



The

M

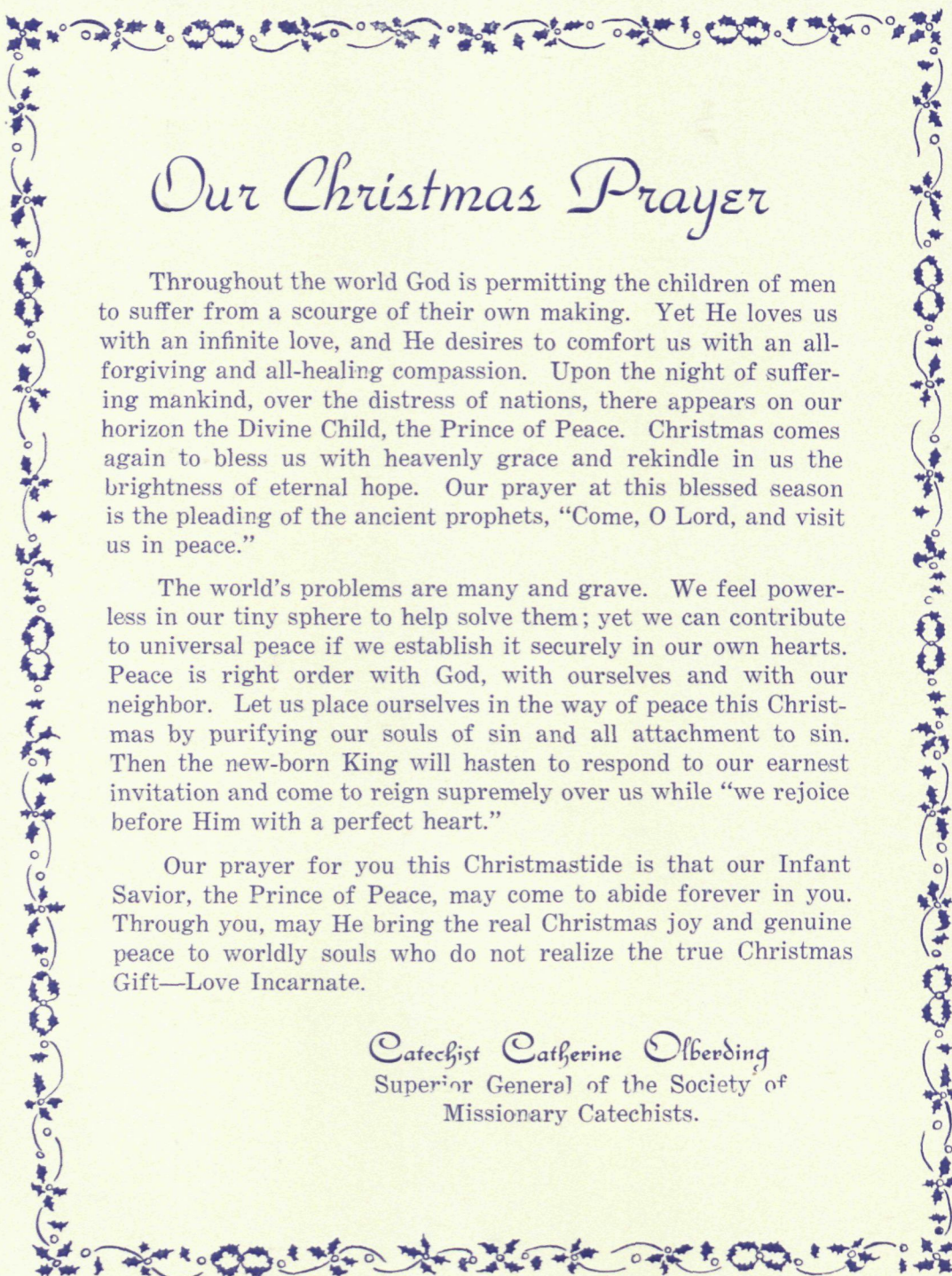
I
S
S
I
O
N
A
R
Y

C
A
T
E
C
H
I
S
T

Christmas 1940

Vol. 17

No. 1

A decorative border in blue ink frames the page. It features a repeating pattern of small flowers and leaves, with larger circular motifs at the top and bottom center.

Our Christmas Prayer

Throughout the world God is permitting the children of men to suffer from a scourge of their own making. Yet He loves us with an infinite love, and He desires to comfort us with an all-forgiving and all-healing compassion. Upon the night of suffering mankind, over the distress of nations, there appears on our horizon the Divine Child, the Prince of Peace. Christmas comes again to bless us with heavenly grace and rekindle in us the brightness of eternal hope. Our prayer at this blessed season is the pleading of the ancient prophets, "Come, O Lord, and visit us in peace."

The world's problems are many and grave. We feel powerless in our tiny sphere to help solve them; yet we can contribute to universal peace if we establish it securely in our own hearts. Peace is right order with God, with ourselves and with our neighbor. Let us place ourselves in the way of peace this Christmas by purifying our souls of sin and all attachment to sin. Then the new-born King will hasten to respond to our earnest invitation and come to reign supremely over us while "we rejoice before Him with a perfect heart."

Our prayer for you this Christmastide is that our Infant Savior, the Prince of Peace, may come to abide forever in you. Through you, may He bring the real Christmas joy and genuine peace to worldly souls who do not realize the true Christmas Gift—Love Incarnate.

Catechist Catherine Olberding
Superior General of the Society of
Missionary Catechists.



Three Gifts

*Christmas—let doors be open;
 Christmas—let love be told;
 Christmas—the cheer of the whole long year
 Is bound in its heart of gold.
 Hang up the wreaths of holly,
 Ring the bells near and far,
 To honor the Three of the Mystery,
 The Child, the Song, and the Star.*

*For these are the gifts of Christmas,
 Set for a seal and a sign;
 The song in the night, the great star's light,
 The Face of the Child divine.
 And always shall love be master,
 And right shall conquer wrong
 This one glad day, in God's own way,
 By a Child, a Star, and a Song.*

by Katherine A. Grime

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST is a monthly magazine published with ecclesiastical approbation by the Society of Missionary Catechists, Victory-Noll, Huntington, Indiana. Subscription rates: \$1 a year; \$2.50 for 3 years; \$4 for \$5 years; \$25 for life, payable in monthly installments; \$1.50, Canada and Foreign. Entered as second class matter December 30, 1924, at the post office at Huntington, Indiana, under the act of March 3, 1879.

O. B. L. V. PRESS VICTORY-NOLL HUNTINGTON, INDIANA

"Bethlehem and its Angel are not of the past. They continue to be; they live on alike in history, in art, and in poetry, but first of all in our adoration. In the Blessed Sacrament the unceasing adoration of that holy Night continues. Here Jesus is surrounded by the devotion of His Mother and of His brethren, and by the gratitude of innumerable seraphic souls. Forth from this Bethlehem countless blessings, and infinite joy, strength

and beauty stream out into the spiritual world, and their influence far surpasses that of any literature or culture, because it brings us uniquely near to God. The secret of spiritual purification and moulding, and that of eternal youthfulness, is to perceive the Divine Presence by faith, to experience and to enjoy It. This Presence transforms ordinary, prosaic, everyday existence into the fulness of noble, beautiful, God-like life. Those who grasp this have found the key to the art of living." (1)

To say: "This Presence transforms the ordinary, prosaic, everyday existence into the fulness of



noble, beautiful, God-like life" is to express the effect every true Christian should hope for from his frequent reception of Holy Communion.

