



St. Catherine's Academy Gazette

Holy Mother Church has dedicated this Month to the
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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LUCY, THE DEVOTED DAUGHTER



HE silver gloom of a Roman twilight was settling over the snow-clad hill, and the wind had blown the flakes into drifts to hide the path. One arm about her mother, who seemed too frail for the weary climb, a girl of fourteen was making her way slowly toward the summit. Outlined against the gray skies above them, stood the white tomb of Saint Agatha.

Even as a little child, Lucy had loved Agatha's story, and had prayed that she too might one day die for Jesus sake. Now for long years her mother had been ill, and doctors had been unable to cure her.

Lucy had thought of the girl saint. Would not Jesus listen to her prayer, since she had died for Him? With new hope in their hearts, the girl and her mother had set out for Saint Agatha's tomb, there to plead for health.

The mother's face was lined with pain, yet she smiled when the girl turned to her with a word of love or merry little jest.

"It is not far now, my mother" Lucy cried; "see, there it lies above us, half buried in the snow." The child's eyes, gentle and meek as those of a dove, were lifted in confidence to the shaft of gray stone gleaming through the bare trees, and her courage inspired the poor mother to a last strong effort. Following her daughter's gaze, she looked up the steep ascent, trying to forget the rugged, toil some way, in the hope that the little tomb seemed to promise. A few moments, and perhaps the pain of a lifetime would be forgotten.

"I see it, child," she answered; "with God's help we will reach it before night fall.

With fresh courage they pressed on, and weary, but full of joy reached the little tomb.

Feasts and Fasts This Month:

Feast of St. Nicholas - Dec. 6th

Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary - Dec. 8th

Our Lady of Guadalupe - Dec. 12th

Ember Wednesday - Dec. 19th

Ember Friday - Dec. 21st

Ember Saturday - Dec. 22nd

Christmas Eve - Dec. 24th

Christmas Day - Dec. 25th

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The snow fell more softly now, and the wind had died away. A strange peace seemed to hover over the white-robed earth. Near to the tomb was a tumbled hut, and within its poor walls the mother and daughter sought a little rest. As Lucy slept, her head pillowed against the rough boards, in a dream she saw Saint Agatha. The martyr's robe was shining like the starlight, and her arms were outstretched in joyous welcome. "Lucy, my sister," she whispered, "your mother will be cured."

Even in her sleep Lucy felt the happiness that surged through her soul at that glad message, but her heart almost ceased beating as Agatha stooped and gathered her in her arms. A wave of longing to be with God swept over her, a stronger, purer love for Him than she had ever felt before.

"Little sister" Agatha said, and her voice was triumphant with gladness, "Jesus has heard your prayer. The crown of martyrdom shall be yours."

"Thank God, thank God," Lucy sobbed, and with that sweet cry on her lips, awoke to find her mother standing before her in the morning sunlight, cured of her infirmity.

The days that followed were joyous ones for Lucy. All that she had she gave to the poor, and over and over again promised the dear Lord to live for Him alone until she might lay her life in sacrifice at His feet.

The time was not far distant. A persecution of the Christians was even then raging, and soon Lucy was brought to the prefect. She was condemned to be burned alive, but when she was cast into the flames God saved her from the heat. Then it was ordered that her heart should be pierced with a sword. And so, on the thirteenth of December, soon after the vision at the tomb of Agatha, her soul sped forth to God.

Her Feast day is December thirteenth.

~ *Children of the Kingdom, Imprimatur 1914* ~

QUIZ ON THE GOSPELS AND HOLYDAYS

(answers to be found on the last page of the gazette)

1. Who said, "Fear not; for behold I bring you good news of great joy . . . For this day is born to you in the city of David a Saviour . . . ?"
2. What is the origin of this quotation - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"?
3. Who said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the . . . Lord . . . ?"
4. When did our Lord say, "Did ye not know that I must be about my father's business?"
5. Which is the shortest Gospel text read at Mass during the year?



St. Lucy ~ Feast Day, December 13th

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ~ DECEMBER 8TH
THE LADY IN WHITE

The cold winds from the mountains sent a chill through the simple cottages in the little town of Lourdes. The good housewives poked the fires in the open hearths and threw short logs in to the flames. In one of the little homes, the dying fire was poked but there was no wood to put into it.

"Bernadette," called the housewife, "go with your sister to the forest near the river and get some wood. The howling of that sharp wind tells me that it is going to be a cold night."

Bernadette, a girl of fourteen, went with her sister and a playmate to gather the dry branches that fell by the river. The girls enjoyed the cold wind against their faces. They darted here, there, and everywhere, seeing who could find the most wood. In their eagerness, two of the girls waded through the shallow stream and wandered far into the forest.

