

THE

MISSIONARY

CATECHIST



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Blessings and Good Wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Mother Cecilia and Sisters

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

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COVER

Sister Rosario, superior in Calexico, California, places the Infant in the manger in the community room of the convent. The scroll in the background, incidentally, is Sister's work.

CREDITS

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NEXT MONTH

The many Confraternity of Christian Doctrine teachers who are subscribers to The Missionary Catechist will be happy to learn of a new feature we will carry, beginning next month. Since nearly every mail brings inquiries on CCD organization, teaching, etc., we have decided to publish some of these questions and answers so that others may profit from them. Be sure to look for the page: YOUR CCD QUESTION in the January issue.

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Our Play Was

No Ordinary Play

by SISTER MARY KATHLEEN

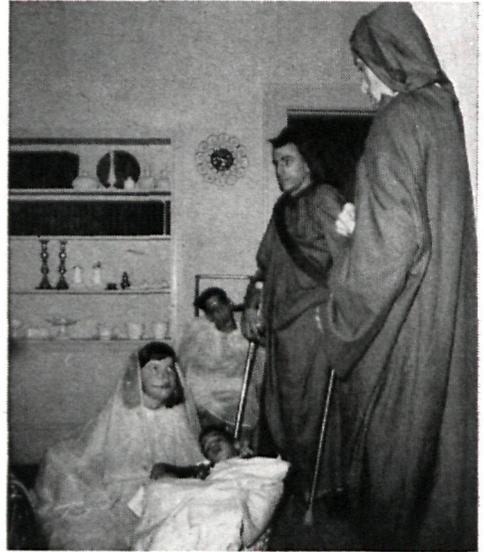
AS soon as I said it, I wished I hadn't.

What had ever possessed me to ask these children whether they would like to put on a Christmas play! The words were hardly out of my mouth when I would have given anything to take them back. But it was too late. The children's enthusiastic, if somewhat incoherent response, was too touching.

These are not ordinary children. They are patients at Villa Rose in De Soto City, Florida. Every one of them is afflicted with cerebral palsy. When they come to class, some are strapped in their chairs so that they can remain in an upright position. Some wheel themselves into the room; some hobble in on crutches. But all are smiling and happy.

These children long to be like others. Putting on a Christmas play would help them achieve their ambition. Joyfully they waited for the parts to be given out.

"We need a Baby Jesus," I told them.



Mary greets the first shepherd.

Not the least bit daunted, they said, "We have a baby."

"We got a new one this week."

"He's four years old, but he is as small as a baby."

"He will fit into a wash basket."

A Jewish boy on crutches was chosen to be St. Joseph. The only girl who can walk was to be Mary. She was happy with her part until she realized that she would have to kneel by the crib. She explained that she could not get up and down without great effort and assistance. She was relieved when I assured her that we would close the curtains while we helped her rise.

Two children in wheel chairs would be the angels at the entrance to the cave of the nativity. One little boy strapped to his chair would be an angel guarding the crib. He would be placed right behind the Infant Jesus.

Delighted, the children practiced the carols, laboring over the words and music.

Only one boy could manage a speaking part. This child remembers when he was a normal, healthy boy. It was an operation that left him badly crippled. We gave him a parody on "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to recite. He was not satisfied with this, however. He wanted to be in the play and wear a costume, so we assigned to this lad the part of a king.

That is why our play had only one king and that is why his camel resembled a wheel chair.

The weeks that followed were exciting ones. There were songs to learn, costumes to be tried on, people to invite. The other children in the school who were able to come, would be wheeled in to see the play. Friends and relatives would be there, and especially the beloved Mrs. Rose McQuade who conducts the school. The children could hardly wait to surprise "Aunt Rose," as they call her.

The great day *finally* came. The hour for the play to begin **FINALLY** dragged itself around.

In the first scene Mary knelt to receive the message of the angel. The angel remained invisible, for there was no child able to take this part.

The trip to Bethlehem must have

given joy to Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph as they watched it so humbly portrayed: Joseph leading the way on crutches; Mary coming along with slow and careful steps.

The nativity scene opened with Mary kneeling by a yellow plastic wash basket which served as the crib. She and Joseph were much concerned about the little boy who was taking the place of Jesus. He was frightened in this strange setting and was crying loudly. Very tenderly Mary leaned over and gave him a kiss. Then she soothed him by gently stroking his hair. Soon he became quiet and happy. The angel strapped in his chair smiled, and Joseph looked on approvingly.

Two shepherds made their way with uncertain steps to the crib and bowed reverently in adoration. Then the king was wheeled in proudly bearing his gift. The gift fell from his hands and began to slide down his legs, but Mary caught it and placed it carefully in the crib with Jesus.

Everyone present joined the children in the singing of "Silent Night" and "Come, All Ye Faithful."

Then our play was over and I was no longer sorry I had suggested it. I was happy I had been so "rash."



One of the angels who guarded the entrance to the cave. Right: the entire cast.

God Is Good

by SISTER DE PAUL

It was just a few days before Christmas.

Their dancing eyes met mine as the children came into the room for religion class. On the table was an assortment of Christmas gifts, a religious article for each child.

"Gee, Sister, are those for us?" one queried.

"How pretty!" exclaimed another.

And so the remarks continued. Class began. The children re-lived the beautiful story of the first Christmas and God the Father's most wonderful Gift to us. They heard the good news of Christ's birth among men. They felt a bit of the joy the shepherds must have felt. For a while, at least, their minds were off those smaller gifts on the table. That was during class—but after!