Mary the Sole Preparation for the First Christmas

In Bethlehem of 1940 years ago we have the total lack of all that worldly-minded men and women consider indispensable for life: everything in that bleak, cold cavern spells mortification for the body. Sight, smell, feeling—yes, all bodily organs meet that which they abhor. There is, nevertheless, the one thing that is essential to life in the sight of God—perfect conformity with His Holy Will.

The Living Bethlehem of Our Hearts

Reverend Charles H. Helmsing

Mary, the spotless Virgin Mother, never for an instant had deviated from the path of doing God's Will. Her acceptance of God's plan for her, uttered nine months before at the Annunciation, gave her peace now amid all the untoward circumstances of that first Christmas Eve. Surely she would have preferred a regal chamber, perfectly clean and filled with all physical comforts for the birth of her Divine Son; yet when she had done all that her extreme poverty permitted, she was perfectly at peace; for she understood that in her perfect doing of God's Will—in her sinlessness—and in that of her chaste Spouse, St. Joseph, her Divine Son had the sole preparation that He desired for His entrance into the world.

Mary's Welcome Sufficed

"The Holy Night was Our Lady's night of worship. She did not count the hours; in utter absorption she adored Jesus, adoring Him more perfectly than do the angels. This she could do, for with the exception of the Soul of Christ, not a soul approached God so closely as did that of Mary. She was rapt in



admiration, in homage, in praise and love, in joy and exaltation. She drew near to God's infinite un-created glory. The Divine attributes and perfections passed before her mind—God's omnipotence and infiniteness and creative power, His dignity and beauty, His life and suffering; she followed each one of His future steps, kissed His every trace; and watched the waves of history roll onward, finally to break before the Judgment Seat of God made Man, while proclaiming His glory. The *Gloria in Excelsis* of the angels was merely the echo of the greeting and glorious joy of Mary, which scaled the very heights of heaven. Could the earth have welcomed God more ardently than by receiving Him with the rapture that was His mothers'?" (2)

House of Bread and Houses of Bread

Bethlehem is a Hebrew name meaning **House of Bread**. More aptly had the ancients named the little city of Judea than they knew, for in it was first housed the true "Bread that cometh down from Heaven," Christ Our Lord. (St. John 6, 50). That Bethlehem of Judean hills was not, however, the final destination of the "Bread of Life." Every human heart was meant to be a Bethlehem to house the "Bread of Life," the Eucharistic Kings of Kings, in Holy Communion. Does not the Church remind us of this in the liturgy of the Mass when she places upon our lips the humble avowal "O Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof?"

Mary in Living Bethlehems

The annual celebration of Christmas forcefully reminds us of the manner in which we can make our hearts true Bethlehems. The cave was fit for Jesus because Mary was there; the great apostle of the true devotion to Mary, Blessed Grignon de Montfort, tells us that our hearts are Bethlehems exciting the "Glorias of the Angels" if Mary rules over them, if Mary is in them by our unaffected love for and dependence on her. One who has willingly made the act of consecration, by which he recognizes his dependence under God upon Mary for all that he has in the order of Divine Grace, will find it easy to turn to her who in justice has complete dominion over him and from her to obtain all that is lacking in his own poor heart.

The Example of the Saint of Spiritual Childhood

Perhaps no slave of the love of Mary has expressed this method of receiving Holy Communion better than St. Therese of the Child Jesus, the Little Flower: "What can I tell you about my thanksgiving after Communion? There is no time when I have less consolation—yet this is not to be wondered at, since it is not for my own satisfaction that I desire to receive Our Lord but solely to give Him pleasure.



Bethlehem

N.C.W.C. Photo

"Picturing my soul as a piece of waste ground, I beg Our Lady to take away my imperfections, which are as heaps of rubbish, and to raise upon it a spacious pavilion worthy of Heaven, and beautify it with her own adornments. I next invite all the Angels and Saints to sing canticles of love, and it seems to me that Jesus is well pleased to find Himself welcomed with such magnificence, while I, too, share His joy." (3)

A Pious Wish and Recommendation

The Missionary Catechists of Our Blessed Lady of Victory, knowing from their own persevering devotion to the Mystery of Bethlehem the transforming effect it has on their apostolic lives, would have all their friends and helpers meditate and study deeply the teachings of Blessed Grignon de Montfort on the method of receiving Holy Communion in union with Mary. This doctrine contained in the saintly author's "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin" and in his "Secret of Mary" is beautifully expressed in the prayer book all lovers of Mary should have, "The Reign of Jesus through Mary." (4)

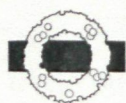
Notes:

- (1) Prohaszka, "Meditations on the Gospels," page 133. Sheed and Ward.
- (2) *Ibidem*, page 132.
- (3) St. Therese of Lisieux, Thomas N. Taylor, Ed. 1927, page 142, Burns, Oates and Washbourne
- (4) Published 1936 by the Fathers of the Company of Mary, Denis and Somers.

Victory-Noll Snapshots

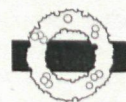


*Novices at the Crib.—
Victory-Noll grounds*



*Christmas secrets among
the novices at Victory-
Noll.*

*Then there is always the
surprise box for the sick
and it is sure to contain
many laughs.*



From Mission-Home to Mother-Home

Catechist Mary I. Doyle



ANOTHER Christmas in the missions is past. After the holy joy of Midnight Mass comes the happy relaxation from the hustle and excitement of preparation. Then a week or two in which to catch our breath, and back to the busy days so filled with classes, practices, visits and activities that we all wish we were twins.

BUT before we call our little vacation ended, we decide on a tonic—a flying trip to Victory-Noll. Our mission is near enough to make this feasible. Gaily we pack up a few of the superfluous goodies that our kind parishioners have given us, and turn our Chevrolet towards Huntington. It's a bright, clear New Year's Day. The morning's High Mass was a splendid echo of Christmas Night, and our happiness is voiced in song and laughter as we follow the highway through the brown and green hills of Indiana, which are touched with occasional patches of last week's snow, and beautiful under the spell of an early sunset.

FIVE o'clock twilight finds us climbing the dear familiar knoll crowned by our Motherhouse. Only the chapel lights shine through sainted windows, and we eagerly tiptoe down a silent corridor in the hope of being on time for Benediction. Just in time! Kneeling on the chapel steps we receive Our Dear Lord's blessing, and then join gratefully in the chanting of the Te Deum which closes the Day of Recollection our sister Catechists have been spending.

PARTY supper with all the feast day trimmings is a buzz of excitement as we tell our news, and listen in turn to the account of home doings. Soon after the last bit of delicious dessert has vanished, the dining-room lights stage a blackout, and into the surprised silence that falls, singing voices bring the Christmas carols. All eyes turn to the windows for the choir members are serenading us from without. They swing their picturesque lanterns which light up



their gleaming white veils as well as their hymn books. Reluctantly we see them go, but we find them a little later, singing their carols under other windows so that the sick Catechists may enjoy some of the pleasure they have had to forego during the merry season.

NOW we must see all the decorations, beginning of course, with the Crib in chapel, that same sweet scene ever new. Festive cutouts adorn the windows of many rooms.

THERE is still much to talk about, but tomorrow will be another day, we promise ourselves, as the bell calls us to prayers. Another beautiful day "tomorrow" proves to be, just right for taking a brisk walk about the grounds to enjoy the fresh, clean air of Victory-Noll's hillsides. In the afternoon, a profitable time is spent chatting with the catechetics teacher about our mission problems, and getting advice from the organist as to future choir undertakings. Rummaging through the "mission room" we find many treasures that will brighten our meetings, plays, and other activities.