Bernadette was left behind. She was not as strong as the others and therefore had to go more slowly. As she approached the bank of the river, she was startled by a rustling sound in a grotto on the side of a hill near her. She looked around and saw a bush swaying as if blown by the wind. Then in the grotto above the bush appeared a bright golden light. The little child gazed in surprise.

Little by little, the bright light faded away, and there in the grotto stood a beautiful woman, smiling sweetly at the little peasant girl. Bernadette had never seen a more lovely face. She had heard stories about holy saints and fairy godmothers, but she had never dreamed of anything so pretty as the Lady in White.

In her long white robe, the lady stood like a statue. A girdle of pale blue was tied about her waist, and the ends fell gracefully at the left side. Over her head and shoulders and down her back was draped a white veil. A rosary with a golden cross was placed upon her left arm. Her hands were folded piously at her breast. Her tender eyes gazed sadly yet sweetly upon the world.

Little Bernadette fell upon her knees. She knew that the beautiful woman must have come from heaven. She folded her tiny hands in prayer, never taking her eyes from the silent figure in white that stood in the rock grotto.

Then the vision grew dimmer and dimmer, until the lovely lady disappeared.

The little child was still kneeling in prayer when her playmates returned with their arms filled with wood. They wondered what was the matter with Bernadette. They had never seen her praying in the woods before.

"Bernadette," they said, "see all the wood we found. Where is your wood?" Bernadette was ashamed that she had not gathered more wood for her mother. She was also sorry that the girls had found her praying. She wanted to keep her vision a secret. Gathering up the few pieces of wood she had found, she joined her playmates on their homeward journey.

But Bernadette's secret made her so happy that she could not keep it. She whispered it to her sister, and her sister whispered it to her mother. That night when the flames were dancing in the open fireplace, the little family talked about the Lady in White who had appeared at the grotto.

Time and again, the lovely Lady appeared to the holy peasant girl. The story was soon carried far and wide. Men, women, and children from all the near-by towns hurried to the grotto to see the vision. Many believed and many doubted.

Once as Bernadette knelt in prayer before the grotto, the Lady appeared to her and beckoned her to climb the rocks. With her eyes fastened on the vision, Bernadette started up the rocks.

In a sweet, clear voice, the Lady told her to wash in the water at her feet. The little child looked around but could see no water. With her hands, she dug a small hole in the ground, and a stream of water bubbled forth. The people who had gathered at the grotto gazed in amazement. They knew that there had been no spring or water near the spot before.

At another time, the Lady in White told Bernadette to have a chapel built there in her honor and to have people go in procession to it. This was indeed no easy task. But God saw to it that the chapel was built, and people from all over the world have gone to it in large processions.

Each year, trains bring thousands and thousands of sick, blind, deaf, and lame to Lourdes to seek a cure. They pray before the shrine of the Lady in White and bathe in the pools that are filled with water from Bernadette's spring. Each year, the sick are cured, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk.

It is God's way of rewarding them for their faith, and of showing the wonderful power of the Lady in White.