"Sister, are you going to give us those?"

"Gee, Sister, this is neat."

Everyone was pleased with his gift, and it was a joy to see such happiness.

The children were slow in leaving. One little girl was especially reluctant to go.

"Did you like the story, Rosemary?" I asked her.

We talked for a few minutes about

Rosemary Learns

the first Christmas, and then out it came.

"Sister," and there were tears in her eyes, "this is the only present I'm going to get this year. My mother didn't have any money left over from our check."

That was it. She pulled at my heart strings and I could not let the child go away feeling like that. And so I started all over again telling her of the best Gift of all, Christ Himself, and that if we have Him, we don't need anything else.

Rosemary had not yet made her First Communion, so she could not



Rosemary with her gift from Sister.

have the joy of receiving Jesus on Christmas. Throughout the year the class had been making spiritual communions; it was nothing new to suggest this as an answer to her problem. Her tears gave way to a big smile as she realized a little better God's everlasting love for her. When she left I was sure Jesus would make it a blessed Christmas for Rosemary.

When I saw her after the holidays, Rosemary was indeed a happy child of God.

"And Sister," she reported, "besides giving me Jesus, Our Blessed Mother brought me other presents. My uncle came home from the Navy, and he brought something for everyone in our family. God sure is good, isn't He?"

Christmas Along the Way

by SISTER DORIS

FOR the past few years a group of young girls from Lexington, Kentucky, spent the weeks before Christmas collecting and repairing old toys for our mountain children.

With each passing year the number of toys grew larger and larger. This past year our living room was filled with everything from baby toys to a typewriter. We realized that there were just too many toys for our children, so we worked out another plan. We would visit homes along the highway to our mountain mission and distribute some of these toys to poor children who were not of our faith.

The plan worked beautifully. Best of all, it helped us to carry out another idea: to ask the people along the highway to display Christmas scenes in their windows during the holy season. Thanks to the generosity of a sodality in Fort Wayne and of my brother, Father Robert Koenig, we received lovely cribs for this purpose. Now we were ready to start out.

What joy it brought to our hearts to be able to bring this little bit of happiness into these poor homes. When we told the mothers why we had come, some of them motioned to us

not to let the children know. They would be the only toys they would receive, so naturally they did not want them to see them until Christmas morning.

Sometimes we let the children choose what they wanted. In one case a little girl and her big brother came to the car. I displayed all the dolls we had and told her to choose. Big brother encouraged his sister to take the largest doll in the assortment, but no, she reached for a very small doll and could not be persuaded to change her mind.

In one home the mother was not there and we gave the toys to a little eight-year-old girl. She thanked us sweetly and followed us to the door. She expressed her gratitude further by calling after us as we reached the car, "We *do* thank you." This was said with all the emphasis that is possible for a little girl to put in her voice.

Added to this satisfaction was the joy we experienced as we drove to our mission for Mass on Christmas morning. All along the highway the true meaning of Christmas was depicted by means of the cribs displayed in the windows of the many homes we had visited.

CHRISTMAS had always been for me, as for everyone else, a day of joy and happiness, a day we prepared for and looked forward to, a day when we could not help but feel the nearness of the Infant Jesus reflected in the happy faces of our loved ones.

But this year, what would it be like? This year I would be spending Christmas in the novitiate and not with my family with whom I had al-

blue lights caught and held my gaze for more than a few moments. The altar with its candles and poinsettias; the wreaths, each a work of art, hung around the lights along the sides of the chapel; the beautiful vestments of the priest—all added a bit of enchantment to the scene.

Midnight Mass had always seemed to me to be one of Our Lord's choicest gifts. Here, where He showers so

My First Christmas

by SISTER ANTOINETTE

ways shared the joys of the Nativity. True, I had left them for a new kind of family, a religious one; but would Christmas now have any semblance of home as I had known it?

Each Saturday evening during Advent when an additional candle of the Advent Wreath was lighted, I could scarcely believe that another week had gone by. Since preparations are necessary if Christmas is to be celebrated at all, so too, in a convent there is a certain hustle and bustle so that all will be in readiness for the big day. The Christmas Novena is a joyous event, a spiritual refresher, so that we will be better prepared to welcome our King.

It was with a feeling of happy anticipation that I walked down the corridor toward chapel for Midnight Mass. I found the chapel resplendent with its festive decorations. The lovely crib and the Christmas trees and

many graces on us, it seemed even more so.

All the buildings were decorated to commemorate the coming of the Infant. In the dining room a tall Christmas tree graced the middle of the room. On the back wall was a large silver star around a niche which held a Madonna and Child, the back and sides of the star being draped in blue and white satin.

The table decorations were exquisite and were also in blue and white, Our Lady's colors, for how could we pay homage to Mary's Child without also honoring her through whom He willed to enter the world! As I entered the candle-lighted room, I could not help but feel the love and planning that made Christmas in the convent such a happy feast.

The novitiate recreation room had been closed to us first year novices the afternoon before, so its decorations

were a complete surprise to us. As we entered, we were greeted by strains of music from a little church beneath a large Christmas tree. Only the lights on the tree and around the Infant Jesus placed at the feet of Our Lady of Fatima guided us as we filed along each side of the statues to express our joy and thanks in song.

