

# THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

"A Child is born to us,  
And a Son is given to us,--"

Isaias, ix, 6

December, 1932



This is an actual photograph of the beautiful wax Infant which has been used for centuries at Bethlehem during the midnight Christmas solemnity.

## A Christmas Message



During this Holy Christmas Season we again, with renewed fervor, contemplate the excessive love and marvelous condescension of God. He, the Almighty, stoops to assume our poor, weak, human nature and to dwell upon earth because "it is His delight to be with the children of men."

The Divine Yearning of God to be united with His creatures is a continual spur to the zeal of His missionaries throughout the world. They spend their lives bringing God to men and men to God. You who have, even at the cost of great sacrifices, aided us in our missionary work among the neglected poor of our own Country, have understood the plea of the Christ Child's extended Arms. You have done your best to help fill Them with the immortal souls for which He left His Heavenly Home and willed to be born and suffer among us. You have, then, merited the Infant Savior's special love and blessing. May His most gracious Smile welcome you to the Crib this Holy Night, and may He, through the hands of His Most Holy Mother, bless you abundantly with all good things. May He increase your joys, lighten your cares and draw you closer to His Loving, Sacred Heart! This is our sincere wish and fervent prayer for you, dear friends and benefactors, on Christmas and throughout the coming year.

*Father Sigstein*  
*and*  
*The Missionary Catechists*

# The Missionary Catechist

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Number 1



## Venite Adoremus



**D**OWN the centuries rings the sublime message of peace and joy and salvation which the Angels brought to earth the Night Christ was born. That same message comes this Christmastide to a world careworn, sorrow-burdened and despairing. Will the joyful spirit of Bethlehem be ruthlessly barred from the firesides where the grim spectre of Want presides? It need not be so if we understand the meaning of that joy. The Christ-Child is wonderfully at home in suffering and poverty,—poverty like that of Bethlehem. Our needs, our trials and tribulations invite Him. They should even be a source of spiritual joy to us when we reflect that “this day is born to us a Savior” who “being rich in all things became poor for our sakes.”

Ages ago, Isaiah, by the light of prophetic vision and in an ecstasy of wonderment and adoration, cried out: “He HIMSELF will come and will save us.” The good God would not entrust our Redemption to another. He would Himself be born on earth so that men might look upon His Face and read therein the astounding lesson of His surpassing love for them. And so it was. When the prophecies were fulfilled; when the fulness of time had come, the period of weary waiting was at an end and the first Christmas Day dawned. The Incarnate Son of God, born of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, lay, a trembling, weeping Infant, on the straw in a stable at Bethlehem. He came into a world wallowing in the mire of sin and greed and ambition. He came into His own world but it neither received Him nor loved Him, for it knew Him not. But the Angels, glowing with the happiness of Heaven, broke forth into that undying hymn of “Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth of men of good will.”



Peace, blessed peace! Is it for us whose hearts are, this Christmas more than ever before, torn with anguish and anxiety; whose bodies suffer want and whose souls are steeped in dejection and in melancholy? Is peace for us who have struggled through years of grief but to stand upon the brink of a dark and well-nigh hopeless future? Yes, it is even for such as we are. Peace, the harbinger of interior joy, is the celestial fruit of humble and loving submission to the most Holy Will of God.

Let us arise and, like the shepherds of old, go in haste to kneel at the feet of The Child and His Mother. We may be despondent, despairing, bitter or rebellious. The sight of our God, Who for love of us lies cradled in a manger, poor, suffering and unwelcomed, will change our hearts. If it does not move us to lovingly kiss the Hand of Our Heavenly Father which proffers crosses when He deems them necessary for His children; it will at least inspire us to beg for patience and courage with which to support the trials of life.

Jesus is born a Savior to each one of us. He is come to be the Emmanuel, the “God with us” in our journey through life. From the cradle to the grave, in joy and in sorrow, He is with us. And He is ever to us a Savior, yet never more a Savior than when we are crushed beneath the weight of our sins and sufferings. It was our need of Him that drew Him down from the high Heavens. It is our need of Him,—our manifold miseries,—that draw Him to each one of us now. He comes to hearts as He came to homes in Bethlehem, seeking shelter and a place in which to be born. Doors were slammed in the faces of Joseph and Mary,—in the face of the still unborn Messias. Will our hearts also be closed against Him Who comes to us a Savior?

Let us, then, not abandon ourselves to hopeless lamentations during this blessed season of peace and joy. Rather, let us bow down before the Crib humbly confessing our sins and casting our cares before our new born King. He has come down from Heaven to take our burden of sin and sorrow upon Himself. He will give us His most precious gift, the gift of peace,—if we ask Him for it; and “He will save us.”



FIRST ADORERS AT THE CRIB



*“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.”*



# Bethlehem's Poverty Reproduced



Catechist Margaret Campbell

**I**N a little white house on the South Plains of Texas there was eager planning, happy anticipation and earnest prayer. Christmas was drawing near. Just two more weeks!

There were packages from friends back home bringing an assortment of clothing, Christmas stockings and candy. As each package was hurriedly opened and every article gratefully appraised, a score of names were suggested of those to whom it might be given. To many of our poor children, Christmas would, we hoped, bring much Spiritual joy and a little temporal happiness. From these same children who crowded around us for Catechism in tents, shacks, or stables, we acquired a deeper knowledge of the Christ Child's lesson. When they retold the Christmas story, they dwelt fondly upon the thought, "and the Baby God was very poor."

