at the entrance doorway to study the sky through the pane of glass.

"Snowclouds, do you think?" one of them mused hopefully. A shrug of the shoulders was the only response. The ground bore no trace of the previous week's snow. Rain had washed it all away. The grass, still green and healthy, was overstaying its allotted time.

A car swerved off the road and pulled into the church parking lot. Soon it was followed by another, and another. The drivers were the volunteer mothers who were helping us put into effect our caroling plans. Before evening their cars would cover many miles on the Cape Cod highways and byways. In five minutes the last car door had banged shut and the caravan of good will, with its twenty-one boys and girls, was heading for its first objective. Drops of rain were beginning to spatter the windshield, and as they increased, the excited voices in the cars dropped disappointedly to low monosyllables. The rain was washing away



all hopes of a snowy setting for the carolers. To give up the idea of bobsleds for the twentieth-century car was inevitable; but rain was no substitute for the traditional snow. The cars sped along the highway in near silence. Of a sudden, someone pointed.

"We're coming to the Ezra Baker School. Can't we stop to sing around the outdoor Crib, Sister?"

All joined in the pleading. Here, the Sunday before, a large crowd of interested citizens had seen the Crib officially erected on the grounds of the public school. The rain had abated and the excursion pulled up along the roadside, evicting its youthful passengers. Cars traveling along the highway lessened their speed momentarily at sight of the group half-circled about the outdoor Christmas scene. The children, however, did not seem to notice the attention they were attracting. Their eyes remained fixed on the three holy Figures in the stable and the air was filled with their song of joy.

Then back to the cars they scampered, as fresh drops of rain threatened to graduate into a downpour. This time the windshield wipers maintained their steady staccato even as we turned off the highway to pull up before a modest white house. Unmindful now of the rain, the little band emerged from the cars and unwrapped its first song of Christmas for the surprised shut-in. When the second verse began, all eyes were focused on the front door which was opening slowly.

A dear old lady, face lined with the intensity of long suffering, stood in the doorway, weakly leaning upon a cane. Her lips were tight and unsmiling but her eyes slowly searched each face in that singing half-circle before her. The quiet gratitude of the aged was mirrored in her eyes. She raised a feeble hand in response to the children's smiles and gestures of greeting. The last vestige of disappointment over the uninvited rain must have vanished from the children's hearts for the gladness that self-forgetfulness brings ran in their voices and could be seen in the happy exchange of their smiles.

A warm personal greeting and a brightly wrapped gift placed in our friend's thin hands was the signal for a final enthusiastic round. Then, with a wave of hands, the carolers dispersed to their waiting cars. A look back caught the figure of the dear old lady still standing in the doorway — standing until the last car rounded the corner out of sight.

The expected youthful exclamations did not follow this stop. We rode along in silence. Perhaps the children were reverently conscious of having been in the presence of one who had lived her good years before them and was awaiting eternity in patience and heroic suffering. Their silence paid homage to a dear soul who would be leaving the

world of time, hand in hand with the dying year.

The rain stopped. Spirits soared and soon the boys and girls were caught up again in the excitement of their venture as new stops were made. At one stop an unimaginative dog of the neighborhood added a sad note of his own to the jubilant refrains, and the singers could hardly muffle their laughter. At another place the quiet tears of an invalid brought questioning wonderment to their faces. They were too young to understand a happiness that finds expression in tears. Finally, a longer journey on the highway brought the singing caravan to the hospital. Here the keynote of joy came with the thought of cheering "perhaps hundreds" in one round.

"Will we be able to sing to the new babies?" someone wanted to know. The question brought appreciative smiles from the others. All were surely thinking of the newborn Child of Bethlehem and the joy it would be to sing to Him.

Inside the double doors of the building the children wrinkled their noses like rabbits. Hospitals have their own distinctive blend of odors perceptible to the outsider. The few persons waiting in the lobby were engrossed in their own thoughts until the entrance of our large number of boys and girls aroused them to curiosity.

(continued on p. 25)

**Sister Mary Regina and Sister Dorothy Louise with carolers in the hospital lobby.**



# In the Home Field



## CARD TO CHERISH

Jose stood there, looking over the cards displayed in the store. Yes, he must find a card for Sister. He must pick carefully; the pennies in his pocket were few and he wanted to get the best for his money.

Jose was taking a course in religion by mail because he had started classes too late to get much out of them and he wanted to receive his First Communion. Now that Christmas was near he must send his Sister a Christmas card.

