

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

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Day
The
Season
Christmas
bring to you
and yours an
abiding
Peace.

Mother Cecilia
and the
Victory Noll Sisters

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

December 1960

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters

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COVER: Pablo finds a new shirt for him under the Sisters' Christmas tree. "Boy, it's swell, Sister!" he says gratefully to Sister Mary Nicholas.

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Two Plays for Christmas

by SISTER ALICE MARIE

WE had to have two Christmas plays that year because the Old Devil Discrimination reared his Hydra-head in our friendly little town.

The first play would be for the white children and their parents. These families were few and quite scattered. In fact, most of the adult parts would have to be taken by the older children of the same family.

We were happy over that because the family was a good one and very loyal to the Church in a very anti-Catholic area. But when we called the first rehearsal we discovered the dilemma.

The children of this good family had a congenital condition of crossed eyes. Only a short time before Christmas their family physician decided that it was time for each child to cover the straight eye and thus permit more exercise of the eye that was crossed. Here we were then with our cast of characters — at least some of them — wearing a black patch over one eye.

We tried our best to place the children so that the black patches would not be too conspicuous, but it was almost impossible.

So it happened that the curtains parted on the interior of the cave scene. A tall angel, with a black patch over one eye, held out his arms protectingly over the tiny crib. He smiled appreciatively at good St. Joseph with his black patch and at the lovely little Mary with *her* black patch. Then he turned his stately head slightly to smile at the oldest shepherd with *his* black patch.

And off-stage a sister muttered, "To make the illusion complete we should have put a black patch on the little cardboard donkey and on the big cardboard cow."

* * *

The second Christmas play was given in an old termite-eaten shack in the pine woods. It had to be at night time because all the colored people worked in the fields, or in the mills whenever there was work to be had.

We prayed there would be moonlight so that the people could more easily make their way down from the hills through the thick growth of trees and vines. There were no electric lights in the pine woods.

This raised a problem of lighting for the little tableaux

that took place on the rickety platform in the front of the long room; but we managed. Father parked his car beside a low window to the side of the platform and the lights shone on the steps so that the youthful actors could see to enter and leave the stage.

We held frames of colored cellophane before our large flashlights and were able to make the various scenes of the Nativity Story very appealing in the soft colors. The rest of the hall was in total darkness, but we knew our audience was large. Besides the proud parents were venerable grandpas and grandmas whose own parents had been slaves on the big plantations near the pine settlement.

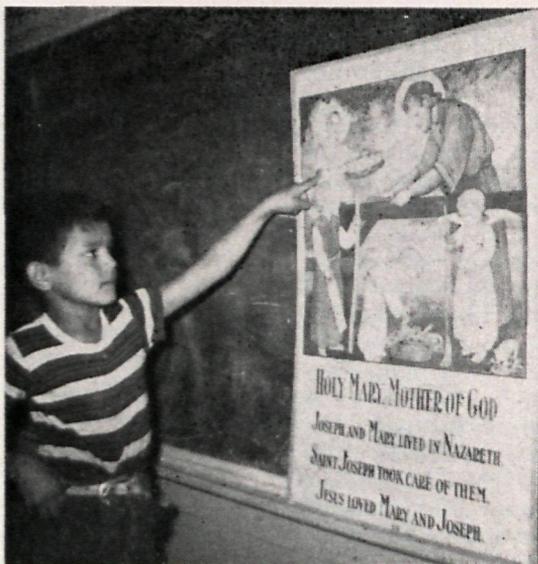
The lovely story went on to its last scene with all the cast around the little crib. St. Joseph stood so straight and tall. The little Madonna gazed so sweetly

and humbly on the tiny Babe, and the shepherds and the angelic chorus looked out into the blackness to try to identify their mothers and fathers in the dark hall.

Sister never knew why she did it. But somehow she knew that the old folks there needed a more intimate part in this lovely scene. And so at the very end, she announced, "Now this isn't a Christmas hymn but it is one that you dearly love. We'll ask our audience to join us in singing, 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.'"

