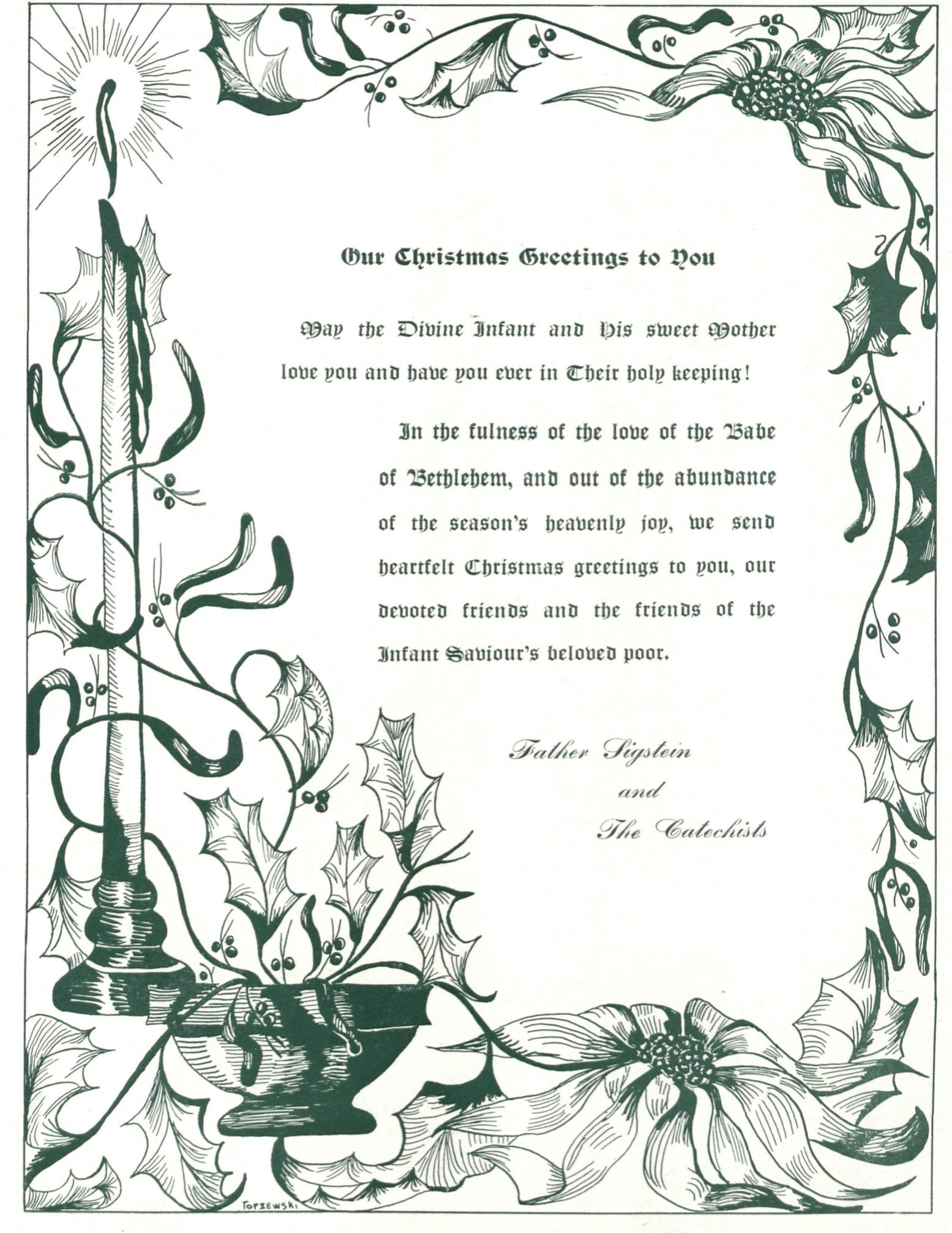


# THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST



Like the Shepherds at Bethlehem they come to adore the Infant Saviour.





Our Christmas Greetings to You

May the Divine Infant and His sweet Mother  
love you and have you ever in Their holy keeping!

In the fulness of the love of the Babe  
of Bethlehem, and out of the abundance  
of the season's heavenly joy, we send  
heartfelt Christmas greetings to you, our  
devoted friends and the friends of the  
Infant Saviour's beloved poor.

*Father Sigstein  
and  
The Catechists*

# The Missionary Catechist

Volume VIII

DECEMBER, 1931

Number 1

## La Pastorela - - - A Drama of Bethlehem

Catechist Blanche Richardson

The Christmas season returns. Night has fallen in the mission country of New Mexico. The serene face of the sky is undisturbed by the faintest suggestion of a cloud. The bright moon rides peacefully over the blue-black expanse, and reveals the earth covered with a light mantle of snow. The high-pitched notes of a pack of coyotes and the deep, rumbling chorus of restless dogs break the stillness for a moment. Then the night breezes waft to our ears another strangely melodious sound. It is the sweet, plaintive singing of "los pastores,"—the shepherds of the hills,—in search of "el Santo Nino,"—the Holy Child. Dark, shadowy figures now move slowly past us. There is one who carries a sword, another clothed in sombre black, a hermit-clad figure, an angel and some shepherds. Lastly pass a group of three or four men, in civilian attire, bearing elaborately trimmed pinatas on the end of sticks. Pinatas are bags of candy, disguised in attractive trimmings of brightly colored crepe paper. These will furnish a treat for the children at the close of the evening's performance. The group enters a small adobe house where a lighted lantern hanging at the door, represents that Star of long ago which shed its lustre over Bethlehem's cave on the night of the Nativity.

We are witnessing the yearly presentation of the Nativity play by the Spanish-Americans. You may well ask why an air of mystery and secrecy surrounds the performance. It is clear that no invitations were sent out even to the best and most trusted of friends. Only the simple, pious people who had seen it presented year by year are to be found in the group. Like the peculiar rites of the penitentes, during the last days of Holy Week, the Nativity play is something very sacred to the Spanish-Americans. They have learned that "los Americanos" are very likely not to enter into the reverential spirit of the celebration, and are apt to regard the whole thing in a curious, frivolous light. Moreover, their very poverty obliges them to

use the most simple costumes and the crudest settings. Real actors and a worth-while play do not need elaborate settings to win success. These people play their part most religiously, for this sacred drama of the Nativity is most dear to their humble hearts.