For the first time that little Mission Church would have a real Crib, and there would be midnight Mass. A Mexican refugee Padre would be there by arrangement of the Missionary whose "Parish of twelve counties" included our Mission Center. It was up to us to prepare the Crib. Several boys with hammers and saws but with no knowledge of carpentry, offered their services. We found some boards, blocks and sticks. With these we managed to construct something that vaguely resembled the illustration of a Crib in the Church Goods Catalog. From his mission in the canyon the Padre brought cedar trees. Christmas trees cost a small fortune which we did not possess. Covering one side Altar with the cedars, we made a very pretty background for our Crib. Light was the next problem. The chapel light was furnished by a lamp in the sanctuary and lanterns in the nave. Vigil candles and our flash light served to light the Crib. This humble Crib, though far from being a masterpiece of art, was for our poor Mexicans, for us and for all who visited the Chapel, a realistic representation of Bethlehem.

Every evening by the light of our kerosene lamp we sorted and wrapped toys and clothes, popped corn and filled stockings. Time flew but our work also progressed rapidly for we were eager to bring some happiness to the least of God's little ones.

On the afternoon of December 24th, our poor children enjoyed their first Christmas party. We conducted it in an

old dance hall in "Mexico town." I cannot attempt to describe the happiness and gratitude of the children and their parents.

After the party the children who had made their First Holy Communion went to Chapel and prepared for Confession. They were very happy to receive Our Divine Lord into their hearts at Midnight Mass.

That same afternoon we visited the widows, the sick and the most abandoned, distributing among them baskets of food prepared by our few, but good, American families. Then, before our little Ford was "parked" for the night, we made a hurried trip to the post office hoping to find more packages with things needed for the children out on the ranches.

After supper we tried to give our little home a festive touch. We decorated a tiny tree and surrounded it with trimmings and gifts from dear ones, far

not too long for them to devoutly prepare for the Sacraments of which they were so long deprived. They visited the Crib and in long, quiet contemplation adored our Infant King. Attired in rough garments and sheepskin coats they were picturesque reminders of the first privileged adorers at Bethlehem.

At 11:30 our Mexican Choir entered singing Silent Night. For fifteen minutes their singing of hymns inspired the gathering worshippers with deepest love for the Incarnate God. At twelve o'clock the Chapel was more than filled. Its capacity seemed to increase. It then held at least 500 persons. The scorned Mexican knelt side by side with the honored American Catholic, the Protestant and the unbeliever.

According to Spanish custom there was "veneration of the Infant" after Mass. When Father took the Infant from the Crib to the Communion Rail, the Choir began to sing "Vamos todos a Belen" (Let us go to Bethlehem.) The Mexican men, women and children went up the aisle on their knees singing the chorus. Many who were not of Spanish or Mexican descent and who had never before witnessed this devout practice, spontaneously joined the kneeling, moving mass.

Concord, N. H.

Dear Catechists:

I am sending you a small sum of money for your work among the poor children of your missions. It is not much but it may help some. I put this money away a little each week since last January so that I would have something to send the Catechists for their mission children this Christmas.

I wish you every good wish and God's Blessing for Christmas and a happy New Year.

ELIZABETH D.

## "MAKING ROOM" FOR JESUS

No doubt our dear Lord will love with a special love and bless with choicest blessings those who make a fitting preparation for His coming as the sweet Infant of Bethlehem. How can we better prepare for His coming than by making the Christmas Novena in His honor?

Our Solemn Christmas Novena begins December 16. Send your name and petitions so that they may be included in this Novena.



THE CHRISTMAS TREASURE BASKET

away as man marks distance but closely united with us in prayer and in spirit on this Holy Night. Thanks to these dear ones and our thoughtful benefactors, there were Christmas "goodies" for us even though we had not had time to plan for ourselves.

As twilight deepened, a bright Southern moon rose to flood the plains with silver light. The rancheros began to arrive for confession. They came great distances, some fifty or sixty miles. The four or five hours before midnight were

*"Show us, O Lord, Thy Mercy, and grant us Thy Salvation."*

## Something to Tell You



Dear Friends of the Infant Jesus:

I have something to tell you. And, since I cannot meet each one of you personally, much as I would like to, I will speak to you through this new column of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST.

Like the great missionary Apostle, St. Paul, who always had something interesting about "his Missions" in the letters he wrote to his friends, we likewise desire to write something of interest to you,—the very dear friends and faithful supporters of our devoted Missionary Catechists of Our Blessed Lady of Victory.

I want to tell you first of all how deeply grateful we are for your unflinching interest in our missionary and charitable labors among the most neglected and suffering of God's poor in the needy missions of our country. Without your co-operation, it would not have been possible, humanly speaking, for our Catechists to have saved the souls and bodies of so many thousands of these "least, of the little ones of Christ." I wish I could tell you in words how much your co-operation and encouragement has meant to our Catechists during all these years. We feel that we have not been the only ones to enjoy these consolations. You, yourselves, dear friends, have been sharers in this "joy of the Lord," for surely you must have felt that the fervent prayers you have offered, the unstinting sacrifices you have made and the financial help you have given us, have made it possible for our devoted Catechists to accomplish so much during the short period of our existence for God's glory, Mary's honor, and the salvation of immortal souls.