BY the time evening comes again, everyone has heard so much about the operetta our children gave, that we simply must give a performance, even though three Catechists have to take the parts of fifty children. With a strong appeal to the imagination of our audience, we launch into the scenes of "When Christmas Comes," singing and acting with all the abandon that follows the release from rehearsal strain. And the listeners catch the spirit so well that they join right in with the last chorus of "The Gingerbread Man" song. Now the young Catechists are more eager than ever to go to the missions, and we ourselves are beginning to feel concerned about our work back home.

SO the next morning finds us storing the car with apples, eggs, honey, and all the useful supplies we can obtain. Farewells and promises of continued prayers are exchanged, and off we go, filled with an increase of zeal for the days of the new year, and a deeper appreciation of that blessed word "Motherhouse."



Crowds before the Crib

Reverend Pacific L. Hug, O.F.M.

MIDNIGHT and Christmas Eve at Greccio in the Apennines, 1223. Up the steep, wooded slopes gay crowds were climbing with blazing torches held aloft. The word of one Poor Man had called them to the cave.

NOTHING in all this wide world is so fascinating as a vivid, original personality. Such a one is wholly set apart, and yet, in some real sense, belongs to all. We set him apart, sometimes on a pedestal, because he towers morally above us; yet we feel an intimate kinship with him, because he is after all no more a man than we and he stirs in us dreams and glimpses of greatness we had not hitherto dared to accept.

FRANCIS of Assisi, who gave us the custom of the Christmas Crib, or at least accounts for its wide appeal, is just such a vivid personality, at once unique in greatness and common to all in love. Unique even among the saints, so that a learned German Jesuit could write of him, the most unassuming of men: ". . . Francis of Assisi presents something entirely new. Not only in his own personality and life. He has created . . . not only a new way of life for others; but has left to the future the legacy of new life itself; in this respect Francis stands alone, the most original of all the Great Founders." And yet, no man ever identified himself so sincerely and completely with the common man. It was precisely in one of his flights from the learned and sophisticated, that he thought up his dramatic reenactment of Christmas and invited all the plain folk of the countryside to join him.

THE story is simple and you have heard it before. Armed with the Pope's permission, he called on his wealthy friend, John Vellita, to prepare the cave of Greccio for Christmas. A manger must be provided, an ox and an ass behind it, images of Mary, Joseph and the Child, the altar for Holy Mass, and invitations despatched to all good people for miles around to join him at midnight of Christmas. They came in crowds, for his sake and because the idea itself had enthused them. Francis was deacon and sang, all his heart's joy thrilling through the richness of his voice. He preached, and the words "Jesus" and "Bethlehem" seemed to melt deliciously on his tongue. Beside himself with sheerest delight, he bent to embrace the infant-image, and, we are told, it came to life for a moment in his arms. In that hour was born the popular practice of building the Christmas Crib.

HE had no thought of starting a universal custom, any more than years before he had planned to

found an Order. As always he sought God in his own unerring, preoccupied fashion, and benedictions for all men sprang up and multiplied about him as he went swiftly by. He could no more have built up a mighty organization of set purpose, than he could have restrained the fiery impulses that urged him on.

THERE is a point in all this for you and me; Francis turns a common fallacy of our time topside down, that mistaken attitude which seems to say: "There is nothing I can do to remedy the evils in the world. Reform is the business of government or great organizations." Nothing more false and enervating! **THE KEY POINT IS THE INDIVIDUAL. THAT IS WHAT FRANCIS TEACHES.** Even in the simple business of the Christmas Crib of Greccio he illustrated the power of one flaming personality.

AND that power still carries on into our day. At St. Peters Church near Chicago's Loop district, the sons of Francis set up in recent years a huge Christmas Crib, facing the busy thoroughfare. Hundreds who had forgotten that Christmas meant Christ, stopped to gaze and went away more thoughtful. Men and women knelt unabashed to say a prayer in public. Again as in Francis' time the people responded with zest, and the conversions following demonstrated the apostolic effectiveness of this simplest of means. Even before this, an outdoor Crib stood before the Water Tower on Michigan Avenue—project of the Illinois Club for Catholic Women. Likewise, at Corpus Christi, Chicago's Franciscan parish for colored people, and at Our Lady of Sorrows, now famous shrine in charge of the Servite Fathers, magnificent cribs bore picturesque witness to the truth: "Peace to men of good will." Thousands, who seldom saw the inside of a church, were reached and blessed by that visual message of hope. In each case, the forceful, dramatic appeal had its source **in the burning thought and initiative of a persistent individual.**

IT requires but a one-word sign to direct the perplexed tourist—and many right around us are perplexed on their way through life. It takes but one small flame to start a forest fire. The little Crib of Bethlehem, which you set before your Christmas tree, the religious greeting cards, which you insist on having—each of these may be a sign to some bewildered person, may be a flame that lights again the love of God in some lost soul. You will not despise such simple means, if you have caught the meaning of that spontaneous gesture by which St. Francis gave to all of us the Christmas Crib of Greccio.

I Found A Bethlehem

Catechist Mary Eva Geiskopf

I TUGGED at the bundle of alfalfa. It was heavy and awkward. My previous acquaintance with alfalfa was limited to admiring fields of it, bright with purple-blue blossoms, but that was all. And so my progress was slow and ungraceful as I dragged my bundle up the hill to the small New Mexico "corral" which furnished scant shelter for our one cow. The Christmas Eve program, presented the evening before in the little adobe school house, required straw for the manger in the nativity scene. The alfalfa had answered the purpose. One of the boys had brought it to the school and now I was returning it to its proper place. That is why I was on my way up the hill on Christmas afternoon. And my errand became something like a pilgrimage.

WHEN I reached the corral, I opened the door, which really wasn't a door at all, but only a few shabby boards nailed together. It was too small for the opening and left wide gaps for the cutting mountain winds to blow through. But then, what need for a tightly fitted door? The entire stable frame-work of aspen poles was held together with an odd assortment of rough-hewn lumber, which gaped at every seam and corner. New Mexico corrals were a far cry from modern, eastern farm buildings.

I STOOPED to enter, still holding the alfalfa. During that pause thoughts raced through my mind, "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger." I looked about at the poverty, the primitiveness. Here, here was Bethlehem. There was nothing theatrical nor "made up" about this setting. The day was bleak and cold, the wind came in at the holes. It was not difficult to picture a small, swaddled Child in that box-like manger by the wall, not difficult to see a Mother kneeling there, and a foster father holding a lantern to dispel the dimness, while he tried to shelter his Two from the cold. It needed



little imagination to hear the heavy breath of animals and to feel its meager warmth, to hear the soft munching of grass and grain; not difficult to sense the presence of unseen angels and to detect their heavenly song.

IT took only a look down the winding road, visible through a larger opening, to assure one that shepherds must be around a bend somewhere, hurrying to join the angels in worship. Shepherds? Surely, shepherds, for wasn't I in a shepherd country, among shepherd people? How like the simple, eager shepherds of scripture our people were. Yet, like the shepherds of legend, who were too sleepy to come to Bethlehem, many, too, among our mountaineers had not come for years to the Bethlehem that was the village chapel. . . .