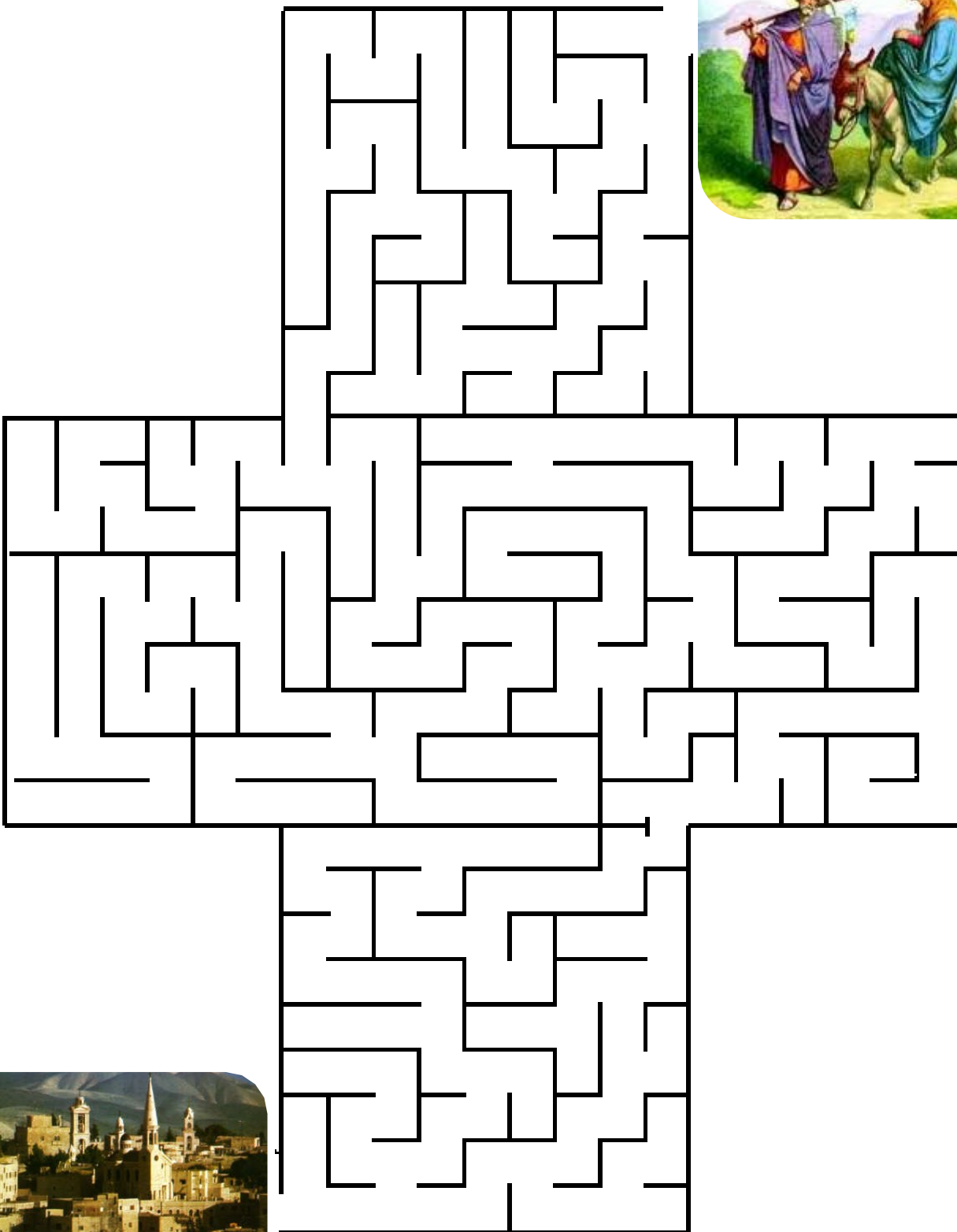
And who was the Lady in White that appeared to Bernadette?

When the little girl asked the Lady her name, she said, "I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION." She was the holy Mother of God who was always free from any stain of sin. It was Mary, then, the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, who appeared to Bernadette in the grotto at Lourdes, and it is through her help that the wonderful miracles are performed at Lourdes today.

~ "Wonder Stories of God's People," Imprimatur 1929 ~



Help Mary and Joseph find their way to Bethlehem.



STATUES

"Render to all whatever is their due; tribute to whom tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes are due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due."

Romans, 13:7.

A pastor in the Middle West recently bought a two-foot statue of St. Joseph for the sisters' convent. When the statue was delivered he placed it on top of the ice-box temporarily, until he would have a chance to present it to the good sisters.

The colored housekeeper at the rectory, who is not a Catholic, was entranced with the beauty of the statue. The assistant pastor took it upon himself to explain who was represented.

"That is a statue of St. Joseph," he told her. "It is for the sisters' home. They are especially devoted to St. Joseph, who was the protector and guardian of the Blessed Mother, the model of all women religious."

"And is that Jesus he is holding?" asked the housekeeper.

"Yes, that is the Christ-Child," the priest explained.

"St. Joseph was his foster-father. Notice the kindly but strong features of the saint. Everybody likes St. Joseph."

And then with sincerity she exclaimed:

"I like him, too, even though I just met him."

That image of the head of the Holy Family was serving one of its principal purposes—to teach, to help instruct. Images have many other purposes, which we will point out after we have shown the foundation or reason for having statues at all. They are sacramentals blessed by Mother Church.

We have statues of our Lord, our Blessed Mother and of the saints. These figures in stone and bronze and marble and even plastic remind us of the holy people they represent. St. Paul told the Romans to render honor to whom honor was due. Honor certainly is due to Christ. In a different and lower degree honor is also due to those heroic men and women who tried to follow Christ. That is the basis, the principle for our veneration of the sculptured likenesses. Let me explain some of the purposes of this practice:

1. With statues we adorn our churches and homes. Go from any Catholic to any non-Catholic church building, or vice versa, and immediately you notice the difference. Beauty, a feeling of companionship and company, are experienced in the Catholic house of worship. This homelike feeling is due principally to the Presence of Christ, but the warm life-like statues add to that considerably.