Many of the cards had big words on them which Jose could not read nor could he understand; they were not in his vocabulary. But Jose was not concerned about the greeting. All he wanted was a beautiful card for Sister, a most beautiful card!

Ah! There was just the thing. A lovely infant — the Infant Jesus, surely! Sister would be pleased with that one. Jose purchased the card, addressed it, and sent it on its way.

Christmas morning. The sisters are gathered around the tree reading their mail and exclaiming over their presents and cards.

Sister opens her mail. A card from Jose. How nice! She pulls it out of the envelope and there is a beautiful infant. Below it the greeting reads, "Congratulations on the new arrival."

SISTER SUSANNA  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



## NO BOXES TO SPARE

Father Patrick Shannon, our good chaplain in El Paso, Texas, has made it a hobby to collect cigar boxes for us — empty ones, that is. He saw a beautiful shrine to Our Blessed Mother made from one by a boy in our religious vacation school classes one year and that gave him the idea.

Strange as it may seem, though Father brings hundreds of boxes, we are never over-supplied, for we find many uses for them. One year they served for shrines; another year, for a Mass vestment project; then for a sick-call set; and again for a sewing box. Last December the older children made stables for the Christmas scene out of them. We provided the Nativity group. Some of these Cribs were as lovely as any miniatures that could be purchased in a church goods store. The best part of this project was that many a poor family was certain to have a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas prominently displayed in the home.

SISTER CELINE

Sister Mary Ann displays one of the Cribs designed from a cigar box.



Judy Geyman and Linda Barron distribute the precious hymnals before choir practice after religion class on Saturdays.—Ida, Michigan.

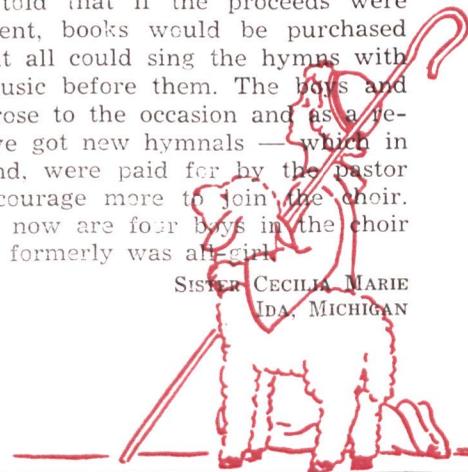
Roger Diroff, Thomas Pernia and Norman Malosh admire their new hymn books.



## GOOD SALESMEN

AS an incentive to sell Christmas cards the children in the choir were told that if the proceeds were sufficient, books would be purchased so that all could sing the hymns with the music before them. The boys and girls rose to the occasion and as a result we got new hymnals — which in the end, were paid for by the pastor to encourage more to join the choir. There now are four boys in the choir which formerly was all-girl.

SISTER CECILIA MARIE  
IDA, MICHIGAN



Sister Mary Martha struggles with the tree. "I wish St. Joseph would help me with this thing."

She lights one of the candles which brighten the sisters' way to chapel at midnight.



The sisters in all our missions are busy preparing Christmas joy for the children, the poor, the sick, the lonely, but they do not neglect their own convent and religious family. On this page are three pictures of convent Christmas from Middlesex, N. J.

Every corner of the convent chapel proclaims the joy of Christmas.



# Mary Goes Calling

by Sister Mary Rita

WE may do it again. We did it last year and everyone loved it. It was an unusual preparation for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe suggested by our pastor. On our weekly catechism day in each of the many teaching centers out of Greeley, Colorado, we held, what you might call, a pilgrimage; only instead of the children coming to her, we carried a large statue of Our Blessed Mother with us to each place where she was enthroned while the rosary, litany, and Act of Consecration were recited and hymns were sung in her honor.

Monday found us on a very muddy street gathering children at two homes as usual. When I explained to my little ones that we would go over to the other house to pray and sing to Mary, they clapped their hands as though I had told them about a party or a free day.

In an effort to clean some of the mud from their shoes, they really plastered the front walk and steps to that home! Inside, they all huddled close together.

The room was small and large pieces of furniture do not leave much space for forty children. It became warm and uncomfortably stuffy before we finished, but no one said a word. Afterwards, I swept a pile of caked mud out of the room while I thought of how Our Blessed Mother must love these good people who not only welcome her on a muddy day, but shelter our children week after week all year 'round for religion classes.

