

The Missionary Catechist



Volume V

Victory-Noll, Huntington, Indiana, December, 1928

Number 1

Bethlehem

Very Rev. Salesius Schneweis, O. M. Cap.

It is but natural for the Christian to feel reverence and devotion for the birthplace of the Saviour. Especially during the days of Christmastide do our thoughts find their way ever so often to the little hamlet which has become so endeared to us: "For on this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ, the Lord, in the city of David."

Very few of us have seen actual photos of Bethlehem and still fewer have been privileged to look with their bodily eyes on the site where the Saviour was born. And yet all of us have a more or less definite ideal picture of the place in our minds. This imaginative representation is the result of descriptions we have read, of pictures or paintings that we have seen and is undoubtedly also the fruit of the vivid faith wherewith we have regarded this mystery from the days of our childhood.

There is no description extant that could tell us how Bethlehem appeared in the days of our Lord. Archaeologists indeed assure us that oriental cities change less in a century than our American cities do in a decade. That may hold good for places where native forces and the national temperament alone have to be considered. But it will hardly apply to periods of foreign domination, invasion and immigration. And that is precisely what has happened to the scenes of our Lord's earthly home. It is simply impossible for us to say to what extent the Bethlehem of our day is the same as the Bethlehem of 1900 years ago. But that does not rob it of its interest or of its appeal to the believing soul. It has an appeal that is independent of time and landscape contours.

The description here given is based mainly on the diary reports of a pilgrim of the last century, the Rev. Dr. Alban Stolz, (cf. his book *Besuch bei Sem. Cham und Japhet.*)

The road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem trails across the ridges and crests of hills and mountains and is in general rather stony. Although Bethlehem is only six miles distant from Jerusalem, it has an elevation 160 feet higher than that city. The journey is therefore a continuous ascent. It is in all probability the same road which was travelled by Joseph and Mary when

"there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled." The pilgrim looks on the same rocks, hills and valleys as he did 1900 years ago.

When at last Bethlehem looms up before the view, it is as though all the joy and religious fervor of former Christmases had returned and were fused in one deep feeling of childlike happiness and joy. Jerusalem also grips and stirs the imagination and the soul of the pilgrim. But it is above all else a feeling of awe and reverence, because Jerusalem is first of all the symbol of the terrible drama of our Lord's death. Not so Bethlehem. Its predominant atmosphere

is one of childlike joy. And rightly so: its symbol is not the cross but the manger with the Divine Infant.

The surrounding country is in a better state of cultivation than the rest of Palestine. The inhabitants are predominantly Catholic and are very courteous to the pilgrims. They reveal their Catholicity at times by making the Latin sign of the cross. There are no Jews at Bethlehem neither at Nazareth. And rightly so: the Jew has no religious contact with these places since he has excluded himself from them by repudiating the Messiah. It seems as though the bleeding of the Saviour still hovered over this hallowed corner of the earth where the Word Incarnate received the homage of the first fruits of the Jews and the Gentiles, i. e., of the Shepherds and the Magi. The inhabitants of Bethlehem did not persecute Him like those of his foster-city Nazareth. No, the infants of Bethlehem were the first to die for Him.

But the pilgrim is interested more in the sacred places of Bethlehem. The church of Our Lady, situated at the extreme east of the town, is the main sanctuary, because it enshrines the grotto of the Nativity. Although it is a mere fragment of the former grand basilica, it can still accommodate upward of 7,000 people. It is reckoned among the oldest churches of the Holy Land and seems to enjoy the special protection of Divine Providence. There are no records extant of it ever having been destroyed during the many religious and political upheavals of the last one thousand years.

The grotto of the Nativity is situated below the church. It is a rock chamber rather narrow and some 40 feet long. No rays of the sun ever reach this place. It is illuminated by the many lamps—some of them very costly—which are kept burning continuously at the shrine. Their subdued, mellow light harmonizes very well with the sacred atmosphere of the place. (When Mary and Joseph arrived here on that Christmas night there were no lamps burning. It was not necessary. They carried with themselves Him who is the Light of



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MAY THE INFANT JESUS BLESS AND REWARD YOUR CHARITY

When Jim Played Santa

By Catechist Dorothy Schneider

"SO times change and we with them," half whispered, half sighed Jim Landon, as he looked on the scene below. For a long while he stood there, watching the hurrying, laughing Christmas shoppers. Often, it is true, there was a far-away look in his eyes, a look that betokened memories. And well might he think of other days.

Why the sound of wedding bells was still in his ears when he had been summoned to war. Just about this time of the year it was, when he had bade Mary Louise good-bye and set bravely off to camp. Mary Louise! How wonderful she had been through it all! She had smiled at him, and teased him about leaving her so soon, and told him to be sure to send a picture soon's ever he got into his uniform.

It wasn't long before he sent the picture and with it the message: "Well, Mary Louise, they have decided the war must be won in a hurry, so they are sending me over with the next detachment. We'll be home before long, and then you'll be proud of the medals your soldier boy will be wearing."

Mary Louise had smiled when the letter came, for she knew the heart of her soldier-husband and the gallantry that made his letter mirthful.

Once in a while a letter from her did reach Jim in the trenches, and one of them caused quite an unusual amount of excitement. Guess what? An airplane from heaven had brought them a little boy-baby. Jim smiled at the recollection, but it was not long before his lips had become quite, quite sober again.

The war over, and his record for unusual bravery won, he had come home, only to find that—well, it was enough to take the glad light out of any man's eyes.