Even your non-Catholic and your pagan ornaments his dwellings with products of the chisel. Yes, we even find statues of Catholics embellishing some Protestant Churches. In the church of St. John the Divine in New York stands a statue of our own St. Francis of Assisi.

2. Then we use these sculptures to instruct. The state and the city erect statues of Washington and Lincoln to teach patriotism and loyalty. The Church erects statues of Christ, His Mother and the saints to teach her citizens loyalty to God.

During the many ages before the invention of printing, from what did the Catholic study but from the figures of the saints and holy scenes? My little story of the non-Catholic housekeeper who learned in a few minutes to appreciate and even to be attracted to St. Joseph by means of an expressive statue of him, is an example of the instructiveness of such images.

3. Furthermore, statues spur us on to put in to practice what we have learned about the people represented. Don't you want to be more big-souled, more honest, more unselfish, every time you look at a statue of Lincoln or Washington? Don't you feel a surge of loyalty to and pride in your glorious United States? Just so, don't you want to be more modest and pure-minded, more thoughtful of God and of others, every time you see a carving of Christ and His saints? Who can gaze upon a marble reproduction of the crucifixion without experiencing the same feeling as the penitent thief hanging by the dying God-Man? Who ever cast his eyes upon the sweet face of a Madonna, chiseled in immaculate marble, and did not wish to share the priceless purity that beams from her motherly countenance?

Were it not so often repeated we would feel it useless to answer the charge that the veneration of statues is idolatry. The simplest Catholic will tell you that he does not worship or adore or in any way honor the actual marble or stone of that figure. He honors the one represented. Let Mother Church explain her stand officially. We quote from the Council of Trent:

"The images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and the other saints, are to be kept especially in churches. Due honor and veneration is to be paid to them, not that we believe there is any divinity or power in them, not that anything is to be asked of them, not that any trust is to be placed in them, as the heathens of old trusted in their idols... on the contrary, the honor we pay to images is referred to the originals whom they represent; so that by means of images which we kiss and before which we bow, we adore Jesus Christ and we venerate His saints."

Mother Church stresses the importance of religious atmosphere and environment, not only in the house of God, but also in the homes of the children of God. Yet, how many Catholic homes are barren, totally barren, of religious images of any kind. What is the cause?

It is not ignorance, for you know full well that a little Catholic air in your home is good for your spiritual health. Catholic atmosphere makes the home peaceful and happy. The cause is indifference and thoughtlessness.

Perhaps these few remarks on the usefulness and reasonableness of statues will induce you to put one or the other in your home, will lead you to appreciate the beautiful statues we have here in church, will prompt you to remember more often and more devoutly the holy people they represent.

~"Talks On The Sacramentals," Imprimatur 1951~

The Sunbeam
 A ladder from the Land of Light,
 I rest upon the sod,
 Whence dewy angels of the Night
 Climb back again to God

~ Rev. John B. Tabb ~



THE LEGEND OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



STRANGERS had been amongst the Indian tribes, strangers who showed them no mercy, who drove them from their dwellings like hunted deer; and there was none to help them, for when they called upon their heathen god he did not heed their prayer.

But holy men came through the forest paths, who told them of God and the Blessed Virgin, and taught them to live as Christian men. One of the noblest of the race made his dwelling there; he learned each tale the Fathers told of Mary, and every week he journeyed to the nearest city to hear Mass in her honour. On his way he passed a hill where a heathen temple had once stood, and there he would always pause and sing the litany of the Blessed Virgin, that the evil spirits might be put to flight if they still lingered there.

Once, while singing the praises of Mary on that hill-side, he heard sweet strains mixing with his own strains so sweet that he felt sure they came from no voice of this world and then, in the midst of dazzling light, a figure stood before him whom he knew to be the Queen of men and angels.

"I know thy love for me," she said, "Therefore I bid thee to take a message to the chief of the holy Fathers: say to him that I will have thee raise a church upon this spot where I stand, and none shall invoke me here in vain."

The Indian hastened to the Bishop. He spoke of the vision he had seen and of the desire of his glorious Mothers; but the Father's words were cold and stern: "It is a wondrous tale," he said; "but I dare not think it true."

Again the chieftain heard the singing on the hillside, again he saw the dazzling light, while the sweet voice spake to him: "Hast thou performed my will?" it said; and, bowed to the ground, he could only tell her it had been in vain; his message was not believed.

"Seek thy priest again," said the vision; "bid him, if he loves me, attend to my request." And the Indian went; but the Father only smiled: "Thou hast done what was bidden thee; go in peace," he said. Sadly and sorrowfully the Indian went homeward. Our Lady stood before him once again, asking him of his success, and then she bid him return to her on the morrow, when he should bear a sign to the Bishop from her.