"La Pastorela" is of ancient origin. It is older than the Passion Play of Oberammergau which dates to the beginning of 1634. "La Pastorela" had its origin in the early church of England as far back as 980. Afterwards it was enacted in the churches of the Continent,—France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The play was very popular in Spain where it was usually presented in the public squares of plazas. It still exists today in that country. It was brought to Mexico and our own Southwest from Spain in the time of the conquistadores. It was most useful to the early Mission-

aries in teaching the savage Indians the beautiful story of Christ's love.

The Spanish-Americans begin their rehearsals several weeks preceding Christmas, and the same air of reverence is discernible at these preliminary stagings as in the public productions begun on Christmas Eve and continued until the 12th of January. There is a custom which the Spanish people follow religiously, of giving the play in a different house each night. The reason for this constant change of setting is that the actors in the play are in honor bound to give the play in every home where an altar has been erected to the Christ Child.

Rare old manuscripts of "La Pastorela" have been found at San Antonio, Texas, and at Santa Fe, Taos and San Rafael, New Mexico. The gentleman at San Rafael, who owns one of these manuscripts, stated that it had been in the possession of his family for generations; that he did not know where it came from, but thought it was a copy of one brought from Spain. The Spanish in which it is written is suggestive of the seventeenth century, while the style indicates that it was written by a priest. The manuscript in San Antonio is written in ink and the color of ink is changed to indicate the different characters. For instance, the angel's lines are written in blue, Lucifer's in purple, and the shepherd's in black.

The play opens with a Christmas hymn after which Lucifer appears soliloquizing. He is uneasy at the portents of the times and determines to find out, if possible, from the shepherds the truth about the Messiah's coming. The shepherds approach singing. A hermit joins them to ascertain what they know about the coming of the Messiah. They journey to their night camp. An angel appears to one of the group and he relates the vision to the rest. The angel reappears and warns them against Lucifer.

(Continued on page 10)

This day is born to you a Savior

# Another Story Runneth Thus

MARIE ANGE — A TRUE STORY

Sister Angela was within a week of her first Christmas in a sanatorium. She was pensive, saddened at this apparent end of all the hopes which had begun so auspiciously. In less than five years her health had broken down; for the past eleven months she had been one of the thousands fighting the battle for life against tuberculosis, fighting too that subtle self-pity, the insidious enemy of so many invalids. But the sight of the holly-wreaths, the sound of the Adeste and Stilly Night coming on in the air, the fragrance of the cedars—all these heralds of Christmas happiness, were heralds of memories, of shattered hopes, of pardonable, if selfish, tears.

A boisterous knock came to her door. Incongruously a timid little boy came into the room. His eyes, big and brown as the buttons on his sweater, were bright with salesmanship and advertised his profession as well as did the paper bag at his side.

"Good morning, Sister," he said. "Do you want a copy of the Christmas Saturday Evening Post? Look at the pictures!"

It was Blaise, little eleven year old Blaise who lingered every Saturday to give this pleasant Sister his carefully laid out sales talk. Week after week he had given her, too, a little of his history, so that she knew he was eleven and in seventh grade at school; his father was dead ten years; his mother was now married to his uncle; and the family of eight were very, very poor.

"Good morning, Blaise," the Sister said with real joy at the sight of him. "Have you made much money this week? Come tell me while I sew that button on your sweater and tighten that buttonhole a little!"

"Yes, I made \$6.75 this week. That's just about my average."

"\$6.75! I think that's pretty good. You can buy your Mother a Christmas present, can't you Blaise?" The button was taking root in the wool.

"I guess not! There's no Christmas at our house this year; we're lucky we're eatin'!"

"Really, Son? Isn't your daddy working?"

"Not much. He worked one day last week and made \$4.50."

Sister Angela laughed and said, "You did better than he did, didn't you? Do you tease him a little when you come out ahead?" She cut the thread and started on the buttonhole.

"Tease him? Boy! I should say not! I'd get something." And they both laughed.

"Well, bless your heart!" came in a gay, sweet voice; and with it appeared a vision of the cheery and immaculate Miss Carey, the little nurse, who entered with her thermometer case. "What's going on here?"

## CELEBRATING IN A NEW DRESS

With this issue THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST enters upon its eighth year. To properly commemorate this event the little magazine appears fittingly garbed in a new dress. We are happy to send forth our little messenger in this new garb and feel quite certain that our faithful subscribers will rejoice to see their favorite magazine celebrate its eighth anniversary in such a worthy manner.

As the zealous messenger of Our Blessed Lady of Victory and Her devoted Catechists, it is but proper that THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST should appear displaying Her glorious shield and ornamented with Her beautiful likeness,—fit symbols of Her goodness and power.

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST is indebted to Miss Esther Ann Torzewski, a promising young artist of Wausau, Wisconsin, for the lovely costume that has come from her gifted hands.

"Well, Blaise just needed a button sewed on. And he's been telling me what fine money he has made this week. Sister Angela smiled approvingly at her little boy friend as she clipped her thread and buttoned up his sweater.

"It isn't very much for so many of us. But we don't complain; lots of people are poorer than we are. Well I guess I'd better be going." And he left the room giving a "Merry Christmas" and taking a "God bless you, Christmas and always."

"Poor little fellow," said Sister. "And we have the nerve to complain, Mary Jane!"

"And I've been feeling sorry for myself because I can't go home for Christmas," Miss Carey said. There were tears in her eyes.

"You're not going then?"

"No, really I just can't afford it. The forty dollars it would cost me can be used so much more sensibly for someone in our family. Besides, somehow, it doesn't seem fair to leave for a vacation just now when the Sisters need me."

"And the patients!" added Sister Angela. "You are a dash of gold in these grey halls, my dear. You will help make

Christmas happy for many of these patients. Is that enough?"

"Mother! Mother!" a child called up from outside.

"That's Mrs. Gordon's little girl. Isn't that touching?" said Miss Carey. "It goes right through me to hear her calling her mother. She is a patient in 332, you know, and no children are permitted to come up."

By this time the mother had evidently reached the window for the dialogue went on.

"Hello, sweetheart!"

"Hello, Mother. Come on down, Mother."

"I can't dear. It's too cold for Mother to come down. Daddy will be down in a few minutes. You'd better get in the car and keep warm, Honey."