I WAS making my Christmas meditation. I did not want to go. The stable had a new, a holy fascination for me. God was good to give me this glimpse of the real Bethlehem here in a mission corral. Often during that Christmastide I made other pilgrimages to my "Bethlehem" to recapture the joy and wonder of that first Bethlehem in Palestine. And although it is many Christmases since I was there, each year I return in memory to the poor stable on the hill amid a shepherd people, where I realized more fully than I ever had before, the greatness and the littleness of the Son of the Eternal Father, who became a Child and was laid in a manger for love of us.

BABY JESUS BRINGS A DOLL



Lilly is not especially interested in Santa Claus. She has a deep devotion to the Infant Jesus and firmly believes that He has a particular regard for her when He distributes His gifts at Christmas time.

Lilly comes from a poor family. Until we met her she was something of a problem child, but she has responded well to our interest, and has manifested an unusual attraction for things spiritual. She was overjoyed last Christmas Eve when we invited her to sleep at our convent so that she could attend Midnight Mass and receive Holy Communion. Her mother readily granted permission and by eight o'clock our little prodigy was with us for the night. Before dropping off to sleep she reminded us that the Baby Jesus was going to bring her a beautiful doll for Christmas, a big one that would sleep and cry. The possession of such a doll is, to our poor little girls, the height of earthly happiness.

The Infant Jesus must have been eager to favor Lilly that night, for although she was not one of the four children selected to kneel at the Crib during Mass, dressed as adoring angels, she had to take the place of one "angel" who could not come.

Fortunately for us, we received, among other toys, just the doll to delight our Lilly, for it was large and it could sleep and cry. We wrapped it and addressed it to her. When she found her gift after Mass she was not surprised, for the Baby Jesus wouldn't disappoint her, would He? But her greatest joy was that she had given Him a present too. "When He came to me in Holy Communion," she told us with shining eyes, "I gave Him my whole heart!"

Catechist Juliana Schmitt.

Conformity to the will of God is an easy and certain means of acquiring a great treasure of graces in this life.—St. Vincent de Paul.



Girl Scouts of Las Vegas, New Mexico, learn the joy of giving.

Christmas in the Missions



The letter to Santa

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



The month before Christmas is a busy time for the Catechists in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The Catechists play Santa Claus to over two thousand children, many of whom are very poor. The little gift from their Catechist is received with deep gratitude, and earnest prayers are offered for the benefactors who make these gifts possible. It is impossible for most of the children in the out-missions even to attend Mass on Christmas Day, for the Missionary cannot reach the small missions oftener than once a month.

Although most of our people are very poor, we try to let them experience the truth that there is greater joy in giving than in receiving. Our Girl Scout troops in Las Vegas, under the leadership of the Catechists, have caught the spirit of giving. At very little cost but at much personal sacrifice, they are learning how to dispense Christmas cheer to the sick, the aged and the poorest in their communities.

Catechist M. Esther Rosenbeck

We had First Communion at Piru last Sunday. After Father examined the children one little girl said, "Catechist, every time I thought Father was going to ask me a question I said, 'Please, God, help me to answer right!'"

Catechist M. Helen Gerhart

MY CHRISTMAS PLAY



My sister Catechists talked Christmas plays, Cribbs and decorations but I was too busy to be interested. There were several unbaptized babies to be concerned about, and my growing number of sick demanded frequent visits. Of one thing I was certain. I could not take time for play-practice this year.

The crowded days passed much too quickly for me. Christmas was very near and I prepared to tell the old, sweet story to my prayer class. As I told it the blessed Mystery of that holy Night seemed to surround us, and I was as enraptured as were the children with the divine perennial charm of it all. Why not prolong the pleasure and repeat the story by dramatizing it?

Peppy, only five years of age, bravely volunteered for St. Joseph's part. Without hesitation he chose little Emma for "his Mary" and then ran to the other end of the hall in search of a donkey—an old broom. The children squatting on the floor, became the City of Bethlehem and each in turn refused shelter to the tired couple. A table was the cave and my box of class materials was the manger. Soon imaginations placed everything in order and the play began. Only this was not a play; no one was acting. Those little ones were re-living the events of that first Christmas Night. Without aid of costumes, lights, music or any stage setting, these unspoiled children of the poor were presenting the Drama of the Nativity in a most touching manner. I wished that the whole world could have watched that performance. It might have helped many to realize a little better that Christmas means Christ.

Catechist Elvira Vigil.

THE CONQUEROR



What a picture! Three lads, between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, apparently holding up the sides of the church on the busiest day of the year, the day before Christmas. I hurried past them into the building to examine the newly erected Crib. One of our artistic young parishioners was putting the final touches to the scene which was the background for the stable. Then, with an abrupt "Have to go now, Catechist," he left to make his afternoon deliveries in a truck well weighted down.

As I made my way to the rear of the church for the purpose of bringing the figures for the Crib, my thoughts traveled around the corner to where three young men stood with nothing in the world to do. Why not ask them to help? The thought was parent to the deed.

All heads turned as I approached. "Would you



Mary, Joseph and the donkey of Catechist Vigil's Christmas Play.

like to help me place the figures in the Crib?" I asked.

Their first impulse seemed to be a desire to run. Then the leader shrugged his shoulders and commanded the others, "Come on you guys, let's help."

By the way they walked across the threshold and dropped their hats on a bench, one could tell that they had not visited a church in many years. But they worked well. They pulled out the box from under the choir loft and I began to unwrap the beautiful statues. One by one they accepted the figures, carried them down the aisle and returned for others. Their faces were a study as they stared at the image of the lovely Infant Jesus which they left until last. Then the leader picked Him up with reverence and solemnly carried Him down the aisle. The others followed. Was there ever such a procession! I think not. Admiring eyes now watched me arrange the Crib, each lad making suggestions and daring to help just a little. I explained, while I worked, about the pretty lights that would be placed within the stable and how all would be lighted and ready for Mass at midnight. Briefly, I also told the story of Christmas—how the King of Kings, for love of man was born a helpless babe. At Midnight Mass I looked down from the choir and was filled with joy at sight of three painfully groomed, familiar figures. The helpless Babe, I thought, is still the Conqueror of Hearts.

Catechist Mary Louise Perl

Associate Catechists of Mary

Peace on Earth

THAT IS THE PROMISE which the angels made to the shepherds on the first Christmas night. "Peace on earth. . . to men of good will!" Through these simple men who faithfully guarded their flocks God made the same promise to us. And He kept it, throughout the centuries. Peace is a precious gift, the gift which He alone can give. He bestows it freely, generously, to all who have a right to receive it—to men of good will.

We are often humbled by the good will expressed in the letters of our Associates, who are working together with us for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. They give willingly all year of their time, efforts and funds, according to their means and interest, that our mission work may continue and progress. In their goodness they tell us only that which will encourage and cheer; but we have become adept at reading between the lines. We realize a little the extent of the sacrifice which many are making, and our hearts overflow with gratitude.

A YOUNG working girl, eager to do her bit for the missions even though she could not take part in active Band work, adopted a Catechist for one day each month. To many of you the offering would seem very little indeed, but for her it is made at the cost of sacrifice which is cheerfully given. "As time goes on it seems so hard to keep up the promise. Other things insist on "popping" up. But I realize all the good my tiny offering of a dollar a month is doing and I will—I **must**—continue giving it. May God's blessing rest on all of you!"

Says Miss A.C.M.—

You know, working in one of the largest department stores in the world isn't easy at this time of year. When I get tired and discouraged, however, I just meditate awhile on the spiritual meaning of the great feast of Christmas and then I don't mind the long hours nearly so much.