Then came the gifts and gifts and gifts—from the community, from our

new sisters, from home, and from friends. It was a scene so like home that I could not help but notice the similarity. Our novice mistress shared our happiness just as Mom used to do. There was much laughter and chatter and we opened box after box.

Christmas Day flew by, so it seemed. In reading our accumulation of mail, we had our little visits with family and friends. Often during the

At Victory Noll



The tree in the dining room at Victory Noll is always different from the other trees throughout the convent. Its decorations are edible! Was Sister Antonia going to sample something when we caught her?

day we joined our sisters at the piano to sing the traditional carols. Entertainment was extemporaneous, but fun and laughter rang throughout the novitiate.

Most important during the day were our visits to chapel and especially to the crib where we joined Our Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the shepherds in adoring the Infant Jesus.

Did I, that first Christmas, think of home? Certainly. It was only natural, for God has blessed me with a wonderful family. But there were no regrets for having left them. This was God's will for me, so I could not be making a mistake. Serving Him was what really mattered. Then, too, I had entrusted my family to Our Lady's care and I felt sure that the Infant Jesus would fill any void I may have left.



The gaily decorated containers were packed with gifts. Sister Carlota (left) and Sister Marie Helene look somewhat overwhelmed.

Santa Moves In

by SISTER DAMIEN

“DOES he really bring all that?” we new sisters asked incredulously when the sisters at Infant of Prague Convent, Los Angeles, told us all the things Santa would bring.

“Wait and see,” they cautioned.

The day for Santa’s arrival came. There was no snow and it was not even Christmas Eve.

“Here comes Santa Claus,” we heard Sister Marie Helene call.

We all rushed to see him arriving not in a big sled with reindeer, but in all kinds of cars, each full to overflowing with gifts. There was no red suit, no white beard. These were replaced by the neat dark blue uniforms, green ties, and white blouses of the sodality girls of St. Mary’s High School.

Each year at Christmas the girls bring gifts to us for boys and girls less fortunate than themselves. To

make things more interesting, the gifts this time were not simply packed in boxes, but were colorfully displayed in decorated trees, huge peppermint sticks, bright angels, sparkling houses, colored stockings, top hat snowmen, and jolly Santa Clauses. It was a winter wonderland in the California sun.

After our front room was packed to bulging we took the girls into another room for refreshments.

“Sister, take our picture so that we can be the envy of the school,” they asked.

All too soon the girls had to leave, but not without singing a few carols for us ending with “Here’s to the Sisters.”

The girls’ generosity each year gives joy to us, to our Confraternity of Christian Doctrine helpers who sort the gifts and pack them, and to the happy youngsters who receive them.



Under Sister Marie Celine's direction, the women from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of Resurrection Parish sort and pack the gifts for the children's parties.



Someone need help?

St. Mary's High School Girls, Los Angeles,

bring Christmas with them



Who wouldn't be happy?

FOR JESUS, WITH LOVE

During Advent whenever the first graders made a loving little sacrifice for Jesus, they were permitted to put a piece of straw in the manger.

They were very generous with their sacrifices and the straw was piling up. When class was over one day, I noticed that the straw was spread out in the manger and scattered on the table where it lay. As I was putting my things away I saw Paula leaning over the manger and pushing all the straw inside.

"Paula, what are you doing?" I asked.

"I'm putting all the straw up close so that when Jesus comes He will have lots of love."

SISTER GRACE

o o o o

OBSERVANT

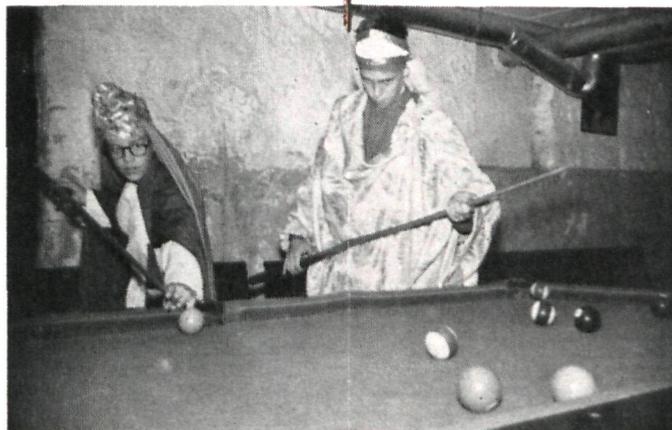
Sister Beatrice was telling the children the things we would need for the Christmas play. When she came to the shepherd's staff, she described what one was like. Said a tiny first grader: "Sister, the bishop has one of those. Can't we borrow his?"

SISTER MARY ADELE



Sister Ruth puts the finishing touches to the convent decorations.

In the Home Field



Two of the Kings enjoy a little game while they wait for the dress rehearsal to start. Big Spring, Texas.

EARLY SHOW

Sunday before Christmas we were indeed surprised to see two small boys dressed as shepherds making their way to early Mass. They were accompanied by mother, father, brothers, and sisters.

It was just a case of getting a.m. and p.m. mixed. We had sent notes home with the children who were to be in the Christmas play, telling the parents to have them ready at 7:30 p.m.

Our little shepherds were somewhat disappointed that we did not go on with the show at that hour of the morning, but they did return at seven-thirty in the evening.

SISTER MARY BEATRICE

o o o o

OUTWARD SIGN

I had explained very thoroughly to the class that an outward sign means something we can see and something we can hear. Then I asked, "What is the outward sign in baptism?"

Danny replied, "You can hear the baby cry."