During the remarkably short period of twelve years since the Society of Missionary Catechists was Providentially founded, you have made it possible for its zealous members to go out and save the abandoned poor, "lying like sheep without a shepherd," in our vast, destitute home-mission fields.

Since ours is the only Religious Community laboring in our home-mission fields without any salary or remuneration, its members could not hope to bring the glad tidings of the Gospel message of God's love to the poor without your consistent support. You have indeed grasped the significance of Christ's coming into the world to preach the Gospel to the poor: to feed the hungry; to clothe the naked, and to bring the knowledge and love of God to His poor. You realize that those with financial means are always able to secure for their children the priceless heritage of a Christian education which, unfortunately, is so often denied to the poor. As it so happens, in many Catholic countries, the people of means are the only ones who know their religion, while the poor as a class are ignorant because they have not the means to pay for a Religious Education. Is it not just too bad that this should be so, and that money should be the great factor determining the Christian education of children, so important for the salvation of those souls, to whom Jesus came to preach the Gospel and for whom He suffered, bled and died? Now, it is precisely to save this poor, underprivileged class of Catholics, who through no fault of their own, are deprived of the ordinary means of Religious Instruction, that the Catechists con-



secrate their lives and their labors. It is among these forgotten and forsaken poor that the Catechists have been Divinely called to labor. It is for the salvation of these poor of Christ that the Catechists are spending themselves in the destitute missions and settlements of our country.

And so, dear friends, from the bottom of my heart, and in the name of all our devoted Catechists, I thank each and every one of you for your noble generosity which makes this all-important work of saving souls possible for our Catechists. On this beautiful feast of Christmas, I shall pray most fervently for you and ask Our Dear Infant King to richly reward you, and to grant you, through His Most Holy Mother, a most happy and blessed Christmas.

### Father Sigstein

East Chicago, Ind.

Dear Santa Claus:

I do everything my mother tells me to. I am good in school. I like the Catechists. I would like shoes and pants. I hope you like me, Santa. Goodby.

Adolph.

Grants, N. M.

Dear Santa Claus:

I have been a good girl all year. We moved here in October. My father died in August. I have a sister, Fedelina 8, and four brothers, Roenas 14, Benny 8, Thomas 6, and Bobby 4 years. Bring us what you think is right for orphans. Please leave something for the other poor children. With love,

Eliosa.

San Antonio, N. M.

Dear Santa:

Will you please give me a doll? I will pray my morning and night prayers every day. And don't forget my little sisters and my Catechist. A kiss for you, Santa.

Visentita.

### The Missionary Catechist Huntington, Indiana

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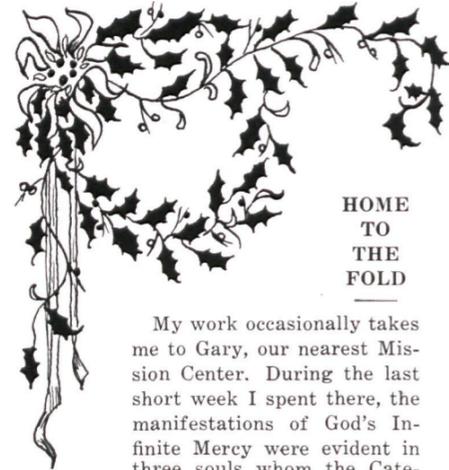
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Editor

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VICTORY-NOLL IN WINTER

"Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me; and teach me Thy paths."

HOME  
TO  
THE  
FOLD

My work occasionally takes me to Gary, our nearest Mission Center. During the last short week I spent there, the manifestations of God's Infinite Mercy were evident in three souls whom the Catechists were privileged to help.

First of all there was poor Manuel Cortez. While making their house to house visits the Catechists found him. He was only a wayfarer without friend or acquaintance. And what a deplorable story was his! He had been without food for days and, when nearly famished, had found something to eat. So ravenously did he eat it while in that weakened condition that shortly afterward he began spitting blood. Dull, listless and pale, he lay on a filthy pallet. When the Catechists saw him they felt that he had only a few days to live. Father was summoned and Manuel was prepared for death. Since there was no one to care for him, he was taken to a hospital. The next day, Father told us that he had gone to his eternal reward. Had not Jesus and Mary led the Catechists to him, he would have undoubtedly died, starved in soul as well as in body.

Then there was dear Martha out at the sanitarium at Crown Point; I must tell you about her. She was made Christ's child in baptism but had never received Holy Communion; she had even forgotten how to pray. After the Catechists' visit to her, she began to try to recall a little Polish prayer that she used to say to her Guardian Angel. Our dear Lord so loved Martha that he mercifully gave her bodily illness that He might draw to Himself her needy soul. After hearing Catechist tell of the love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and how longingly He awaited His first visit to her, she sighed regretfully but with a holy anticipation for the future and said, "Oh, just think of all that I have missed!"