He went. The Blessed Virgin appeared, and, smiling, bid him bring her flowers from the hillside, and with these she twined a fragrant wreath, which he should bear to the



to the good Father, in token that the vision was true. The Indian wrapped his treasure in his cloak, and took his way through the city, where he sought the Bishop.

“See, my Father,” he cried, “our Blessed Mother has sent to you a sign,” and as he spoke he threw back the folds of his cloak Ah! no flowers are there, no half-faded wreath, but the face of the Virgin Mother! Drawn as though by angels, before which the Bishop bent his knees in reverence. Multitudes came flocking to see that wondrous sign, and there, upon the hill top, a church was raised, in which there was an altar to Mary, blazing with gold and rarest gems, given by the chief of the Indians; and the cloak with its marvelous likeness was preserved as a sacred relic of the Mother of God, whose praises are sung by many thousands of Christian pilgrims to that spot.

~ *Legends of the Saints, 1876* ~

UNSCRAMBLE THE SAINTS NAMES

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. PIASOLYM | A. BIBIANA |
| 2. RABBARA | B. DAMASCUS |
| 3. TERSYLVES | C. OLYMPIAS |
| 4. BIUSEUSE | D. NICHOLAS |
| 5. SUCSAMAD | E. BARBARA |
| 6. ESORBMA | F. SYLVESTER |
| 7. ABIBIAN | G. EUSEBIUS |
| 8. CHONILAS | H. AMBROSE. |



ST. STEPHEN



HAT saint could we choose for the month of December, dear children, more interesting than St. Stephen; the first, of all that multitude of disciples who crowded around our Blessed Lord, to lay down his life, and shed his Blood, for Christ? The apostles, and many a zealous follower of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, lingered on through the summer, and autumn, and into the bleak winter, of a long life of hardships, earning then martyr's crown, as men earn the glory of a great name, when life had become a burden easy to lay down; while St. Stephen, was called, in the first freshness of the paschal joy, with the light of that Resurrection morning still kindling the fervors of his youthful soul, and making sacrifice more than easy a joy, a triumph.

There is no doubt that St. Stephen was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord; for, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, we find him perfectly instructed in the law of Christianity, and with the power to work miracles, while he preached with an earnestness that excited the fear of the Jews, and, their hatred. It was not, in that day, the first thought of a Christian to smooth down the rough and sharp edges of the doctrines of Christ. It was not supposed to be the best way of making converts to the new Faith, to tell people that they could be "saved as well out of the Church as in it, if only they were honest in their detestation of it, if only they thought themselves safe." The first Christians were wholly given up to the glorious work of making Christ known as the Redeemer of men, and they were too much in earnest to flatter men into the belief that they could get to heaven in their own way ; which would have been the same as to say, that their way was as good

as God's way, and that Jesus Christ had been born, had suffered, and had died, all for no purpose.

This very easy way of taking care of one's own salvation, or of instructing others how to do so, was not, certainly, the way of the apostles, or of St. Stephen. They, certainly, did not tell people that it was really of very little importance what they believed, if they were only good, honest, well behaved, people.

If they had done this, who, among the Jews, would ever have taken much thought or trouble about them? Instead of this we find them preaching, everywhere, the necessity to salvation of a belief in Jesus Christ, and of baptism in His name. I suspect that if St. Stephen should appear among us now, he would not be among: the liberal sort of Christians, or the liberal sort of Catholics, who are ready to say anything which they think will flatter their neighbors, and make them good friends, and companions.



In those first days of Christian charity when every Christian was known to every other Christian, there was a holy strife, as to who should be most ready to part with his own, special, privileges, for the good of the whole. Such was the zeal of their charity, that the apostles found it impossible for them to preach the gospel, and, at the same time, give out the alms put into their hands. Seven deacons were, therefore, appointed to this work, and the first one named was "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

But the duty of a deacon also included teaching, and St. Stephen was attacked by the Jews who wished to dispute with him. When they found that they could not withstand his arguments, they bribed witnesses, as in the case of Our Lord Himself, to charge him with blasphemy against Moses and against God. Upon this false charge he was dragged before the Sanhedrim, or the highest Jewish court, and, after the accusation had been read, Cai-phas, the high priest, ordered him to make his defense.