"Mother—please, Mother, aren't you even coming home for Christmas—not even for Christmas?"

It was full two minutes before Mrs. Gordon could answer and then her voice was trembling.

"Maybe I will, Sweetheart. But maybe not—hop in the car, darling,—goodbye."

"She's crying!" said Miss Carey softly. "And so are you, Sister."

"And so are you, Mary Jane! Isn't that sad, sad?—Mary Jane, tell her about little Blaise when you go in her room next time. Suppose she had eight at home instead of just her one little girl."

"Yes, and even so she said there will be no Christmas at their house this year. If only she could have her health back she says they would ask for nothing else. She is improving. Wouldn't it be wonderful if she could go home for Christmas?"

"If people only knew what blessings they have with good health!" thought Sister Angela as Miss Carey left the room. "How the sight of others' hardships makes our own seem slight! A bromide! But oh so true, and more true this year than ever before."

And then as a perfect compliment to her thought another visitor's gentle voice came to the door asking "May I come in, Sister?"

It was Mrs. Van Dyke.

Mrs. Van Dyke had been a patient at the sanatorium for two years during which time her father and two sisters had died there while she was in bed unable even to visit them. A third sister, Irma, was ill out in California. Mrs. Van Dyke at thirty-four had borne griefs and hardships with heroic resignation, and when she was permitted to return to her home and her two little children she was the happiest little mother in her town!

What mattered that her strong, young husband labored from sun-up to sun-down and received the disheartening returns which are so prevalent among our

(Continued on page 6)

A Child is born to us and a Son is given to us

CHRISTMAS-TIDE

'Tis Christmas-tide and once again  
The world pours forth its sad refrain—  
So many poor, so many ill  
Work lacking, food and coal are nil;  
The humble homes where children dwell  
Could many a tale of hardships tell,  
And helpless infants, born to die,  
Like Christ, may in a manger lie.

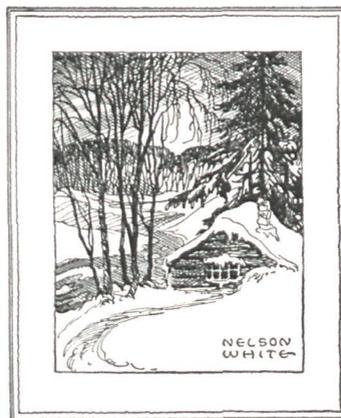
'Tis Christmas-eve and once again  
The bells ring out their glad refrain,  
The wants of suffering ones supplied  
With food and coal and gifts beside,  
Their burdens eased and cheer betide,  
Thrice blessed are those who, self denied,  
Give of their bounty satisfied,  
Christ dwells with them at Christmas-tide.

Philena L. Parrott in "Christmas Stories."

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

**D**URING the past eleven months much has been said and written about hard times, business depression, unemployment and the misery and sufferings of the poor. With these and other kindred ills the minds of our people have been much occupied and their hearts sorely oppressed during this period of universal want and suffering.

Many Catholics, unfortunately, who should during these hard times, have recourse to the consoling and comforting doctrine of the Providence of God, have lost the hope of better things and better times, and have even given way to helpless despair. In this they are like so many pagans without faith, or hope, or trust in God, who cry out in their despair: "What have we to be thankful, or hopeful for, during these times of depression." Surely this is contrary to the spirit manifested by every good, practical Catholic to whom his Religion is a living thing, because his life is motivated, not only by the virtue of Faith, but by Hope and Charity as well. It is not that such a good, fervent Catholic is immune from suffering, or that he hopes to escape privations, or even the deprivation of the material things he formerly enjoyed during prosperous times. As a matter of fact such a Catholic may have to undergo even more sufferings than others. But animated by true Christian sentiments he understands that suffering and sacrifice form a very essential part of his Holy Religion. He is, therefore, prepared to make sacrifices, not only in his own case, but even in the case of his



CHRISTMAS PEACE

Christ's peace, old friend, I wish today.  
Harbor God's Gift in mortal clay;  
Rejected was He, exposed to storm,  
In hillside cave took He our form.  
Saving, His message to us in sin—  
To men who share with Him their inn.  
Mary and Joseph seek a hearth,  
Asking for room to give Christ birth—  
Some warmth, some shelter in our heart;  
Peace and good will, they would impart.  
Each door they tapped, and begged for room,  
And found each home, cold as a tomb.  
Christ and His Mother ask today  
Even of us a home to stay.  
Rev. Joseph McMahon, S. J.

less fortunate neighbor. Realizing that this present business depression is a means given him under the Providence of God to spend himself for the good of others, he is prepared to make any and all sacrifices in order to relieve the necessities of the helpless and suffering poor. And when he hears of those in destitute circumstances: those, who are suffering from the pangs of hunger, or who are lacking food, clothing, or other necessities of life, his charitable heart is touched and he gives as generously as his meagre resources will permit.

During this Holy Season especially does he remember that Christmas is a time of God's love and mercy for His poor, helpless children. Full well does he know that, it is a time when "the love of God is poured out upon us, and the charity of Christ urges us"—a time of peace and happiness: a time when the Divine Babe of Bethlehem, for love of us, came down upon earth, suffered upon a cross and died, that all might become partakers of the blessings which he won for us.

Yes, for the charitable Christian, who truly loves God's poor, Christmas is indeed the happy, holy time he prays for when His Heart and the hearts of all men "of good will" open with charity towards the poor and afflicted.

VENITE ADOREMUS

The little Infant Jesus chose to come to us through Mary, His Mother. Let us, then, choose this holy way in which to go to Him. In answer to the beautiful invitation, "Venite Adoremus," let us offer our heart's love and adoration to Jesus through Mary. Mary will unite Her profound love and adoration to ours and thus make it a worthy offering for Her Divine Son.

Have you heard about "The Secret of Sanctity," Blessed de Montfort's True Devotion to Mary, Our Mother? If not join the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of Our Hearts and learn the secret of this beautiful devotion.

Enclosed find membership fee of \$1.00. I wish to be enrolled as a member of the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of Our Hearts:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

FROM A GRATEFUL HEART

I promised to published and to have a Mass offered in thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, Our Blessed Mother and to St. Raphael for protection from bankruptcy during the past thirty days.

Enclosed please find stipend for Mass for departed souls.

—A Subscriber.

