

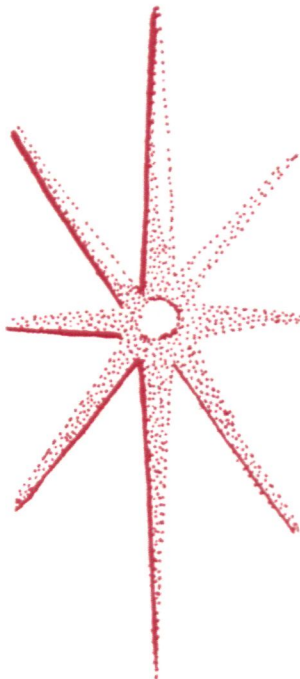
# THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

Volume 36

DECEMBER 1959

Number 1





Christmas . . . . .

the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord,  
has come again,

and our thoughts go out once more  
in a spirit of gratitude to Him  
who became Man for our salvation.

Let us give our love to Him  
who first loved us.

Only then will we enjoy His gift of  
peace,

the peace of which the angels sang  
on the night of His birth.

May your Christmas joy brim over  
into a holy and happy New Year.

Mother Cecilia  
and the  
Victory Noll Sisters

# THE MISSIONARY CATECHIST

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No. 1 Vol. 36

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters  
Victory Noll, Huntington, Indiana



Victory Noll Press

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COVER

Richard Casteneda lights the candles on the Advent Wreath, while Patsy Ann Davey reads the prayer and Gail Running watches.

CREDITS

Cover and page 5, W. Wesley Kloepper, Azusa, Calif.; pages 8 and 9, Vince Bizzaro, Port Allegany, Pa.; page 14, Wyoming Catholic Register photo by Thomas Thomas.

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# The Joy of Preparing

by SISTER M. DE PORRES

It was the first week of Advent and something had been added to my usual classroom equipment which I gathered together from the back seat of the car.

The children from Mountain View School in Azusa, California, ran to help me, as usual, to carry chart, brief case, and the other things into our garage classroom. But now they stopped short at the "something new" and one child exclaimed happily, "Oh, goodie! It's somebody's birthday!"

It was not Somebody's birthday yet, but it was coming soon and this was the Advent wreath to prepare for it. Anchored by gravel, four candles were arranged in a round cake pan that I had painted green. A purple ribbon gave the finishing touch.

Who would light the candles the first week?

The very first time I brought an Advent wreath into the classroom I asked that question. Of course every hand waved to the accompaniment of "I want to, I want to!" "Please let me!"

Now I know better, and after I explain the purpose of the ceremony, I select the shortest child for the privilege. According to custom, the youngest in the family lights the first candle, but in class the children are all practically the same age. By choosing the shortest child the others are satisfied.

The second week calls for the oldest in the family to light two candles. This time I choose the tallest child.

The third week it is the mother who lights the first two candles and also the rose one that represents Gaudete Sunday. Whenever I explain this to the children, they clamor, "You light them, Sister." I have made it a practice, however, to let the privilege go to the child who attends Mass regularly, receives the sacraments often (if he is old enough), comes to class every week, and studies his lessons.

The fourth week of Advent is nearly always time for Christmas vacation from school and therefore from the school of religion. It is the father's duty to light all the candles on the wreath and we have reason to believe that each year more and more families use this beautiful preparation for the feast of the Infant. That is, of course, the reason we carry out the custom in class. We send home with the children a leaflet explaining the simple ceremony and containing the prayers that are said.

In our garage classrooms I have the children read the prayer from the Mass of each respective Sunday in Advent. If they cannot read, I read it. Then the candles are solemnly lighted with everyone looking on in awed silence. Sometimes the star performer scorches a finger in his eagerness. As the little flame grows to its full size we sing the chant *Veni, Domine Jesu . . . Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.*

In our open garages or trailer classroom the drafts and breezes make the candles burn down very quickly. They cannot possibly last the whole season



if we allow them to burn all during the class period. Besides, it would be dangerous. We have had to devise rules for blowing them out, just as we devised rules for lighting them. Blowing, as well as lighting, is a thrilling experience for the children.

In the middle of four candles we place a small empty paper crib. When the children return to class after the Christmas vacation we have a tiny plastic replica of the Infant lying in the crib.

The children can carry out this

same project at home and many of them do. A number of mothers made hundreds of such cribs or baby beds as the little ones call them. At the beginning of Advent we give them to the younger children in our classes. They put them somewhere near their own bed at home and fill them with straw (bits of tissue) earned by acts of love and sacrifice. We obtained a large number of the little plastic images which the children in turn buy from us at a nominal cost. Then they can carry out their project to its happy end by placing the Infant in their own crib on Christmas Eve.



While the candles are being lighted, the whole class watches in solemn, fascinated silence.

# *She Makes the Bitter Sweet*

by SISTER CAROL

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
Empress of the Americas



WHENEVER the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe comes, I always remember my friend, Moises de la Vega Beltran. He was a bracero from Capulhuac near Mexico City.

Like many other Mexicans, Don Moises had come to the United States as a contract worker thinking in terms of the exchange of twelve pesos for every American dollar. I met him when we returned to the Imperial Valley in late August after our summer retreat in Redlands.