Lastly, there was seventeen year old Carlos. He had caused his mother many a heart ache and no doubt it was her prayer that had merited for him the grace of conversion. One day he came to the Catechists and asked for instruction. He had determined to amend his ways and to become a good Catholic. Young men who, like Carlos, wander far seeking opportunity, find that today the world is most merciless to them. Fathers of families, women and children are pitied and often helped, but the young unmarried man seldom receives sympathy when he is "down and out". May many, like Carlos, turn to the Heart of Jesus who alone sees and understands.

Catechist Laura Franken.

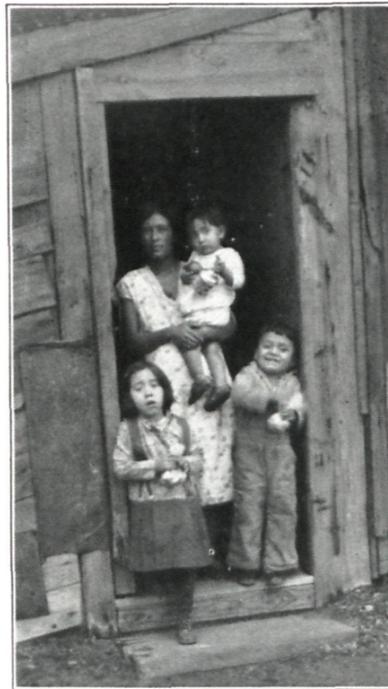
## LUCAS FINDS HIS TREASURE

Why Lucas came to Catechism class in the first place and why he continued to come were mysteries to me. He wrecked my discipline, tormented the other children, laughed and scoffed at everything I taught and seemed to be the very incarnation of mischief. Lucas was thirteen but small for his age. He had spent the greater part of his life on the street and had become notorious even among the street gamins for his daredeviltry. His was the homeliest face I ever saw on a child, but, nevertheless, he possessed a peculiar charm. Whether it was his homeliness or his bold, domineering air, or simply his meanness that attracted all, I could not tell. Perhaps it was a hidden bit of nobility. Lucas was evidently undernourished and often in need of medical attention. His scanty attire was a guarantee that he was usually cold. His mode of life told clearly that hunger was his daily portion. But would he take clothing or food or any personal attention? Indeed not.

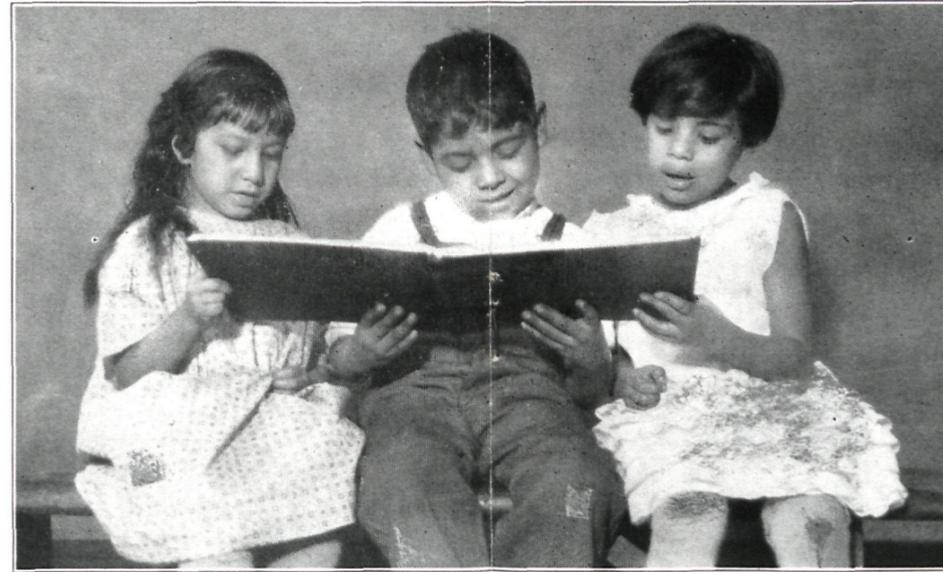
"Them people need it worse than me," he would say, and add haughtily: "I takes care of myself."

He seemed to feel that he lived only to battle with adversities, and he was determined to enjoy the fray. He even defied the elements. Shivering with the cold he would chuck his hands into his pockets, shut his teeth and grin in the face of a snow storm as he would set out in quest of mischief, or perchance a meal.

But I must go on with my story. I had often been advised to dismiss Lucas for the sake of the other children in the class, but I dis-



Box Car tenants watch the Catechists leave after making a "Christmas Visit."



"GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO"

# A Little Child Shall Lead Them

liked to do this. Certainly I would find something that would interest him and draw his thoughts away from evil. Quite unexpectedly, one day, my difficulty was solved. It came about in this way:—Catechist and I were down town shopping. In front of a large drygoods store we paused to decide about some purchases. Suddenly I spied Lucas. But was it Lucas? Yes, it was he,—Lucas minus mischief. His hands were jammed into his pockets as usual, but he was walking along as one lost in mournful thoughts. On his homely face was a look of loneliness, of wistful yearning. I was seeing, unmasked, the lad who had "put on a bold front" for so long that he had won the reputation of being "hard boiled". I was seeing him as the lonely, cheated lad he was, whose bravado was a buckler against the world with which necessity had forced him to cope. I was glad, now, that in spite of his meanness, I had been patient and kind.