*May the wisdom and solace of the
Church keep your home bright and happy
At Christmas and during the New Year*



Our Gift Came Early!

THE evening of October 16 was a gala one for our Chicago Associates and their hosts of friends. It was the date of the Annual Card Party, held at the Morrison Hotel. For weeks and even months the General Chairman and the members of the various committees gave unstintingly of their time and energies, that this year's affair might prove a success for our mission cause.

That it was a success there can be no doubt. The generous donation sent to us as a result of this affair was a great blessing, one which can be repaid only by the

precious spiritual gift of prayer and remembrance at Holy Mass. "Our Lord surely must have heard all the prayers offered for the party," Miss Mary A. Perkins, General Chairman wrote afterwards. "It was a lovely night, not too cool, and we had a nice crowd." We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to Miss Perkins for her untiring zeal and the spirit of self-sacrifice with which she undertook this responsibility. The fact that her work lies outside the city of Chicago made the task a doubly difficult one for her, and she accomplished it completely and well. To Mrs. L. J. Owens, who gave Miss Perkins invaluable help with the many details which demanded so much devoted attention, we send heartfelt, fervent thanks.

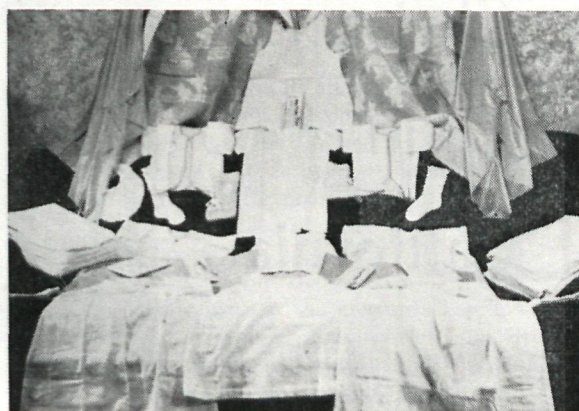
WE owe congratulations and gratitude to Miss May Walsh for the way she conducted the "outside" raffle, held this year for the first time. Mrs. Johanna Schweihs had the important task of procuring and distributing the table prizes, while Miss Margaret Goodman took charge of the door prizes. Once more Mrs. J. F. Gleason was Chairman of the very necessary ticket committee, and with the able assistance of Mrs. Fred Kiefer, Mrs. Thos. Garrity and Mrs. Alice Cleary, accomplished much towards the party's success. We deeply appreciate also the work of Mrs. H. F. Staley, who superintended the editing of the program book; Miss Marie Knuth who so ably took charge of the publicity, and Mrs. Marie McDonald and Miss Bertha Collins, who also acted as chairmen of committees.

To all the band members who gave their cooperation and generous help, and to all the many friends who contributed towards the party's success by attending and making it a pleasant social affair, we express our sincere, deepest gratitude. God bless you all!

SEVERAL Christmases ago a lover of mission babies in Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote: "Again we have sent you a parcel containing the layette which has become an annual gift. As usual, it is sent in memory of Mother. I only hope that it will cast a little ray of sunshine to someone and bring as much pleasure as we had in assembling it. Just the thought of clothing some tiny infant makes Christmas brighter for us, as it will keep some little body warm. Christmas was made for children, and there are so many who are neglected."

IN Los Angeles two Bands named in honor of Our Lady have adopted layette-making as their regular club activity, in addition to the generous donation they send each month. "It's so grand working on these little clothes, knowing that they will keep some little babies covered and warm," Mrs. Alice Meng, an active member, wrote. "We are making nightgowns, kimono's and jackets so far, but still have flannel to get and blankets to make up. It is wonderful work, Catechist, and we really feel that we are accomplishing something worthwhile."

Yes, Christmas time is baby time. And all the year round is grown ups' time to help make our babies and mission children happy!



is Baby Time!

THIS attractive layette was sent by the Mission Committee of St. Boniface Sodality, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Blessed de Montfort Mission in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Who can guess the comfort and joy it brought to the heart of one of our poor Mexican mothers!

As We Herald the Good Shepherd's Birth

SEVERAL months ago a new band of Associate Catechists of Mary came into being, and was named in honor of the Good Shepherd Whose Birthday we lovingly celebrate this month. It was organized by Mrs. Mary Staley, Chicago, who is likewise promoter of Elizabeth Ann Seton Band. "As yet the band is small, but it shows very promising signs of growing," Mrs. Staley wrote. "One member must spend about an hour to get to meetings, she lives so far southwest of us. If all take as much interest, it won't be long before we have a really good-sized group. We all sincerely hope to be a real help to your Society."

Good Shepherd Band fulfilled this promise, and already new members have joined to swell its ranks, and add to fun and funds. Welcome to our A.C.M.! May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, make your work fruitful in souls for His true fold, and in blessings for yourselves.

SANTA CLAUS, in the guise of a U. S. Postman, has been making regular visits all the year round during the past decade at our Gary, Indiana, mission. The members of three mission-minded circles of St. Patrick's Sodality, Fort Wayne, send him there with boxes containing the results of their monthly showers. Miss Helen Arnold, who is head of St. Francis Band of eight girls, explained how they and the other two Bands—St. Patrick's, with Miss Esther Becker as president, and Little Flower Band, with Miss Mary Bauer as the leader,—carry on their activities for our mission cause.

"Each band meets separately each month at the home of one of its members, the evening being spent socially. At the time of meeting each girl brings a 25c shower gift, and pays 5c dues. However, all three bands collect the same thing for the month so that our package will be uniform. It so happens that my band would rather pay their quarters, and either let me do their shopping for them, or send their donation direct. We are all set for a big New Year!" Catechist Meister, superior of our Gary mission, wrote that they were able to purchase a hundred much-needed copies of "Jesus and I" books with the girls' contribution.

THE message brought to you by "Miss A.C.M." during the past few months has been taken from actual letters written to us by the Miss A.C.M.'s who devote themselves with youthful energy and enthusiasm to aiding our mission work. The inspiration for our December message came in a letter written during last year's Christmas rush by Miss Lillian Dunn, promoter of Immaculate Conception Band, Detroit. This group of mission helpers adopted Catechist Mary Monica Gogin, and their Christmas boxes and donations go to Catechist M. Josephine Miller at our Tulare, California, Mission. Several months ago Miss Dunn and three members delivered their Band offering in person here at Victory-Noll, and assured us with a smile of satisfaction that it completed their first \$100 towards their adopted Catechist's Burse. Our gratitude goes out to the girls again for this accomplishment, as we wish them "God speed" toward their goal of a completed Burse.

Christmas in California

Catechist Mary Ruth Karl



A date garden in Indio, California



IN the heart of every land there is shrouded a special and characteristic phase of the celebration of the Feast of Christmas. Perhaps it is the straight green fir tree of the German peasant, or the hereditary Christmas songs heard in a Polish village. It may be the Yule log in England, or the pinate of Mexico, or the welcoming candle that glows in the window of each Irish home for two weary Travelers should they come again on Christmas night. All these customs and traditions are not part of Christmas itself, but by long usage we grow to love them, and in our hearts they seem to belong to the worship of the tiny new-born Son of God.

That accounts for the premature thought that came to me in September. We were speeding along on our two-thousand-mile journey toward the luxuriant beauty of California. Deep down among thoughts of home and our journey and our mission work, buried so deeply as to be scarcely recognizable, a tiny seedlet of thought now and then reiterated in small voice: "Christmas won't seem like Christmas in California." For how would Christ's Birthday seem without the hush of snow and the crispness of frosty air, and the walk to Midnight Mass between two worlds of snow and stars? How visualize Christmas of a warm day and sunny weather and green things growing? That, so I had heard, was Christmas Day in California.