In the siege of influenza which had swept the country, Mary Louise had again donned her nursing garb and kept faithful watch beside the sick and dying. It was her service to her country. "While Jim is fighting overseas," she had bravely declared, "I will fight another foe at home." So each morning placing her baby in a day nursery, she would set out upon her day's round of nursing visits, cheering a patient here, instructing a nervous mother there, calling a doctor when none had been summoned, helpful always, loved everywhere. Then one morning found her fever-stricken, unable to arise. Neither she nor Jim had relatives in New York. A neighbor cared for her until the doctor insisted that she be taken to the hospital. Worn by the fatigue of nursing others, her struggle was not long. Three days, that was all. And the baby, Jim had never yet been able to trace it, search records as he might. It was one of those strange things that often happen in the midst of New York's swirling life. Some one had promised to care for the baby. There was no one to demand that legal formalities be complied with, and the little one had been lost in the hidden family life of a great city, yet unsolved by the most skilled detectives, a mystery yet unraveled by the most fervent prayer.

Jim walked away from the window. He sank into his chair, and drawing out Mary Louise's picture, sat there a long while looking into her eyes. If only she were there to enjoy his success, for he had been successful in the years that followed his re-



*Like the roses and lily blooming,
Sweetly heav'n and earth perfuming,
Stainless, spotless, thou appearest,
Queenly beauty graces thee.
But to God, in whom thou livest,
When to Him in beauty nearest,
Yet so humble thou canst be.
Lovely Maid, to God most pleasing,
And for us His wrath appeasing;
O, by all thy love of Jesus,
Show us thy clemency.*

turn: if only he had her and his baby, what a happy Christmas it would be!

Jim walked away from the window.

It was growing late; his stenographer and clerks had gone long since, but still he sat there, musing, Mary Louise's picture in his hand. How happy they had been during the days of their courtship, and afterwards. He remembered the day of their engagement, and then, like a flash, a promise he had made.

"Jim, dear," she had said, "let us always keep our hearts tuned to the infinite charity and love of the almighty plans of God. It is a great adventure we are starting upon. I know that if we live in harmony with God's decrees, we shall find happiness at every step in the road. It is only when we struggle against his eternal designs that unhappiness enters our lives. And, Jim, I want you to promise me something."

"Anything in the world, Mary Louise, anything in the world."

"Well, Jim," she had said, smiling gravely, "you know I have had many strange experiences in my nursing career, many peeps—in at the most intimate family relations, and it seems to me that one of the most prevalent causes of domestic unhappiness is that husband and wife tend to become too self-centered.

"One evening Father Lane gave me an inspiration. And the thought came to me that if we promised to spend a certain percentage of our yearly income in helping others and carried out our 'charity' plans together, God would not fail to bless us, for He loves generous hearts. What do you think about it?"

"My dear, my dear, I will promise to do anything that will conduce toward our happiness."

And there, under the blossoming trees of spring-time, they had planned and planned—Suddenly Jim straightened up.

"Well, now that's a good idea. I will. Certainly it would make her happy. But how? That's the question. How?"

With a more-interested-in-life expression in his eyes Jim straightened up his desk for the night and hastened off to the Pennsylvania Hotel for dinner.

As he ate he considered his resolve. He could afford to spend quite a considerable sum on Christmas charity, that was not the question: the great question was what form his benefactions should take and who should be the recipients. All through his meal his mind played on the difficulty. Just as he was about to leave, a chance remark from a nearby table caught and held his attention.

"—and the good Sister told me that this year they scarcely know where they will get money to provide for the children's Christ-

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Victory-Noll Woods in Winter

"WHATSOEVER YOU HAVE DONE FOR MY LITTLE ONES YOU HAVE DONE UNTO ME."

"Letters to Mary"

Victory Noll Notes

"ALL FOR JESUS THROUGH MARY"

Victory Mount



My dear Mary:

Christmas is coming!! Even the great out-of-doors seems to herald it. Yesterday morning I read it in the great book of Nature, whose pages lay open in the vast panorama toward the East. It was figured in what took place. The golden orb of day had its precursor in rosy clouds which warmed the cold, unresponsive earth and caused the whole to glow with ardent expectation.

Your dreamy friend was instantly reminded of another clime,—that of tropical southern California. While we are still whipped about with ice blasts, there Spring has already been ushered in with days of gentle showers, interspersed with days of cloudless skies. Overhead glows the warm sun, while beneath one's feet are wide fissures in the sandy earth. Tiny plants are pushing their tender green shoots upward which cause these cracks in the earth. Then the striking words of our Christmas Novena flash on memory's screen,—“Drop down ye dews from above, let the clouds rain the Just One, let the earth open and bud forth the Saviour.” Alas, that intimate Nature should be more responsive to God's love than human hearts.

But even if we were not addicted to reveries and day-dreams, there are more practical means of concluding that Christmas is near. Has not the mail-man already anticipated the greatest Christian Feast with occasional parcels, the gifts of some generous, faithful friends of the poor in New Mexico? They have been happily inspired to honor the Infant Jesus in the Person of His Poor.

It is interesting to note the divers tastes of our different donors. Last year a club of ladies in Chicago sent some Christmas stockings made of mosquito netting, which were already stuffed with candy, nuts and popcorn for our poor children. They understood, it seemed, that we were busy Missionaries, and so we did not have to bother filling the stockings. A little lady in Kansas thought more about the real needs of the children, than the passing joys of Christmas, and thus she sent several dozen warm stockings to keep their little legs warm.

A widow in Oregon was evidently thinking of some very poor Mexican family when she packed her box for she put in it some flour, sugar, two or three cans of fruit and a glass of jelly. No doubt she meant this to

help out toward their Christmas dinner. We knew an aged Indian lady, whose husband was dying with cancer, who was most grateful to receive this box.

Miss S. first lined her huge fibre carton with old clothing, and then filled up the center with toys and a large bag of hard candy. At the same time she sent another box whose contents she specified were to be for ourselves and our chaplain. In it were several new kitchen utensils, a five-pound fruit-cake, dates, raisins and various items which were to help make up the Christmas dinner. There were cigars for Father, a pair of warm gloves and inside of one a crisp dollar bill.

A little lady in Pennsylvania wanted to make a more direct gift to our infant Saviour. She sent a Benediction Burse which she had painted, and several smaller pieces of altar linens. We thanked her most earnestly in His Name.