After Mass the first Sunday we were back, Don Moises introduced himself and his bracero friends. He asked if we had a catechism in Spanish. The men told us of the hardships they had endured since they left their homes in Mexico. They were hired to pick cotton and were paid according to the quantity picked.

It was impossible to work hard in the blazing sun. They had to do without water because the water would be on the truck and the truck was far away from where they were working. These men were in a group of about 1,200, far more than the camp was equipped to care for. They would have to get up at two or three in the morning and wait in line for hours to get into the dining room. Otherwise they would have to go to work without breakfast. One of the doctors told us that the men were always coming to him with stomach ailments caused by the poor food they were given in the camps.

"*Hemos sufrido mucho*," the men said simply, and there was disappointment in their voices as they said it. They looked forward to better fields where the picking would go faster and they could earn more.



In the days that followed we prayed each morning for cooler weather; cooler weather in the Valley being 110 degrees. After Mass on Sunday Don Moises always waited respectfully to bid the *Madres* the time of day. Then he was sent to work in a field where they picked squash and cantaloupe.

Very often our doorbell would ring during supper and we knew it was our bracero friend bringing cantaloupe or squash. We appreciated the gift all the more because it meant that by going out of his way to come to the convent, Don Moises had to walk two miles to the camp where the men lived.

He spoke of going to confession but there seemed to be something in his heart, some grudge against someone that was holding him back. Often he hinted at what it was, but never expressed it. He never told us. We never asked.

Don Moises, like all Mexicans, had a great love for Our Lady of Guadalupe. I urged him to go to confession and to receive Holy Communion on *el día de la Virgen*. When Guadalupe Day came, he wrote a beautiful poem in which he addressed Our Lady: *Polvo de azucar, endusas lo amargo de la pena*. (Powdered sugar, you sweeten what is bitter in affliction.)

Perhaps it seems strange to us Americans hearing Our Lady called by such a term, but a Mexican knows no restraint when he speaks of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I have seen strong men get tears in their eyes upon hearing her name mentioned, so great is their love for her.

But Don Moises did not receive Our Lady's Son in the Eucharist on that Guadalupe Day. The obstacle, whatever it was, still remained.

One evening he brought us a letter he had just received from his wife. He wanted us to know what she had written about one of his four little boys, the oldest one. He was doing very well in school. The sister who taught him

said that he received all the awards in his class. His father was so proud of him. He looked forward to returning to Mexico in a few months to see his wife and children.

After Christmas Don Moises came to the convent with the welcome news that he had gone to confession and receive Holy Communion on the feast of the Nativity and on several Sundays afterward. He seemed very happy. He had better work.

Then one night after night prayers the doorbell rang. A bracero wanted to speak to me. I expected to see Don Moises, but it was not he. It was his friend, Don Emilio.

Don Emilio was from the same pueblo in Mexico as Don Moises, and the two men had been friends before they came to California to work. He had been to the convent before with his friend, but this time he was alone.

Abruptly he said, "I came to tell you that Moises died last night."

He said he had awakened to hear him choking, and within a few minutes he had died. The other men in the quarters were so stunned that they did not have the presence of mind to call a priest. He went so quickly.

I was shocked at the news. I thought of his wife. I thought of his little boys who would never see their father again. I thought of their heartbreak and I prayed for them. But most of all I thought gratefully of how God had prepared him during those last few months for eternity.

We went to the funeral home to pay our respects before the body was snipped back to Mexico for burial. The morticians were surprised at how many came asking to see him. We were not surprised. Don Moises' kindness and graciousness had brightened the lives of many of the others who had worked with him. He had many friends. Perhaps Our Lady had permitted him to help her in "sweetening what was bitter in the affliction" of her beloved braceros.

# *Welcome, Jesus!*

by SISTER NOREEN

**T**HE Love Story of the Incarnation "comes alive" in Smethport, Pennsylvania, as the children of St. Elizabeth's parish enact the parts of those who were present during that first happy Christmas.

Before Midnight Mass, the crib on the side altar houses only the ox and the mule. Two or three sheep graze on the simulated hills. Where are the shepherds? These figures are in the

hands of living shepherds who are taking their place in a procession forming in the church hall.

An angel is waiting to lead them. Behind the shepherds, another heavenly messenger precedes the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph who are carrying small statues of these saints. Following them is the Christmas Star who bears a beautiful statue of the Infant on a decorated satin pillow.



The procession moves up the aisle of St. Elizabeth's Church.





Father Grode, pastor, receives the offerings for the Holy Sacrifice.

Is everyone in place? No, one Wise Man is missing! It is late, so a shepherd is suddenly elevated to a kingly role replacing his rugged apparel for a royal one and a crown. The kings follow the star and, accompanied by pages, carry their symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The two small girls walking behind the kings bring the Love Story up to date, not only by their modern dress, but more by the gifts they carry. One has a cruet of wine; the other, a large white host on a golden paten. After the crib figures are in place these girls will present their offerings to Father for use in the Mass to follow. For what use? To be consecrated into the very Body and Blood of Christ.

