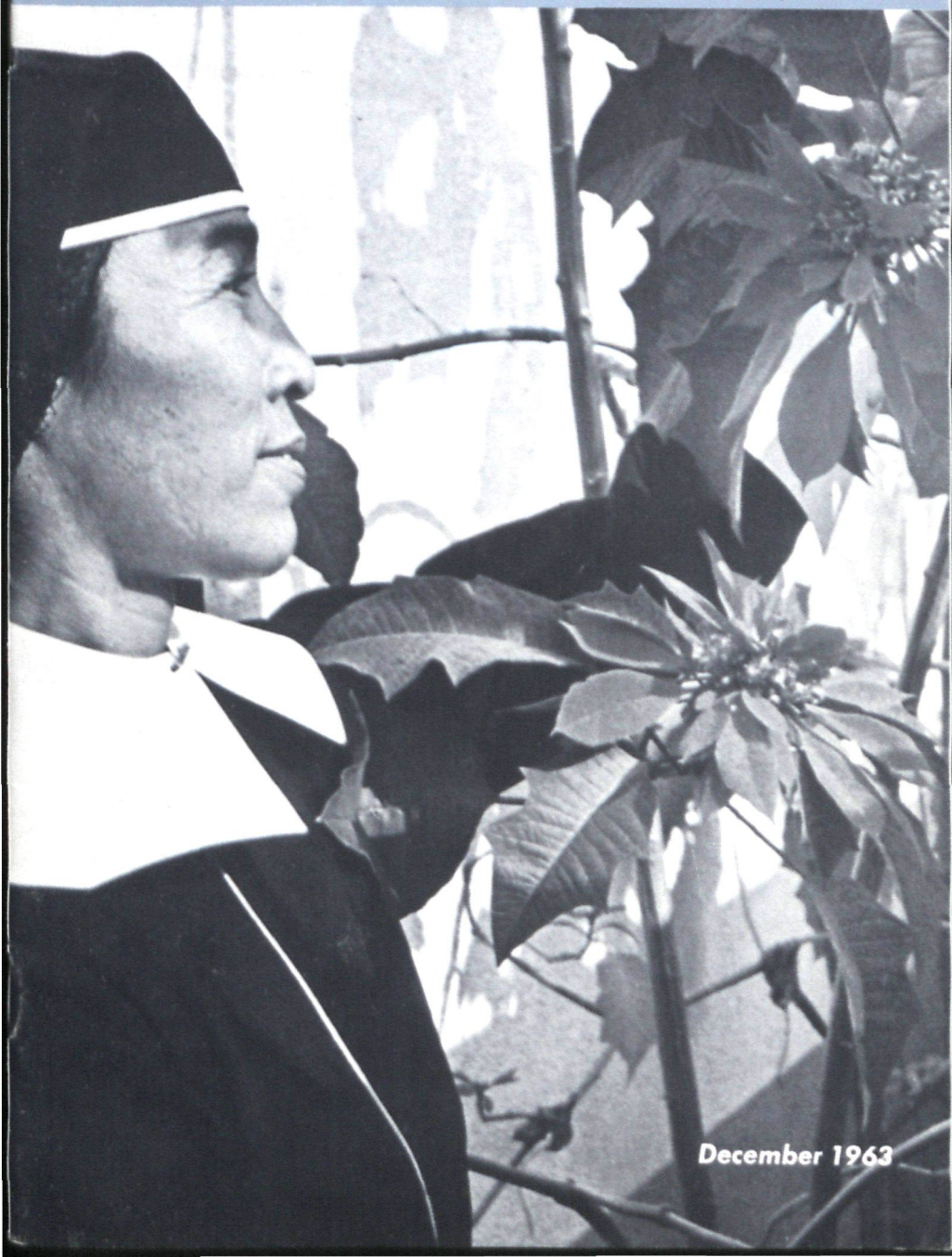


THE
MISSIONARY
CATECHIST



December 1963



*A Joyful Christmas and a
New Year filled with Blessings*

THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

December 1963

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COVER: Much taller than Sister Consuelo are the poinsettias that bloom in the small garden of one of our convents in Los Angeles. The plant was a Christmas gift only a few years ago.