"Let's watch," I whispered to my Catechist companion. Lucas came nearer apparently unconscious of the shoves and bumps he received from the hurrying pedestrians.

Above the noise of the busy street, the yelp of a dog reached my ear. I turned in time to see a big, fat man kick a small, white and yellow dog and hurl it against the building. Everyone else seemed too busy to pause and take notice. The fat man, having removed the obstacle from his path, walked away. The little dog picked himself up and stood shivering against the store not far from us. He was a sight to inspire pity. His ragged coat was dirty and showed blood

marks here and there. His face must have been crushed once upon a time for it was twisted and out of proportion. His tail, partly skinned, curled, coward-like, between his hind legs. One redeeming feature he had,—his eyes. In them you could see that, notwithstanding his present condition, this dog had ancestors who were "somebodies". But on the whole, a better picture of misery it would be difficult to find,—unless it be—there he was now, Lucas! Lucas had spied the cur. For a moment he looked down at him and the dog stared back. Then like a flash he was down on both knees pressing the forlorn animal to his breast. And the look on his face! If he had found the pot of gold at the rainbow's end his joy could not have been greater. Love is indeed the greatest beautifier, for that homely face was transformed. Big tears rolled down the blue cheeks and the twitching lips uttered words of endearment that I had been positive Lucas never knew existed. What a touching scene! Two kindred hearts had met and had found in each other the fulfilment of a mutual desire and the satisfaction of a common need.

"Your dog, kid?" A big, Irish policeman stood swinging his club right over Lucas' head.

"No—yes—sure, Mister."

"Take him out of the way, then. You're getting stepped on."

Lucas had been stepped on but he didn't care. Gathering the still-shivering pup in his arms, he smiled broadly at the kind policeman and hurried away through the crowd.

Two days later, Lucas rapped timidly on the front door of our Center and asked to see me. It cost him much to speak but he came right to the point.

"Catechist, I ain't a goin' to make trouble in Catechism class anymore. I got a dog now!"

What having a dog had to do with behaving in class, I am sure I could not even imagine; but I do not profess to understand that mysterious affinity which exists between a dog and a boy. Having witnessed the manner in which he "got a dog", I took Lucas at his word. Nor have I had occasion to regret it.—C. R. T.

## LAMBS OF "THE GOOD SHEPHERD"

A group of little ones came to our Center to inquire about that mysterious person known as "Santa Claus". Could boys and girls too small to go to Catechism class expect Santa to know about and remember them?

Suddenly a five year old boy noticed a picture of The Good Shepherd hanging on the wall and he exclaimed: "Look, The Good Shepherd! How pretty!"

Too small to attend classes regularly they may be, but nevertheless, not too small to understand the story of "El Buen Pastor", a story most dear to the hearts of these children who are themselves the small sons and daughters of poor and lowly, but simple and devout shepherd folk. Catechist Helen Sroll, Grants, New Mexico.



Petra receives her first lesson about the infant Jesus.

THEIR  
FIRST  
VISITS

Among our fondest treasured memories of childhood are those of our first visits to the Crib of Our Infant Lord. Even before we were able to lisp the name of Jesus, most of us were brought by loving parents to the parish Church where, touchingly depicted, was the scene of that First Christmas Night at Bethlehem. You and I, who have from our infancy been the recipients of so many spiritual privileges and blessings would better appreciate them if we understood what it means to be deprived of them.

Every year because of working in new fields or because of extending old ones, the Catechists witness the pathetically beautiful ceremony of children making first visits to the Lowly Crib of Our Divine Infant Lord. Could you be with us at such a time you would be amply rewarded for whatever sacrifices you make in order to help the Catechists bring a taste of spiritual joy and Christmas cheer into the lives of these poor little ones so dear to the Heart of Jesus.

I shall never forget our "first Christmas" at Saticoy. The crib was crude but it was a treasure to the children. Christmas morning they came from far and near, through torrents of cold rain. At the door of the Chapel they hesitated, awed by the soft lights and the gleam of a star above the humble stable. Finally, they begged me to tell the Christmas Story again. And so, while they stood in wide-eyed wonder, I pointed out the various persons and objects, reviewing briefly the Beautiful Story. There was really not much need for words. For the first time these poor children were seeing the representation of The Birth of Our Lord. To them, however, it was not just a representation. They were actually present at Bethlehem. Their reverential attitude, the love-light in their eyes, the smile of pure joy on their faces, clearly told that. Forgotten was the rain and the cold outside; forgotten were their dreary homes and even their kind fathers and mothers whose lives were so absorbed in the almost hopeless struggle for existence that they had very little time for instructing their children in the truths of Faith.

After the holy Sacrifice of the Mass we had a Christmas party for the children. Santa Claus came bringing each child a stocking. There was not much in the stockings,—at most of our missions we are, unfortunately, obliged to be "stingy",—but the children were happy and pleased beyond description. I shall never forget Francisca. All she had to say was: "It's just too pretty; it's just TOO pretty!" Catechist Julia Murphy.

"Come, O Lord, and do not tarry."

"Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Power and come."

# Mary's Little Helpers

Dear Little Helpers:

Merry, merry Christmas to you! I know each and every Little Helper will have a real, happy Christmas.