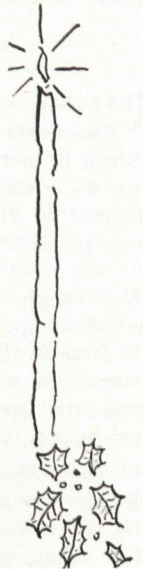
Only that tiny seed of thought—but it sprang to sudden growth when my astonished eyes saw California. I had heard much of California, its tall trees and riotous flowers; California of the sunny skies and generous rains. California, where the sun is warm at Christmas, and the fragile poinsettias grow, not in hothouses, but in our gardens. Yet no one had told me what is, perhaps, California's secret: Every day is Christmas Day in California. To

her native sons California is "The Sunshine State"; but to the stranger within her gates, to the Catechist who comes to her in quest of souls, California becomes with striking literalness "The Land of Christ."

In its exterior aspect, there is much in California that resembles the Holy Land. When Moses sent the Jewish messengers into the Promised Land, to bring word as to the country and its people, they returned carrying a great bunch of grapes, with pomegranates and figs, to show the beauty and fruitfulness of the land the Lord was to give them. Pomegranates and figs, fruits of the sun, are commonplace in California. One afternoon we were visiting in a barren little place with a few trees in the dusty yard. The children were coming from school. Into the house for bread and jelly? Indeed not! Anita was hostess that day. Scaling a pomegranate tree with an ease that showed long practice, she provided refreshments for all.

Soon eager hands were breaking open the ripe pomegranates, white teeth were biting into the jewel-like red of the edible seeds, and black eyes were flashing enjoyment of the juicy, tangy fruit. As we smiled and talked together, these little folk and I, they could not guess that their after-school lunch had carried me back into the centuries when there was no Christmas, but when pomegranates even then grew and ripened in the Promised Land that God was preparing for His Son.

There is more than one story of fig trees in the Gospels. One can understand them more fully



after seeing a fig tree "in action." We are accustomed to the gnarled apple tree, the hard-working peach, the sedate plum of a harder climate, putting forth their blossoms cautiously after the snows have gone, and coming to fruitage after a slow, steady, summer's work. It is an interesting contrast to see a fig tree at the harvest season. A well-grown tree is large and spreading. Some of the leaves may be almost a foot in length and nearly as wide. The fruit is of an elongated oval shape, two or three inches in length. At first light green, it ripens to deep, rich purple. The fruit continues to grow and ripen for a period of two or three months, and during that time one has the curious impression that the tree is really in action. The figs seem to be almost more plentiful than the leaves themselves, and they ripen quickly and continuously. A glance at this fecundity of an ordinary fig tree, and one understands, for instance, Our Lord's cursing of the tree that would not bring forth fruit. Or again, it is easy to see why the master ordered his servant to cut down the **unfruitful** fig tree "Why cumbereth it the ground?" And one can sympathize with the anxiety of the steward to save such a possibly prolific part of the orchard, "Lord, let it alone this year, till I dig about and dung it, if haply it bear fruit; but if not, then I shall cut it down." Our Lord knew fig trees well, for they grew in the Land of Christmas as they grow in California. He lived in a sunny land, and it is interesting to notice that while the Gospels often tell how He spoke of the fig and the vineyard, of wheat and tares, sowing and harvest, flowers, rain, clouds—they do not mention that He ever told a story of snow. Apparently it was not sufficiently familiar to His listeners!



Scene from an outdoor Nativity Play.—Monterey, Calif.

Besides the exterior aspect, there is another side to our everyday Christmas. Christmas itself was both a rejection and a reception. "His Own" rejected the Christ-Child, Mary and Joseph received Him, and after them, the shepherds and kings. Our work among the souls confided to our care is likewise both a perpetual rejection and reception, and therefore a perpetual Christmas. There are many

who refuse Him entrance to their hearts. And there are many, thank God, to whom we are instrumental in bringing Him and who receive Him humbly and kindly.

So far I have seen no shepherds in California, but once it seemed that the angels were singing. It happened after another afternoon of visiting. Four little girls, the oldest no more than nine, had accompanied us for the last block on our way to the convent. There was Anita, plump and laughing; Juana, who is a little lame, with a small, serious face; and two others. We started to bid them goodbye at the convent door. Then sudden seriousness fell on the little group, and an earnest look passed among them. Maria was spokesman.



"Catechist," the word was full of emphatic seriousness, and an earnest finger pointed in turn, "Anita —an' Lupe —an' Juana —an' —me —" An eager upward look now, and every syllable emphasized. "We-can-go-into-the-church?"

There was the Spanish softening of our "ch," the Spanish prerogative of questioning by inflection rather than placing of words, and all seemed to add to the pleading in the little voice. Catechist was pleased. Our tiny chapel is across the driveway, and they wanted to visit Jesus there. "Yes," she told them, "but wipe your feet before you go in, walk very softly and don't make any noise."

With a quick promise they were off and we went in the house. A few minutes later, busy at other tasks, I heard the sound of singing. Presuming that a class was going on or that some children were practicing hymns, I paid no attention at first, until it struck me that the close of the day was a very unusual hour for either. I listened, then went to the convent door nearest the chapel. "Anita an' Juana an' Lupe and Maria" were entertaining Jesus! "O Maria, Madre Mia,"—in soft Spanish they were asking "O Mary, my Mother, guard and guide me"; then a pause and that classic of childhood melodies came in sturdy English, "Holy Angel, Watch over me . . ."

I was busy and I went back to my work, conscious again that every day is Christmas in California, and confident that the Holy Child of the Tabernacle was delighting in the spontaneous little gift of song from our "angels." Surely it pleased Him as much as that jubilant "Gloria" on Christmas night!

Oh, yes, Christmas, with sun and flowers, is DOUBLY Christmas in California!





Mary's Loyal Helpers

*To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord
And this shall be the sign:*

*All snugly wrapped in swaddling
bands
And in His manger laid—
In Loyal hearts who shared His love
By prayer and mission aid.*

*Peeping In
on Helpers Doings!*

"WE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION CRUSADE of St. Mary's School, Mount Morris, Michigan, are sending you these dolls in order that you may make a Merry Christmas for the poor mission children," wrote Helen Burns, Chairman. "We have many stamps saved for you too and will try to send them soon after New Year's Day. May God bless all the missions and those working in them and for them with a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

Their gift brought sunshine into the lives of several wee girls who never had a chance to "mother" a real doll before. Happy girls. . . and happier Crusaders who sent them to us as a Birthday gift for our Infant Savior.

"THE SIXTH GRADERS of Trinity School, Bloomington, Ill., have formed a Mission Club," Mary Frances Norton, Secretary, told us. "Every week we have a meeting. Each week every boy and girl brings a penny for the missions. At the last meeting we started thinking about Christmas for the poor. Someone had told us about you and your missions, so we decided to send you the Christmas trees we are making. We sew or paste small gifts on them, and would like to have the address of a mission quickly so that they will be there on time for Christmas."

Later this letter came from Catechist Frances Quinn, one of our missionaries in San Angelo, Texas: "The sixth grade of Trinity School sent us the nicest Christmas box. Evidently each child cut out a good sized Christmas tree from green cardboard and mounted little gifts on it, such as tiny cards, pencils, very small dolls, figures in eraser rubber, and crayolas." May the happiness you brought to others double your own Christmas joy!