Our little chapel yet needs many things. We are still without pews. Straight-back chairs, as well as camp chairs, placed close together, consequently substitute for the customary pews. Our Chapel needs to be enlarged when we are able to do so. During our August Retreat when all of the Catechists from the neighboring Missions were gathered here with us, we felt we had become expert contortionists so agile had we become in folding ourselves up to fit in incredible small spaces. However, it is a relief to have some place to put your feet again.

As for your check which you said we might use for Christmas decorations and trimmings,—bells, holly, etc., if we chose, we are most grateful. However, we will spend it entirely for our chapel. We hope the town florist may have some real poinsettias or some bright red flowers of some kind, which, with pine boughs, will give our altar a festive appearance for the coming of Mary's Son on Christmas Eve.

Ever your loving friend in Jesus and Mary,
Catechist Blanche Richardson.

December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, was most appropriately celebrated at Victory-Noll by one of the largest Investitures in the history of the Society. Ten states were represented with Ohio in the lead.

Catechists Julia Schmitt, of Dubuque, Ia., Loretta Smith, of Des Moines, Ia., and Mary Dickebohm, of Lafayette Ind., pronounced for the first time their vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

Eight Catechists were admitted to the Juniorate of the Society: Catechists Elizabeth Hann, of Lilbourn, Mo., Cecilia Schmitt of St. Louis, Mo., Dorothy Oehler of Mt. Healthy, Ohio, Margaret Javaux, of St. Louis, Mo., Laura Franken, of Carrolton, Mo., Helen Weber, of Ozone Park, N. Y., DeVota Christ, of Hamilton, Ohio, and Charlotte Scheper, of Indianapolis, Ind.

Catechist Margaret Dunsmore, of Duluth, Minn., became a Probationer.

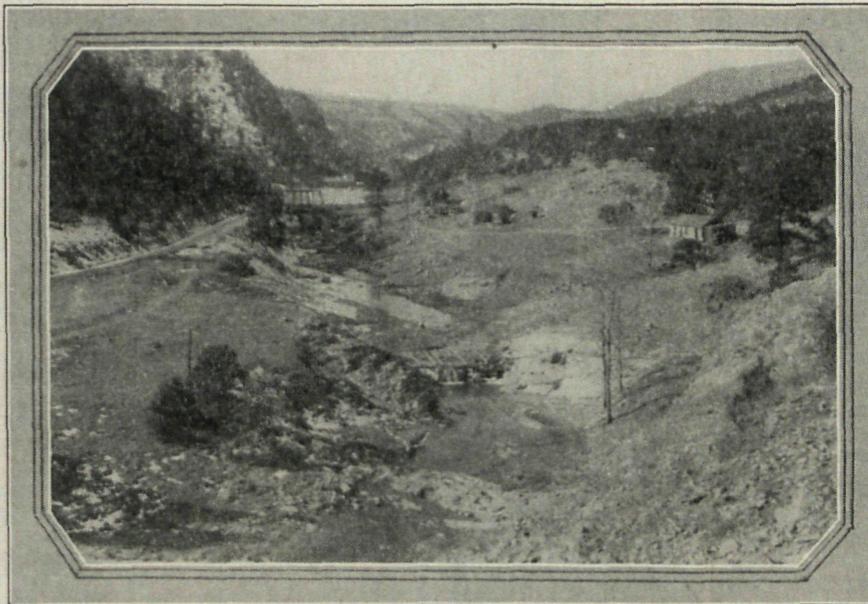
Fourteen Candidates received the White Veil and Mary-blue uniform of a Consecrate. Catechists Mercedes Gutierrez and Carlota Baca from the Preparatory School at Las Vegas, New Mex., Catechists Eleanor Gerhart, of St. Louis, Mo., Marie Spychaj and Viola Wopperer, of Hamilton, Ohio, Marguerite Murfield, of Toledo, Ohio, Regina Torzewski, of Wausau, Wisc., Mary Louise Perl, of Mansfield, Ohio, Bernetta Quinn, of Buffalo, N. Y., Blanche Lawler, of Cortland, Ill., Margaret Schneider of Madison, Minn., Elizabeth Wengritzky, of Lombard, Ill., Aurelia McMahon, of Janesville, Wisc., and Eleanor Olthaus of Covington, Ky.

Since a large Investiture presages that ere long new Bands of Missionary Catechists will take their departure to the Southwest to labor in the long-neglected Mission districts will our Readers pray that their combined efforts will bring many wanderers back to the Faith?

Rev. A. A. Link, Director of the Home and Foreign Mission Society in the Diocese of Buffalo, visited the Noll during Novem-

ber. His comments of Victory-Noll were most gratifying, especially his assurance to us that our Society had a great future ahead of it and that all the Directors of the Propagation of the Faith were closely following the work which our Society is doing in the Missions of the Southwest.

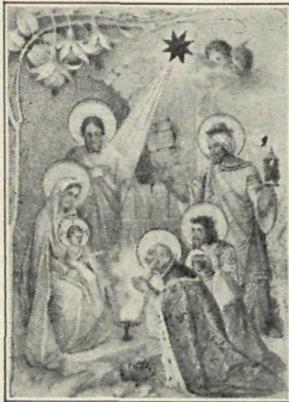
“IN THE SERVICE OF THE QUEEN,” our vocational movie, has completed a most successful tour of parts of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin. Our Publicity Agents, Mr. Roeder and Mr. Zieverink, feel much elated both with the large audiences present at the different showings of the picture and with the financial returns therefrom. Later we expect to publish a number of the interesting letters we have received from them.



A Winter Scene Near Victory-Mount

MAY THE INFANT JESUS BLESS AND REWARD YOUR CHARITY

The Lesson of the Magi



"And falling down they adored Him; and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts."