SISTER MARY LAWRENCE

The Missionary Catechist

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

A happy task that came our way before Christmas was to select ten poor boys from the parish to be taken down town for the annual pre-Christmas supper sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

Among the boys chosen were three brothers from a very poor family. On hearing the good news they were at first bewildered, then skeptical. Such a wonderful thing just couldn't happen to them. Every day before the big event they would check with one or other of the sisters to make sure it was really true.

Then when it was almost supper time on the night, the oldest of the three boys came to the convent to tell us that his two brothers were not going to go! They were frightened at the prospect.

Two of us jumped in the car and hurried to their house. There were the two boys playing outside, barefoot. We told them to clean up and be ready to go to town. If they did not go to the supper, they would be keeping other

boys from the chance they had. In fact, a small group of boys was already gathering in front of the house.

The boys worked hard and fast at the job of getting ready. Soon they were on their way to the church where they were to be picked up. Later they told us that they had such a good time that they would like to go every year.

SISTER VIVIAN

o o o o

CALENDARS IN HEAVEN

I had been telling my third graders the story of the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As I showed them a lovely colored print of it I said, "This picture is very special because it came from heaven. The colors in it are just as bright today as when Mary appeared to Juan Diego over four hundred years ago."

When class was over, little Frank picked up the picture and remarked, "Say, Sister, you said this picture came from heaven. Why does it have a calendar on the back of it?"

SISTER DEPAUL



Sister Cecilia Marie, Sister Roseann, and Sister Bridget work busily on the children's Christmas gifts.

The Play Goes On

with a bit of prompting from Sister

by SISTER ANNE VERONICA

CHRISTMAS was approaching and each class in our school of religion was supposed to take part in a program. There was really no extra time to prepare anything very special. The only time we saw the children in this little mission was on class day and then, of course, every minute had to be given to teaching.

What to do! What could first and second graders do as their part in the Christmas program?

We decided on a simple dramatization of the Christmas story. That seemed about the best solution, and so I gave each second grader one line to learn for the play. The first and second grades together would sing "Silent Night." I limited the practice to parts of two classes and used the occasion as a review on the Incarnation.

Too soon came the day of the program. The little ones were to be first. There was no stage. The performance was to be on floor level in a small section between the kitchen and stairway. But we did have a stage entrance—the kitchen door!

Before curtain call the kitchen was a hubbub of activity. We had found some old pieces of material with which to dress the children and it was surprising even to us how nice they looked.

Things were going pretty fine until it came to dressing the three kings. I began on the first little king. I put a piece of cloth around him, fastened it with a sash, and was just ready to put on his head his little crown when, all of a sudden, he startled me with, "Waaaaa! I don't want to be a king!"

There was no convincing him, and time was running short, so I quickly

chose another boy. While I dressed him I repeated over and over the one line he was supposed to say. I completed his costuming and heaved a sigh of relief that now at last everything was ready. Just as I turned to get an overall look, a little voice by my side pleaded, "Sister, I want to be a king." I looked down and there stood the first king-to-be. I consoled him by telling him he could sing with the others, but he would have to give up his role of king.

One last look. Yes, the curtain was ready. That sheet did not look bad in between the two broom handles. I looked at the boys carrying it. Yes, they were capable. They were the tallest of the second grade boys. It was their job to "draw" the curtain at the end of each scene.

The innkeeper had been safely smuggled across the room to take up his station in the corner next to the piano. A portable screen had been placed in front of him to serve as a door on which Joseph could knock. I had painstakingly dressed the little innkeeper in a special hat that I knew the audience would enjoy. He had been instructed to move out from behind the screen into the view of the audience before he said his line to Joseph.

Yes, I decided; everything was ready. The show must go on!

The curtain holders did their part nicely until one of them, in turning, "walked up" the sheet and had to be untangled.

The Annunciation scene went without a hitch. The officer who told everyone to go to Bethlehem did well too. Then came Joseph and Mary looking for shelter.

Joseph went to the screen near the piano and knocked loudly, asking, "Have you any room?"

I waited to see the reaction of the audience to the innkeeper's costume but, instead, all I saw and all the audience saw were Joseph and Mary and the screen. No innkeeper popped his head out in answer to Joseph's knock. Finally, a weak, scared little voice came from behind the screen, barely audible: "No, we haven't any room."

Of course later on, when the play was over, the innkeeper had great fun poking his head out from behind the screen.

Everything went fine again until the first angel went out to perform. She was to say to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news."

As soon as she saw the audience she became petrified. From the kitchen I softly prompted her: "Do not be afraid . . ."

Instead of taking her cue, the poor

little angel just stood there. Again I tried to help, this time saying louder: "Do not be afraid. I bring you . . ."

Still no sign of recognition from the angel. A third time I tried, and finally the little angel, who was so afraid herself, told the shepherds in a trembling voice: "Do not be afraid."

Now it was time for the other angels to appear. Three little girls were to be the "multitude" of heavenly hosts. Before they left the kitchen, I went over with them their line: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

They left the kitchen and gathered around the first angel. I waited. I heard not a word. I waited a minute or two longer. Still, all was ominously quiet. From the kitchen I prompted: "Glory to God . . ."

Whether there was an exclamatory element in my voice that did it, I will never know, but now the little ones fairly screamed: "Glory to God in the highest!"

From now on the play ran smoothly and soon the shepherds and kings found their way to the center of the room and surrounded the Holy Family. Then from the audience came a serious line of first graders with hands solemnly folded. They made a semi-circle around the Nativity scene and the entire group sang "Silent Night" with all the love their little hearts could put into it.