It was now that St. Stephen showed all the supernatural wisdom of one upon whom the Holy Ghost had descended, and, also, all the courage and constancy, which, like heavenly wisdom, are the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

With all the fiery eloquence of the Prophet Isaiah, he reminded them of the prophecies, beginning with the books of Moses, concerning the Messiah; and also reminded them how the very sacrifices of the temple were a figure which was well understood by the Jewish doctors of the law, of a better and more perfect Sacrifice, which he showed to have been completed in the Sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Then, seeing, no doubt, the unbelief of their hearts written on their countenances, he accused them, in burning words, of having rejected and slain those prophets "who foretold the Just One ; of whom," he said, "you are now the betrayers and murderers."

St. Luke tells us, while giving this account of St. Stephen, that "All who sat in the council, looking on him, "saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel;" yet, with this shining face before them, bright with the holy Indignation of a St. Michael, they no sooner heard this truth concerning themselves, than, as St. Luke says, they were " cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth." But St. Stephen, nowise frightened by these signs of raging hate, "looking up steadfastly into heaven saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." No longer able to contain themselves for fury and revenge, "Crying out with a loud voice, and stopping their ears," as if to shut out their own yells, worthy of the demons, "with one accord they ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city they stoned him." But our holy deacon, Stephen, had no resentment towards his cruel murderers. His indignation was not against them, but against their sin their sin of unbelief; that sin which is now thought so little of that people are not ashamed of it, are even proud of it, and seem to think it a mark of superiority it was against their sin, and not against them, that St. Stephen had uttered such burning words; and therefore, while the heavy stones were hurled upon him from all sides, he could say,

with a just confidence in his Divine Master, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Then, falling on his knees he cried with a loud voice, saying; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep in the Lord."

Such was the death of the first martyr, "the protomartyr," as he is called, the model of all martyrs, so long as Christ shall ask the testimony of Christian "blood for His truth. However you may look at this martyrdom, from whatever side you may approach it, it is still the same; and, after eighteen hundred years, almost nineteen hundred, we still go back to it to learn how to confess Christ, and how to suffer for him.

St. Stephen's feast day is December 26th.

~ adapted from, "Patron Saints," Imprimatur 1871 ~

MATCH THE SAINTS TO THEIR SYMBOLS

(Answers to be found on the last page of the gazette)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER | A. STONES ON A BOOK |
| 2. ST. AMBROSE | B. EAGLE, SCROLL OF GOSPELS |
| 3. ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE | C. LAMP AND DAGGER |
| 4. ST. STEPHEN | D. SHIP AND CRUCIFIX |
| 5. ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE | E. BLACK EAGLE, CROWN |
| 6. ST. LUCY | F. CROWN OF THORNS |
| 7. ST. WENCESLAUS | G. BEEHIVE |
| 8. ST. JOHN OF GOD | H. ROSES, BREAD |
| 9. ST. HELENA | I. SPEAR AND LANCE |
| 10. ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY | J. CROSS, HAMMER, NAILS |



St. Stephen, Feast Day, December 26th

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

1. ADONAI
2. ADVENT
3. ANTIPHONS
4. CHRISTMAS
5. CLAVISDAVID
6. DAYSPRING
7. DECEMBER
8. EMBERDAYS
9. EMMANUEL
10. ISAIAS
11. KEYOFDAVID
12. LORDOFISRAEL
13. ORIENS
14. PROPHECY
15. RADIXJESSE
16. REXGENTIUM
17. ROOTOFJESSE
18. SAPIENTIA
19. VESPER

A	V	Y	Y	S	K	Q	Y	J	I	Q	L	H	D	V	X	S	D
C	N	F	D	F	Y	C	A	J	J	O	R	A	N	L	R	A	I
O	Z	T	D	F	E	A	N	O	R	F	Y	C	X	I	E	P	V
K	H	M	I	H	S	T	D	D	X	S	N	T	D	S	B	I	A
L	W	U	P	P	B	N	O	R	P	Y	C	I	S	C	M	E	D
Z	E	O	Q	B	H	F	E	R	E	B	X	E	U	F	E	N	F
V	R	S	A	Y	I	O	I	I	A	B	J	K	Y	W	C	T	O
P	E	R	S	S	T	N	N	K	R	X	M	I	U	A	E	I	Y
S	D	S	R	E	G	J	M	S	I	O	A	E	I	P	D	A	E
N	Z	A	P	Q	J	Q	V	D	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	K
I	E	D	F	E	J	F	A	R	E	X	G	E	N	T	I	U	M
L	P	V	D	M	R	R	O	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	I
S	J	E	X	N	W	S	L	T	I	A	N	O	D	A	D	S	I
Z	L	N	D	S	E	G	X	B	O	L	U	N	Q	G	A	T	S
D	C	T	U	K	C	I	R	X	F	O	N	C	D	I	F	N	H
D	I	V	A	D	S	I	V	A	L	C	R	E	A	N	K	F	Y
Y	E	V	G	O	A	U	E	V	P	D	H	S	H	T	J	W	B
I	Y	K	Y	L	Q	H	L	U	P	C	J	E	E	L	M	Q	K

Heart of the Holy Child



Heart of the holy Child,
 Hide me in Thee;
 Purest and undefiled,
 Purify me;
 Sweet Child of Bethlehem
 Open Thine Heart,
 Lessons from Nazareth
 Deign to impart;
 Joy of my infant life,
 Far from evil passions rise,
 Troubling this world of strife,
 Keep me with Thee.