Bringing the procession to a colorful close are the girls in long pale gowns who carry wheat and grapes. These symbolize all the members of the Church who, united with Christ, form His Mystical Body.

No wonder that the choir and congregation sing so joyously: "Come, let us adore Him . . . Christ the Lord." In silent tribute to the boys and girls who defied drowsiness to be part of the procession, first place at the Communion railing is given them. As Father turns at the *Domine non sum dignus*, he sees Mary, Joseph, shepherds, kings, angels, and "modern" children ready and eager to give place to Him who could find no room in the inn.

"I ALWAYS knew I loved Our Blessed Mother," I said to my companion. "But I didn't know I loved her this much!"

This much meant enough to get out of bed at three o'clock in the morning to do her honor.

We laughed together and recalled the joke one hears among the Spanish-speaking people. A man told a priest he did not feel that it was necessary for him to go to Mass on Sunday.

"Aren't you a Catholic?" inquired the padre in surprise.

"Oh, yes, Father. I'm a Catholic; but I'm not fanatic about it!"

In Spanish the play on words makes it funnier: "*Si, Padrecito: yo soy Catolico, pero no soy fanatico!*"

When our rising bell rang me out of

and the reality surpassed the expectation.

Maybe you will ask as I did: Why four o'clock in the morning? I was told it was because we imitate Juan Diego who was hurrying to Mass very early in the morning when Our Blessed Mother appeared to him. I rather suspect it also serves the practical purpose of allowing many to show their devotion who would be working at a later morning hour.

Since there were four of us sisters, two went to St. Joseph Church and another sister and I to Sacred Heart. Inside, all the lights and many candles were blazing. The picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, beautifully decorated, held the place of honor. I was pleasantly surprised to see many of the children from our classes. Somehow I had hardly expected them to make such an early appearance!

## *Torchlight and Stars in December*

by SISTER MARY KARL

pleasant slumber at 3:00 a.m., I rose with anticipation into the cold, dark morning of December 12. The sisters had told me all about it, and this year I too would join in the procession in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

After four o'clock Mass at each of the mission churches in Eagle Pass, Texas, the congregations form in procession, meet at a downtown intersection, and then walk a few blocks farther to *La Iglesia Grande* (the Big Church or Mother Church), where a Solemn Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated at six o'clock. It was something to look forward to,

Father Boron caused a titter among the boys when he told them we would all sing during Mass and that they should get the *cucarachas* out of their throats and sing out loud and strong! Father had conducted a novena in preparation for the feast. Now he led the singing as Father Junius offered Mass.

Some of the hymns were the very ones used at the basilica in Mexico City on this day. Sweet and strong indeed they came from the throats of the Guadalupanas and the Hijas de Maria; full and strong from the lips of the Holy Name men. The whole congregation joined in. Perhaps the "singing as



of innumerable birds" that Juan Diego heard surpassed ours, but it was very beautiful. At Communion time it seemed as if everyone in church received Our Lord.

After Mass began the procession. We passed from church to form ranks. We sisters found ourselves just behind the women of the Guadalupanas—a large group. The sky was still dark though star-lit. Men carrying flaming torches flanked the procession as we walked to Williams Street, then turned down Ceylon.

It was perhaps a mile that we walked, saying the Rosary, singing Guadalupe and Cristo Rey hymns. As we passed the dark houses, not a dog barked. It seemed strange. Visiting on these streets during the day often found us the center of a canine chorus.

As we turned north on Ceylon, I saw with delight that an unexpected marcher had joined our Queen's procession. Beyond, where the trees made two dark lines against the still darker sky to frame his magnificence, there glittered and gleamed down upon us the stars of Orion the Hunter. His sword, too, was there to do homage to a beautiful Lady.

"Listen!" Sister Marie Celeste whispered to me suddenly. "Do you hear the others?"

Yes, there it came. In quiet intervals of our own prayers and singing, one could hear far off its distance-softened echo. The two processions were drawing close together. Ours reached the appointed corner first and halted to await the others. The torches had long ago burnt out, and now one sensed dawn in the sky. Across the street a gas station glimmered. To our right, the Eagle Pass Electric Company loomed up. But modern progress held no interest for us then. We walked in the footsteps of Juan Diego.

For a few blocks the pilgrimages joined into one grand procession that led into the Church of Our Lady Refuge of Sinners. At its open doors Father Nash was waiting, and we all poured into its refuge. Here truly was light and warmth and music, and the waiting arms of our Mother. There she was, the quiet little Madonna with the angel under her feet and the stars on her mantle, lifted high above us and bordered with immense draperies of the green and white and red of Mexico.

The ushers were still worriedly trying to find space that was not there, when the Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe began. Our welcome pealed out in the Introit and Gradual: "Hail, holy Mother! . . . Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun? As the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the days of spring!"

Her answer came at the Offertory: "I have chosen and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there, and my eyes and my heart may remain forevermore." And the Communion verse gave Mexico's proudly grateful acclamation: "He has not done in like manner to every nation; and his judgments he has not made manifest to them."