But the old folks did not sing it. As the soft voices of the children started out sweetly and clearly, the old people hummed the accompaniment and swayed gently from side to side. Their eyes were closed, and Bethlehem and the beloved New Jerusalem seemed very near in the old shack in the pine woods.





A Detail We Had Not Thought About

by SISTER MARY MILLICENT

THE lesson was on the Holy Family at Nazareth.

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph loved and helped one another and did everything they could to make one another happy. Jesus did everything for Mary and Joseph — like getting the water, bringing in the wood, and helping them both. Mary did all she could for Jesus and St. Joseph. Now what do you boys and girls think she did to make them happy?"

"She cooked for them," offered John.

"She peeled apples for them," ventured Dorothy.

"She put her hair up in curlers to make it pretty for them to look at," Frank declared.

Frank was not being flippant. I knew that, and so I looked again at the picture of the Holy Family and saw it now in the light of a modern child.

The Bells

by SISTER M. DE PORRES

ALTHOUGH Mr. Bell is now both father and mother to his five children, he finds time to work for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in his parish.

His own children attend a Catholic school, but Mr. Bell is not unmindful of the many Catholic children who attend the public schools. He has enrolled in the CCD teacher training classes, takes a turn driving the CCD trailer classroom, and is always available for doing odd jobs around the convent.

Before Mrs. Bell died (after a brief illness), she too was a

devoted Confraternity worker. Her CCD class of twenty-three third graders whom she taught every week in a garage classroom were among those who felt her death keenly.

Because we had no immediate substitute for Mrs. Bell, the children had to crowd into my already over-sized second grade class. Their former teacher had done her work well, however, for the children came to class and received the sacraments regularly even though I could not give them as much attention as they should have had.



Mr. Bell and his children around their Advent wreath. Mother is still there in spirit.

No Room in the Garage

by SISTER RUTH ANTHONY

“THERE'S just no room, Sister. We keep too much junk in our garage. You have no idea how much a person can accumulate.”

No, we hadn't, but it did not take us long to see for ourselves.

Our interest in garages was occasioned by our need of catechetical centers near the public schools. At the beginning of our search we were confident of quick success. We had just obtained permission from the principal of a new school for a weekly released time period. We had assured him that we would conduct the classes at the home of a Catholic family who lived near the school. Since the area was new and the homes and garages were spacious, we did not anticipate difficulties.

Naturally we went first to the home nearest the school. Here some very young ladies were stumbling about in their mother's dresses and heels. After admiring our 'real' long dresses, they stepped out of the heels and raced into the house to notify their mother of our presence at the front door. From inside we heard a shrill voice shout, "I don't care who

they are. I'm moving and I don't have time to see anyone.”

By now we were not eager to see her either so we thanked the disappointed youngsters and continued our search up and down the street. Garages were plentiful, but Catholics were at a premium. Perhaps the second street would produce some.

But here we met a hazard—a fierce-looking, growling boxer. As he bounded toward us, his open mouth displayed almost toothless gums. Though the snags that remained looked harmless, we would not care to face the creature every week, especially not while we were escorting children to class. It was almost with relief that we learned that the residents of the street were all non-Catholic.

By now we were three blocks from school, far enough for any released time class. Time used in going to and from the center is deducted from the period which is an hour at most, but often only forty minutes. Knowing that we would have to find a center if we were to keep our precious released time privilege, we prayed hard while waiting at the door of the first house on the third street.



Children of St. Anthony's parish school of religion, San Bernardino, Calif., dramatized "No Room in the Inn" in their garage classroom.

A gracious, smiling woman invited us in. She was a Catholic and would be happy to let us use her front room since her garage was being converted into living quarters. Not wishing to inconvenience her unnecessarily, we suggested that we try the remaining houses on the street. If no garage were available, we would accept her generous offer.

The occupants of the second house proved to be Catholics as did those of the third. Now we had two garages at our disposal. Later the owner of one of them telephoned, "Sister, I put up a

fluorescent light for you. If you need any benches, I'll be glad to make some for you.' Here was the type of cooperation and generosity we scarcely dared dream of.