~ Greetings to the Christ Child, Imprimatur 1879 ~



Jesus' Birthday

How happy you are every year, my little children, as Christmas day draws nearer and nearer! But do you know that long ago there was no such thing as Christmas day? However, people knew that sometime one would come, for had they not been told ages and ages ago, when Adam and Eve sinned and the gates of Heaven had been closed, had they not been told, I say, that God would send His Son Who would show the people how to be good and happy again, and reopen the gates of Paradise?

The time was now drawing near when the promise was to be carried out. The King of heaven and earth was to come into this world quietly. Who was the first to know it, dear children? The loveliest creature that ever lived, the modest maid of Galilee in whose sweet face shone goodness and purity. This beautiful maiden was called Mary. She is no other than our own dear Blessed Mother. Mary lived in the peaceful little village of Nazareth. Her home was the poor cottage of St. Joseph, the village carpenter.

One day as Mary was at prayer, suddenly a soft light filled the room and the angel Gabriel appeared, saying: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed are thou amongst women." As Mary gazed in wonder at the beautiful angel, he went on to tell her that she was to be the Mother of a Child 'Whom she should call Jesus.' Later, the same angel appeared to St. Joseph, telling him that he was to be the foster-father of Jesus.

Time went on, and an emperor of Rome wished to know just how many people he ruled over, so he sent out word that every man should go to the city where his family belonged and write down his name in a large book.

Now, not very far from Jerusalem there was a little town called Bethlehem, the city of David, and St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary had to go to have their names taken down, for both belonged to the family of David.

Of course there were many, many others who had to go there, too, and Bethlehem, being only a very small place, every house was soon filled. It was quite late when St. Joseph and Mary arrived and nowhere could they find a room for the night; but at last some one told them of a cave close by which was used for a stable, and even then there were animals in it.

But St. Joseph and Blessed Mary were so tired from the long journey that they were glad to find a place to rest, even if it were a rough stable open to the cold winds. Here at midnight the Infant Jesus was born in cold and poverty; He did not even have a bed to lie in, and His Blessed Mother wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, the only cradle she had for her dear Baby.

So, the little town of Bethlehem slept through the first Christmas night, and did not know that its Saviour had been born.

Such, children, is the sweet story of Bethlehem and the Infant Jesus.

~"Bible Stories for Children," Imprimatur 1918 ~



"FLOWER OF BABIES WAS THEIR KING"



f all the feasts in the year there is no feast for little children like Christmas, the day on which our dear Lord became one of them ! Everything about it is easy to understand, and very delightful.

In the church there will be a wonderful Crib with certainly the dear little Christ Child in it, and our Lady and St. Joseph. Probably, too, there will be a donkey and a cow, possibly even some shepherds with nice woolly sheep.

Once I happened to go into a church where there was just such a Crib, and what do you think I saw in it? ... a real, live, little boy of about four years old, who had wandered in from the street, and, seeing the stable, had climbed over the rail in front, and was close up to the manger playing with one of the woolly lambs! I suppose it was a little naughty, but I could not help feeling rather sorry when someone came and lifted the poor babe out and sent it away.

One of the best ways to learn about Christmas is to go and kneel quietly in front of the Crib, look at it, and think for a little while. All kinds of thoughts and feelings will crowd into mind and heart. You will find yourself asking questions of your own soul. Who is the little Babe? Who are the people with Him? Where is He? Why is He there? Does He like it? What is He doing? And to each question you know at least some of the answers, and the answer is like a key which unlocks the door of your heart, flings it wide open, and out of it come flowing all your love and gratitude, making you feel that you must give back something to the God Who is doing so much for you.

As the Crib remains in church for some time, you will make many visits to it, and as you like a good deal of change, you will perhaps like to know of other ways of spending your time near our Lord. One day you might take your New Testament, or, if you have not yet one of your own, then a penny copy of either St. Matthew or St. Luke. St. Luke, in his second chapter, tells you how it was our dear Lord came to be in the stable in that uncomfortable little manger; and about the angels who sang, letting the shepherds into the great secret, and telling them how they were to know the Babe Who was Christ the Lord. You can read there, too, what the shepherds did when the angels disappeared.