Again a throng for Communion. Where *did* all these people come from? I heard later that since the penal laws against church processions are still on the books in Mexico, many people from Piedras Negras, Coahuila, cross the Rio Grande to join with us in the early morning pilgrimage. How happy this union in Faith of the two nations which were but one vast country when Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego very early in the morning!

Daylight brightened the world as we left the church, with never-to-be-obiterated memories of torchlight and starlight that honored a Queen.



Some 400 children and their parents came to the annual Christmas party sponsored by our clinic here in San Diego. First there was a program put on by children who attend a dancing school and a few girls from Rosary High. Then Santa distributed gifts to all the children. They received also a small paper crib and a bag of candy.

It was truly a big affair with so many there, but everything went smoothly and joyously. Those who attended were truly among the poorest of the poor.

Before Santa gave out the presents he announced that he was looking for the child with the biggest halo. He went all around the hall and then stopped in front of our little Amalia, a child with a spinal bifida. The lower part of her body has been deformed since birth,



Sister Marie Celeste gets help refurbishing the crib statues.

## In the Home Field

and until a few months ago, Amalia had to be carried around. She was born here, but was abandoned by her parents and lives now with a grandmother in Tijuana, across the Mexican border.

Grandmother brought Amalia to the clinic with the hope that something could be done for the child. She is now eight years old and stands about the height of a three-year-old. But she stands! Since she had orthopedic surgery she is able to get around with the aid of crutches and steel braces.

Amalia was in Mercy Hospital for a few months for this correction and during that time learned English. We are all very proud of her. When Santa stood in front of her she was all eyes. Of course she got the first and biggest gift.

SISTER JOHN FRANCIS



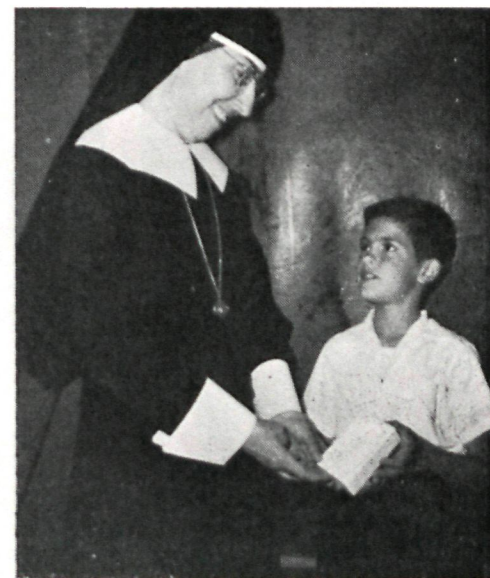
From a dining room window at Victory Noll.

### PARTY FOR THE ANTS?

It was the day of the annual procession in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, held every year in Los Angeles on the Sunday closest to her feast. Three of the sisters from our convent were to walk with the children from Soledad parish, two with Guadalupe parish, and two with St. Marcellinus.

We were ready to leave the convent when we heard a distressed cry, "Sisters, the ants are in the candy!"

With a crew of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Helpers we had, a few days before, sacked, counted, and packed in boxes, 500 bags of candy for our Christmas parties. Now everyone rushed to the scene of disaster. We stopped and gulped hard as we looked at the endless trail of ants busily maneuvering their way into our bags of freshly bagged candy.



Sister Clarice admires the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe carved in soap.

"What will we do—with the procession just a half hour away?"

It did not take us long to decide. Four sisters left and three of us stayed behind to "de-ant" the bags and salvage what we could. Fortunately the ants so far had aimed at a special target and all the rest followed the leader, so we lost only a few bags.

Fortunately, too, the procession was such a lengthy one that it took our section a good forty-five minutes to start moving. We managed to join before they got off to a good start. We were somewhat breathless, it is true, but our minds were at rest.

SISTER MARY MILLCENT

\* \* \*

Second grader in Los Alamos, New Mexico, the Atomic City: "Sister, do you know why only the three Kings knew the star was a sign Jesus was born? Because they had so few scientists in those days!"





At the Bishop's suggestion we arranged ourselves on the stairs.

## *Silent Night* for the Bishop

by SISTER STEPHEN

"COME in, come in, invited the Bishop cordially as he himself opened the door to us. "I've been expecting you."

Sixteen pairs of snowy boots lined the porch as their owners nervously plodded their way into Bishop Newell's residence. This was their long-awaited moment. Six weeks of rehearsal lay behind them. No, it had not been easy for these teenage girls to learn Christmas carols arranged in four parts, but they

readily accepted the assignment. The oft-repeated reminder that they would be carolling on Christmas Eve for the Bishop of Cheyenne was all they needed to get over the rough spots during the rehearsals. It had been hard work, but now it all seemed worthwhile.

At the Bishop's suggestion we arranged ourselves on the staircase according to our vocal parts. His Excellency smiled encouragingly from below. That was the sign to begin.

I gave a starting note to the high sopranos, but they shook their heads very emphatically from the top of the stairs. That note would never do. A few of the girls offered an opening tone. In a few seconds everyone got into the act by attempting to offer a note that would please the sopranos. We sounded like an orchestra warming up. Meanwhile Bishop Newell waited patiently.