On Tuesday Our Blessed Mother was enthroned on a long table in the State Armory where the walls are adorned with guns and war pictures, and where a hundred children from Lincoln School gather for instructions each week, and now were coming eagerly for an afternoon of prayer.

On Wednesday she was welcomed royally to one of the larger homes. For a week the girls had been making paper flowers, and the boys — not to be outdone — brought nickels for tiny candles. These were placed on a shiny



## *When Mary Smiled*

WE do not read that angels' glow  
Dispelled the blackness in the cave,  
When Mary to the waiting world  
Its Infant King and Savior gave.

NO angel's light was needful there  
For all the darkness of the place  
Fled from the brightness, unsurpassed,  
In Mary's smile, and radiant face.

by Jovita De Vargas





**Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.**

platter in front of the statue which we set in the picture window. Under the statue itself was spread a large doily with big red-breasted robins embroidered upon it. Birds, flowers, and lights were there to do homage to the queen of all.

Roads had been icy and dangerous the week before when a woman had brought a car full of youngsters from the next town to join us, mistaking the date of the Virgin's arrival. Without a word of complaint, she brought them again this week. We had also received phone calls from disappointed children who were absent because of the weather. How glad they were to learn that they, too, were mistaken about the date. Now we had a house full. Mothers with babies in arms praying with us, made a touching group.

On Thursday we carried Our Blessed Mother to the Fire Hall in another of our centers. This is a very quiet place. In the three years that I have been using it as a classroom, a fire alarm never once sounded during our classes, though I would be as interested as the children to see those three big fire trucks respond to a call. Here, in a large room, we placed the statue on a round table covered with oilcloth. Before I began the rosary, I told my little ones that I would lead the prayers and they could answer. Disregarding my direction, thirty little voices took up the Creed and Aves with me, the older children responding. These little ones, with their dark eyes glued to the figure of Our Blessed Mother, prayed eagerly and earnestly, keeping up the lead.

On Friday our most restless group gathered around Our Blessed Mother. Fifty Hail Marys must seem endless to small children but I noticed only one distracted boy blowing toward the vigil light to make the flame dance, and a girl near the window holding the lace curtain between her folded hands.

On Saturday five towns in succession honored the Virgin.

On Sunday, at one place, an altar had been set up and families had been gathering nightly for a novena of rosaries in preparation for their Queen's visit. Even two families who had been at enmity for years had joined in the novena and had forgotten the feud!

On December 12 a high Mass in the main parish church, sung by three hundred children, climaxed our pilgrimage. These children were representatives from all the missions which the statue had visited. Today the statue was placed on a shrine of rocks and cacti surrounded by colored lights, with a large cardboard figure of Juan Diego at her feet, spreading his mantle before her. Truly, it was a happy day. So well prepared for, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe meant more to all of us than ever before.



# our **A**ssociates'

**A Happy  
Holy  
Christmas  
to All!**

ST. JOSEPH BAND NO. 2, *Chicago*



The raffle of an afghan, made and donated by Mrs. John Sullivan, one of the members, helped increase the receipts of this Band, which always does exceedingly well under the able direction of Mrs. A. Naumes. Although our Promoter had to miss many meetings during the past year because of ill health, the members carried on faithfully. Mrs. Naumes in a Christmas letter wrote: "May our Blessed Lord hear our humble prayers and restore peace and order to the world soon. What better Christmas gift could there be for us?"

Dear Associates:

ONE of the saints, I think it may have been St. Alphonsus Liguori, wrote so beautifully:

*The Lord is God and greatly to be feared;*

*The Lord is little and greatly to be loved!*

At this season of the year we like to recall all your benefactions to the poor, for it is Christ in the person of His little ones (the poor and needy) whom you have helped through them. The results of your mission parties and dues go out to the missions in funds to help care for the starved souls of children whose only contact with God and His Church are *Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters* whom you send or help keep in the mission fields.

SISTER SUPERVISOR, ACM

ST. RAYMOND BAND, *Chicago*

A letter from the Promoter, Mrs. Kathrynne Quinlan, said in part: "At our Christmas meeting we usually have a grab bag, but this year we decided to do something for you sisters instead. We would like to have a linen shower for some new convent. Please let me know if this would be suitable so I can have the girls do their shopping." (Your Supervisor approved this idea with a hearty *Amen!*)

## On Guard Duty!



We wish to express our deep gratitude to the many clubs which send Christmas boxes to the sisters whom the members sponsor. We learn that besides warm clothing for the poor and toys for children many boxes contain inexpensive but much appreciated gifts for THEIR sister and her companions.