Read Something Worthwhile

By Rev. A. J. Blaufuss

CHRIST AND THE PRIEST by Rev. S. Middleton, Ph. D., published by Benziger Bros., is a book of thirty simple meditations for priests, each prefaced by a picture suggestive of the theme under consideration. Everybody likes pictures, even priests. This feature not only adds to the interest of the book but helps to focus the imagination, which is of such consequence to all who wish to meditate well. The meditations are systematically developed and have something hearty in them. They will assist many in acquiring that most profitable habit of meditating.

Join the 2500 Club. Its aim: 2,500 persons contributing \$1.00 or more per month toward the support of the Catechists.

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

Editor

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#### ANOTHER STORY RUNNETH THUS

(Continued from page 4)

farmers today. Their little family was all together again and God was good. Periodically, Mrs. Van Dyke came back to the sanatorium for treatments. That is how she happened in to see Sister Angela and to ask again for prayers.

After the usual questions from patient to patient, Sister Angela entered loving into the sacred sanctuary of her friend's sorrowing heart—"And how is Irma?" she asked.

"Irma died last month, Sister," the words came with tears.

"Oh! I didn't know, Dear. I am so sorry! So Irma has gone too! Poor child!" She tried to comfort her, but oh, so gently.

"You know, Irma wrote to me the day before she died," Mrs. Van Dyke said after a few minutes, drying the tears. "She begged me to take care of her two little children. So Charlie is bringing them on to me for Christmas."

"If only I were well!" She smiled feebly. "Really, we could manage very well. We have enough to eat, of course. Steve does keep up a fine farm but we can't sell anything. I had to borrow money to come in for my treatment."

"Sister, if you just knew how I pray. If only God will spare me long enough to bring up my children and Irma's. There's no one else now to pass them on to." Then she brightened, "But won't it be wonderful to have all four for Christmas! There won't be much tinsel, but, believe me, we are happy just to be together."

Such bravery was too much for the Sister. She diverted to Mrs. Gordon and Delphine—and then to little Blaise. Both stories touched her listener who said repeatedly, "I have so much to be grateful for."

## Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth Peace to Men of Good Will

#### WHAT PRICE POVERTY

We are having a large attendance at Catechism classes here in Calipatria, California, and we have more than once lamented the fact that we have no religious articles to distribute among our children. The Mexican people have a great devotion to Our Blessed Mother and love to recite the rosary, but often they have no rosary beads. Parents are too poor to buy even the necessities of life, and however much they would like to purchase religious articles, they must forego this happiness. So you see we really do have poor people in California, though this is contrary to the opinion of some of our friends in the East. We find many people here in dire need;—with scarcely enough clothing to cover their bodies, and only enough food to keep death at arm's length.

May Our Dear Mother inspire devout Catholics in the East to send us rosaries, medals, etc., in addition to clothing of which we are badly in need.

Catechist Esther Furst.

There conversation was interrupted by the nurse who brought in two letters for Sister Angela—an interruption which gave Mrs. Van Dyke an opening to go. So with the same cheery "Merry Christmas" Blaise had sung out, Florence Van Dyke left Sister Angela to her letters.

One letter was from a former teacher; the other bore the signature of a loved Sister at the convent home. Both were lovingly sympathetic, full of regret that Sister Angela should be obliged to spend Christmas in exile. Heaven! you'd think she was in a leper colony! She had, in fact, felt that way herself at first—

"Don't pity me! For pity's sake don't pity me," she wrote to her sister in religion. And she told her about Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Van Dyke and little Blaise. "And," she concluded, "another story runneth thus—'And She brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.' Oh, I know this blessedly poor family of Bethlehem will welcome the worship of such poor people as I have told you about. Thousands of Mothers like Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Van Dyke, thousands of brave little boys like Blaise, will kneel before the crib this Christmas. And oh how warmly the Baby Christ will welcome their gifts—the frankincense of their perfect praise in resignation to His holy will; the myrrh of their bitter hardships. Not from such as these will come the gold. But gold will come from those whose store is still replete. I fancy, don't you, that from the Magi's gold, the little Infant made rich gifts to those poor shepherds who had found Him first? Or was He, being human, still too small? and did He look into His Mother's eyes and did He thus direct Her Blessed hands? Dear, let us kneel among God's poor ourselves—and let our eyes meet His and Hers—And only Heaven will reveal what gifts have come from Hands at Bethlehem!"

#### A MISSIONARY AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

At one of our schools there is a very dear Portuguese girl of fourteen. She is a good Catholic and a lovable child. At our first class in that school we had forty-five children. At the second class, a week later, we had ninety-two children, — forty-seven new pupils, all through the efforts of this one zealous girl. During the week she had talked to her companions, arousing interest in us and urging them to stay for our next instruction. Her efforts were certainly fruitful.

Catechist Cecilia Schmitt,  
Tulare, California.

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

- 1 Anton Chico, New Mexico.
- 2 Chaperito, New Mexico.
- 3 Los Banos, Calif.
- 4 Grants, New Mex.
- 5 620 W. Fifteenth Ave., Gary, Ind.
- 6 Holman, New Mex.
- 7 3868 Block Avenue, East Chicago.
- 8 Box 30, Montezuma Route, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
- 9 Lubbock, Texas.
- 10 Cerrillos, New Mex.
- 11 Catechist Blanche Richardson, Victory-Mount, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
- 12 Calipatria, California, Box 533.
- 13 Santa Paula, California, 222 8th. St.
- 14 Tulare, Calif.

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

Much good can be accomplished by the Catechists in thirty days. You can have a share in that "good" by contributing \$25.00, thereby providing for the support of one Catechist in the field for one month.

#### A LIFE OF DARKNESS

Little six year old Manuel was leaving for the State school for the blind. Manuel is a sunny little fellow; this was to be his first ride on a train and he welcomed it eagerly. He was going away to school where he was going to learn to read and write like his sisters and brothers. Manuel was happy and contented. His goodbye to his parents and to us was most cheery. For poor Manuel could not see the tears in the eyes of his mother and father. Nor did he ever dream that often his poor, sightless eyes had been the cause of tears to his beloved parents.

Manuel's parents have six other children, all with beautiful, bright, sparkling eyes. At birth Manuel's eyes were just like those of the other children, his father told us brokenly, but the woman in attendance at his birth had, by mistake, put lysol instead of silver nitrate into the baby's eyes. A doctor at his birth would have saved Manuel a life of darkness,—but how very, very few of our people can afford the service of a doctor.