CREDITS: pp. 5, 6, 12, Sister Evelyn Marie; pp. 9, 11, Sister Joan Louise; p. 13, Sister Mary John; pp. 16, 17, Sister Theresa; outside cover, sketch by Sister Martha Mary.



*Message
of the
Poinsettias*

by SISTER PAULA

IN THIS land of sunshine which is California, poinsettias do not suddenly appear for a few short weeks before and after the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. Throughout the winter months they grow like trees on all sides. Their bright flowers often sit, like hats on display, at the end of the branch long after the leaves have dropped and left it bare.

Today — though Christmas is over and gone — Sister Sacristan cut a few branches of the brilliant blooms and fixed two beautiful arrangements for our altar of exposition. When I saw

them, it seemed to me that each bouquet was like a burst of fire with flames shooting out in all directions.

It suddenly occurred to me why the poinsettia is such a wonderful flower to symbolize Christmas.

On the first Christmas God's love burst upon the world in the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal Father. From the first moment of His presence in the stable, His love spread out in all directions. It filled the hearts of those closest to Him: Mary His mother,

and His foster father, St. Joseph; enveloping them and causing them to burst into flame with love for Him and all others on earth.

And this was just the start. All through Our Lord's earthly life, this love flamed out, enkindling the hearts of those with whom He lived. This was why He had come. "To throw a firebrand upon the earth — that is my mission! And oh, how I wish it were already in a

blaze!" (Luke 12, 49, Kleist-Lilly Version) On and on His love flamed until we see the magnificent outburst in His sufferings and death on the cross.

As the poinsettias die and their flaming petals disappear, they are cut down. The sticks, seemingly dead, are planted, however, and after a time the leaves sprout forth and flame anew. New life has appeared. So Our Lord would be taken down from His tree and put into



Georgina points out to Toni the stable that will eventually house the cardboard figures of the Holy Family.



Cora's smile reflects the joy that children everywhere experience when it is their turn to light the candles on the Advent wreath.

the ground — but only to rise. From Him come new life and blazing love.

With his return to His heavenly Father we see the advent of the Holy Spirit in flames of fire. Now the wild fire of love truly begins to spread as the apostles and their followers preach the glorious news of God's reign of love on earth.

“O God, who made this holy night to shine forth with the brightness of the true light . . .” (Collect of the First Mass at Christmas) “We, upon whom is poured the new light of Thy Word . . .” (Collect, Second Mass at Dawn) “This day a great light has descended upon the earth.” (Alleluia of the Third Mass) “That was the true light which en-



That flame touches us when we become God's children, adopted by Him and filled with His life and love at baptism. This early spark of love is fed by Christ's own life in the Eucharist. As we grow in our life in His Kingdom — the Church — the still small flame is fanned until it bursts into a true fire and tries to set all about it a-blaze with that same love.

A quick look at the liturgy of Christmas reinforces this idea of a blazing fire that has been kindled on earth. The Mass formularies for the feast have numerous references to light.

lightens every man that comes into this world.” (Gospel of the Third Mass)

What flame does not give light? This light was such as had never been seen before on earth. How great must be the flame which will enlighten the whole world!

Of all this the poinsettia could remind us — with its brilliant petals, so like tongues of fire, darting out from its glowing golden center. And so—the love that burst upon the world that first Christmas spreads out from its center, Christ, and rages over the whole earth.

In the Crossing of My Arms . . . *In the Fold of My Mantle . . .*

by HAROLD J. RAHM, S.J.

Father Rahm of El Paso, Texas, is National Spiritual Director and Promoter of the Empress of America Apostolate, Inc., whose object it is to make known Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas.

WHEN CHRIST established His Church He instructed His Apostles to be witnesses to Him even to the uttermost part of the earth. The known world at that time was the civilization flourishing around the Mediterranean Sea. It was within these boundaries that the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, began to grow.