# Club Mention



## TWO CHICAGO GUILDS



We are very proud of the work done by *Dolores Mission Guild* (Mrs. Anna Klingel, Promoter) and *St. John Mission Guild* (Mrs. A. Bechtold, Promoter)

which together sponsor our Sister Mary John, located this year at Punta Gorda, Florida. Included in the large mission boxes of articles for the children are inexpensive Christmas gifts for the three sisters as well.

## HOLY SOULS BAND, Chicago

In September, Mrs. John McGovern, Promoter, wrote: "Eunice Howes is having the meeting today at the Oak Park Arms. Enclosed is a check from Holy Souls Band for ten dollars from Nellie Doyle Crowley. Mr. McGovern and I will have our anniversary Mass (Silver Wedding) in Denver at St. Dominic's by a Dominican Father who was formerly in Oak Park."

Mrs. McGovern's Band has started its twenty-fifth year of existence, too! She has written many a letter during those years with the preamble, *Enclosed find check!* Congratulations to the happy couple and to the honored Band members.

## ST. ANNE BAND, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sometime ago the leader, Mrs. H. Karnitz, wrote us: "Please let us know of one of your Missions that could use some First Communion dresses. Thank you for the Mite-boxes. We like the new magazine, and usually pass ours on to someone who is not receiving it to let them know what the Missionary Sisters are doing."



## BANDS, CLUBS, GUILDS DONATIONS September 16 to October 12, 1955

Adrian, Chicago, Florence Dietz .....	\$ 25.00
Charitina, Chicago, Helen Ford .....	5.50
Dolores Guild, Chicago, A. Klingel ..	75.00
Iota Chap., Pi Epsilon Kappa, Hammond, Ind., Mrs. Farkos .....	10.00
Little Flower, Chicago, V. Foertsch	35.00
St. Anne, Milwaukee, Mrs. Karnitz ..	60.00
St. Augustine, Marshfield, Mass., Mrs. James O'Brien .....	10.00
St. Catherine, Los Angeles, Calif., Mrs. M. McMannamy .....	200.00
St. Clare, Omaha, Mrs. M. Preiner	30.00
St. Joseph II, Chicago, A. Naumes	45.00
St. Justin, Chicago, Mrs. Kiefer .....	20.00
St. Katherine, Chicago, Mrs. Hammer	14.00
St. Omer, Cincinnati, Mrs. Hurlburt	10.00
St. Philomena, Chicago, M. Schaefer	50.00
St. Rose, Marshfield, Wis., Mrs. John Huebl .....	50.00
Srillians, Cincinnati, L. Willenborg	9.00
Seven Dolors, Bellwood, Mrs. Murphy	5.50
Via Matris, Chicago, A. Aldworth ....	10.50



## GOOD WILL MISSION CIRCLE Carrollton, Kentucky

One of the officers of the Circle, Mrs. Laura Hill, gave us the following news of their mission group.

"We are late with our dues but last month we were short of funds and had to wait until we sold our greeting cards. We did real well with sales . . . Our little band is still going strong. We contribute to the Kentucky mountain missions which are in need of help. We are glad to do what we can. Our card parties, greeting card sales, metal sponges, and birthday pennies all net us a neat little sum each year. We send clothing and toys to the poor in the mountains."



# Mary's Loyal

Dear Loyal Helpers:

CHRISTMAS has been called the children's festival! Old hearts become young, tender, compassionate, forgiving, generous — all because the great Lord of Heaven and earth, for us men and our salvation, descended from His



throne of glory and became a lovely Infant. Having given us the Gift of Himself, He asks in return only the complete gift of ourselves in such wise that for love of Him we will avoid sin which offends Him, and serve Him henceforth in the person of our neighbor, especially the needy and afflicted.

It ought not be hard for us to make Him these promises as we kneel beside the miniature Cribs erected in our homes, or at the larger one in church. The most suitable time is right after our Christmas Communion when He is cradled within our hearts.

As always, I will remember all our Loyal Helpers at Mass and Holy Com-

munion on the Feast of the Holy Innocents.

May God and His wonderful Mother Mary fill you with endless Christmas Joy.

Mary-ly yours,  
SUNSHINE SECRETARY, MLH.