Out of what seemed a multitude of pitches, there finally came one agreeable to all. Hesitantly we began "O Come All Ye Faithful," and then with growing confidence, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." We were pleased with ourselves now and sang more easily as we progressed. As I glanced around I could plainly read on those angelic faces: "Why this isn't so hard to do after all, even if it is for the Bishop. In fact it's lots of fun. We ought to do it more often."

Alas, all good things must end.

"That's all we know, Bishop," I announced as the last tone faded away.

A look of surprise came over the Bishop's face.

"You mean you're going to leave without singing 'Silent Night'? Why Sister, Christmas isn't complete without 'Silent Night'."

"Well, we DO know 'Silent Night,' Bishop, but everybody sings it everywhere so we thought we better not do it again."

"Oh, but I insist."

What can you do when a Bishop insists, and especially when all the choir is jumping with glee at the prospect of showing off their ability once again?

Full of confidence and urged on by His Excellency, we began.

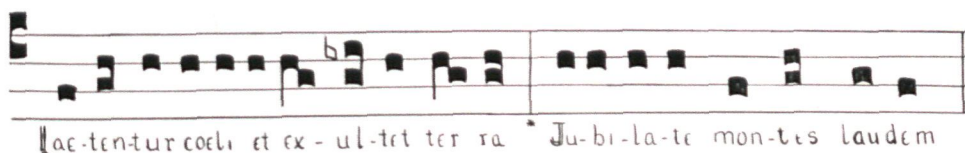
"All is calm," they chirped; but in our excitement we had started too high. The sopranos quickly gave up and gradually faded into second soprano. The second altos decided to follow suit. The first altos tried desperately to save face by singing the melody with the sopranos. Our grand four-part opening ended in unison.

Red faces looked sheepishly down at the Bishop, but he was smiling and clapping more vigorously than ever.

"That was the best one of all," he said enthusiastically as we descended the stairs. "The angels couldn't have done it better."

Laughingly and rather reluctantly we made our way back to the cars.

"Thanks so much for coming and for the lovely singing," the Bishop called after us, "but thanks most of all for . . . SILENT NIGHT."



our

# Associates'

Dear Associates:

THIS is the season when we like to express our gratitude for all the help given our sisters *collectively* and *individually*. In the former case, we have in mind the club dues and special donations sent to the Motherhouse for the general and particular needs of our community; in the latter, gifts sent to a sister in the mission fields.

We want you to know that the joy you experience in working for our sisters can be equalled only by our joy in having such friends.

May our Blessed Mother raise the Divine Infant in her arms in benediction over you and all those you love on Christmas day and always!

SISTER SUPERVISOR, ACM

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## GREEN SCAPULAR GROUP



In Oak Park, Illinois, a small group of women, under the leadership of Miss Grace Lewis, has been organized into a band under the title of *The Immaculate Heart of Mary Group*. These ladies have turned out thousands of green scapulars in the past and will continue to make them in the future. Besides, they will pay monthly dues. The members, who are employed during the week, sacrifice their precious Saturday afternoons, once a month, to make scapulars at the home of Miss Lewis.

## MORE HELP FOR INFIRMARY

On one of the last days of October, Mrs. A. J. Lammert, Promoter of *Mother of Perpetual Help Band*, St. Louis, wrote as follows: "Enclosed are money orders and checks from our recent card party amounting to \$200. Sister Florence told us about the new building you are erecting. You can use this money toward those expenses if you wish."

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## BETHLEHEM





# Club Mention

## SISTER ISABELLE SEES SPONSORS



It was a mutually happy meeting a few months ago when Sister Isabelle visited with members of St. Joseph Band, Chicago. This group, headed by Mrs. A.

Naumes, sponsors Sister. A special party in her honor netted \$40 and Sister wrote that the amount was being used at the Powell, Wyoming, convent, where she is stationed, for sets of pictures and various other class aids.

We are proud of this Band. It is one of our very best. The last meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Benz. Nine tables of cards and buncos were set up and the sum of \$55 realized.

## TELL-O-GRAMS

SACRED HEART MISSION SOCIETY, NEWARK, N.Y. A major event with this mission society and for us, as we get a large portion of the proceeds, is the annual bazaar held about the middle of November. Mrs. Theresa Pitrella, the secretary, wrote: 'I have been sewing aprons until the late hours of the night and when I think I have finished I have more material given to me. It goes on like that until about a night before the bazaar. We are hoping to make a lot of money this year.'

\* \* \*

ST. JOHN MISSION GUILD, CHICAGO. We do not hear very often from the secretary, Mrs. Ellen Berger, but when she writes she makes it worthwhile dollarwise, sending checks ranging from \$50 to \$100 from the members of the club. Our only means of reciprocation is that of earnest prayers.