The Americas, although unknown then, were inhabited by various Indian tribes. In 1492 this New World was discovered by Christopher Columbus who planted the seed of Christianity there when, upon landing, he erected the cross and offered his prayer of thanksgiving.

At this time one of the highest Indian civilizations was that of the Aztecs who lived in the center of this New World. Cortez conquered the

Aztec nation in the name of Spain in 1521, and paved the way for the Franciscan friars who were to nourish the seed of Christianity.

By 1531, however, the position of Juan de Zumarraga, bishop-elect of this new territory, had become critical. The strife which existed between the Indians and their Spanish conquerors had increased. In his anxiety this saintly Franciscan called upon the holy Mother of God for help. Our Lady answered his prayers through her appearances to the Aztec Indian, Juan Diego, on whose *tilma* she left impressed her own self-portrait.

In her first apparition, Our Blessed Mother identified herself to Juan Diego thus: "Know for certain, littlest of my sons, that I am the perfect ever Virgin Mary, Mother of the true



The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, is always gala for the Mexican people who love her so dearly. Children wear native costumes. Orchestras serenade her and play before her shrine in the church. All night long the people pray and sing hymns in her honor.

God, through Whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth.

"I wish and intensely desire that in this place my sanctuary be erected. Here I will give all my love, my compassion, my help, and my protection to the people. I am your merciful Mother, the merciful Mother to all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me."

Through her message and miraculous portrait, Mary reconciled and united the Spaniards and Indians. Thus she showed the way to the peace, love, and unity attainable through her motherly assistance. Of special significance to us *now* is her statement that she is the merciful Mother of all of us who live united in these lands and of *all mankind*.

Thus did the Western Hemisphere become Mary's land. Down through the ensuing four hundred years Our Lady has ever been a bond of union, a bulwark of faith for all who call upon her.

Mary's words are still as vital to us today as they were to Juan Diego. This is clearly brought out in an article written by Monsignor Angel M.

Garibay, a Guadalupan historian and professor of Nahuatl (the Aztec language) at the University of Mexico. We quote in part from Monsignor's description of the last of Our Lady's apparitions to Juan:

"It was the twelfth of December, 1531. Juan Diego was hurrying to bring a confessor to his uncle who was dying. He tried to hide from Mary and took another path, sure that she would not see him. But she came to meet him and asked why he was taking a new path. He apologized and, filled with sorrow because of his uncle's suffering, entreated her to permit him to proceed on his way to bring a confessor to his uncle."

The essence of her message is to be found in these words which she spoke to Juan Diego: "Hear and let it penetrate your heart, my dear little son. Let nothing discourage you, nothing depress you. Let nothing alter your heart or your countenance. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else that you need? Let not the illness of your uncle afflict you, because he is not going to die



Those are real birds in the cage the little boy is holding. Birds are often left near the altar of Our Lady of Guadalupe on her feast day, for did not Juan Diego say that the beautiful singing he heard on that December morning sounded like the singing of a thousand birds?

now. Be assured that he will get well."

Let us analyze these statements. After an introductory admonition — her solemn insistence that the Indian fix his mind on what she is saying, indicating the seriousness of what she is about to tell him — Mary enunciates three principles:

First, he must fear nothing. He must let nothing discourage

him. He is not alone in the world nor without help. She then tells him why he should be free from fear — because she is his Mother and he is under her care and protection. *This is the most important part of the whole message.*

Mary compares herself to the *ahehuete*, a tree with luxuriant foliage that protects from the sun and from the discomfort of rain, giving solace and rest to whoever takes refuge under its branches. This is an affirmation that she as Mother gives what all mothers give: protection and inexhaustible love.

Next Our Lady asks, "Am I not your fountain of life?" Mary is the fountain of life in the sense that we all know. She is the Mother of the One Who is Life and Who condescended to take His human form from her. She is the fountain of grace which is the communication of divine life to the soul.