After months of weariness and peril the Three Kings from the Far East, following the mysterious Star announced by Balaam as the sign of the coming Messiah, reach the end of their journey, only to find that the Star, their heavenly guide, has stopped over a lowly stable! Can this be the dwelling place of a king? Such must have been the thought uppermost in the minds of the royal Magi, who had undoubtedly expected to find a sumptuous palace wherein they would see the new-born Child surrounded by all the pomp which was His right as Savior of the world.

But what a different sight they behold! For entering the cave, before them they see Mary and Joseph, and a poor wailing Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. Indeed this was a supreme test of their faith. They do not hesitate. They do not turn back in dismay. Rather, enlightened by grace, they reverently prostrate themselves at the feet of their Infant Savior and silently adore Him as King of the earth and acknowledge Him the Sovereign Ruler of their hearts. Nor are they content with this act of adoration, but "opening their treasures they offered Him gifts."

The coming of the Magi should bring us Catholics a two-fold lesson: We should not be content with our outward homage—our adoration at the Crib of the Lowly Babe of Bethlehem on Christmas Morn,—but we, too, should open to Him our treasures and give Him of our gifts. We should return to Him that which He so bountifully has bestowed upon us, the gift of the goods of this life, of which we are only the stewards, not the masters, and which He expects us to return to Him in the person of the least of His little ones,—the poor.

Our Infant Jesus is not satisfied with our adoration alone, but, He also asks that we make Him a practical offering,—that we give to the poor who are His special friends, Our Infant Jesus is pleased to show His dependence upon us by allowing us to supply Him in the person of His poor with the necessities of life. Let us remember the

poor. We hold our worldly wealth for the poor—the hand that is outstretched for an alms is the hand of the Infant Jesus. His hand is stretched out to Catholics today for His little ones,—the poor little children of the Missions. Let us not let this Christmas go by, then, without putting into practice this two-fold meaning of the coming of the Wisemen. Rather let us adore and let us give that we may at this holy Christmas Season enjoy a foretaste of that happiness which shall be ours in Eternity.

Society of Missionary Catechists,
Box 109, Huntington, Indiana

Reverend dear Father:

In honor of the Birthday of the Babe of Bethlehem

I am enclosing \$ _____ to be applied to the Babe of Bethlehem Burse.

Name _____

Address _____

The Missionary Catechist Huntington, Indiana

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Rev. J. J. Sigstein, Spiritual Director of
The Society of Missionary Catechists
Editor

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Brevities

Surely our friends would be stirred to pity if they could see the emaciated, wretchedly-clad little children of the Missions and their hearts would quickly and generously go out to them. We feel quite certain that they would not let our pleas for assistance go unheeded, but, would—in honor of the Infant Jesus—bring happiness to these little ones.

During this holy Christmas season nothing could be more appropriate than a gift in honor of the Birthday of the Babe of Bethlehem. No doubt our friends would be glad to contribute towards our Babe of Bethlehem Burse in honor of Him who sanctified poverty by His lowly birth in Bethlehem's cave on that first Christmas morning twenty centuries ago.

For the convenience of those who wish to help in building up this Burse we are printing on this page a form for sending in donations. Just fill it in, clip it and return it along with your offering to the Society of Missionary Catechists.

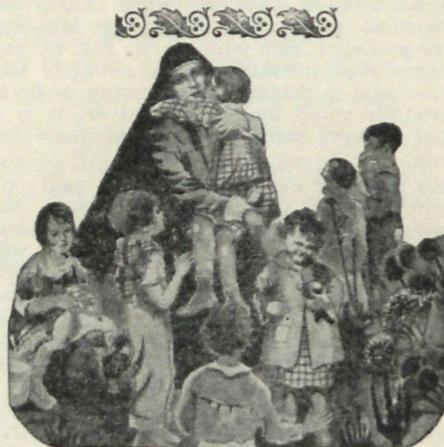
Dear Readers, when you are drawing up your New Year's resolutions do not fail to include the following one:

"This year I intend to give most liberally to the Missions. I mean to enroll as a member of the '2500 Club' AT ONCE, pledging myself to give a dollar each month for the year 1929 towards the support of the Missionary Catechists so that they may not find their work for the salvation of souls retarded by lack of the necessary funds. Besides, I promise to interest at least one other person who will also contribute a like sum for the same length of time. By joining the '2500 Club' I know that I shall be doing something worth while for charity and something most pleasing for Our Divine Lord."

The Society of Missionary Catechists was founded to save the faith of needy, neglected Catholics in all those Missions and settlements deprived of the ministrations of Priests, Sisters and Religious teachers. The Society is laboring in those mission fields where the need is greatest, namely, among the Spanish-speaking people who have been deprived of all religious influence and are, moreover, subject to the proselytizing activities of Protestant Missionaries who are drawing tens of thousands of these Catholic people from the Church. The vocation of a Catechist is a sublime vocation. It should appeal to Catholic young women, generous-hearted and charitably-inclined, who wish to do something for God and Holy Church and really accomplish something worthwhile in this life. Address the Reverend Spiritual Director of the Society for full particulars concerning the work, entrance requirements, etc.

The next date for reception into the Society of Missionary Catechists is the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11th. Those contemplating entering at that time should not delay corresponding with us.

Of course, your 1929 Budget provides that a certain percent of your income is to be applied to your savings account. Naturally you are planning to invest this account where the returns will be greatest and safest. Then, read about our "Annuity Plan" on page eight and let us furnish any other information you may desire.



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To
all our
Readers, Benefactors and Friends,
may the coming of the
Christ-child at the Yule-tide
bring much peace and joy. Such
is the heartfelt wish of the

M C
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of Our
Blessed Lady of Victory

"WHATSOEVER YOU HAVE DONE FOR MY LITTLE ONES YOU HAVE DONE UNTO ME."