That was the finale and it held the audience spellbound. Perhaps it was because they felt the love those little ones were giving to God. Perhaps they envied their innocence and simplicity. Perhaps they realized that there was only one thing that mattered—that we show our love for God and give Him all of ourselves. For that was what these children had done. They had made mistakes, yes, but they had their hearts in it all, right down to—and especially in—the finale as they knelt to adore their new-born Savior.



These second graders are not out of Sister Anne Veronica's Christmas play, but they might well have been. The picture comes from Ogden, Utah.

our **A**ssociates'

A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Dear Associates:

MAY the happiness you bring to others, because of your charitable deeds, return to you a thousandfold, through Christ, our Newborn King!

SISTER SUPERVISOR, ACM

ST. IRENE AUXILIARIES, *Chicago*



Headed by Miss Madeline Sebraska, this Band is composed of several members of St. Irene's, who decided a long time ago to

double their efforts for us by meeting *in between times* and collecting dues.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S, *Marshfield, Mass.*



We are sure the Promoter, Mrs. James A. O'Brien, was especially pleased when Sister James, one of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, was transferred this summer, from Colorado to our convent in West Harwich, Mass. "My Daughter is now within calling distance," she writes.

ST. MARY'S, *Orlando, Fla.*

St. Mary's Mission Club was transplanted from Maywood, Illinois, to Orlando, Florida. This happened a few years ago when Mrs. Forest Lehman, Promoter, and her husband moved there. It continues to thrive, under her loving attention, as is evidenced by the donations we receive from time to time.



CLUB MEMBERS PROVIDE THE MEANS FOR A CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Misses Betty and Anne Accomando, members of Les Petites Fleurs, Chicago, gathered together a large quantity of new but slightly shopworn articles of clothing, toys, and household goods. These they brought to us in their car. We distributed them at the end of a Christmas party, last year, held for the poor in the outlying districts from Victory Noll. The accompanying picture shows some of the grownups and children making a visit to the Christmas crib in our chapel.

Club Mention

HELPS WITH A RAFFLE



Above is pictured Miss Jean Pranton of Chester, Penna. She sold chances on a doll and its wardrobe, at her place of employment, and made twenty dollars for us.

EVANSTON AND LOMBARD (ILL.) BANDS



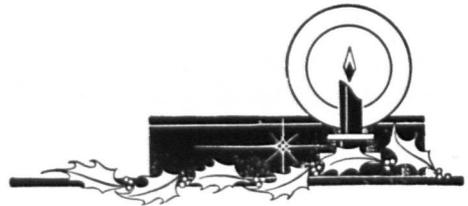
Like the chosen people of old who offered their first fruits to God, Miss Celia Henrich, Promoter of *Our Mother of Perpetual Help Band*, Evanston, Illinois, and her members always start off the New Year with a nice big donation toward our work.

You remember the childhood rhyme, "Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make a mighty ocean and a mighty land." These words can be aptly applied to *Mary, Queen of Our Hearts Band*, Lombard, Ill. We discovered that the members, chiefly the *Wengritzky sisters*, have given more than five hundred dollars over the years.

A HAPPY HOLY NEW YEAR!

BANDS, CLUBS, GUILDS DONATIONS September 23 to October 23, 1958

Charitina Club, Chicago, Helen Ford	\$10.00
Charitina Club II, Paris, Ill., M. Gibbons	30.00
Holy Souls, Berwyn, Mrs. McGovern	23.00
Little Flower, Chicago, V. Foertsch	30.00
Our Lady of Fatima, Huntington, Ind., Mrs. Dan Herzog	10.00
Padre Serra, Corona, Cal., Mrs. delaTorre	5.00
Sacred Heart Miss. Soc., Newark, N.Y., Mrs. Sue Albanese	150.00
St. Augustine, Marshfield, Mass., Mrs. Jas. A. O'Brien	5.00
St. Catherine, Los Angeles, Cal., Mrs. M. McMannamy	10.00
St. Clare, Omaha, Mrs. A. Vlcek	30.00
St. Helen, Dayton, Helen Melke	6.50
St. Joseph, Chicago, Mrs. A. Naumes	50.25
St. Just'n, Chicago, Mrs. F. Kiefer	10.00
St. Katherine, Chicago, Mrs. Downes	23.50
St. Luke, Chicago, Mrs. Potter	38.55
St. Mary's Mission Club, Orlando, Fla., Mrs. Lehman	5.00
St. Michael, Palos Hts., Ill., Mrs. J. E. Thompson	10.00
St. Omer, Cincinnati, Mrs. Hurlburt	10.00
St. Rita, Hammond, Mrs. Jehann	13.00
St. Vincent of St. Jude, Ft. Wayne, Mrs. Eunice F. Carl	31.00
Seven Dolors, Chicago, Mrs. Murphy	26.00



Painted in Heaven

by SISTER MARY KARL

IF some day I would have a choice of visiting, for *five minutes*, any spot on this earth, I know immediately which spot I would choose. Not any of those very special precious places to which I am attached by ties of faith and ties of love. Not Rome, nor Lourdes, nor home, nor Victory Noll. Five minutes would be far too short for any of them.

But five minutes would be exactly right if I could be transported into New Mexico to a tiny church in the Rio Grande Valley.