IT IS A LONG TIME since you have heard about our young missionaries, the Shea family, Gladwin, Michigan. We had to wait for news too, but it came—and with a Sunshine gift of five hundred pennies! "I know you think that Nora and I have forgotten all about you, the Catechists and the missions," Ruth Shea wrote. (But she wasn't right, you may be sure.) "We really haven't but so many things are happening all the time that we forget to write." Only God's angels can count the smiles and sunshine they brought to His needy ones. You have taken us no less than thirty feet on our way towards our goal, one mile of pennies. God bless you, Ruth and Nora, Roseann, Donna and Donald, our Loyal Helpers!

North, South, East and West—

from all over America they come!

IN EVERY PART of our great nation, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Canadian border to the land of Our Mexico, live ardent young missionaries eager to share their sunshine and joy with God's needy ones. "Send us a Sunshine Bag. We will fill it with sunshine pennies and send it back to you," the request comes from boys and girls. "Please send us ten of your Sunshine Bags. We shall see how long it will take us to fill them!" wrote a Sister from Cincinnati, who is Moderator of a Mission Crusade Unit. Many letters came from those who have "Mrs." before their name. They are welcome Helpers too!

And so we are off! This Christmas season finds us on our way towards a big goal: a Mile of Pennies to bring miles and miles of smiles to our Catechists and their mission children. Each sixteen you drop into your Sunshine Bag will take us one foot on the way. Will we have reached our destination when another glorious Christmas Day comes round? It depends on you!

Father Ray's Chat

WE WERE AMERICAN YOUNGSTERS in an American Catholic school, and our usual spirit of liveliness and gaiety grew apace when Christmas time drew near. It reached its climax and knew no bounds when genial Father Ray, our pastor, made his round of the classrooms before we left for a two weeks' Christmas vacation. Father Ray was built on the lines of Santa Claus and was every bit as jolly. His cheeks and nose and the tips of his ears were a bright delicious red as he stamped into our classroom first, and the huge cape, under which we had loved to play hide-and-seek when we were tots in first grade, was covered with delicious flakes of snow.

"O-o-h, but the wind is howling and blowing today!" Father exclaimed, wrinkling his nose and blinking his eyes. "It will be an easy job for Santa to make his rounds, if this wind keeps up till Christmas eve. I almost didn't reach the school on time to have a last Christmas chat with you. Every step I took the wind blew me two steps backwards!"

Father Ray seated himself behind Sister's orderly desk and knocked ashes from his pipe until our burst of laughter was under control. Quiet again, we waited for Father to speak, knowing that a treat was in store for us—one of Father Ray's rare, delightful stories. In hushed, solemn tones our now serious pastor began:

Christmas in Bethlehem!

THE BEST CHRISTMAS I ever spent was during my seminary days in Rome. Several days before the loved feast arrived I packed a bag and went, alone, to the very city where the Savior of the world was born—to the town of Bethlehem itself. Those who know assure us that the Bethlehem of today is very much like the Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph saw when they rounded the last bend in the road and entered the gates of the quaint charming city so many centuries ago.

I arrived in Bethlehem early on Christmas Eve. It was, perhaps, the same hour that Mary and Joseph entered it on that blessed evening, the first Christmas Eve. Unlike them, however, I was able to find a room in a private home. In

silent prayer I asked God's Mother and gentle St. Joseph to enter it with me, to make up to them for the hard-heartedness of the Bethlehemites who refused shelter to the holy couple on the first Christmas night. Sleep was out of the question, and I sat thinking of the beautiful story of our Saviour's birth

while I waited for the midnight hour.

A KNOCK on my door caused beautiful memories to be forgotten in an instant. As I crossed the room to open it, I smiled almost hopefully at the thought that perhaps I would find Mary and Joseph on the threshold, seeking shelter once more on a Christmas Eve. On the top step, their eyes blinking at the sudden blaze of light from my room, stood, not Mary and Joseph, but an elderly man with two young boys. They spoke a strange language, one I could not understand. Yet it was not difficult to know what they wanted. There were many travelers in Bethlehem, thrilling at the opportunity to spend Christmas in this holy city. No doubt these three had come for the same reason. The hotels were crowded, the inns were filled with guests. When I reached the serene gentle town earlier in the evening I had to take a room in a private home. These three travelers had been unable to find even that. As I hesitated, the words came to my mind, "There was no room for them in the inn . . ."

With a smile of welcome I led my three unexpected guests across to my own room. How could I rest anyway on Christmas night in Bethlehem? Since we could not understand each other, they would never know that I had given up my room to them.

I WENT TO MIDNIGHT MASS in the splendid sanctuary which St. Helena built in the fourth century, transforming the lowly cave where Jesus was born. I gazed with reverent awe at the silver star which marks the place of Jesus' birth under the Greek altar. Inscribed on it in Latin are the words: Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. Kneeling there, I felt nearer than ever before to Jesus, our Infant Savior, and realized better the love which brought 'Him down from heaven that He might be our

Brother. To the right are steps leading down to a tiny chapel. There, in a hollow in the rock, is the place of the manger where the Divine Babe was laid, and where the happy shepherds adored Him.

When our Infant King came to me on that blessed, never-to-be-forgotten night, I whispered to Him somewhat ruefully, "Even if Mary

(Continued on page 18)



For a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the World to come, the Prince of Peace.—Isaias ix, 6.



They can best enjoy who know best how to suffer. Our capacity for enjoyment is in proportion to our capacity for suffering. Were there never a cloud in the sky the pleasures of life would lose half their charm. They would become monotonous and pall on us, for "the rays of happiness, like those of light, are colorless when unbroken."

LIKE all missionaries who are far from home and loved ones, the Catechists look forward to Christmas remembrances from those dear to them. Are you looking forward to rejoicing the heart of your Catechist with a word of cheer or some token of affection? If there is no Catechist on your Christmas list, adopt one or contribute according to your means toward the support of your favorite Burse. Then your very own Catechist 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.

Our Cover. The Catechist sacristan at Victory-Noll is the first adorer as she places the Infant in His manger Crib.

FATHER RAY'S CHAT (Continued from page 17)

and Joseph were to knock at my door this evening, I would not have a place to put them up for the night. There are strangers in my bed." In answer I seemed to hear His words, the words which He spoke to comfort all who have sacrificed themselves for the sake of less fortunate neighbors at home and abroad, "Whatever you have done to the least of My brethren . . . you have done unto Me!"