Lay Catechists Again

Catechist Supervisor, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

PERHAPS those zealous persons of the world, who devote a portion of each week to the teaching of Catechism to God's poor little ones have noticed there is an increasing interest on the part of American Catholics in this most necessary field of labor. Numerous Confraternities of Christian Doctrine are rapidly springing into existence in the East, West, North and South. If there is not a canonically erected Confraternity the students of the many parochial schools and academies go out in organized bands to conduct Sunday school or weekly Catechism classes in their vicinity for Catholic children who are deprived of the ordinary means of Religious instruction.

Much has been done. Much can be done, especially in our larger cities. Rural communities, however, often present difficulties with which it is hard to cope. If it is difficult to provide Religious instruction for Catholic children living in Eastern or Middle-Western rural communities, it is an exceedingly arduous task to reach the scattered rural population of New Mexico. Ours is the fourth largest State in the Union, and Catholic families form practically the whole of the rural population. These people live in small isolated communities of several dozen families each, which are fifty and sixty miles from each other, connected only by mountain trails which cannot be traveled in the rainy and snowy season of the year. During the bad seasons, these people are usually cut off from all communication or influence,—religious or otherwise,—with the rest of the world. They have raised a few beans during the summer, and, perhaps have procured a small quantity of flour. On these they will subsist until milder weather makes it possible to travel the roads again. Deprived of the saving influence of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and of the life-giving Sacraments, lacking Religious instruction, and, subjected, moreover, to the intense activities of the proselytizing missionaries, it is obvious that the religious life of these people will necessarily deteriorate and in the end be entirely lost.

In order to save the Faith of these spiritually-starving people and to make theirs a more enlightened Faith, it is imperative that ways and means be found to reach and hold them in the Faith in which they were born. Although the task is a difficult one, we believe we have found the solution. It is our purpose to establish catechetical training schools at logical centers, and here train a carefully selected group of young, intelligent women to become efficient lay-catechists and teachers of small communities. After eight weeks of training in the following subjects: Catechism, Bible History, Church History, Catechetics Apologetics, Liturgy, Sacristy and Church work, sewing, music, Kindergarten and Playground work, these girls will be formally enrolled in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and return to their respective villages where they will be able teachers of religion. At regular intervals the Missionary Catechists will visit them, advise them, and encourage them in their work.

Since these girls must come many miles to attend these catechetical institutes, it will be impossible for them to return to their



An Open Air Class

homes each evening. We must, therefore, provide them with their meals and sleeping quarters. Our Spanish-Americans for the most part live simply, and so our equipment will likewise be simple. We will use collapsible furniture, such as folding army cots for the dormitories, and folding card tables for school desks for two reasons. First, such furniture is inexpensive, and secondly, since our catechetical training school is to be moved from parish to parish, as soon as a catechetical training course has been completed in one, and is about to be begun in another, it is necessary to have portable furniture.

May we not confidently hope that during this Christmas Season some of our regular subscribers will be inspired to contribute something toward the equipment of this training school for the lay-catechists of New Mexico? Once the equipment has been purchased, the expense of conducting such catechetical institutes will be relatively small. Perhaps there is nothing which will contribute more effectually to the preservation of the Faith of our Catholic New Mexicans than these training centers for lay workers.



Awaiting the Coming of the Lay-Catechist

Bethlehem

(Continued from Page 1)

the world. And undoubtedly this light also shone forth from the mouth of the cave in that sacred midnight hour far out into the valley of the shepherds, who saw the brightness and splendor of God.) At the narrow end of the grotto is the main altar, the altar of the Nativity. It is carved in precious marble and the front is in the form of an open table. Directly beneath the altar stone is a star surrounded by the legend: *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.* (Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.) Our pilgrim tells us that the star was one of precious marble which replaced a former silver star the rays of which had been dotted with diamonds and other precious stones. Later reports—the Catholic Encyclopaedia among them—mention again the silver star.

Another altar marks the place where the manger stood and where the newborn Saviour received the homage of the shepherds. A crib of precious marble now takes the place of the rough wooded structure which served as the first resting place of the God-man. A third altar commemorates the site where the Magi offered their adoration to the newborn King of the Jews. These altars are surmounted by valuable paintings illustrating these incidents and all are adorned with many precious lamps.

Several narrow corridors lead from the main cave to more or less spacious recesses which Christian tradition has identified with scriptural incidents, e.g. the chapel of St. Joseph where he received the command for the flight into Egypt, the chamber,—now a chapel,—of the Holy Innocents where the bodies of the infant martyrs were interred.

Although these places are beneath the earth and withdrawn from the light of day, there seems to be a perpetual Christmas going on in this hallowed cave. Day after day the Franciscan Fathers conduct solemn processions to the various sanctuaries. On the feast of Christmas the Patriarch of Jerusalem presides at the solemn services. He carries the figure of the Sacred Infant in solemn procession to the place where the manger stood and places it on some straw in the marble crib.

In reviewing the incidents of the story of Bethlehem the faithful Christian will at times find it difficult to repress the thought: "Oh, that I could have knelt near the crib, or could have adored the Incarnate Word with the Magi or could have taken Him in my arms like Simeon." Such thoughts and desires are natural and pardonable. Yet they also are witnesses to the imperfection of our faith. God in His mercy and goodness has made the realization of this desire attainable in the Catholic Church. Yes, even more than that.

In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the Word Incarnate is lying on the Altar just as really as He was bedded in the manger. There He appeared in the form of a poor helpless Babe, here under the guise of a tiny Host. And yet in either place He was present the Lord of infinite power and majesty. And when you walk up to the communion railing on Christmas morning you will receive Him not only into your arms but into your hearts. Verily, "Our God hath not done in like manner to every nation."

MAY THE INFANT JESUS BLESS AND REWARD YOUR CHARITY

The Associate Catechists of Mary

Dear Associate Catechists of Mary:

May the Sweet Babe of Bethlehem in the arms of His holy Mother grant you and your loved ones a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Once more the greatest day of all the year, the birthday of the Dear Babe of Bethlehem, has come to gladden the hearts of men. What sweet peace and happiness flood our souls as we kneel before the crib of Our Infant God and King, whose hands up-



hold the entire created universe.