And then comes the third principle: "Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?" This is the perfect picture of the family life with which the Indian was familiar and which is true to this day. It is the best expression of motherhood. Enfolded in the mantle or *tilma*, the Indian carries whatever is

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In the Home Field

At Christmas plays — at any plays, for that matter — it is always the smallest actors who steal the show. Our pre-schoolers in Odessa were no exception.

All of the children were on the stage. As a little fairy tapped each one on the head with a wand, the child was supposed to stand and say what letter he was. Everything went well until the fairy reached 'O.' She tapped 'O' on the head, but very solemnly he shook his

head. He was suddenly stage struck. Silence was going to be his policy.

Poor little fairy tapped him again. Again he responded with a firm shake of his head. Little fairy smiled indulgently and, as though it was all part of the program, tapped him *again*. FINALLY, 'O' blurted out, "I'm 'O'," and the triumphant fairy went to the next letter.

SISTER ALICE



Sister Mary Joan (left), Sister Evelyn Marie, and Sister Mary Janet examine with delight their Christmas gifts.

THE LITTLEST INNKEEPER

The proprietors of the Heather Manor Inn were most anxious for us to admit their little son Walter to our pre-school class of religious instruction. His mother assured us that he was mature, intelligent, and alert.

Walter was not quite four, however, and naturally we were hesitant. We did invite him and his mother to the Christmas party. We knew they would enjoy the playlet the little ones were going to present. It was very informal. The mothers were seated in a semi-circle in the classroom. The children performed up in front.

They dramatized Mary and Joseph's search for lodging at Bethlehem. Time after time they were turned away. The scene ended with a sing-song: "There was no room in the inn, no room in the inn."

Suddenly Walter slipped off his chair, walked to the front of the room and announced in a clear, loud voice: "Yes, there is room!" Looking straight at Mary and Joseph he continued: "You can have No. 13. It's vacant. We keep it for 'mergencies!"

"OK," said little Joseph very simply. Mary shrugged her shoulders but looked grateful.



Behind scenes Greg shows Mary Lou the technique of shooting bow and arrow. The boys and girls of the school of religion in Sebring, Fla., presented an Indian version of the Nativity in the Christmas play, *The Papoose Spirit Prince*.

The mother of the newest member of the cast was chagrined. The audience was delighted. And I was amused at such an unscriptural ending.

Walter was admitted to the class after the Christmas holidays.

SISTER MARY GABRIELLE

* * *

CONTEMPLATION

One of the kindergarten children was heard to say, as she looked at the Infant in the crib: "You are so strong that You could change all that straw into candy canes."

SISTER ROSE MARY

For the Very Youngest

by SISTER BEATRICE MARIE

WHEN A CHILD experiences its first Christmas, the attention of the entire family is focused on him. What joy it is for everyone to catch the light in his eyes when he sees the tree, and to watch his excitement at the festive celebration. The climax comes Christmas morning when the family gathers around the tree to open their gifts. All of them are intent on observing the child's reaction. Eagerly they urge him on.

Something similar to this situation is created at Victory Noll at Christmas, because there is always someone experiencing the festivities for the first time — the postulants.

About a week before Christmas the postulants intensify their efforts to find out just what it is going to be like.

"Sister, do we go caroling?"

"When are they going to put the figures in the stable?"

"Do we open our gifts on Christmas Eve?"

"How late do we stay up after Midnight Mass?"

So the endless questions con-

tinue. Few answers are given, and those that are, only add to the postulant's excitement and curiosity.

"Just wait and see. It will be the best Christmas you have ever had."

It was evident that no one was going to tell the postulants anything. They were going to have to find out for themselves.

Two or three days before Christmas, very secretive things began to happen in various parts of the convent. Sheets were seen hanging from the ceiling in corners of the dining room. Behind them busy workers were concealed.

A large screen bearing the sign "Santa's Cloister. Keep Out!" was placed in front of the door of the guest kitchen. An air of expectancy permeated about the newly erected stable in the chapel. It was not unlike that of a stage void of characters.