That took care of one school. We still had two more to find teaching places close by.

Our second school was in a well-to-do neighborhood. Perhaps because the homes and lawns were so well cared for, no one seemed ready to accept a class of forty or more pre-teens, even once a week.

The few Catholics we contacted apologized profusely.

They wished they could but, "You see, Sister, my husband likes to make things and he uses the garage as his workshop." Or, "My husband makes his wine in the garage"; "We keep our boat . . ."

It was time for us to go home and we were still literally going in circles, round and round the school, up the many winding streets. Two hopes remained and if one failed we were "out," for we needed two garages. Both prospective families were away from home that day. We would have to try again.

As we drove back on the following morning, we discussed the slimness of our chances of success. We found Mrs. S. at home. She hesitated, then phoned her husband at the office. Sure, he wouldn't mind cleaning the garage. It had been needing a good cleaning anyway. And his wife wouldn't mind backing her car out of the garage on class days. So it was settled.

Now we needed only one more center in that vicinity but the family that lived there was out of town. The neighbors did not know when they would return. Every evening for four days we tried to call them. Finally, our persistence was rewarded by a "hello" at the end of the line.

Evidently the neighbors had acquainted our friend with our

designs on his garage. Politely but firmly he told us that it would be impossible to use his garage as a classroom. He used it for storage—not junk, but valuables which would be a source of distraction to the class. We understood, but of course we were disappointed. There went our last hope.

We were wondering what to do when the phone rang. Our friend had called to tell us that he had reconsidered. He would arrange the valuables in his garage to make room for our classes.

Our third school was in an area as poor as the others were prosperous. There just were no garages or, if there were, they were much too small to house an average class. In desperation we requested a local group for the use of their meeting room. Then parents began to object because the place was on a busy street and was surrounded by used-car lots and a lumber yard.

Again we went questing and came across a huge barn that had been converted into a four-car garage. The owners were apologetic. Their children had graduated from Catholic schools. They found it hard to visualize a barn-garage as a center for a school of religion. However, it was ours if we thought it would do.

Do? Perhaps it did not look like much to them, but to us it was shelter from wind and rain, flies and ants, and outdoor noises. It was the end of our search.



Detroit Sisters choose gifts to give to the children in their religion classes. Children prefer religious articles to other things. From left: Sister Maria Goretti, Sister Jean Marie, Sister Dennis Rose, Sister Mary Kevin, and Sister Angela.

In the Home Field

HARDLY
The fifth graders had as a homework assignment to write fifty words on "What Christmas Means to Me."

When one boy handed in his paper, he remarked, "Sister, do you think we will ever know what Christmas really means until we get to heaven?"

SISTER MARY KEVIN

GARAGE CHRISTMAS

Among the Christmas gifts each sister in our convent received from one of the parishioners was a ten-inch plastic statue of the Infant Jesus.

After the feast of the Nativity, when classes began again I took the image to be venerated by the children who attend religious instruction.

"There is a surprise for you waiting in the garage," I would say as the children filed out of the public school.

Boys and girls love to bring their new things to class to show Sister, so it was a joy to them to have me bring my gift for them not only to see, but to venerate. When they entered the garage classroom, they found the Infant lying on a blue cloth. This was later used as a

veil for the girl who would take the part of Our Blessed Mother.

When class was over, one of the girls held the Infant while

the children filed by, kissed Him, and received a medal as a gift. As they waited in line for their turns, they sang "Silent Night."



Seriously, the children filed by and kissed the Infant.

For some of our children this was the nearest they had come to the real meaning of Christmas. Many did not have cribs in their homes, and some, alas, had not even gone to Mass on the feast.

SISTER M. DE PORRES

* * *

REHEARSAL LINEUP

"Where is Mary? Where is Joseph?" I inquired at the last rehearsal of the Christmas program.

"Sister, they're in line for confession," came the startling news.