It is a quiet little place. Tourists do not stop there, for it is a mile off the highway. It dreams with quiet dignity amid the adobe houses round about, and looks off to the mountains and the hills. On the way I would be remembering another five minutes I had spent there . . .

One Saturday afternoon, while we were doing catechetical and census work in the parish, we had to see a certain woman in one of the outmissions. When we reached her home, we learned that she was helping to clean the church just then, so we followed her there.

While my companion sister consulted Mrs. Garcia in the sacristy, I went into the church proper. Our visits here were rare and I wanted to see it. I made a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and knelt for a moment—I thought it would be but a moment—before Our Blessed Mother's altar.

Then I saw IT. My prayer over, I stood up and gazed curiously at the dark painted square—was it of wood?—that was propped up at Our Lady's feet.

Yes, it was a painting. Yes, it looked like some old, old Spanish work, or one of the early paintings of Mexican ar-

tists. Yes, it was Our Lady of Guadalupe. And there was Juan Diego. But what *else* was that? The four separate apparitions, so often shown encircling a print of Our Lady of Guadalupe? No, not those. But what *were* those shadowy figures?

Now alive with curious interest, I entered the sanctuary and bent down to see the picture well. One of the good women noticed me, and coming over with her dustcloth, smiled as she dusted off the square for me—a pleasant courtesy still remembered. But it hurt as I saw a flake or two of paint break off under her good-intentioned rubbing.

Then for five entrancing minutes I looked at one of the loveliest artistic concepts I have ever seen. I have never studied formal art, but I love beauty in all its forms. And in this painting from long ago I saw a blending of doctrinal, historic, and devotional beauty whose memory charms me still.

It seemed to be painted directly on the square of wood which was the size of a small bread-board, perhaps a foot or fifteen inches square, about three-quarters of an inch thick.

The historic picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe was there, just as one usually sees it; a little to the right, and lower than the exact center. Our Lady hovered above the mountain top. In the foreground below her an ecstatic Juan Diego knelt, apparently in discourse with his Queen. I had to look hard to trace his age-darkened figure.

But above them both and to the left, were the three figures that had so puzzled me. As I traced them out and saw the story the artist meant to convey, my heart leaped with joy at its sheer beauty.

It was the Blessed Trinity, not in the symbolic form, but as one sometimes sees It visualized in the visits of the three Angels to Abraham. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were represented here as three young men in the prime of life, each one strong, beautiful, and majestic as the others.

They seemed to be seated, clouds below them blending into the mountain. The two figures representing God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were above the one representing God the Son; and yet in their attitude and expression was conveyed the idea that they were deeply interested, sharing in what He was doing.

Our Lord, seated a little below the other Divine Persons, with body turned somewhat to the left, had urgent business on hand. What it was I learned as, with great difficulty, I deciphered the instruments He bore. Gracefully but firmly His left hand grasped an artist's palette, with colors in use. His right hand held an artist's brush.

And — now this is the picture you must see if you wish to share the pleasure of that moment with me! — it was the movement of that active right hand which brought to life and linked together all these various figures into one beautiful whole. Once the slight shock of seeing Our Lord represented with such unfamiliar instruments had passed away, leaving my mind alert and eager to see what was behind this strange representation, I grasped the whole story.

At this very moment Our Lord has completed his work. His right hand is withdrawing His paintbrush from the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As He does so, He turns His face slightly to His right, and upward, as though inviting inspection. And one sees that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are One with Him, looking down in love and approval of it — a sort of active complacency.

Thus, how delicately is the story told! One sees the Blessed Trinity united in a work of love for souls, through Mary. One sees God the Son preparing a mantle of glory for His Mother. The moment He completes His work, she assumes her role. There she is before His marvelous backdrop, hovering over the mountain. That same moment a chosen Indian hears his name called as he is hurrying past the hill. He hears singing as of innumerable birds, sees the cactus and the very rocks shining like precious stones, above them a Lady of incomparable beauty.

And then — the thrilling voice and that now oft-told opening question: "My son, Juan Diego, whom I tenderly love as a little one and weak, whither goest thou?"

Now can you see the magnificent thought of my unknown artist, sparkling up out of the dim painting like a star coruscating in winter skies? He knew how to compress action into fifteen square inches with a deference and a deftness moderns seldom imitate!

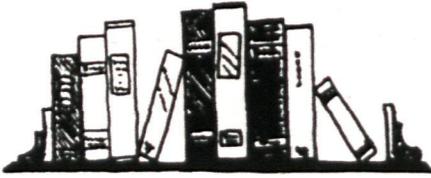
Some day I hope to return to the little church and see all the things in the picture that I wonder about still. Was it really painted on wood or was there a canvas? Did the artist sign his name? What was in the left foreground? I do not remember it at all.

I want to see again the classic faces of the Three and delight in the portrayal of Our Lord as artist. And looking on it, I'll remember what Pope Pius XII said in a message to America: "On the cloak of poor Juan Diego was painted with brushes not of this earth, a most sweet picture, which the corrosive work of centuries most wonderfully was to respect."

* * *

Our unknown artist painted his picture long before the Holy Office issued its directive (March 16, 1928) that it is forbidden "to depict the Holy Spirit in human form." His only object seemed to be to show the supernatural origin of the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. EDITOR.

Books



How to Understand and Teach Teen-agers by John M. Gran. T. S. Denison & Company, Minneapolis. \$3.95.