## BAND, CLUB, GUILDS DONATIONS

September 28 to October 28, 1959

Charitina, Chicago, Helen Ford .....	\$ 10.00
Dolores Guild, Chicago, A. Klingel ....	101.00
Holy Family, Chicago, Jos. Walz ....	50.00
Holy Souls, Chicago, Mrs. McGovern ..	54.00
Mother of Perpetual Help, St. Louis, Mrs. A. J. Lammert .....	200.00
Our Lady of The Sacred Heart, Appleton, Wis., Helen Arens ....	60.00
Padre Serra, Corona, Calif., Mrs. V. delaTorre .....	20.00
Queen of Virgins, Madison, Minn., Miss Regina Emmerich .....	6.00
St. Anne, Milwaukee, Mrs. Karnitz ..	15.00
St. Augustine, Marshfield, Mass., Mrs. Jas. A. O'Brien .....	50.00
St. Catherine, Los Angeles, Calif., Mrs. M. McMannamy .....	75.00
St. Clare, Omaha, Mrs. A. Vlcek .....	10.00
St. Joseph, Chicago, Mrs. Naumes ....	55.00
St. Katherine, Chicago, Mrs. Downes ..	42.50
St. Luke, Chicago, Mrs. L. Potter ....	24.50
St. Margaret Mary, Omaha, Neb., Miss Marie Egermier .....	150.00
St. Mary Sod. Band, Detroit, Mich., Mrs. Mary Pink .....	30.00
St. Omer, Cincinnati, Mrs. Hurlburt ..	10.00
St. Patricia, Chicago, Mrs. L. Gones ..	5.00
St. Philomena, Chicago, M. Schaefer ..	60.00
St. Vincent of St. Jude's, Ft. Wayne, Mrs. Eunice F. Carl .....	25.00
Seven Dolores, Chicago, Mrs. Murphy ..	25.50
Srillians, Cincinnati, Rita Busche ....	24.00

## LES PETITES FLEURS, CHICAGO.

At the beginning of the year, the members, most of whom are mothers of many children, decided to do away with the making of religious articles at meetings. They concluded that members can do this more easily at home. Instead they spend the monthly meeting time in a social game of cards with regular dues being paid.

# Pretending Christmas

by SISTER EVELYN MARIE

SHORTLY before the Christmas holidays, the little ones in the prayer class at St. Joseph's parish, Ogden, asked me if they could "pretend" the Christmas story. I promised that I would try to arrange it for our next class.

We had no actual costumes, I knew, but I counted on the ever useful rummage supply that all but fills a small room in the basement of our convent. I was not disappointed in my search. I came forth with an armful of used curtains and a few pieces of colorful materials, as well as a number of fashionable looking men's ties.

On the promised day I was greeted by excited, smiling faces. "Are we going to pretend Christmas today, Sister?"

When I assured them that we were, they pleaded: "May I be Mary, please?" "I want to be St. Joseph!" "If there are going to be shepherds, I want to be one."

After we said our opening prayers and all had seated themselves in expectation, I produced a small box and explained that it contained folded blank slips of paper, that is, all except one. That one had the name "Mary" written on it and the little girl who drew that paper would be permitted to portray Our Blessed Mother in the tableau. We followed the same procedure in selecting St. Joseph, the shepherds, and the angels.



When all the fortunate ones had been chosen and the simple costuming completed, the children helped to decide the places for each character. Sally, our dark eyed, fair complexioned madonna, looked very sweet and humble with her head and shoulders draped in a snow-white, silk curtain. In her arms she held the Infant, a doll that we ordinarily use in demonstrating baptism.

Michael stood close by and looked very much like the silent, thoughtful Joseph in his dark brown robe made also of curtain material. Three young shepherds knelt before the scene in adoration. On their heads were bright coverings of red, blue, and yellow, held firmly in place by contrasting ties of sprightly design.

In the background, singing "Silent Night" together with the pupils in the audience, were two rather impish looking youngsters. Their print dresses showed plainly beneath the pink and cream-colored gossamer angel gowns that had at one time graced the windows of someone's home.

When the pictures had been taken and the little celebrities were once more seated among their companions, one of them was heard to say, "Well, that didn't last long, but it was fun!"





# Your CCD Question

**I am a member of the Parent Educator committee. We made our first visit to several homes, but hesitate about going again. Won't the families think we are intruding?**

No! On the contrary, experience has proved that the families look forward to subsequent visits. Of course it is assumed that the members of this committee are thoroughly instructed and know exactly how they are going to approach the families they visit. It is the duty of the chairman of Parent Educators to see to this.

Parent Educators must never, never give out all the leaflets at once. This is fatal to the success of the program.

Now you can see how important it is that the chairmen of the various committees (and ideally, the members also) take part in a training course. We cannot insist too much on this. Unfortunately some Confraternity members, and pastors, too, see the necessity of training courses for Teachers, but not for those in the other divisions—Helpers, Fishers, Discussion Club Leaders, etc.

\* \* \*

**The graded course of studies that we are using in our school of religion calls for singing. I can't sing. Shall I leave out the singing altogether or what?**

We had a voice teacher who used to insist that everyone has a voice, just as

everyone has some kind of nose. Well, maybe, but sometimes we doubt it. Even if it is true, it does not mean that everyone can teach a song to a group of children.

The most practical way out of your dilemma is to get a Confraternity Helper to take over the singing. It might even be that you know someone who is a musician but she never dreamed of being a Helper because she did not know her talent could be used in the religion class. She will be delighted to help you and gain an indulgence while doing it!