"Please send my children a Sunshine Bag. They have Mission Piggy Banks at school but I shall encourage them to remember your mission work, too."

Mrs. Marie Grimme,  
Round Lake, Ill.

## JOIN MARY'S LOYAL HELPERS!

Are you a boy or girl who reads these pages every month? Then why not be a Loyal Helper yourself? Just send a two-cent postal card to *Sunshine Secretary, Victory Noll, Huntington, Indiana*, saying you would like to join and she will send you a membership card, a Sunshine Bag and dime card. You will then share in the prayers of our Sisters.

## ELMHURST (ILL.) HELPERS



Pictured above are Dannie and Donnie Picchietti who joined Mary's Loyal Helpers two years ago.

# Helpers' pages

STADLER HELPERS, TOPEKA, KANSAS



In the accompanying picture, left to right, are Kathleen Ann (7), John Andrew (5½ months), Michael John (4), and Bernadette (11). These were their ages when this picture was taken in the family living room beside tree and Crib. The Stadler family represents two generations of *Helpers!* The children's aunts and uncles, now grown, were also members of our children's mission club. Two aunts, Sister Germaine and Sister Ann Joseph, are members of our community.

I am enclosing one dollar in dimes. Will you please send me THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST free for one year?

*Dorita M. Ingalls, Verdale, Wash.*

I have said my Hail Mary faithfully for the missions each day. I have also made some sacrifices but most of the money I am sending I earned.

*Kathryn Przybyla, Chicago, Ill.*

## DECEMBER PUZZLE

In the sentences below are hidden words connected with the first Christmas. Underscore these hidden words after you have found them, or else list them on a blank sheet of paper, with corresponding number of sentences. Send in worked puzzle for a holy card.



1. Christ came to earth to redeem sinners.
2. Reba began to hum softly, "Silent Night."
3. He was just able to board the train before it pulled out.
4. She epitomized the compendious diary of her trip.
5. They were making silver stars for the stage backdrop.
6. He found, in the back seat of the car, Olsen's rosary.
7. The Magi came looking for the Christ Child in Bethlehem.
8. Herman, geraniums, are hardy outdoor plants in Southern California.

## ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER PUZZLE

1. St. Martin. 2. St. Cecilia. 3. St. Hubert. 4. St. Catherine of Alexandria. 5. St. Andrew. 6. St. Elizabeth of Hungary. 7. St. Gertrude.



# True Devotion to Mary

by Sister Elizabeth Ann

UNTIL a little over a century ago all dogmas concerning Mary, including that of the Divine Maternity, had been proclaimed in order to refute current heresies. The Immaculate Conception was the first to be defined directly for Our Lady's glory. Since then it has been our privilege to live in an age that also saw the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption, likewise defined to add to the glory of Mary.

It was on December 8, 1854, that our Holy Father of blessed memory, Pope Pius IX declared, pronounced, and defined that "the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been preserved from every stain of original sin at the first instant of her conception, by a grace and unique privilege of God Almighty, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind, had been revealed by God and must, therefore, be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful."

The correct understanding of the Immaculate Conception presupposes the knowledge of what we mean by original justice, the state in which our first parents were created by God. It consisted in the complete harmony of all the powers of man and the submission of his reason and will to God through the supernatural gift of sanctifying grace. Moreover, besides the usual gifts that accompany sanctifying grace — the infused virtues and the seven gifts of the

Holy Ghost — there were added gifts of integrity. The lower powers of Adam's soul were perfectly subject to his reason and will. Also, his body was to be preserved from all sickness and even from death. This state of original justice was intended by God to be transmitted to all of Adam's descendants.

But Adam sinned and lost original justice. He lost it not only for himself but for all his children. Consequently, all men are born into the state in which Adam was after his sin. We call it the state of original sin. By baptism original sin is effaced in us. Yet, though we recover God's friendship, we still have in us the effects of Adam's sin. Disorder and weakness are there. Our lower faculties are in rebellion against our reason and will.

One person alone escaped this punishment — she who was to be the Mother of God. The Immaculate Conception of Mary, then, consists in her exemption from original sin. From the first moment of her existence, her soul was adorned with sanctifying grace and she was always the beloved child of God.

Mary was redeemed, just as every other child of Adam. But her redemption was more perfect than ours. As the collect for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception expresses it, she was preserved from original sin "in view of the merits of her Son." She was *preserved*. We were redeemed by Christ after we contracted original sin. Mary was redeemed before she contracted it.