Packages arrived at the door of the postulancy, only to disappear rapidly and mysteriously. On December 23 the doors of the community room were

closed, not to be opened again until Christmas Eve. A notice was posted instructing all postulants to remain in bed on Christmas Eve even if they heard the singing of angels.

Although the postulants did not think Christmas would really *ever* come, it *did* finally arrive, and it fulfilled every expectation and more. The singing angels came in the form of novices. The Christ

Child arrived at the stable with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. Decorations complete with tree, stable, and fireplace adorned the dining room. Presents from home were opened and enjoyed.

Now the postulants are novices and they are anxiously looking forward to Christmas again when they will have the joy of witnessing someone else's first Christmas in the convent.



"They look awfully good. Are you sure they're for ME?" Sister Mary Loretta asks of Sister Joseph Adele.

Another kind of

Breakfast Club

by SISTER THERESA

IN EVERY convent of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters we are dependent on our devoted lay people to help us in our work. At no time of year is their generosity so evident as at Christmas time.

Conditions differ from mission to mission. When we came to Colorado Springs, in 1950, Archbishop Vehr of Denver



Four zealous workers: Mrs. T. H. Ining, Mrs. Mae Kehoe, Mrs. Paul Fox, and Mrs. B. J. Fitzgerald.



The First Friday Breakfast Club are guests of the Sisters for the holiday meeting. Monsignor Hoffman, spiritual director of the Deanery NCCW presides.

asked the Deanery Council of Catholic Women to make our convent its special project. All the Catholic societies in the area who are affiliated with the NCCW have been most helpful, but we would like to single out for special mention a group called the First Friday Breakfast Club.

Among other things that they do, these women help us provide little gifts for the children at Christmas and at the end of the school year. Though our enrollment has risen from 484 in 1950 to 1,688 at the present time, the women have met the challenge.



Problem: Find Sister Mary Frances. The snow falls thick and fast in Colorado Springs.



I am a member of our CCD executive board. The pastor wants some of us men of the parish to make a cursillo. What connection is there between the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and a cursillo—or is there any?

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, as you should know since you are an active member, is the key organization in the parish. It offers an opportunity to all to do the works of the apostolate. For that reason it is highly recommended that cursillistas become active members. It works the other way around also. It is well for active members of the CCD to become cursillistas.

Those who have made a cursillo are filled with zeal for the spread of God's kingdom. They must be given the opportunity to exercise this zeal. No better means can be found than the CCD.

Incidentally we gather from your letter that you are not fav-

Your CCD Question

orably inclined toward the cursillo movement. It might be better for you to withhold your judgment until you have made one. It is imprudent, to say the least, to be so disdainful toward a movement that has been the means of grace for so many. We can assure you that it is not the emotional affair you seem to think it is.

More and more of our sisters are now cursillistas. Because we work so closely with the lay apostolate we are convinced that we must be familiar with the cursillo movement. The only way to know what it is and what it does for oneself and others is to make one.

We advise you to sign up.

* * *

Have you any suggestions how we can interest high school students in CCD work?

Invite them to be Helpers. There are many things they can do both in and out of the classroom. Then when they have completed their own high school religion courses they can take the teacher training.

BOOKS



Religious Liberty and the American Presidency. A Study in Church-State Relations by Patricia Barrett, R.S.C.J. Introduction by John Courtney Murray, S.J. Herder and Herder, New York. \$4.50

With the 1964 campaign only months away, it is interesting to read this study in Church-State relations. Have the ghosts of bigotry been laid forever or will they raise their heads in the heat of the coming battle?

Mother Barrett, a Religious of the Sacred Heart and professor of political science at Maryville College in St. Louis, examines some of the charges that were leveled against the Church during the last election. Much of the book—sixty-five pages, in fact—is an analysis of some of the hate literature that was circulated and that is now with the Fair Campaign Practices Committee. The bibliography covers another twenty-two pages.

Mother Barrett marks Mr. Kennedy's speech before the ministerial association in Houston as the turning point in the

campaign. In this statement, it will be remembered, the President gave his unqualified commitment to separation of Church and State.