We all know that the anniversary of the birth of Our Savior is fraught with the deepest mysteries of love, but it has one meaning of which, perhaps, we seldom think the missionary meaning. Christ came to establish His Kingdom on earth, and none have as much reason to be happy on Christmas day as those in whose hearts He reigns. But how many, many souls there are in which He is still unknown and unloved? The best gift which you can offer Him on Christmas morning is a firm resolution to do something; or, if you have already done something; to do just a little more; to help those who labor to bring Him the souls for which He weeps

A MAGIC GIFT

Just suppose that you could give your best friend a magic charm: something that you positively knew would bring him good luck all through the year. How eager you would be to give him one, and if you didn't have one for yourself, to get one! But is it so impossible? What about a year's membership in the A. C. M.? "That's no magic gift," you say, and of course you are right, but after all, isn't prayer a wonderful sort of magic, that has power to bring us the richest blessings of Heaven every day of the year? A. C. M. Membership means that the members share in the Missionary Catechists' daily perpetual novena to our Blessed Lady of Victory, and in all the other spiritual benefits attached to membership. Write for information.

as He lies shivering on the cold, prickly straw.

The charity and generosity which you have manifested toward Our Dear Lord in the person of His beloved poor is certain to make this Christmas a happy one for each of you. Without your assistance the Catechists would not be able to do as much as they are doing for the poor under their care, who will gratefully remember the charity shown them when they kneel to adore the new-born Savior.

The Missionary Catechists are fervently

praying Our Infant King to ever increase the flames of charity in your hearts. "On earth peace to men of good will" was the song of the angels on the first Holy Night, and it shall be repeated to you, our dear Associates, for your good will undoubtedly will bring you that peace of soul without which all the pleasures of earth are but as dust and ashes.

Sincerely in O. B. L. V.

THE CATECHIST SUPERVISOR,
Associate Catechists of Mary.

Please ship all items intended for the needy missions direct to our mission centers. Address: "Society of Missionary Catechists" at:

1. Holman, New Mexico.
2. Anton Chico, New Mexico.
3. Los Cerrillos, New Mexico.
4. Box 30, Montezuma Route, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
5. 620 W. Fifteenth Ave., Gary, Indiana.
6. Dos Palos, Calif.
7. Lubbock, Texas. Box 1658.
8. Catechist Blanche Richardson, Supervisor of Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine, Victory-Mount, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Express and freight shipments for Holman and Anton Chico are sent via Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Dear Little Helpers:

I know how busy you are now, and, Oh! how exciting and thrilling it is to pass the shop windows with their lovely Christmas display, and how anxious you must be to know what Santa will bring you for Christmas.

Our little Mexican children are also wondering if you will remember them this year as you have in the past. Do you know that if it had not been for the toys and pennies you sent us last year many a little boy and girl would not have had a Christmas?

I'm going to tell you a true story of a little boy in New Mexico. His name is Carlos. He is about ten years old, and is sick quite often, but he is very plucky. If his parents were not so poor his sufferings could be lessened by having his tonsils removed. Last year Carlos was sick in bed, and couldn't go to the Christmas party the Catechists gave for the children in the mission. All of Carlos' friends were able to go to the party and they enjoyed themselves immensely. The Catechists gave each child a rosary, candy and toys. The Catechists were afraid they were not going to have enough presents for all, but a few days before the party several boxes were sent to them, so that they had enough presents for all.

As Carlos couldn't go to the party the Catechists saved a few things for him, for they knew that he would have nothing for Christmas if they did not give him something. The next day they want to see Carlos and took him the presents.

Was Carlos happy to be remembered? Just wait until I finish the story and you can tell for yourself. You see Carlos thought sure that Santa would forget him again, and he would have no Christmas as he wasn't able to go to the party, so when the Catechist gave him the presents he was

Mary's Little Helpers



*May Santa Claus reserve his best
Until he gets to you,
Then shower you on Christmas day
And all the New Year through.*

just as happy as any little boy could be. He couldn't thank the Catechist enough and when she told him that some little children more fortunate than he had sent them, Carlos said that he would pray for them especially, asking the Infant Jesus to bless them with a Christmas as happy as his own. He was so happy and grateful that he said that he would go to Mass and Holy Communion on Christmas even if he were sick, because he wanted to thank the Little Jesus for being so good to him, and he knew this was the best way he could do it.

Carlos isn't the only one you made happy last Christmas, and I know that you will do the same for many more this year. Why one of our bands of Little Helpers has been working on its Christmas box since vacation, and I know many others are also

working hard to make as many pretty things as they can for their Christmas box for the poor.

Last year a dear friend of the children sent a box of mouth organs to the children in the missions, and, Oh, how they did appreciate them! They love music very much, and the day after the Catechists had distributed the mouth organs many of the children were able to play some of the pretty little songs they love so well.

I wish you could see for yourself how delighted they were with the rosaries, holy cards, and medals, you mounted. I know that you are all going to have the happiest and merriest of Christmases because you have made others happy.

Praying the Infant Jesus to remain always in the nice, warm crib in your hearts that you will give Him Christmas morning when He comes to you in Holy Communion, and wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am

Your

CATECHIST SUPERVISOR

Little Helpers of the M. C.

Address all A. C. M., or Little Helpers
communications to:

CATECHIST SUPERVISOR,

Associate Catechists of Mary,

Victory-Noll

Huntington, Ind.

"WHATSOEVER YOU HAVE DONE FOR MY LITTLE ONES YOU HAVE DONE UNTO ME."



Mission Echoes



Christmas day and the day preceding will be very busy and very happy ones for Gary-Indiana Harbor Catechists, for with approximately 450 children to be provided with a Merry Christmas, every head and hand has its full quota of work, and who could help being radiantly happy when engaged in such a heartwarming task?