Sure enough; Mary in her blue dress and Joseph in proper Jewish attire, were waiting their turn by the confessional.

SISTER ROSE

FEARS
The smog was extremely bad and was bothering me very much. I was teaching a lesson on baptism. I said, "Anyone who dies without baptism will never go to heaven." With that I wiped the tears from my eyes. The children were very greatly impressed. They thought I was taking the lesson very seriously indeed.

SISTER MARY LAWRENCE



Girls tell Sister Gertrude how much they enjoyed party.

The Catholic students at Intermountain Indian School, Brigham City, Utah, are indebted to the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for their annual Christmas party. Everything — decorations, refreshments, and individual gifts for the 600 boys and girls—is provided by the women. Bishop Federal of Salt Lake City is the honored guest and the children themselves furnish the entertainment.

It is a gala occasion and one that is joyfully looked forward to and appreciated.

Christmas at Intermountain

by SISTER GERTRUDE



Sister Mary Martin explains crib to neophytes.



Caroling Linguists

by SISTER MELITA

THOUGH nearly twenty centuries old, the feast of Christmas seems always eternally new. The crib, the drama, the novena, all combine to renew in our hearts and minds each year the wonderful and beautiful truths of the Incarnation.

Our live Nativity scene here comes from St. Thomas parish in Big Spring, Texas. While enacting the Christmas story the children sang carols in five different languages. After the program they went to the various hospitals of the city to sing for the patients and personnel.



Knights' Christmas Party

by SISTER EVELYN MARIE

"Look at that one, Sister," says Tommy Suazo whose job it was to put the cabbage in the baskets.

It is really two Christmas parties the Knights of the Altar have. The first year they helped us pack food baskets for our needy families, they enjoyed themselves so much that they asked to be in on the "party" again the next Christmas.



Boys wouldn't be boys without a bit of clowning.



When Sister Mary Mark brought out the chocolate cake, Patrick Galvan gasped, "Sister you're killing us with kindness!"

To show our appreciation for their generosity (they were an immense help to us), we surprised the boys with an after-Christmas party in our convent a week or two after the feast day. Now they look forward each year to Christmas as a time for showing a greater love for neighbor.



Before going home, the Knights clean up.



Your CCD Question

Our school of religion is working fine for the grades, but we have trouble getting the high school boys and girls to come to class. Have you any suggestions?

That is a familiar complaint. It is difficult to discuss this subject briefly, but we might list some of the most essential points.

The parish high school of religion must be well organized. The most important thing of all is that the pastor be interested in every phase of the project. Then he will see to it that a good course of study is used and that the teachers are well prepared.

The students must be made to appreciate the opportunity they have to study their religion on the high school level. Again, this can only come about through the efforts of the pastor. However, it is also important that the parents cooperate.

Some of the techniques that can be used to further these aims are: direct mail invitations to pupils; interviews with students and also with their parents; good publicity in newspapers, over radio, TV, etc.; use of report cards; occasional social events; diplomas and graduation exercises.

In a word, the parish high school of religion must be well planned. The cooperation of every member of the Confraternity Executive Board is necessary to make it successful.

* * *

How do you go about planning a program for Catechetical Sunday?

The National Office of the Confraternity has a leaflet that answers your question. It may be obtained by writing to Confraternity Publications, 508 Marshall St., Paterson 3, N. J. Ask for Form CCD-89.

Incidentally, Canon Law (711:2) specifies that a Catechetical Day should be held annually. Whenever this prescription is carried out, the CCD has been given new impetus in the parish.

BOOKS



Transformation in Christ by Dietrich von Hildebrand. Helicon Press, 5305 East Drive, Baltimore 27, Md. \$4.50

When *Transformation in Christ* was first published twelve years ago, it was hailed as a classic on the spiritual life, a reputation it has continued to enjoy. Its re-appearance will be welcomed in many quarters.

Written by a distinguished philosopher, the book contains many terms that are unfamiliar to some readers. For that reason, it seems necessary to warn them at the outset that *Transformation in Christ* is not easy reading. It is even a bit heavy at times. However, it is worth any difficulty that it might involve, and we can only advise the reader to keep at it and he will be more than compensated for his trouble.