I hope you have all been busy getting little Christmas gifts ready for the Mission children. If you only knew how happy your little gifts make the children, you would be more than willing to sacrifice some of your own toys for them.

You should have been with me when I went to a Christmas party for the Mission children. I felt so badly for the poor boys and girls, and also for the Catechists, that I almost cried. You know I've often told you that the Catechists have to get all the toys, and candy and things from their friends before



St. Mary's School,  
Lafayette, Ind.

Dear Catechists:

Sister received your good letter and read it to us and we are certainly very happy to be able to help you in your excellent work for God's poor.

We are sending you a mite, it is true. We only wish we could add a few zeroes to our \$2.10, but you have the assurance of our prayers and good wishes. We are the Fifth and Sixth grades of St. Mary's School. We save this money by ab-



never saw people work so hard as those Catechists did trying to get those boxes open in a hurry, and then guess what,—there wasn't a toy or a piece of candy in any of the boxes. They were all filled with clothing, so the Catechists tried to find something for at least some of the children. Some got sweaters, stockings, handkerchiefs and different things, but I'll bet that although they needed the clothes they would have been awfully glad to get a toy and a stocking filled with candy. Why it doesn't seem possible that there are little girls who have never owned a doll-baby and boys who don't even own a pocket-knife right here in our country, and yet I have seen lots of them. So you see you can make somebody awfully happy on Christmas if you want to. And, don't forget to pray for these poor children on Christmas. They need your prayers, too.

Your little pal,

WEE WILLIE WINKLES.

they can give them to the children. Well, the Christmas that I was at Las Vegas, they didn't get very many Christmas boxes, so they didn't have many toys or candy. You should have seen them watch for the mail man every day, hoping the things would come! They had a party for the children in each one of their little out-missions and used up the toys and candy they did have, hoping that they would get more. Then, on the day before Christmas they had their last party, which was the biggest, for all of the children right in Las Vegas, and they had practically nothing for them. Imagine a Christmas party without any toys or candy! That was awful. They prayed hard, and just before the children came, three great big boxes came. I



staining from candy, movie shows and in many other ways.

Wishing you all kinds of success, we remain,

ST. MARY'S MISSIONARIES.

Our Dear Lord must be very pleased with the sacrifices these little missionaries are making to help our poor Missions, and I hope that many more school children will follow their noble example.

## ONLY A PENNY!

A penny is only a penny,  
But think of all it can do;  
If you save until you have many  
You'll have nickels, dimes and dollars,  
too.

A penny is only a penny!  
Maybe it doesn't mean much to you,  
But if you don't send us any  
Then there's nothing that we can do.

So get busy and save every penny,  
Even if it means sacrifice to you;  
And save all you can till you have plenty  
And we will be grateful to you.

*"Stir up, O Lord, Thy might, and come to save us."*

# The Associate Catechists of Mary

Dear Associate Catechists of Mary:

May the Christ Child bless you and all of your loved ones with the peace and happiness which only He can give!

To each and every one of you I wish a most happy and blessed Christmas. As I kneel before our dear Infant King on Christmas Day, I shall ask Him to fill your hearts with a tender love for Him, and to reward you for all of the sacrifices you have made in order to serve Him so faithfully in the person of His dear poor. You, like the kings, are bringing to Him costly gifts,—the gifts of real love and sacrifice. You have all felt the effects of the trying conditions during the past year. And, yet, you have not let the poor suffer. You have worked harder than ever before. You have made greater efforts. You have denied yourselves in many things, so that Christ's poor could be taken care of. This, dear friends, is real Christ-like Spirit—The Spirit of the Divine Babe of Bethlehem. And oh, how happy you should be, as you kneel before our dear Infant Saviour and say to Him: "I have done my best, dear Lord. I have not failed your poor. What you have generously given me, I have, for love of You, shared with the poor so dear to Your Heart!"

That you may have a very happy Christmas, dear Associate Catechists of Mary, is the fervent prayer of

THE CATECHIST SUPERVISOR.



TRY IT!

The best way to enjoy Christmas is to make others happy. Put others first during the Christmas season. Let sympathy and generosity be strong hands to help and swift to carry you to places of need.

Relieve the suffering; help the poor; be gentle and tender to the aged and sorrowing; make the cold earth warmer for somebody; kindle a fire on the frozen hearth of some life.

Make Christmas Day unlike any other day. It is a holiday; make it a holy day. May the whole month be hallowed because of Christmas.—Exchange.



## DID THEY COME YET?

Tennis shoes are not the best kind of foot-wear for winter. But little Tony was happy to own a pair. One day he knocked at our door and asked for a new pair, showing a little brown toe through the worn uppers. We had no shoes, nor even tennis shoes to fit Tony, so we told him to pray so that some good friend would send some. A week later Tony came up after Catechism class with the question: "Catechist, did they come yet?" It was hard to answer no to this question because Tony's poor little feet were minus even the torn and worn-out tennis shoes this time. Tony could hardly believe this and he answered, "But Catechist, I pray every night, and they didn't come yet?" Tony's prayers are faithful and persevering. Perhaps you may hold the answer to his plea.

We, too, are praying that Santa's bag will contain shoes to keep many little feet warm.