\* \* \*

**How do you get teenagers to come to the parish high school of religion? Out of a possible fifty-nine, we are getting only eight or ten.**

If there is any single most important factor in getting high school boys and girls to attend religious instruction, it is the teacher. When the classes are interesting and challenging enough, the teenagers will attend and will bring others. This means work, hard work. The teacher must like teenagers and must prepare his material well.

Some of our most successful high school classes are on the so-called "tough" East Side in Los Angeles. The boys and girls are enthusiastic about their religion classes, attend well, and are an influence for good in their high schools. But the sisters who teach them work harder preparing these classes than for any other classes they have.

## Books



*Handing on the Faith* by Josef A. Jungmann, S.J. Herder and Herder, Inc. 7 West 46th St., New York 36, N. Y. \$6.50

Catechists everywhere will welcome the long-awaited English edition of Father Jungmann's *Manual of Catechetics*. It is worth the wait and also worth the price.

Father Jungmann needs no introduction as an authority on the liturgy, but perhaps his knowledge of catechetics is not so well known. Those who have attended Father Hofinger's classes will recall that he refers to Father Jungmann as the "master." Readers of *Lumen Vitae* think of Father Jungmann, Father Hofinger, and Father Goldbrunner as the exponents of the kerygmatic approach to teaching Christian Doctrine.

It is this approach that permeates *Handing on the Faith*. It is the privilege of catechists to teach the glad tidings of the Gospel with all its power and beauty; and to awaken in their charges the grateful response to their Heavenly Father for having made them His children.

Catechesis implies not just religious instruction, but sound Christian training, religious education in every sense of the term. Father Jungmann begins with the history of catechesis from the early days of the Church until the pres-

ent time. Then he discusses the role of the catechist, his task, and the methods he uses. These methods are first treated in a general way and then broken down into special categories covering visual aids, homework, memorizing, etc.

A valuable chapter follows on special tasks proper to various age levels: First Confession, First Communion, Introduction to Holy Mass, Confirmation, etc. Appendices are entitled: The Apostles' Creed, The Kerygma in the History of the Pastoral Activity of the Church, Kerygmatic Theology, and Catechesis in England.

Invaluable are the references that are given. They cover every phase of the teaching of religion. Catechists who are using the Catholic Catechism and Father Goldbrunner's accompanying Workbook will be especially grateful for *Handing on the Faith*. It should be in every catechetical library. It would make an excellent catechetics textbook for seminarians and religious.

\* \* \* \*

*Our Lady in the Liturgy* by Dom E. Flicoteaux, O.S.B. Translated by Dom Aldhelm Dean, O.S.B. Helicon Press, 5305 East Drive, Baltimore 27, Maryland. \$2.75

"True devotion to the Blessed Virgin," Dom Flicoteaux tells us (p.96), "is shown by an habitual and lively sense of her presence, of her tenderness, of her protection; by an irresistible need to have recourse to her in the smallest details of our daily life, and especially in our temptations, our sufferings and our trials. To acquire such dispositions, there is no surer way than to live the life of the Church and make her prayer our own."



In this little book the author shows us how to live in this spirit of filial devotion to Our Lady by recognizing her rightful place in relation to Christ and the Church.

The first half of *Our Lady in the Liturgy* stresses Mary's part in the economy of our salvation. The author shows us Mary's role in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption, as it is incorporated by the Church in her liturgy.

The second part of the book considers the principal feasts of Our Blessed Mother, her place in the ordinary of the Mass and in the breviary, and her own Little Office. An appendix gives a detailed and beautiful explanation of the Salve Regina.

Here and there the English is not so smooth as it might be. Words are sometimes repeated within a sentence and adverbs are misplaced. We almost overlook these flaws, however, because of the excellence of the subject matter of the book and its treatment. Lovers of Our Blessed Mother and lovers of the liturgy—and should we not be both?—will value it.

\* \* \* \*

*First Steps to Sanctity* by Rev. Albert J. Shamon. Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. \$2.75

This little book gives us exactly what its title claims—the first steps on the road to sanctity. It should be in the library of every retreat house. Parts of it might also be used profitably by postulants in a religious community. Any religious, in fact, will benefit from reading it, especially the chapter on meditation, but the book is intended primarily for lay persons.

The matter is solid, but it is treated in such a way that it is easily grasped. Starting with the premise that sanctity is not just for a chosen few, but should be the goal of all, Father Shamon discusses the means that are within the reach of anyone who has good will and the desire to be a saint: spiritual reading, meditation, mortification. He points out the obstacles to the spiritual life and gives practical rules for overcoming them.

We hope that the author carries out his intention to follow this little treatise on the purgative way with companion volumes on the illuminative and unitive ways.

\* \* \*

*Ste. Anne de Beaupre: Its Shrine—Its Spirit* by Eugene Lefebvre, C.Ss.R. Ste. Anne's Bookshop, Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Canada. \$2.00

This is a beautifully illustrated book on the famous shrine of Ste. Anne. It contains the history of the shrine from its beginning in 1658 until the present day.