Early on the afternoon of Dec. 24th, we will go to Indiana Harbor to decorate the church basement for the party before the arrival of the children. But no matter how early we are, experience has taught us at least a few eager youngsters will get there first to watch us work and to get in our way with their efforts to help.

When the dull, gray basement has been transformed by red and green roping, tinsel, and gay red bells into an attractive and inviting place, and the wonderful Christmas tree with its twinkling lights stand in the center, the door will be thrown open to the children. We are confident that, through the generosity of our readers, we will be able to give each of these little ones a small gift and a candy and popcorn treat.

A pretty Spanish custom prevails among the Gary children. They go out by twos; each child takes a certain street in the Mexican district and a hunt begins for a baby who has been born on Christmas day or on a day shortly preceding Christmas. The two that find a baby who comes nearest to being a Christmas day baby receives a prize, and the baby itself receives a dainty layette. Last year two little girls, Carmen and Lola, were the lucky finders, and great was their delight when each received as a prize a life-like baby doll. The baby's parents were also much pleased with the layette, for as Lola exclaimed, "That baby was SO pore! Why, it didn't have no clothes a 'tall."

We extend our sincerest gratitude to those who are aiding us in giving these little ones a merry Christmas, and pray God to give you in return a New Year filled to the brim with blessings.

It is cotton picking time in Texas! All our people are leaving for the cotton fields. But, thanks to Jesus and Mary, many of them return to Lubbock for Mass Sunday morning.

We have found out that there are many Catholics in Lubbock who don't know there is a church here, so we are going around from house to house, seeking our Catholic people. We are having some interesting experiences, too. One old lady threw up her hands in horror when she saw us at her door and said, "So YOU came to Texas!"

One of the doctors, although a Protestant, is very much interested in our work among the Mexicans and has offered to assist us in our clinic which we are open-



ing. For the present we will use one room of our house for this purpose. We certainly have a great deal to be thankful for, and we ask our friends to continue praying for us, that we may be able to save the Faith of these people, who so long have been neglected.

Rejoice with us! Last Sunday we had a "Full House" at church. It happened to be the anniversary of Father Lanctot's arrival here in Dos Palos, and it was the first and only time that the church was filled in the year that he has been here. Every seat was taken. We had forty-four children,—Maybe that doesn't sound like many,—but the Sunday before we had eight and a few grown-ups.

Yes, four Catechists are, so to speak, only a drop in the bucket in this wonderful field of ours. We could use forty instead of four. But how could we ever get enough equipment for that many? As it is, we need another car and a bus. We are taking care of three towns and only seven camps out of the seventy that surround us.

Mission life is getting more exciting every day. We at Anton Chico, just finished with the Fiesta, with all its accompanying ceremonies,—Vespers the preceding night, a Solemn High Mass on the morning of the Fiesta, followed by a procession and Benediction. The church was crowded. Nine priests and eleven Catechists were here for the occasion.

This morning we went to Canon Blanco,

about twelve miles from Anton Chico. Two Catechists conducted Catechism classes, using part of the time for hand-work, singing, etc. In the meantime Catechist M. and I went visiting. We made only four calls within the hour, as we had to walk about a mile to each house.

Tecolotito is our newly opened Mission. The road is very bad and we expect to walk if it is not very far. One afternoon we set out for Tecolotito but met difficulty in the form of a river. Now a different way must be found. On the return trip we said our Office and Rosary. We felt like the early Padres walking along the road praying while returning home from our Missionary labors.

All last week we were kept busy with our nursing kit. A little girl was kicked by a horse, knocking out all her front teeth and making her look like a viejita (little old woman); two ladies were thrown off a wagon and one badly hurt; two cases of pneumonia and the mumps were on the list. So you see visiting the sick keeps the infirmarian and driver on the road all day, while the other two remain at home, one cooking and cleaning, while the other one cares for the deaf, rheumatic, etc., in our small dispensary. Recently, we went to Turquillo, about seventeen miles away from home, to sing High Mass in honor of the Little Flower, the patroness of the Turquillo Mission Church. After the Fiesta, we continued our journey five miles farther up the mountain to Guadalupita, to clean and straighten our house there. Two of us will go there week-ends to teach.

A pitiful sight met our eyes the other day. It was a bitterly cold afternoon when we went to Hot Springs for Catechism. We, ourselves, left Victory-Mount prepared for the extreme cold, but we had not gone far when we saw two little boys coming down the road barefooted and clad only in very thin jackets over much-worn cotton shirts and overalls. Oh! they looked so cold. Thanks to Jesus and Mary, the poor children could at least be comfortable in the schoolhouse as we built a good warm fire.

This morning we went with our Missionary Padre to Gallinas to sing a Requiem Mass. Gallinas is about twenty miles up in the mountains at an altitude of 10,000 feet. The scenery thereabouts is most gorgeous. On our arrival Father rang the church bell and after three ringings about twenty minutes apart a few began to straggle in for Mass.

Although unprepared, we conducted Catechism afterwards. When we had finished the mothers gathered around us and asked us to come often and teach their little ones more about their religion. Whenever we can get more Catechists we hope to open this mission.

THE MISSIONARY

CATECHIST WILL

MAKE FOR YOU



THE WHOLE

YEAR

THROUGH

When Jim Played Santa

(Continued from Page 2)

mas. You know it has been one of Mother Teresa's highest aims to make the orphanage as homelike as possible. Through the generous contributions of one of her childhood friends she has been unusually successful. Unexpected business reverses have made it impossible for him to send his usual Christmas check and poor Mother hardly knows what to do. She and the other Sisters are storming heaven for help.

"If we had only known sooner—" Jim walked over to the table. "Pardon me, I could not help hearing part of your conversation, which seems almost heaven-sent. For the last hour I have been engrossed in the complex problem of determining what form my Christmas benefactions shall take. Perhaps you can assist me?"