After the shameful events of 1928, thirty-two years were to pass before a Catholic could be elected to the highest office in the land and then it was only by a slim margin. In the short time since 1960, however, the whole picture has changed. There will be some bigotry again in 1964, but it is doubtful if it will ever again be of such proportion as in years gone by. The "Catholic issue" is no longer a reality.

* * *

The Johannine Council: Witness to Unity by Bernard Haring, C.Ss.R. Foreword by Joseph Cardinal Ritter. Herder and Herder, New York. \$3.50

This is a commentary or discussion of the Second Vatican Council. Love is the theme that runs like a thread through the book, just as the primacy of love was taught in such a practical and convincing manner by Pope John. Father Haring calls John XXIII a "personification of the Johannine primacy of love, not merely in his utterances but also and particularly in his actions and in the uniqueness of his personality."

Pope John placed the Council under the protection of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. That is one sense in which it can truly be designated the Johannine Council. But more than anything else, the Council continues its work in the spirit of the Pope who began it. In this sense then, more than in any other, might we continue to call it the Johannine Council. The sublime vision of John XXIII centered on the mystery of unity and love. Unity has now become for us practically a synonym for love.

This is truly a spiritual book, not merely a description of the workings of the Council. Father Haring begins with the revelation of the mystery of love in the Trinity. The Son of God became incarnate and founded in His blood the New Covenant. He gave His commandment of love to His disciples and exhorted them to unity, giving them—and us—the Eucharist as a visible sign of union in the family of God.

This message of love, of union, must be also the message of the Church which is the continuation of the Incarnation and the extension in space and time of Christ's redemptive mission. The Church is the theme of the Second Vatican Council. She must ponder her nature and her mission. She must examine her conscience. She must inquire

whether her liturgy, her preaching, her moral message are stamped by the mystery of unity and love.

This is what the Church is doing in the Council and it is these concerns that Father Haring reports in his book.

The author is one of the leading moral theologians in the Church today. He is a peritus at the Second Vatican Council. During the past summer many audiences had an opportunity to hear him when he lectured in the United States.

* * *

Our Father in Heaven by Father Francis. A Book on Creation. The Seraphic Press, 1501 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee 15, Wis. 25 cents.

If you are looking for a work book for first graders or pre-school children, here is one you will like. It is not just a color book, but there is room on each page for the child himself to draw. He is told to "put in more rain and waves of water," "add some mountains and rocks," etc. A whole page is left blank to "draw some animals you like." The story of creation is given together with the promise of Redemption. The front cover is in color.

IN THE FOLD OF MY MANTLE

Contd from page 11

most cherished or most precious. In the fold of her mantle, a portable cradle, the Indian mother carries her youngest.

"In the crossing of my arms" brings to mind the manner in which a mother crosses her arms when she presses her child to her heart. Mary's statement meant that Juan Diego and all who are personified in him lie in the warm fold of her mantle and in the crossing of her arms, pressed to her bosom. Is there any better way of expressing mother love?

In her apparitions and message on Tepeyac Hill, Our Lady

of Guadalupe declared herself to be a Mother, a Mother to all, a Mother in the truest sense of the word.

"Are you not in the fold of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?"

IMPORTANT NOTICE

FIRE DESTROYED records of subscriptions that had come in during the first two weeks of November. Stencils had already been made for some of them, but not for all. If you renewed your subscription to **THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST** recently or know of any new subscriptions that were sent to us, will you kindly write us? We ask you to be patient until we can clear up our records.