The knowledge of our need of redemption is the prime condition of our transformation in Christ, for it provides the only possible basis for our readiness to change. We must begin with this readiness to change. It is to this that the author devotes his first chap-

ter. This is the foundation. Without it we can never reach that goal in which we can say with St. Paul: "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me."

After laying down these first principles, Professor von Hildebrand discusses contrition, self-knowledge, recollection and contemplation. Then he analyses the virtues of humility, patience, meekness, mercy, and sobriety. He closes with a magnificent chapter on True Surrender of Self, which is really the theme of *Transformation in Christ*.

This book is solid and inspiring, its spiritual depth profound. It is permeated with the spirit of the liturgy and with Holy Scripture and the writings of the Fathers. It is written for those who would penetrate into the "depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God." Romans 11, 33.

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Meditations on the Old Testament—The Psalms by Gaston Brillet. C.Or. Translated by Jane Wynne Saul, S.R.C.J. Desclée Co., Inc., 280 Broadway, New York 7, N.Y. \$3.50

Two months ago we reviewed—and highly recommended—the first volume of this series: *Meditations on the Historical Books of the Bible*. If we are even more enthusiastic about this recent book, it is because of our love for the psalms.

Father Brillet follows the same pattern he used in his first book. He first presents parts of the psalm, no doubt presuming that the reader is familiar with the whole of it or will read all of it before beginning his meditation.

Then, after summarizing the meaning of the psalm and perhaps indicating its use in the Mass or Divine Office, the author develops it further, but always in short, pithy paragraphs. However, lest, in our eagerness, we rush on to this part of the meditation, he always warns us with the words: Adore. Speak to God.

The psalms are treated in the order in which they appear in the psalter. Some of them are skipped, and some are the subject of at least two meditations.

This book, with its ninety-one meditations, will undoubtedly lead us to a deeper appreciation of the psalms.

* * * *

Morality and Modern Warfare: The State of the Question edited by William J. Nagle. Helicon Press, 5305 East Drive, Baltimore 27, Md. \$4.50

This is not merely a collection of opinions on the subject of the morality of nuclear war-

fare, but it is a symposium in the strict sense of the term. The subject is discussed, opinions gathered, and the contributors comment on the views of one another.

This does not mean, however, that the problem of the morality of nuclear warfare is solved. It is not that easy. The book is, rather, as its subtitle implies: *The State of the Question*.

The contributors are all well known and include three Jesuits: Fathers John R. Connery, Father John C. Ford, and Father John Courtney Murray; and seven laymen: Noel J. Brown, James E. Dougherty, Thomas E. Murray, John K. Moriarty, William J. Nagle, William V. O'Brien, and Gordon C. Zahn. The inclusion of Dr. Zahn we found especially interesting in view of his pacifist leanings. He was a conscientious objector in World War II.

Perhaps because all-out modern warfare spells annihilation to most of us, we have become very apathetic about it. Defense authorities complain that the public in general seem to feel that since there is little or no defense against nuclear weapons, why bother? This same apathy extends, to a certain extent, to the discussion of the morality of all-out-warfare.

To inform us on this important subject, to dispel the

apathy that exists, and to help us form a correct conscience on these moral issues, this book has been written. We cannot afford to neglect reliable sources of information on a subject that concerns all of us. An extensive bibliography makes this book especially valuable.

* * * *

An Introduction to a Catholic Catechism edited by Herbert Fischer. Herder and Herder Inc., 7 West 46th St., New York 36, N.Y. Paper, \$2.50

Since *A Catholic Catechism* first appeared, Father Goldbrunner has given us three workbooks to help us use it. Now we have a book that explains the structure of the Catechism and shows how its methods may be adapted to prevailing conditions.

Father Jungman provides a Preface to the book, and in an Introduction Father Howell traces the origin of the Catechism and explains its kerygmatic outlook. The eight chapters that make up the book are contributed by German catechists.