It is significant that the first cure took place when the foundations of the original little chapel were being laid—at a time when there was as yet no relic, no statue. Louis Guimont, though severely crippled with rheumatism, dragged himself to the spot and made a supreme effort to lay three small stones in the foundations. He was immediately cured. Since then countless remarkable cures have taken place.

Persons who have had the privilege of visiting the shrine will be especially happy to have this handsome album, but it should be of interest to every Catholic in North America.

## EDITOR'S BY-LINE

The Christmas spirit does not depend on the weather in any way, and down in our hearts we know it is true. Yet we who grew up in the northern half of our country associate cold and snow with Christmas.

What I really want to say is that I am trying to catch the Christmas spirit while outside we are enjoying a balmy, late fall day. It is one of the vagaries of the publishing business. You are always weeks ahead of everyone else, including the weather. Christmas has come and gone around the feast of All Saints; Easter is over while you are still keeping the Lenten fast.

I wish I could catch the Christmas spirit of the early years of community life. Of course every postulant thinks her first Christmas in the convent is the most wonderful of all, but sometimes I wonder whether some of Victory Noll's first Christmases did not surpass all the others. Perhaps it is just nostalgia.

We were a small family at Victory Noll in the early days and that made a difference. The decorated dining room was out of bounds after the noon meal on Christmas Eve. We used to eat supper in the kitchen! We picked up our food cafeteria style and sat in rows. We had no trays, and how we juggled the plates I do not know, but we must have managed for oyster soup was always part of the menu.

I can still remember standing there in the kitchen waiting for the community to assemble before we said grace. Through the windows you could see the snow falling softly on the little evergreens strung with Christmas lights.

Those evergreens are gone now. The two by the door grew up and were

scraggly and had to be taken out. What was the old kitchen is now our guest dining room.

Do you suppose I could recapture the special flavor of a Christmas Eve of long ago if I would take my plate and sit in the corner of the old kitchen to eat my supper?

No, that is silly and I know it. Christmas does not mean decorations and lights and loud speakers blaring "Silent Night," not even the hushed expectancy of a convent on Christmas Eve.

Christmas means the realization of the tremendous fact of the Incarnation. The Word assumed our human nature and gave us in exchange the grace to be partakers of His divine nature. The Church in her liturgy never lets us forget this. Again and again in the Mass and Office of Christmas she recalls to our minds that Christ is made like unto us that we may become like unto Him.

This is the meaning of Christmas.  
SEA

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## IN MEMORIAM

Alva McConnell, Bloomington, Ind., father of  
Sister Effie  
Most Rev. Thomas J. Danehy, M.M., D.D.,  
Apostolic Administrator of Pando, Bolivia  
Rev. Anthony Kroger, O.F.M., Gallup, N. Mex.  
Sister Mary Estelle, RSM, Titusville, Pa.  
Sister Irene, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio  
Mrs. Frank Schrimpf, Sr., ACM, Milwaukee  
Mrs. Rose E. Peil, Fort Wayne  
Rupert L. Hammond, LaPorte, Ind.  
Mrs. Joseph Derheimer, ACM, Fort Wayne  
Mrs. Mary A. Earl, Rochester, N. Y.  
Sophie Siech, Chicago  
Mary O'Brien, Chicago  
J. S. A. Smith, Los Angeles  
Laura Franken, Norborne, Mo.  
Charles Bartrom, Huntington, Ind.  
James Dwyer, Barre, Vermont



# *Hail, O Empress of America*

by SISTER REGINA

Hail, O Empress of America,  
Our dear Queen without a stain.  
Guadalupe is your title  
And the throne from which you reign  
Is Mount Tepeyac made blessed  
When you came to earth again.

Mother Mary graced our country  
With her loving presence rare.  
She appeared to Juan Diego  
Sending him with gentle care  
To the bishop with a message  
That she wished a shrine built there.

"Build a temple to my honor,  
Where my mother heart may reign,  
Calling all with sweet compassion;  
None will come to me in vain.  
All in labor or affliction  
Strength and peace will find again."

The good bishop, wisely prudent,  
Begged a sign of Heaven's Queen;  
And the gracious Lady answered  
In a manner sweet, serene;  
Working miracles, inspiring  
Hope through ages yet unseen.

She commanded Juan Diego  
Gather roses fair and bright  
Which she caused to bloom in winter  
On a barren, rocky height,  
On the twelfth day of December—  
Blessed day! O blessed site!

She arranged them in Juan's mantle  
Saying with a smile benign:  
"Take these to the holy bishop,  
Here he has the heavenly sign.  
Do not look within your mantle  
'Till the bishop you will find."

When Juan opened his poor mantle  
To the bishop's great surprise,  
Roses fell in shower of glory  
Spreading their sweet perfume wide.  
But the prelate knelt in reverence;  
Greater marvel met his eyes.

There upon the cheap, rough tilma,  
Painted by an art divine,  
Was the portrait of Our Lady,  
Queen and Mother for all time,  
Come to dwell in our dear country  
Blessing souls with gifts sublime.

Hail, O Empress of America,  
Guadalupe is your name.  
Please accept our humble homage,  
Bless our hearts and homes again.  
Keep us loyal to our Savior  
Till with Him and you we reign.