In Memoriam

- Joseph Renier, Chicago, brother of
Sister Madeleine Sophie, O.L.V.M.
Mrs. Catherine Cottier, sister of Sister Madelon, OLVM
Luke Hall, Great Bend, Kans., brother of
Sister Loretto, O.L.V.M.
Mrs. Rose Gomez, Los Angeles, Calif., sister of
Sister Dolores Marie, O.L.V.M.
Most Rev. Francis Beckmann, C.M., D.D.,
Archbishop of Panama City
Rev. Edmund A. Ley, Terre Haute, Ind.
Brother Lambert Barber, C.S.C., Notre Dame, Ind.
Sister M. Consolata Daly, R.S.M., Titusville, Pa.
Sister Mary Bonavita, C.P.P.S., Dayton, Ohio
Henry Lueke, Louisville, Ky.
John Toensmeyer, Alexandria, Ky.
Elizabeth Framme, ACM, Carrollton, Ky.
Mrs. Thelma Zenz, Hartford City, Ind.
William J. Ostergren, St. Paul, Minn.
Mrs. Leo H. Dwerikotte, Phoenix, Ariz.
Thomas L. Hartman, Winter Park, Fla.
Mrs. Emma Grill, Santa Fe, N. Mex.

Editor's By-Line

It was Christmas morning. The doors of the living room were opened and the family went in together to open their gifts. First they would say a little prayer before the crib that had the place of honor beneath the tree.

Somehow the crib did not look exactly as it should. What was wrong? Everyone looked in astonishment and then for an explanation turned instinctively to the four-year-old twins, Freddie and Fran. Why had they put TWO infant figures in the manger?

"Well," said Freddie, the spokesman, "we thought maybe Jesus was twins like us." Fran nodded in agreement.

This happened in the large family of the brother of one of our own sisters. With the logic of four-year-olds Freddie and Fran had added another infant to the crib.

We might express amazement, but is this nearly so astonishing as what really happened at the Incarnation? The Son of God, Second Person of the Trinity, took on Himself our human nature. Through the action of the Holy Spirit the Word of God became Man. As Son, Christ received all from the Father. He returned everything to the Father and He did this in the love of the Holy Spirit. This

eternal, divine reality, existing in the Godhead from all eternity, was transposed into Jesus — human, temporal, historical.

The love story of the Incarnation does not stop there, however. It was only as man that Our Lord could become a sacrifice for our sins, merit to be raised up by the Father, transformed by the Holy Spirit, and become Lord, the Kyrios.

This eternal, divine reality that is Christ's was transposed into the Church. We now share in it. Though we are fully human we participate in the divine nature. We do this through the sacraments, especially baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist. Through the sacraments we are drawn up to a new level of being.

Christ, the perfect response to the Father's love, is continually giving Himself to the Father and drawing us out of space and time into this same relationship with the Father. We can say that we have died and are risen with Christ and ascended with Him to the Father.

This wonderful process, this result of the Incarnation, is not finished, however. It is continuous. Not only must we grow in the divine life, but we must bring others into it — into the eucharistic assembly. Therefore — charity, union with Christ and with one another. Love is the key. SEA

A Personal Message to You

Beginning with this issue of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST, our magazine will become a bi-monthly. It seems to us that to reduce the number of copies a year is a wiser thing to do than to raise the price of the subscription.

We would like very much, however, to increase our circulation. You — more than anyone else — can help us do this.

Our subscribers are very faithful. Many of you take the time to write us that you enjoy the magazine. The only complaint we get is that there is not enough of it! We would rather have you continue to make such a complaint than to put the magazine aside until you have more time to read — and not read it.

We do not want you to think of THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST as a kind of receipt for a donation. We do not make any appeals through the magazine, as you know. In former years we sent a Christmas appeal to our subscribers. This annual appeal has been discontinued. It is not that we do not need donations, but we know that these days many demands are made on your charity. If you wish to send us a gift for Christmas, we will be most grateful. The poor are still with us and they look to us to help them. But whether or not you send a gift, let us assure you that we will remember you and your intentions in our Novena of Masses preceding the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord.

One of the nicest gifts you can send us would be subscriptions to THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST — whether you yourself subscribe for someone or suggest to your friends that they subscribe. You can assure them that they will *not* be besieged with appeals of any kind, that this is not our policy.

During this holy season when we commemorate the mystery of the Incarnation, we will remember you and your loved ones in a very special way. May peace and joy be yours in the year that lies before us.

Sister Elizabeth Ann

Editor



Come,
let us adore Him.

Roman Breviary