Catechist Helen Srill,  
Grant, New Mexico.

We would be grateful for colored post cards, envelope linings, discarded kodak negatives, holy pictures and mounting paper. All these would be a great help to us in keeping our girls interested and busy at their Sunday afternoon meetings. They would also help us to counteract the influence of the Protestant organizations which

are offering every inducement to our girls in the hope of getting them to spend Sunday afternoons at their "Social Betterment Clubs," etc.

Catechist Helen Srill, Grant, New Mexico.

At Victory-Noll our Novena in honor of Our Blessed Lady of Victory is perpetual. Send in your name and intentions and join us in making this Novena.

#### CATECHISING IN THE OPEN

There is plenty work to be done here at our new mission in Tulare, California. There are about twenty schools in the Parish with an attendance of almost 1,000 children. So far we have been teaching the children of only eight schools. But we hope to reach them all, for the children certainly need instructions. Some of the eighth graders do not even know how to bless themselves.

Father has been able to secure for us the use of but one school building. In Waukena we are teaching in a dilapidated, abandoned house about a quarter of a mile from the school. The Catechists teach the Packwood School children out on the roadside.

Catechist Eleanor Cogan.

#### A NOVENA OF GRACES

Our beautiful Christmas Novena will be celebrated in a solemn manner in the Chapel of Our Blessed Lady of Victory, beginning Wednesday, December 16, and closing on the Eve of Christmas. Every day during this Solemn Novena the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the intentions of those friends, benefactors and subscribers, who wish their intentions included in this Novena of Grace.

All our friends, who have such great love for and devotion to the Infant Jesus and His Most Holy Mother will not hesitate to ask for some special and important favor during this Novena.

Nine Masses will also be offered at the Miraculous Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, for the intentions of this Novena.

?

"Will Santa Claus come to little girls who have no papa?" the baby tearfully asked as we rose to leave.

We were calling on a poor woman whose husband had just died, leaving his wife and three children,—five, six and seven and a half years of age—in great need. His illness had exhausted their meager saving account. Now they were turning to us for help.

We left the home in haste—without answering the baby's question. What could we say when our poor fund boasts not even a dollar and we have no promise of coming aid for these three babies and many others like them? If only we had money to supply the necessities of life for those, who are on the verge of starvation, we would not complain about the absence of toys and joys for the little ones' Christmas celebration.

Catechist Catherine Olberding,  
Santa Paula, Calif.

How about a LIFE SUBSCRIPTION to THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST? It is only \$10.00, payable in monthly installments of \$1.00.

OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TO YOU.



#### LIKE OLD MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD

With the advent of cold weather and a corresponding increase of infirmities among the poor in the different sections of the city, there is a steady drain on the clinic medical supplies at Las Vegas, N. M. It will not take long before the entire supply of medicines, salves, etc., will be exhausted. The Catechists in charge of the clinic are growing very anxious, fearing that they will be unable to continue to minister to the sick poor throughout the winter months which have scarcely begun. In addition to purchasing the needed medical supplies, the Catechists must pay rent and light for the building in which the clinic is situated.

Because of the unemployment situation the people depend more completely than in any previous year upon the Catechists to help them in their distressing circumstances.

The Blessings of God and the prayers of the sick poor will ever attend those who, in their charity, assist the Catechists in this time of need.

#### THE BABY JESUS' CRADLE

The veritable wooden manger in which the Christ-child lay was removed to Rome in the seventh century during the Mohammedan invasion of the Holy Land. There it is preserved in a strong brazen chest, from which it is brought forth on Christmas Day and placed on the Grand Altar. It is mounted upon a stand of silver inlaid with gold and gems. The shrine in which it rests is of purest rock crystal.

The word "Christmas" is taken from the old English "Christesmesse," which means Christ's Mass.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS AND FREQUENT PRAYERS ARE—

# Mary's Little Helpers

Dear Little Helpers:

Merry Christmas to you all! I hope you will all have a happy Christmas, I am sure you will, too, because by your charity, you really deserve the best kind of Christmas happiness.

Did you ever hear of a "baby hunt"? I never did before I went to New Mexico. I know of "rabbit hunts, fox hunts, and a few other kinds of hunting, but the first time I ever heard of a baby hunt, I thought it was awfully funny. Of course, after I found out what it was all about, I decided it wasn't funny at all. In fact, it is a beautiful custom, so I am going to tell you about it. To the Spanish and Mexican people, Christmas isn't merely a time to give and receive presents. Christmas to them is a time to show their love for their beloved Santo Nino, which means Holy Infant. They have many beautiful ceremonies to honor the Infant Jesus and one of them is the baby hunt. They get all kinds of pretty baby things together, such poor people can afford,—like little dresses, nightgowns, caps, everything they can find for a baby. And then, what do you suppose they do? Early Christmas morning they send all the little girls and boys out to hunt a new baby. The children go into every house to see if they can find a baby that was born at midnight,—the same hour that our Dear Lord was born. The girl or boy who finds the baby is a very happy child because he is given the privilege of taking the baby things to the mother. In addition to this, he also receives a prize for finding the baby. Last year in one of the Missions the Catechists sent the children out to hunt for a baby. Two little girls found the baby and the mother was so poor that she didn't have any clothes



at all for the baby. You can imagine how happy that poor mother was when the girls gave her the clothes for the baby. She said she felt as though the Infant Jesus Himself had sent the children to her house. Don't you think, too, that this is a beautiful custom? Wouldn't it be nice if all the people would think of doing something like that to honor Jesus,—our little new-born King?

Well, Little Helpers, I know the Infant Jesus must be pleased with you because you have been working so hard and so faithfully all year to help your poor little Mission friends. Remember, all that you have given to these poor little children,—you have really given to Our Dear Lord Himself. And so, you may be sure He Himself will send you many of His Heavenly blessings as His best Christmas gift to you.

Always your friend,

WEE WILLIE WINKLES.