Chapter 28 of this book is titled "Who is an Ideal Teacher?" The contents of the chapter, the answer to this important question, just about summarizes the contents of this book. It is a book that covers every phase of understanding and teaching the teen-ager. Not only prospective teachers, but teachers with much experience will profit from reading it.

The reader will not want to put the book down, once he has begun it. It is not only most practical, but it is entertaining. The author states his points and then illustrates them by true-life stories. Some are touching, some entertaining, some downright exciting; for instance, "A Chip on His Shoulder," the story of a student with the wrong attitudes.

This is not just another book on teenage psychology. It shows us how to *teach* the teen-ager. The author discusses such things as the unit method of teaching, the uses and kinds of tests (with examples), report cards, home work, etc. Teachers will give a cheer when they read (p. 91): "The statement popular with dewey-eyed educators that a good teacher has no problems of discipline is neither helpful nor fair. The teacher does not exist who has all the pupils in her class properly motivated at all times."

Mr. Gran of St. Paul, Minnesota, has had twenty-five years of experience with teen-agers as a teacher, principal,

and consultant to the juvenile division of the police department. He is now assistant superintendent in the St. Paul Public Schools system. Of interest to Catholics and especially to teachers of religion, is the fact that Mr. Gran is a member of the Lay Committee of the National Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. For the past ten years he has been instructing seminarians who are preparing to teach released time classes.

* * * *

Biblical Subject Index edited by William J. Kiefer, S.M. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. \$4.50

The dust jacket adds that this book is an invaluable addition to any library. Certainly that is no exaggeration. It does not replace a concordance, but supplements it.

As the title suggests, the verses of the Bible are listed according to topics or subjects, such as charity, mercy, relics, etc. There are abundant cross references. For instance, after the references on the *Greatness of God* are the directions: See also *Understanding, God is above our*; See also *Omnipotence of God*. Then the next item is *Greatness of God acknowledged*.

The work, Brother Kiefer explains in his preface, is the result of necessity on his part. Not always able to consult a verbal concordance, he copied many headings onto file cards and added important scriptural references beside them. The continuous value of his index led him to believe that others would profit from it also.

This is an exhaustive work. The word *Christ*, for instance, covers twelve pages and includes the prophecies that preceded Him, His own prophecies, and alphabetical lists of His miracles and parables.

Biblical Subject Index is indispensable for the teacher of religion, no matter on what level.

A Catholic Catechism. Herder and Herder, Inc., 7 West 46th St., New York 36, N.Y. Popular edition, \$2.00

This is the English version of the well publicized catechism officially adopted by all the dioceses of Germany. It is an English *version* and not an exact translation. While it adheres faithfully to the original, some parts were slightly changed to conform to conditions in this country.

Just reading the book hardly makes it possible for one to evaluate it correctly. To do so, one would have to use it. It is not strictly a text book, nor is it a teacher's manual. The preface warns the reader of these facts and after he has gone into the book a bit, he will find himself going back again to re-read the preface!

The material, we would say, is suitable for children in the twelve to fifteen age group. And yet, even though it is not a teacher's handbook, the catechist will find it valuable in preparing classes for younger children.

The sequence of doctrine to be taught departs from the one we are accustomed to: creed, commandments, sacraments. Instead, the truths of faith are presented in a much more logical way. The theological virtues, for instance, follow the subject of baptism. Prayer also is treated after baptism. Then, after the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist, come the dangers that threaten the new life of the soul — sin. Penance naturally follows.

The term sanctifying grace is not used; rather, the beautiful expression "grace-life." Sacred Scripture gets its proper emphasis and the role of the Church is woven into nearly all of the lessons.

Each chapter proposes thought-provoking considerations for the students to discuss and ends with some "things

to do." The questions and answers are set off in distinctive type.

The German Catechism is the work of scholars who devoted years to its development. Catechists in the United States are fortunate to have this English version so soon after the original was published.

Those who already have the more expensive first edition may wonder what difference there is in this one. None except that the illustrations are not in color and the cover, though cloth, is not so durable and handsome.

* * * *

Organ Registration in Theory and Practice by E. Harold Greer. J. Fischer & Bro., Glen Rock, N.J. \$6.00.

If the price sounds steep to you, let us assure you that you are getting your money's worth—and more—when you buy this book. It is a complete manual on organ registration and is, moreover, extremely well written.

To be a successful organist one must have a knowledge of acoustics. The author devotes the first two chapters of his book to this science. From there he applies technical information to a discussion of tone combination. The next step, naturally, applies the theory of tone combination to musical interpretation.

Included too are interesting and valuable historical surveys of the organ in Europe and America; also chapters on the planning of registration and mechanical matters. Music from the masters is used as illustrations of the various techniques explained. Tables, graphs, figures, and a complete bibliography help round out this excellent work.

The book would make a wonderful Christmas present not only for the student organist, but for the experienced one as well.

Editor's By-Line

Even the most casual reader of *The Missionary Catechist* this month will have surmised that Christmas plays are a tradition in many of our missions.

In one mission in which I was stationed, the pastor insisted on two performances a year: Christmas and Mother's Day. Each one was a headache, for we had not only the usual difficulty — little time for practice — but there were hundreds and hundreds of children. How could we possibly get them all in a play and satisfy the parents who came to see it? Besides, the children were nearly all from very poor homes and most of them had no sense of responsibility. I am not exaggerating when I say that it was most unusual to have in the show the same children who had practiced for it.