Before another thirty minutes had passed Jim was on his way to the orphanage, where he arranged with Mother Teresa for a great Christmas party for the children. Her fervent expressions of gratitude and praise to the Infant Jesus both amused and edified him.

Then she surprised him. "But you must come," her eyes were twinkling, "and play Santa Claus. From what you have told me of your life I am certain your Christmas will be the happier for it."

With an answering twinkle in his eyes Jim promised, and the party was set for Christmas eve.

After Jim had left the orphanage Mother Teresa summoned the Sisters to communicate to them the almost miraculous answer to their prayers. Before concluding her story she added:

"And I think we too have a surprise for Mr. Landon."

That was all she would tell them. Mother Teresa did not believe in committing herself unless she was absolutely positive of her facts.

Having dismissed the Sisters, Mother Teresa went over to the safe, from which she took an envelope. Drawing her chair nearer the light, she read again the note it contained and examined closely the picture of a smiling soldier face.

"Dear Sister Teresa," so the letter began, "I have been seriously injured and they tell me I shall not live through the night. Many years ago you begged me to call on you if ever I should need you. I do now. Please take care of Mary Louise's little boy. His father was reported dead just before Mary Louise's death. She never knew, thank God. You will find the telegram and his picture in my desk. I know that I can rely on you. Good-bye—Pray for me—"

Lucille.

Mother Teresa put the envelope in its accustomed place. "How wonderful indeed

are the ways of the Lord," she said softly, "how wonderful and how strange."

Next morning calling a smiling lad to her, she gave him the picture of his soldier-father and told him to pray and pray and pray to the Blessed Virgin for a very particular intention.

Jim arrived at the orphanage very early on Christmas eve. Ever since talking to Mother Teresa he had looked forward with keen anticipation to playing Santa Claus to the orphanage children.

And play Santa Claus he did indeed! Never in all the world was there a jollier happier Christmas party.

All through the evening's fun Jim's attention had been attracted to a blue-eyed lad who seemed to remind him of someone. He had been delighted as the rest, flushed of face and sparkling of eye, but now he had withdrawn from the others and stood near the window, looking at something in his hand.

Jim went over to him. "Well, my lad, didn't Santa Claus bring you everything you wanted?"

Then, noticing the picture, he said, "And what's this you have?"

"It's my daddy. He was killed in the World War."

Jim looked at the picture. Fearful to believe what his eyes saw, he said never a word but hastened to where Mother Teresa stood.

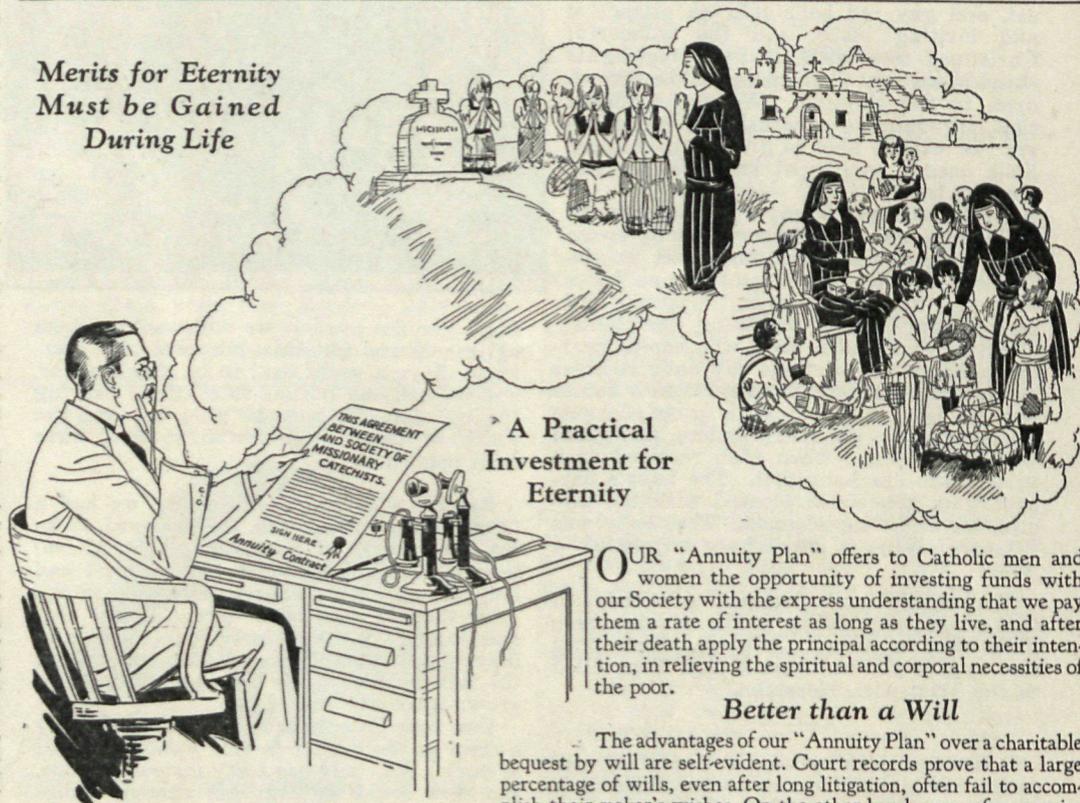
One look at him and Mother Teresa invited him to her office. Without a word she showed him the telegram and the letter—

So Jim Landon found his son, the answer to years of fervent prayer, in bringing Christmas joy to the orphanage youngsters.

Before leaving the good Sisters Jim and his son knelt before Our Blessed Mother's Altar and the Infant's crib, and Mother Teresa, kneeling with them, said again:

"Great are the works of the Lord, great beyond the comprehension of man."

Merits for Eternity Must be Gained During Life



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"WHATSOEVER YOU HAVE DONE FOR MY LITTLE ONES YOU HAVE DONE UNTO ME."