Nothing is more fitting than that Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, should be the Immaculate Conception. It harmonizes so perfectly with



her role as Universal Mediatrix, as Co-Redemptrix, as the Distributer of All Graces.

But if Mary is so pure, so spotless, so holy, so perfect, how can we approach her? How can she understand our fallen nature? How can she be sympathetic when she was untouched by the slightest movement of concupiscence?

Ah, this same Mary, spotless Virgin, is our *Mother*. She became our Mother when she consented to the Incarnation. She conceived in her chaste womb not only Christ the Head of the Mystical Body, but us, the members. St. Pius X, in his encyclical *Ad diem illum*, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, wrote: "Already in the Virgin's chaste womb, Christ joined to Himself a spiritual body formed of all those who were to believe in Him! and it can be said that, bearing Jesus in her womb, Mary also bore there all those whose life was included in that of the Savior."

And what a Mother Mary is! She gives to us supernatural life. Christ is the life of the soul. In giving us Christ, Mary gives us true life. Then she continues to obtain grace for us, that life-giving grace which is so necessary for us every moment of our existence.

Does it not follow logically that anyone who has given us so much as Mary has, deserves everything from us in return? We can give Mary *all* by practicing Total Consecration, by dedicating to her our whole selves, body, soul, goods, both exterior and interior, even the value of all our good works. It is little enough to offer to that Mother to whom we owe so much.

We are the ones who gain from such a consecration. Mary does not need us. It is a glorious feeling to know that we belong wholly to Our Blessed Mother, that she who knows so well the will of God, will dispose of us as her Divine Son wishes, will obtain for us every



Magnificat

grace we need for carrying out His designs in us. Nothing we do will be wasted. True freedom is ours when we realize that Our Lady will make the big decisions for us. She will take care of all our needs and apply our merits as she sees fit.

Surely this is the highest form of devotion to Mary we can practice. If you would like to learn more about it, write to Victory Noll and obtain a full explanation of it. Address:

Sister Secretary  
Confraternity of Mary  
Queen of All Hearts  
Victory Noll  
Huntington, Indiana

**We are sorry.** The second installment of Sister Blanche Marie's narrative of her trip with our superior general, "I Accompany Mother," was crowded out this month by Christmas accounts. We promise to give you a double portion in January.

# Christmas in Los Angeles

by Sister Juanita

**T**WAS the month before Christmas, and all through our house, all creatures were stirring—even the mice.

Yes, a month before Christmas finds the sisters at 2321 Opal Street, Los Angeles, wishing they had traffic signals throughout the convent.

More fortunate than many of our missions, we are blessed here at Christmas time in that our local good Catholics generously share their material goods with their less favored neighbors. We live in East Los Angeles and teach poor children. Various parishes and schools from the west side share their Christmas joy with our children through the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

One of the groups who contribute are the girls from Mount St. Mary's High School. They hold a contest among the rooms for the most original idea in gift-gathering. Each class carries out a theme such as: A snowman full of toys; an angel; a fireplace with big red stockings bulging with presents; Santa and his sleigh; a huge candle filled to the flame; a comfortable armchair; etc.

**Snowman and "angel" stuffed with gifts are transported to the sisters' convent by students from Mount Saint Mary's High School.**



**Mount Saint Mary's girls enjoy a snack after unloading their treasures.**

Our Lady's Sodality members carefully pack the bundles into cars and bring them to Santa's workshop — our convent. Suddenly, Opal Street is crowded with traffic as car after car arrives, loaded with Christmas treasures. This lovely collection is only part of the supply which congests our front rooms, dining room, hall, even our bedrooms. The only safe place is the chapel.

The sisters' spare moments are spent counting gifts for our different mission centers. We enjoy this immensely for it is like working in a toy shop. Mechanical toys are walking and running here and there, and we laugh heartily and often over many a "modernized" invention. All this helps us acquire the Christmas spirit early.

Finally, it is time to distribute these presents to our children. The beautiful assortment is displayed, in each mission, on a table or around a decorated tree. The most deserving children have first choice. There are many exclamations and squeals of joy as each child happily makes his selection.

Besides this array of lovely and elaborate gifts the sisters' contribution

— a paper Crib for each child — appears small indeed. A thrill of true Christmas joy runs through me when I realized that the children prized this little Nativity Scene more dearly than they do a big rubber doll or an expensive train. One twelve-year-old remarked last year: "Sister, I've always wanted a picture of when Jesus was born. I'm going to put it right on our TV!"