Happy Christmas to you, dear Little Helpers! I am sure you have all been counting the days to Christmas, haven't you? Isn't it a beautiful thought to know that Christmas means more to us than just getting a lot of new toys, lots of candy and nuts, and in having a good time? Christmas is the time, of course,

for everyone to be happy. But we, as Catholics, and especially as Mary's little missionaries, know it means more to us than that. It is a time when we should show our love for our Dear Infant Saviour Who loved us so much that He left His beautiful Home in Heaven to come down upon the earth. And how do we show our love for Him? By doing what He wants us to do,—never grieving His Sacred Heart by committing sins, and by trying to make everybody love Him. When you visit the Infant Jesus in His crib at Christmas time, will you pray real hard, Little Helpers, for the poor little children out in the Missions, so that they, too, may all learn to know and love Him? Our Dear Jesus will listen to your prayers, and I am sure He will send many blessings to our poor Missions. Don't forget to pray for the Catechists, because they also need your prayers.

Marie Garrity's Little Flower Band of Chicago is doing wonderful work for the poor little boys and girls in the Missions. Last month she had a big party and made \$35.00 for the Holy Child Burse. Besides this she also sent a complete Hallowe'en party out to New Mexico for the boys and girls. She sent them cookies, cocoa, candy, and everything that our little boys and girls like for a Hallowe'en party. Isn't that fine? How would you like to send a real Christmas party to these little children in New Mexico who won't have any Christmas presents not even candy or nuts—unless you send them?



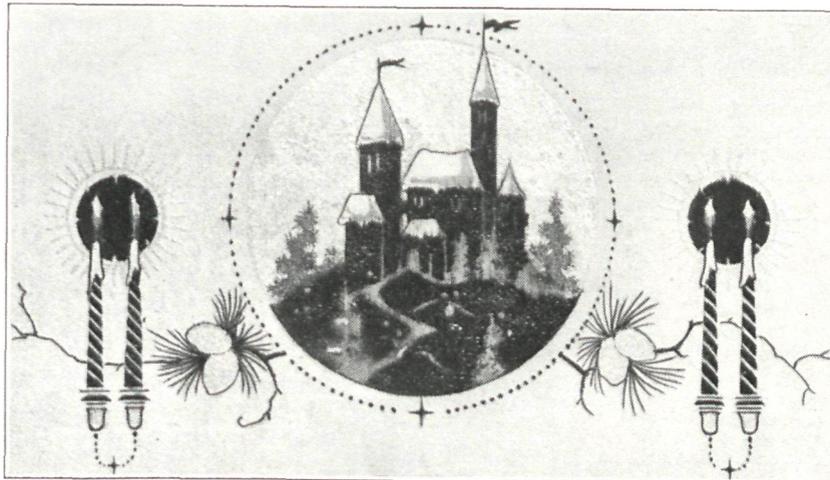
MERRY CHRISTMAS, LITTLE HELPERS!

# The Associate Catechists of Mary

Dear A. M. C. Friends:

May Our Dear Infant Jesus shower His choicest blessings upon you and all dear to you, and grant you a Christmas filled with peace and joy!

I feel sure, dear friends, that you, who have given so generously of your time and your efforts for God's dear poor, have merited the love and benediction of our dear Infant King and His Holy Mother. You have proved yourselves to be true friends of the poor, the neglected and the forsaken, and by this beautiful spirit of charity, you have fulfilled Our Dear Lord's command,—to love your neighbor as yourself. I know, too, that you have been obliged to make many little sacrifices in order to provide for the needs for our Missions. You may rest assured, however, that each little sacrifice and every little act of self-denial which you have made, has been recorded in letters of gold in the book of Eternal Life, and has given joy to the Sacred Heart of Our Loving Jesus. We consider it a happy privilege to have you as our friends, and every day we thank Our Dear Lord and His Holy Mother for sending us friends like yourselves to help us in our charitable and missionary labors. We are Missionaries whom Our Divine Lord has chosen to labor in the vast harvest fields of our destitute Home Missions. But without loyal devoted helpers, it would not be possible for us to garner this harvest of immortal souls. Now, dear friends,—you are these devoted helpers. You are our faithful co-workers who make it possible for us to save the souls of God's poor, neglected little ones in the Missions. Of course we can never repay you for what you have done and are doing to aid us in our great work. We are certain, however, that Jesus and Mary, for Whom we are laboring, love you most dearly and will infallibly reward you in infinitely better ways than we could ourselves ever hope to do. And so on this holiest of days, when everyone is making a gift to some dear one, my Christmas gift to you—is my spiritual offering to Our New-born Saviour through the hands of His Holy Mother—of the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, together with the many prayers I shall pour out from the fullness of my heart for all your intentions as



I kneel before the Crib of the Divine Babe of Bethlehem.

Sincerely,

THE CATECHIST SUPERVISOR.

Anton Chico, N. Mex.

Dear Santa Claus:

I am writing this letter to tell you what I want for crismas. I want a pair of shoes size four and a half and maybe a pair of pants size twelve years. That's all.

Your loving friend,

Jose Pino.

Dear Santa Claus:

Hello! How you are? I am alrite, thanks to our good God. I hope you are fine too. Well dear Santa after saluting you, I will let you know that I am pleased with the nice present you sent me last year. I like it very much. And for this year if you don't mind I would like a nice coat to keep me warm. Thank



Catechist Playing Santa

you, Santa Claus, very much for your good complements.

Love to you,

Isabel Esquibil.

The Stella Maris Club of Chicago held a very successful "blanket" shower at the home of Miss Florence Dietz. As a result, our Missions received twenty-five beautiful blankets for distribution among our poor.

The Charitina Club, Chicago, of which Miss Katharine Hennigan is the promoter, sponsored a card party at which they made \$61.00. These zealous members have been helping the Catechists many years, and in addition to supplying clothing, etc., for the Missions, they are also supporting our Jesus, Mary and Joseph Burse. This Club is named in honor of Sister Mary Charitina—Miss Hennigan's sister, who died three years ago after a long illness. She was a very holy Religious, and offered all her sufferings and prayers for the Catechists and their dead poor.

In one of the Catechism classes, Catechist was trying to impress upon the children the fact that they should always be grateful to Our Dear Lord for what they receive. One little boy with eyes shining, whispered to Catechist: "Catechist, I have something to be thankful for, but you would think it funny if I told you." Catechist assured him that no matter how small it was, his gratitude was very pleasing to Our Dear Lord. Then he said: "Well, you see, I always thank Our Lord for that pretty flower He planted in our back yard." The pretty flower he referred to was nothing more than a weed with a tiny blossom.

Good Mrs. Graham, Sr. and Jr., Mrs. Scheuer and Mrs. Godley sponsored a successful party for the Sacred Heart Club, which resulted in the splendid sum of \$75.00 for the Sacred Heart Burse.