Dilia, New Mexico,  
Dec. 10, 1932

Dear Santa Claus:

Just a few lines to tell you to bring me a pair of shoes No. 3 and a coat and a shirt and a pair of trousers. Please don't forget to bring me what I am telling you in this letter.

Your loving little boy,

PEDRO.

Maria, aged five, walked into the classroom.

"Where's our Catechist?" she asked.

"She's sick," said Catechist M. "She cannot come today."

"Then I'm not going to stay for class," said Maria, "I'm going to church and pray for her."

Little Martha came rushing breathlessly into the house. "O Mother, guess what? Mrs. Jones, next door, is going to form a band, and just the other day Betty told me her mother cannot even play the piano. What do you suppose she will play then?" The band to which little Martha was referring was a Mission band to help the Catechists.

## THANK YOU!

Our Lady of Perpetual Help.....	\$100.00
Sacred Heart Band, Chicago,	
(Mrs. Gallagher) .....	35.00
Dolorosa Club, Buffalo, (Dr.	
Margaret Grotz) .....	30.00
St. Jude's Band, Fort Wayne,	
(Mrs. Mary Noll) .....	23.00
St. Francis of Assisi, San Fran-	
cisco, (Mary Sarsfield) .....	20.00
St. Joseph's Band, Chicago, (Mrs.	
C. Service) .....	20.00

Mrs. A. F. Beck and Mrs. F. J. Sant-schi of Chicago have organized a new band under the patronage of St. Anthony. We are very grateful to these good friends, and we feel that their band will be a big success. Their first attempt netted \$20.00.

We are happy to find so many friends interested and willing to help our Mary's Little Helpers. One good friend, Mrs. Forster of Chicago, sponsored a very successful party and donated the proceeds to the Little Helpers' "Holy Child" Burse.

## THE FAITHFUL FEW

"There's lots of worthy members,  
Who will come when in the mood,  
When everything's convenient,  
They can do a little good;  
They're a factor in the meeting  
And are necessary, too,  
But the Ones who never fail us  
Are the ALWAYS FAITHFUL FEW."



"Behold the Lord shall come to save the nations."

Crown Point, Ind.

Dear Catechists:

Some time ago I wrote asking you to pray for a certain intention for me. I am thankful to say that your prayers have been heard. I am enclosing a dollar as a thanksgiving offering. May God reward you for all the good you are doing.

Please do not forget to pray for me and mine.  
MRS. F. R.

Now is the time to begin thinking about your New Year's resolutions. Why not resolve to become a member of the 2500 Club and share in an especial way in the labors and sacrifices of the Missionary Catechists? Your only obligation is to pray for the Catechists and to contribute one dollar each month for one year toward their support.

Catechist: "What is the first thing you say when you go to confession?"

Juan: "Bless my father for all my sins."

#### TO HONOR THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

According to their Rule, the Missionary Catechists go about among the poorest of the poor, instructing the little ones, feeding the hungry, clothing the needy, nursing the sick poor in their homes and guiding the prodigals back to Our Father's House. Every Catholic should desire to share in this Christ-like work. Here is an opportunity to do so: The Catechists depend entirely upon the contributions of generous friends for their own support and the means wherewith to carry on their missionary labors. One dollar will keep a Catechist at work in the Field for one day; twenty-five dollars for one month.

Make your contributions in honor of the Infant Jesus toward the Babe of Bethlehem Burse.

#### LEND A HAND

We have no agents to sell subscriptions to "The Missionary Catechist." We depend almost entirely upon our readers to secure new subscribers. How often have you gladdened the editor's anxious heart by sending in a subscription for some one else? How often have you aided the cause of Jesus and Mary by interesting others in the work of the Catechists and by getting new subscribers to this little magazine? AND—Do you yourself always renew promptly?

Subscription rates: Annual, fifty cents; life, ten dollars, payable in monthly instalments of one dollar.



Dear Little one, how sweet Thou art!  
Thine eyes, how bright they shine!  
So bright they almost seem to speak  
When Mary's look meets Thine.

Art Thou, Sweet Child, my very God?  
Oh, I must love Thee, then;  
Love Thee, and yearn to spread Thy love  
Among forgetful men.

—Father Faber.

#### THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER

Who has knelt at the Crib on Christmas morning and not sighed to hold the real Infant Jesus in his arms? Supposing the Christ Child was actually present and also His Mother, what would you feel that you must do before embracing Him? You would turn to His Blessed Mother to see if it was all right to take the Holy Child. He is Her Child; She must give Him to you. How tenderly She lifts Him from His Crib! and how lovingly She hands Him to you. What joy to hold the Divine Infant! Minutes become as seconds and it is with reluctance that you think of having to give Him back to His Mother's tender arms. Mary reads your thoughts and She says:

"Since you so love My Son, I will let you keep Him. Your heart shall be His Crib and I will watch over Him there."

"Oh, how wonderful, Sweet Mother," you reply. "Then, I shall have Christmas my whole life through."

To seek Jesus Through Mary is to find Him in all His Sweetness and to keep Him always.

He who gives to the poor cultivates a kindly soil which will one day give back to him more than he had entrusted it with.  
— St. Gregory the Great.