Everyone who is using *A Catholic Catechism* will be grateful for this *Introduction*.

* * * *

Blessed Martin de Porres by the Very Rev. Nicholas Humphreys, O.P. The Blessed Martin Guild, 141 E. 65th St., New York 21, N.Y. 15 cents.

Devotees of Blessed Martin will welcome this new booklet about him. The emphasis is on Martin's role as our social guide in the world of today.

* * * *

God's Infinite Mercy by Julian Chrosiecowski, M.I.C. \$2.00

The Mystery of Divine Mercy by H. Woroniecki, O.P. \$1.75

Divine Mercy in the Doctrine and Prayers of the Church by Julian Chrosiecowski, M.I.C. 50 cents.

These three books, all paperbacks, are published by the Congregation of Marian Fathers, Eden Hill, Stockbridge, Mass. Their titles describe their contents. The first book is especially appealing and well written. It is unfortunate that the page numbers are incorrectly given. Perhaps the editor confused these with the page numbers of the cloth edition.

In Memoriam

Gregorio Mendoza, Chicago, father of Sister Maria Rafaela, O.L.V.M., and Sister Lucia, O.L.V.M.

Edward Shields, Omaha, father of Sister Mary Marguerite, O.L.V.M.

Frank May, Brooklyn, N. Y., brother of Sister Clarice, O.L.V.M.

Mrs. Irene Potthoff, ACM, Fort Wayne

Mrs. Theresa Volkman, ACM, Chicago

Joseph J. Blasko, ACM, Detroit

Mrs. C. J. Ueber, Fort Wayne

John Palbitski, Winona, Minn.

Mrs. Ethel Lagoni, Chicago

Rudolph Smaus, Chicago

Editor's By-Line

At the Midwest Regional Convention of the Catholic Press Association this fall one of the promotion men from a large secular magazine briefed us on How to Get New Subscribers and Renewals. He told us just how often his magazine follows up expirations with This-is-t h e-last-letter, etc., etc., and all that sort of thing.

Concerning Christmas gift subscriptions he complained that it was very difficult to get the artists and copy writers in the proper mood before they saw the snow fly and heard Christmas carols.

Right now the air is nippy and the frost is on the pumpkin, but the snow has yet to fly. I have not heard anyone practicing carols. However, it is not because of the absence of snow and carols that I am going to write of something other than Christmas.

This column is going to be about something else that happens every December — the start of a new volume of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST.

Since we began volume fifteen we have been doing our own printing. Until this issue this has been on a built-over 1924 model Kelly press. Now, thanks to the Didier Printing Company in Fort Wayne, we are printing on a Miehle, the wonderful gift we told you

about several months ago.

The last run on the old Kelly was a bit nostalgic; you know—something like the last run of the old 2564 before she is relegated to the historical society. We hardly had time for sentiment, however. All we wanted to do was finish the November issue and start on the Miehle. Not that we are abandoning the Kelley. It will still be used for promotion material and other things.

To print economically—both as to time and money—we have decided to make THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST the size it is now. Then there is another thing to consider. We pride ourselves on the fact that we have many cover-to-cover readers. Were we to increase the size—no matter how excellent the contents—we fear we will lose them. I mean they will put the magazine aside intending to read it when they have more time. And perhaps that time will not come soon, if ever!

Over the years we have added to and subtracted from the pages of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST. These changes have been dictated by circumstances. Essentially the magazine has remained the same, with the amount of copy varying little. Even now, though the magazine looks smaller, line for line it contains only slightly less material than it did formerly.

Incidentally, it looks as if the Editor's By-Line is going to be longer than it was before. We hope you will not mind. SEA



The Infant had been brought from Mexico by a pilgrimage group. The little girl, who lives across the street from our convent in Azusa, California, is fascinated by it.

 **E**mmanuel,
our  **K**ing
and  **L**awgiver,
the **D**esire of all
nations 
and their **S**avior:
come and save us,
O **L**ord our **G**od!