Mrs. J. Klein, promoter of St. Anthony's Club, Chicago, planned a very successful party and raffle and realized \$60.50.

St. Luke's Club, Chicago, of which Mrs. Maxwell is the promoter, is working for St. Paschal's Burse. They recently added \$132.00.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

LA PASTORELA—  
(Continued from page 3)

Lucifer appears, clothed in black, and as a traveler, and asks for shelter. The shepherds refuse it and the hermit demands of the stranger his name. Lucifer replies by giving an account of his Fall in veiled language and declares he will pursue the King and His followers to death. Michael, the Archangel, returns as the shepherds are running off in great fear. After a fiery dialogue he drives Lucifer out before him.

The next scene shows the shepherds preparing for supper. Bartolo, one of the shepherds, sends the lad Cucharon off to see if the flocks are safe. Lucifer tries to find out from the boy what he can about the Messiah. Failing to get the desired information, he is about to consume him in flames, when the lad calls on God for aid, and Lucifer retires discomfited. Rushing back to camp, Cucharon declares he has seen the Devil. The Devil follows slowly. Heavenly music is heard, and a bright light announces the approach of Michael. The angel announces that he is to protect the shepherd and, after a long argument, subdues Lucifer who is dismissed to the dismal abode of everlasting punishment. The shepherds then set out for the manger. Each one sings an appropriate verse as he approaches, recites a prayer and offers a gift to the Infant Jesus. He then retires calling the next shepherd by name. Bato, it seems, is something of a simpleton, and the others are somewhat ashamed of his foolish utterances. His tender, loving words to the Infant are, nevertheless, quite captivating. He draws from his pocket a perinola,—a kind of four-faced dice,—and plays with it before the Infant Jesus. The dice has four letters on it, L, P, S, and T. As he spins it and lets the dice fall he states the significance of each letter. "L," he says, "means leave me at Thy feet." He then begs the Infant to receive him as His slave. When the letter "P" turns up he begs the Little Saviour to "Pluck, Lord, the scales from sinners' eyes." His prayer at the sight of "S" is: "Save, Lord, our souls from error's bond." Lastly he prays: "Take all, and all I ask is Thy care. Grant it. Show the strength of Thy great power that all may praise Thy Holy Name; and error, war and schism vanish from the earth so men may rise from earth to heaven as freely

The Holy Father in his "Crusade of Charity and Relief," tells us that since we are all children of one and the same Father,—all members of one and the same family, God's family,—we should be participants of the sorrows and adversities which fall to the lot of the poor and unemployed.

Every day our Catechists are besieged by hundreds of the suffering poor. Many of these that come are children who are not only hungry, sick and in rags, but, moreover, know nothing about God or the things of God. Only Our Merciful Lord and His Holy Mother know how to provide for the needs of these suffering, helpless little ones. They would have you sharers in the work of Divine Charity by providing the Catechists with food, medicine, and clothing to save the helpless poor in this hour of their greatest need.

as the wild birds soar." He ends by giving the Infant the perinola and begs Him to remember him.

Other interesting characters are introduced, such as a quarrelsome woman, a cook, and a lazy shepherd. Bartola is the lazy shepherd and he shows great reluctance about going to see "the Glory of God" at the manger. He begs the shepherds to bring "the Glory of God" to him so that he may not be obliged to stir from his blanket. After fruitless attempts to persuade him to accompany them, they carry him by force in his blanket to the crib. Bato brings the performance to an end by invoking a blessing on the whole company. The shepherds now depart singing the following "despedido" (farewell):

"Tis time to depart,  
Dear Child of my heart,  
Close to Mary nestling,  
Cast on me Thy Blessing.  
Adios, Adios, Adios,  
Little Jesus, Adios."

Dear Father Sigstein:

During these trying times it is a relief to find such a safe and sound, as well as practical, investment as your ANNUITY PLAN. I shall recommend it to my friends.

Thanking you and wishing you all a Merry Christmas, I remain,  
Sincerely yours, E. J. P.

AN EASY WAY TO HELP GOD'S POOR

If it is a great thing to be a Missionary Catechist and to spend one's life in performing the Seven Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, then it is also a great thing to assist the Catechists by enabling them to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to nurse the needy sick, to mother God's poor. This great thing you may easily do by sending your dimes to ST. JOSEPH'S POOR FUND FAMILY.

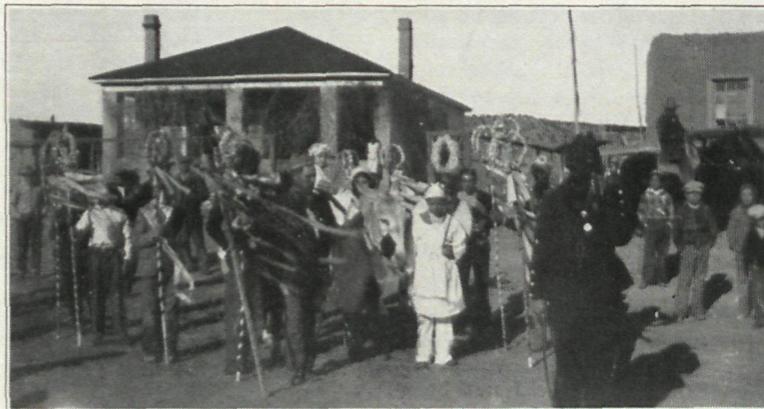
Give to Jesus Christ in the person of His suffering little ones a very small portion of what God has given you and your reward will be very great in Heaven.

POOR LITTLE DIMER!

Santa Claus is coming  
O'er the frozen snow;  
But to look at Little Dimer  
You wouldn't think 'twas so.

His little heart is heavy  
For he fears he'll have to stay,  
Hanging on the ladder's rung  
On that blessed Christmas Day.

Send your dime and help Little Dimer reach the top.



"Los Pastores" Seeking the King.

THE CATECHIST'S CHRISTMAS

Like all missionaries who are far from home and loved ones, the Catechists look forward to Christmas remembrances from those dear to them. Have you, for your very own, a Catechist whose heart you will gladden this yuletide by a word of cheer or some token of interest and affection? If not, adopt a Catechist, or contribute according to your means toward the support of your favorite Burse. In this way you will have a Catechist on your Christmas list and she will keep you in her prayers and share with you her labors and sacrifices, not only on Christmas Day, but every day of the long year.