#### PRAYER

O Incarnate Wisdom! Sweetest Jesus, Who didst love Thy Most Dear Mother more than all the Angels and Saints in Heaven, and Who didst bestow upon Her privileges, dignities and honors without number, and Who whilst on earth didst depend upon Her always in all things; Thou Who dost desire to see Her known and loved throughout the world, grant us, we beseech Thee, the grace of union with Our Blessed Mother to which we so ardently aspire.

#### SHARE WITH JESUS

One day we took Maria to a doctor in Chicago. She admired the Christmas trimmings and lights, and really enjoyed the whole trip. Upon our return to our Mission Center, however, her spirit completely changed. It happened that the Catechists were also making Christmas decorations. She stood quietly contemplating the red and green heaps upon the floor and then sadly remarked:

"You know, Catechist, it will be Christmas everywhere but at home."

It is to the destitute, lonely homes of such as Maria—where sickness and misery reign—that the Catechists long to carry a bit of Christmas cheer. You have it in your power to make this possible. Share your own Christmas with the Infant Jesus in the person of His poor. If you cannot give as much as formerly, at least give as much as you are able. Mail your boxes or checks to one of our Mission Centers, listed below.

Address: "Society of Missionary Catechists" at:

1. Anton Chico, New Mexico.
2. Cerrillos, New Mexico.
3. Grants, New Mexico.
4. Holman, New Mexico.
5. Box 30, Montezuma Route, Vas Vegas, New Mexico.
6. Lubbock, Texas.
7. Brawley, Calif., 247 North Imperial Avenue.
8. Los Banos, California.
9. Redlands, California, 102 W. Lagonia Ave.
10. Santa Paula, California, 222 8th St.
11. Tulare, California.
12. 1385 Van Buren St., Gary, Ind.
13. 3868 Block Ave., East Chicago, Ind.
14. Catechist Blanche Richardson, Victory-Mount, Las Vegas, New Mex.

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

A Merry Christmas

# Acostado Del Nino

(Placing the Infant in the Crib)

Catechist Blanche Richardson

**T**HE solitary horseman heaved a deep sigh of satisfaction as he came within sight of the white-walled adobe houses of San Jose. The little village, with its twin-towered Mission Church, nestled against a long unbroken chain of sierras which pierced the sky with greater or lesser peaks. Rifts of white clouds were lifting themselves out of the dark blue hollows of the jagged cliffs like steam rising out of an old iron kettle.

In the village there was intense activity. The beehive ovens gave forth a delicious aroma which was evidence enough that it was the eve of a big feast. At midnight the Church bells would again announce the glad tidings of the Savior's Birth.

Dona Elena, wife of the distinguished Gregorio, whom we have just seen returning from a day's journey on horseback, intrusted the feast day baking to a servant, and was seated at a small table in the living room where a thick log burning in a small fogon radiated a cheerful atmosphere. She was signing the last of a heap of postcards bearing the picture of the Holy Child on one side, and on the other the inscription: "Feliz Pascua de Navidad (Literally, Happy Christmas) from Don Gregorio and spouse." These were to be the souvenirs of an extra-liturgical ceremony to take place just before the midnight Mass, in which Don Gregorio and Dona Elena were to be the central figures.

This ceremony known as "Acostado del Nino" has long been a custom in San Jose. Each year the parish Priest appoints some distinguished couple in

the parish to act as padrinos,—sponsors,—for the occasion. The ceremony consists of a short procession from the main Altar to the Christmas Crib. The sponsors, who have the privilege of carrying in their arms the image of the Infant Jesus, lead. They are followed by a number of altar boys dressed in red cassocks and glistening white surplices, and carrying lighted candles. At the end of the procession walks the celebrant, vested in cope. The choir sings verses of Christmas hymns and the entire congregation joins in the chorus. On arriving at the Crib, the Priest takes the Bambino from the arms of the padrinos and places it in the manger between the kneeling figures of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph.

The sponsors usually give a goodly sum as their Christmas offering to the church on this occasion. After the midnight Mass the congregation call at the home of the sponsors where they are served a light refreshment and receive a souvenir of some kind commemorating the happy event.

At the close of the Christmas season, a ceremony similar to the one described above takes place. It is known as "La Levantada del Nino," which means, the raising or lifting of the Child Jesus from the cradle. This brings to a fitting close the various observances connected with Christmas. The simple ceremony of "La Levantada" takes place on the evening of the Epiphany, January 6. The Infant Jesus is removed from the manger, and the Crib, with all its trimmings, is taken down and put away until the festive season returns.



# Wills Are Uncertain===

They are easily broken. They give no assurance of your charitable intentions being carried out after death.

Why not avoid all worry and uncertainty about your charitable bequests being carried out after death by investing in our ANNUITY PLAN?

## HERE ARE SOME OF ITS ADVANTAGES:

Safety as to principal and interest

Payments as low as \$50.00 accepted,

Privilege of withdrawal upon sufficient notice;

and, last but not least:

The privilege of the principal being retained by the relative or friend you designate and after that person's death that same principal being applied for the support of a Catechist in her Christ-like work of saving the souls and bodies of the most abandoned poor.

Write today for further particulars to:

Rev. J. J. Sigstein, Society of Missionary Catechists, Huntington, Ind.