## Let's Go Caroling

(continued from p. 13)

The carolers, forewarned about the necessity of silence, tiptoed into their customary semi-circle and waited. At a signal from Sister the usual hospital hush gave way to the familiar songful message that had been ushered into a quiet corner of the earth by angels on one holy night long ago. The apparent anxiety on some faces seemed to be smoothed away a little as they listened. Others nodded smilingly to the children. When the sixth carol had been sung, the children's eyes reflected the questions in their minds.

"Don't we get to sing to the poor sick people?"

The answer came with the appearance of the head nurse, dressed in the starched white garb of her profession. The local photographer was anxious to secure a timely picture of a number of patients around the Christmas tree in the hospital lobby. Carolers would so add to the picture story! Would we consent to being in it? The children nodded approval in unison. When the posing was over and the white figure moved away to the reception desk, the carolers feared that the lobby would be as far as they would be permitted to go. But no. The nurse returned with directions on how to reach the nearest stairway.

In a few moments we mounted the stairs to the second floor. Except for

nurses on duty there, the corridors were deserted. We were conscious of the cloistral rooms with their half-closed doors and the expectancy of feeling behind them which must have been raised by the shuffle of twenty-one pairs of feet. The children sang well, almost in a lullaby hush, to those whom they could not see. No answering smiles welcomed them here, no nods of appreciation. Only the silent, white corridors.

In their hands the choristers held decorated envelopes for the patients containing little reminders of the first Christmas. "May we deliver them personally?" was the question now. The possibility brought a round of eager whispering. I suppose, like little children who watch their mother's face as she unwraps a gift from them, these boys and girls were eager to witness the joy of their giving. This little reward was denied them.

"At least," said one resignedly, as the packets were placed in the nurse's hands, "they'll be surprised when they see them on their trays tonight."

The afternoon was well over when we left the hospital premises. Our caravan worked its way through the dusk over slippery roads. The children were quiet. The evening silence was a balm to their tired throats. Although unmindful of the full sublimity of their venture, these boys and girls had offered gifts today on which no value could be set — they had given of themselves. Like the shepherds, who having seen The Wonder that had come to pass, proceeded on their mission of joyful telling, these boys and girls had radiated the blessed message of the Savior's birth with all the meaning it implies for mankind. Their song had stirred again in the hearts of the lonely and the suffering the realization of the love of Christ for man, and had strengthened the invisible bond of charity between men in Christ.

## The last word

by the Editor

Love is an exchange of gifts. Saint Ignatius said this many years ago and it has been repeated in countless ways since, for it conveys a beautiful truth. Love must give; it is of the essence of love to give; without giving there is no loving.

Christmas is a feast of love; it is, then, a time for gifts. True, the custom of gift-giving has been sadly abused, as have many other good things in this world. Nevertheless, all who give have as their Exemplar our heavenly Father Himself Who instituted Christmas by the very fact that He conferred on mankind a most precious gift—His only begotten Son to be our Savior.

At Christmas time we sisters are only on the receiving end of the line—seemingly. In reality this is not so. You show your love for God, and for His cause which we are trying to promote, by your generosity to us in varied forms: Articles to be used in our convents, or for the children; new subscribers to THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST; membership in our 2500 Club; and above all, stringless donations to be used where our need is greatest.

On our part we do not forget you. With Saint Peter we can truthfully say, "Silver and gold we have none;" our gifts are spiritual and imperishable. They are, moreover, made through Our Blessed Mother who will treasure them for you and who will not let them be lost.

On the nine days preceding the Feast of the Nativity, Holy Mass is offered every morning at Victory Noll for your intentions. In the evening, before the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar, postulants, novices, and professed

sisters chant the prophecies that foretell the coming of the Messiah, and again we are pleading for you in this impressive Christmas Novena. Finally, before the Crib at Midnight on Christmas Eve, and in all our visits to that font of grace during the Christmas season, your needs are placed in the tiny outstretched hands of our Infant God. He Who gave Himself will not refuse lesser gifts to His children, if they are for their eternal welfare.

May you be blessed in receiving and blessed in giving, for Christ's sake, this Christmas, and may the love of God grow in all hearts with every exchange of gifts.