Remember, too, that your gift to the Catechists and their poor is a gift to the Christ Child and His Holy Mother whom alone they serve.

Help us complete:  
The Infant Jesus Burse. \$2,208.98.

IN MEMORIAM

Unite with us in praying for our departed friends: Mr. Joseph McNamara, Mr. Heaney and Mr. Clements.

GOD BLESS YOU WITH A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

May we ask you, as a special favor, to send us the names and addresses of some of your friends who might possibly assist our Catechists in their missionary labors among the poor children of our country? We will gladly send them copies of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST.

Name .....

Address .....

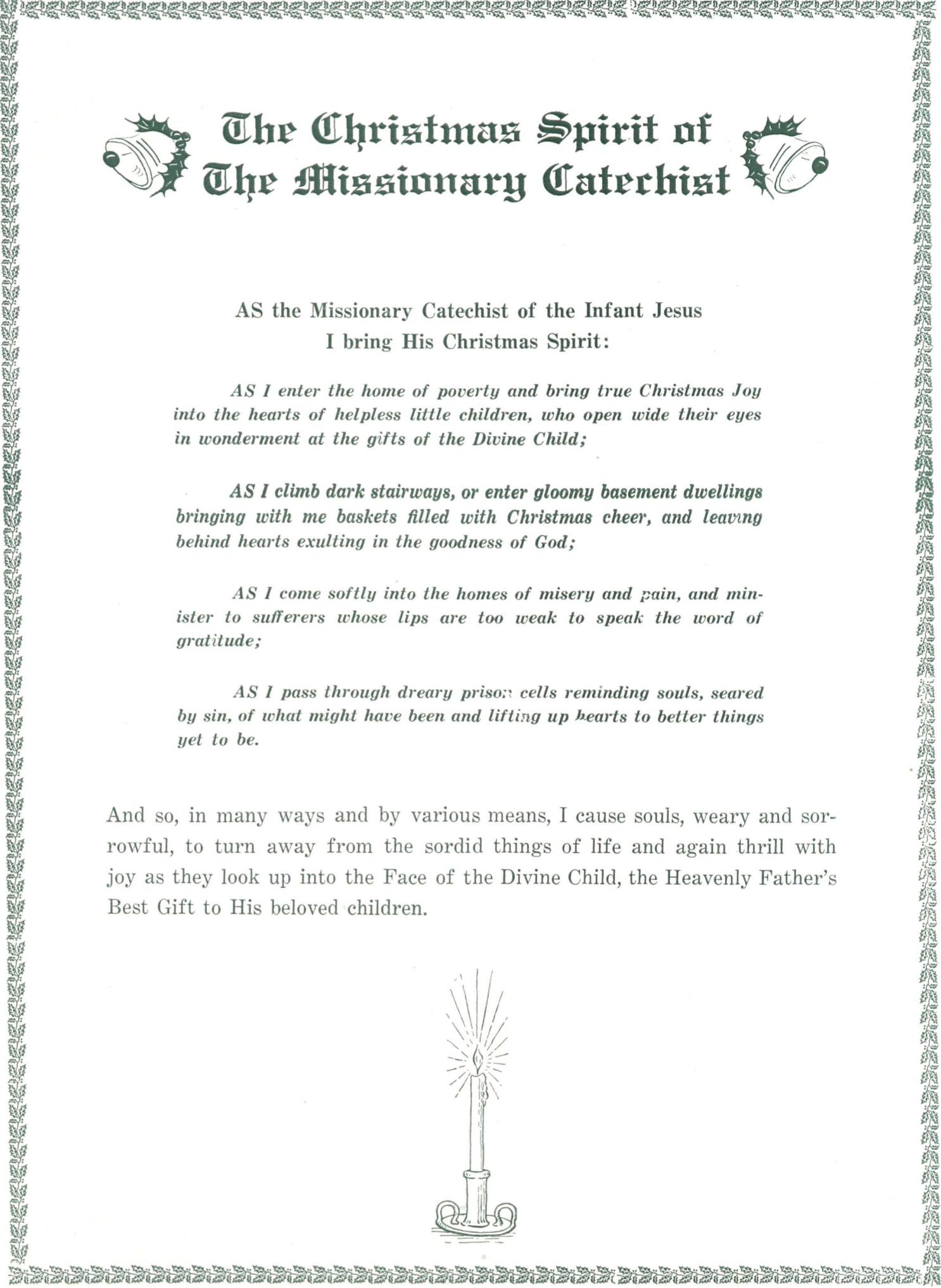
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 **The Christmas Spirit of**   
**The Missionary Catechist**

AS the Missionary Catechist of the Infant Jesus  
I bring His Christmas Spirit:

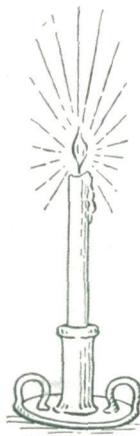
*AS I enter the home of poverty and bring true Christmas Joy  
into the hearts of helpless little children, who open wide their eyes  
in wonderment at the gifts of the Divine Child;*

*AS I climb dark stairways, or enter gloomy basement dwellings  
bringing with me baskets filled with Christmas cheer, and leaving  
behind hearts exulting in the goodness of God;*

*AS I come softly into the homes of misery and pain, and min-  
ister to sufferers whose lips are too weak to speak the word of  
gratitude;*

*AS I pass through dreary prison cells reminding souls, seared  
by sin, of what might have been and lifting up hearts to better things  
yet to be.*

And so, in many ways and by various means, I cause souls, weary and sor-  
rowful, to turn away from the sordid things of life and again thrill with  
joy as they look up into the Face of the Divine Child, the Heavenly Father's  
Best Gift to His beloved children.



# The Story, Ancient Yet Ever New



*And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled.*

*And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city.*

*And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and family of David,*

*To be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with Child.*

*And it came to pass, that when they were there, Her days were accomplished, that She should be delivered.*

*And She brought forth Her First-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

*And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock.*

*And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear.*

*And the angel said to them: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people.*

*"For: This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David.*

*"And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying:*

*"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will."*

*And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this Word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us."*

*And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger.*

*And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this Child.*

*And all that heard, wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds.*

*But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.*

*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*

—St. Luke, Chap. 2, Vs., 1, 3-20.