THE addresses of our mission centers are:

- Refuge of Sinners Mission, 512 Soldano Avenue, Azusa, California.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission, Box 1356, Brawley, California.
- Good Shepherd Mission, Box 336, Coachella, California.
- Little Flower Mission, 1143 Fifth Street, Los Banos, California.
- Mary Star of the Sea Mission, 598 Laine Street, Monterey, California.
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission, 537 East G Street, Ontario, California.
- Queen of the Missions, Box 46, Redlands, California.
- St. Peter the Apostle Mission, 563 O'Farrell Street, San Pedro, California.
- Precious Blood Mission, 222 South Eighth Street, Santa Paula, California.
- St. Joseph Mission, 120 South F. Street, Tulare, California.
- Mount Carmel Mission, 3868 Block Avenue, East Chicago, Indiana.
- Sacred Heart Mission, 4860 Olcott Avenue, East Chicago, Indiana.
- Our Blessed Lady of Victory Mission, 2324 Monroe Street, Gary, Indiana.
- Holy Ghost Mission, 416 S. 3rd Street, Goshen, Indiana.
- All Saints Mission, San Pierre, Indiana.
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission, 720 Court Street, Elko, Nevada.
- Our Lady of the Snows Mission, Box 172, Winnemucca, Nevada.
- Ave Maria Mission, 551 Murray Street, Ely, Nevada.
- Nazareth Mission, Anton Chico, New Mexico.
- Souls in Purgatory Mission, Box 223, Cerrillos, New Mexico.
- Our Lady Help of Christians Mission, Cleveland, New Mexico.
- St. Coletta's Mission, Grants, New Mexico.
- Blessed de Montfort Mission, 514 Valencia Street, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
- Cristo Rey Mission, Box 154, El Paso, Texas.
- St. Francis Xavier Mission, 3816 East San Antonio Street, El Paso, Texas.
- Holy Family Mission, Box 1317 Lubbock, Texas.
- Queen of Angels Mission, 27 West Avenue N, San Angelo, Texas.
- Mary Queen of Peace Mission, 524 West Fourth South, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Let your friends and neighbors read this copy of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST.



The Missionary Catechist

Books

THE POPE SPEAKS, The Words of Pius XII, with a biography by Charles Rankin and a preface by the Most Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, D.D. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 383 Madison Avenue, New York. \$2.75.

"The author of our American Declaration of Independence," writes Bishop O'Hara in his preface to this volume, "laid it down as the philosophical and historical basis of our republican institutions that men 'are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.' As long as such language was current and understood by public men, the Pope as a spokesman for a Christian order in Society had an intelligent hearing." Although Pius XII ascended his throne at a moment when the unalienable rights of men were being more flagrantly violated than ever before in history, the heedlessness of "Those in Power" (to whom he addresses one of the messages contained in this book) has not deterred him from his task as spiritual spokesman for mankind. "We shall not allow diffidence, or disagreements, or rebuffs to interfere with Our undertaking," vows His Holiness in the SUMMI PONTIFICATUS. "We shall not be deterred by fear that others will fail to recognize, or will distort, Our motives." Here is the record—everything that Pius XII has written, or officially spoken, since the outbreak of the war; his Five Point Peace Plan, his messages to King Leopold and Queen Wilhelmina, his letter to President Roosevelt, his first encyclical, on world evils (Summi Pontificatus); his encyclical letter to the Church in America, his message to France, his many discourses to Vatican audiences. The appendix contains Benedict XV's peace plan of 1917 and Pius X's encyclical on Germany. A short biography by Charles Rankin, PIUS THE MAN, traces the career of Eugenio Pacelli from his youth to his election as Pope and summarizes his pontificate to date. As honorary chairman of the Catholic Association for International Peace, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City, contributes the preface.

In Memoriam

Rev. F. Pierce Thomson, St. Louis
Frank Revesdorf, St. Louis
Miss Lena Vogel, St. Louis
Mrs. J. C. Hesselbrock, Cincinnati, Ohio
Miss Eva Albert Nejc

Dearest Rita,

Christmas Eve has come once more, and I can picture you putting last minute touches here and there so that everything will be in readiness for the great day of Christ's birth. While you are busily engaged at home, perhaps you are wondering what I am doing here at Victory-Noll.

The day before Christmas is always a busy one at Victory-Noll as it is in every other Christian home. The food is prepared for the feast day and the dining room is artistically decorated. Already every window boasts a wreath, a candle, or some other Christmas design. The Crib is just now being completed. I am glad because it is already late in the afternoon and we are to go to bed at seven o'clock. It has been whispered that music will awaken us and invite us to Midnight Mass. I am so excited and happy I can hardly wait. . . .

Hark, I hear sweet music! It is coming from the corridor. Why, it is the young novices' choir. How beautiful! How sweetly they sing. It sounds as though the angels had come again to tell the great news. But I must hurry or I shall be late for Mass. Eagerness and excitement make my fingers all thumbs; but I am ready at last and happy to find that only one Catechist is in chapel ahead of me. The Crib is all lighted up. Everything is peaceful and quiet.

While kneeling before the Crib in the soft light of flickering candles, my imagination readily transports me to the scene of the first Christmas. I am in a city of Judea, in Bethlehem. It is a small city but destined by God to be known to every race and clime. It is hidden among hills on which the shepherds tend their flocks. The streets of the city are narrow and tonight they are crowded with strange people.

Cesar Augustus has ordered all the tribes of Israel to return to their chief city for the census. A kind man asks me if I know of a place where his Spouse and he can find lodging. He says everyone tells them there is no room. The lovely young woman at his side looks tired but I notice a look of heavenly peace and happiness upon her face. Her thoughts seem far from the bustling crowd. They pass by and I look after them hoping

that they soon find a place to rest . . .

I leave the city and the crowds and climb a nearby hill. There I see shepherds resting beside their flocks. Suddenly heavenly music breaks upon the stillness of the night. "Gloria in Excelsis Deo!" An angel! He awakens the shepherds! I listen to his message: "Fear not; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Savior 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."

The angel departs but the music continues, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

The shepherds hasten to find the Savior and I go with them. We draw near an old stable. Surely this is not the birthplace of the Son of God! It is cold and dreary in the stable; the only light is the red glow of a lantern. The man, standing beneath the lantern—it is the one who asked me the way in Bethlehem—turns as we approach and beckons us to come in. We find the mother kneeling beside a rude manger which cradles the King of Kings. It is as the angel announced, "you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger." . . .

All too quickly Midnight Mass is over and I return to my room. What a day of love and peace Christmas is to us who have Faith! May the love which burns in our hearts on this blessed day continue throughout the year and keep us ardent in the loving service of our Savior who was born for us on that first Christmas night.

When I began my letter, I intended to tell you all about Christmas at Victory-Noll. Instead I have repeated that old, sweet story of the Christ-Child's Birth—the story which I had told you often in the past when we spent Christmas Eves together by the fireside of home.

I am eagerly awaiting the letter which will tell me all about your Christmas, Rita, and praying that your New Year may be a happy and holy one.

Love to all, from

Your Novice-sister.





LAETENTUR COELI

Let the heavens rejoice, and may the earth exult, *
ye mountains, praise ye the Lord.

Let the mountains break forth into gladness *
and the hills with justice.

For our Lord shall come * and shall show mercy
to His poor.

Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let
the clouds rain the just one, * let the earth be opened
and bud forth the Savior.

Be mindful of us, O Lord, * and visit us in Thy
salvation.

Show Thy mercy unto us, O Lord, and grant us Thy
salvation.

Send forth the Lamb, O Lord, the Ruler of the earth,
from the rock of the desert to the mountain of the
daughter of Sion.

Come to deliver us, O Lord, the God of hosts. *
Show Thy countenance and we shall be saved.

Come, O Lord, and visit us in peace, * that we may
rejoice before Thee with a perfect heart.

That on earth, O Lord we may know Thy ways, *
and among all nations, Thy salvation.

Put forth Thy strength, O Lord, and come, * that
Thou mayest save us.

Come, O Lord, and do not tarry, * blot out the
offences of Thy people.

That Thou mightest break through the heavens
and descend, * from before Thy face, the mountains
shall flee.

Come and show unto us Thy countenance, O
Lord, * Who sittest upon the Cherubim.

Canticle from the solemn Novena for the Feast
of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ chanted
each year at Victory-Noll from December sixteenth
to the twenty-fourth.