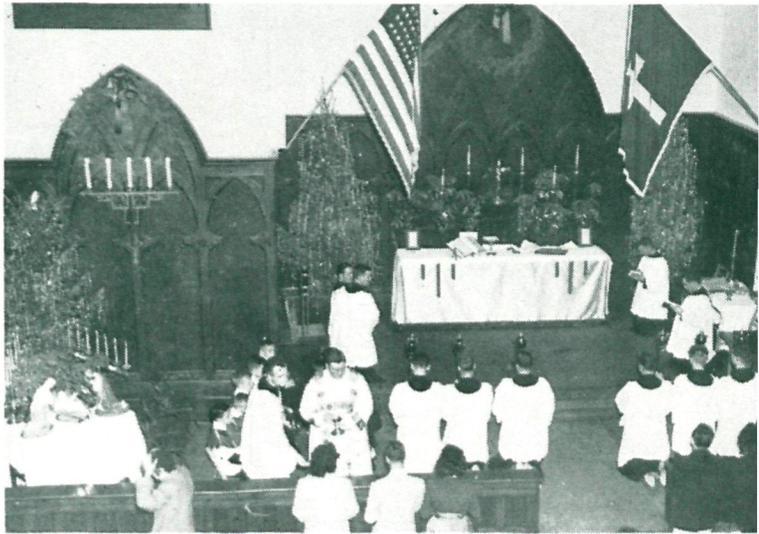


## In Memoriam

- Ida Wopperer, Hamilton, Ohio, mother of our Sister Viola.  
Miguel Perez Medina, Puerto Rico, father of our Sister Merced.  
Mary Lorenz, Hopkins, Minn., mother of our Sister Beatrice.  
Henry Altmiller, Fort Smith, Ark., father of our Sister Anna Margaret.  
Maria Rodriguez, Salt Lake City, mother of our postulant Consuelo Rodriguez.  
Rev. Joseph H. Steinbrunner, Cincinnati, O.  
Margaret Besse, Louisville, Ky.  
Eugene Zahm, Huntington, Ind.  
Frona Saal, Huntington, Ind.  
Herman Dickerson, Lafayette, Ind.  
Mrs. A. Rogers, Ft. Wayne, Ind.  
Anna Marie Hoagland, Peru, Ind.  
Ida Deppert, Brooklyn, N. J.  
Lillian Spellman, Chicago, Ill.  
Clara Ryan, Oak Park, Ill.  
Mrs. John Weber, Wilmette, Ill.  
Miss C. Zimmerman, Streator, Ill.

# Peace at the Fort

by Sister Noreen



Midnight Mass at Fort Sam Houston's Post Chapel.

"PEACE on earth to men of good will," the angels sang at the birth of Our Lord in a cold stable in Bethlehem. That peace is experienced at the re-birth of Jesus in the warm hearts of the faithful. Nowhere is the Prince of Peace more welcome than in the place where war is the profession — at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

WAR and peace! The cold business of war is evident in the dress of the men and women engaged there in the defense works of our country. The warm concern of peace is manifest in the vestments of the priest, richly brocaded in gold; and in the garb of the acolytes, with soft satin capes and bows of red, ornamenting cassock and surplice. The hope of peace is shown in the eyes and the attitude of the faithful gathered in the chapel to do homage to the newborn King.

THE Reverend Edward E. Kusch, celebrant of the midnight Mass

pictured here, is carrying on the tradition of the Church with full ceremony. Before the Mass, a procession of cross-bearer and acolytes was followed by Father Kusch bearing the figure of the Infant. The boys sang Silent Night as they walked slowly down the center aisle of the main chapel at Fort Sam Houston. Father incensed the Infant before placing Him in the Crib. The brilliant poinsettias, silver "icicles," and softly glowing candles contrasted with the harshness of the setting of the stable.

THE flags of the United States and of the Fourth Army, prominently displayed, spoke of "one nation under God" ready to defend God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. A participant at this midnight Mass noted these flags dip toward the crucifix on the altar, as the priest re-enacted the Supreme Sacrifice made by the Son of God for these same principles!



Father Kusch incenses the Infant after laying Him in the Crib before the Mass on Christmas Eve at Fort Sam Houston. Turn back page for story.

○ God, Who makest us glad with the yearly expectation of our redemption, grant that we who now joyfully receive thine only begotten Son as our Redeemer, may also without fear, behold Him coming as our Judge, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God world without end. Amen.

Collect from the Mass for the Vigil of Christmas