One year at Christmas we got the bright idea (I say "we," but I have to take the discredit for it) of combining the Christmas play with the Christmas party. It would be for the children only.

We found a play that we thought was ideal. It was called "Christmas Windows." There was only one speaking part. That was important in a place where some of the cast might not show up at the last minute. We could get a dependable high school girl to do the reading. The other parts were in pantomime.

The first blow came when we went to the center the afternoon of the play and learned that the pastor would not be there. If anyone could put fear into those mobs of children, he could, and we knew from past experience that it was good to have him around when we had to put the whole crowd together.

Neither would the assistants be there. It was the monthly day of recollection for the priests of the diocese. However, the pastor had left word that a priest would attend the play and party. He was from Mexico and had been

staying at the rectory. This was not unusual. The parish was not far from the border and we often saw strangers around the church who — in spite of their colored ties — we instinctively called "Father." This priest was unusually refined and gentle.

The large auditorium was filled to overflowing with children and the play began — or tried to begin. Each window of the hall seemed to be filled also, but with boys ranging from ten to fourteen who never came near our religion classes. It was they who started the noise, and the mob soon fell in with them.

Poor Father got up on the stage and in Spanish that all understood (if they could have heard him), tried to quell the near-riot. No success. The sisters tried — in both Spanish and English — but with the same results. In desperation we abandoned the play and directed each class to its own room for the party.

Since I taught in the hall, most of the disturbers-at-the-windows found their way into my class. I had a serious talk with them. They were deeply repentant, gave me their names and addresses, and promised faithfully to come to class after the Christmas holidays. They thereupon each got a bag of candy from soft-hearted Sister, for who could turn a child away, especially a very poor, unattractive child a few days before Christmas?

I never saw them again. SEA

In Memoriam

His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Mooney, D.D.
Archbishop of Detroit.
Samuel Haines, Goshen, Ind., father of Sister
Mary Monica
Sister Marie Dennis, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio
John Hammer, Chicago
Albert J. Wrede, Omaha
Mrs. William Egidy, Greeley, Kans.
Leo Rues, Greeley, Kans.
Frances Sailer, Valley City, N. Dak.
Mrs. Mary Koehler, Dayton, Ohio
Clement J. Ciulik, Amsterdam, N. Y.
Mrs. Oda Wiley, Huntington, Ind.
Mrs. Edward Dowd, Esther, Mo.
Mary Jowak, Garrett, Ind.

Christmas Customs

among the Spanish-speaking people

by SISTER EVELYN MARIE

AMONG the Spanish-speaking people there is a charming custom that usually takes place after the Christmas Masses. It is known as the Veneration of the Infant.

The priest takes the statue of the Infant from the crib and the faithful approach the altar rail and kiss the image. All during the Veneration the congregation sings Spanish Christmas hymns beginning with *Vamos Todos a Belen* (Let Us All Go to Bethlehem).

Better known, perhaps, is the ceremony of *Las Posadas*, the Spanish



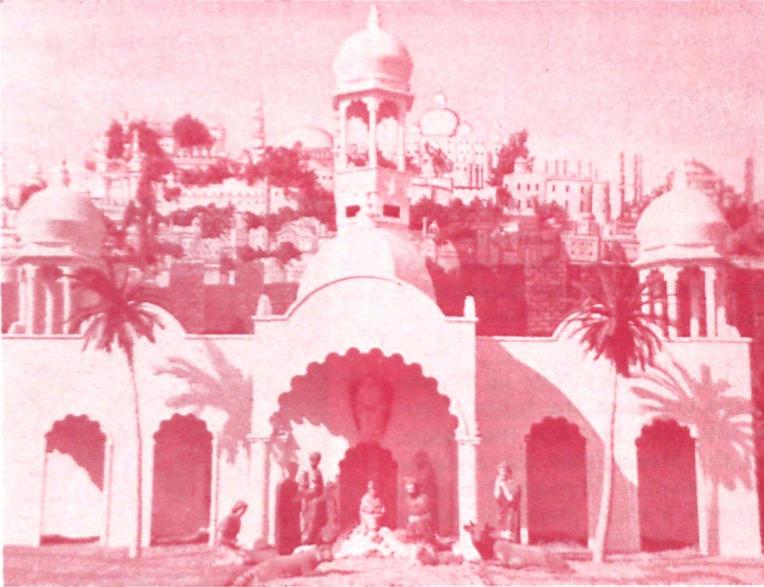
When the Infant has been returned to the crib after the Veneration ceremony, the small children like to draw close and gaze long and lovingly at the image.



Figures used in the ceremony of *Las Posadas*, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Ogden, Utah.

Christmas Novena. It commemorates the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the holy pilgrims being represented by small statues.

Last year Father Kern, pastor of Santa Maria de Guadalupe Church in Ogden, Utah, added to the fervor of the novena by obtaining in Mexico the attractive statues pictured here. Brother Donkey appears unusually ambitious and alert. Perhaps his transformation from a sleepy, siesta-time burro south of the border is due to the happy nature of his mission.



Outdoor crib in Mexicali, Old Mexico

**Come ye, O faithful, let us see the place
where Christ is born. Let us look up, and
with the Magi, kings from the East, let us
follow the star wherever it goes: for in that
place, shepherds keep watch, and angels
praise, singing endlessly this worthy hymn:
"Glory be to God in the highest, for today, in
a cave in Bethlehem of Juda, He is born of
the Virgin, the Mother of God!"**

Christmas Matins

Eastern Rite