If in your Crib there are the Kings, you will have to go to St. Matthew to hear the story. St. Luke does not tell it, but you will find all about it in chapter two of St. Matthew's Gospel.

The great St. Dominic loved this Gospel best of all, and I often wonder whether this story of the star-guided Kings, with their gold, frankincense, and myrrh, had anything to do with the preference.

The adventure and the generosity are so exactly suited to appeal to a Saint descended from a line of knights. Ask St. Dominic to teach you how to read your Gospel, so that it may help you to know and love our dear Lord as it helped him.

Perhaps you love poetry, and would like to look for more for yourself. You will find that many poets have written about Christmas, and I will end with some lines written by Christina Rossetti:

From "Christmas Day."

Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and Seraphim
Thronged the air

But only His Mother,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved With a kiss.

"What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part
Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart."

If we said this poem before the Crib, I think we should have made a very nice little visit, and perhaps the Holy Child would grant us the grace to give our hearts to Him, never to be asked back.





CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS



e should strive ever to emphasize the fact that Christmas is the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The greeting cards we send at the holy season should be a manifestation of our Catholic faith, an aid to our friends to enter into the spirit of the holy season, and a reminder to them that we are praying that they may know Christ more intimately and love Him more ardently. Your cards to non-Christian friends may be a means of causing them to make inquiries in regard to the real meaning of Christmas.

Christmas derives its name, "Christ's Mass," from the Mass offered in honor of the Birth of Christ. Its early English form was written as "Christes Maesse," and in the course of the change of the English language it eventually became Christmas. In the earliest days of the Church this feast did not exist. Greater stress was placed on the Feast of the Epiphany, because it commemorates the day on which our Saviour was made known to the Gentiles, when the Wise Men came to adore Him. The Feast of the Nativity came gradually into existence in the fourth century. Its first mention is made by the great Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria, about the year 200, and shows that it was celebrated on May 20. About the year 300, the Latin Church began to observe it on December 25, because an ancient tradition assigns that day as the probable date of the Birth of our Saviour.

Love of the Babe of Bethlehem, who was born to redeem us, caused Catholics, in centuries long gone by, to introduce into our churches a representation of the crib, the Divine Babe, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the shepherds. St. Francis of Assisi deserves the credit of making this practice very popular. His zeal prompted him to place at Graceio a representation of the cave of Bethlehem. His plan permitted the Faithful vividly to grasp the story of Bethlehem and to realize the poverty and suffering of our Saviour in the bleak, cold stable where He was born. The plan has spread to churches in all parts of the world.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, it is customary to put the statues of the Wise Men beside the crib. In the early Church, this feast was celebrated with great solemnity because it was the day on which our Saviour was made known to those who were not of Israel. In the fourth century, the Feast of the Nativity came into its own and was given first importance, though in many Catholic countries the custom exists of giving all Christmas presents on the Feast of Epiphany, since on that day the Wise Men brought gifts to our Saviour.

The Christmas tree is of recent origin. It represents for us the Tree of the Cross. Bethlehem and Calvary are ever associated together in our Christian thoughts, for Christ was born to die on the Tree of Ignominy and thus redeem a sinful world. The lights placed upon the Christmas tree have for us a symbolical meaning. They portray the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

Our modern Santa Claus, a crude, ridiculous figure, can be traced back to that gentle lover of children—St. Nicholas. This Saint's feast is celebrated on December 6, and parents and friends gave children presents on that day. The Dutch settlers in New York brought this custom with them to the New World, and the giving of presents on December 6 and on Christmas Day became somewhat confused. St. Nicholas was contracted into "Santa Claus" and, with the increasing pagan idea of the Yuletide, became the rollicking, bewhiskered figure so alien to the true Christmas spirit.

Let our children look to the Christ Child for their Christmas presents. There is no need of deception here, and of shattering childish faith. The Christ Child exists; He loves the little ones and He wishes them to love Him. We have no use in a Catholic home for the fraudulent Santa Claus and the pagan Christmas he now symbolizes. Let the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ be for young and old a day of spiritual joy and close union with the Savior whom we love.

~ "Can You Explain Catholic Practices?" Imprimatur 1938 ~

A NOVENA TO THE INFANT JESUS

December 16th is the day to begin the Christmas Novena.

The following is a novena in honor of the Infant Jesus which can be used at any time, but is usually made during the nine days preceding Christmas, to prepare for the coming of Christ in our hearts, and to obtain some particular favor. We ask especially for a spiritual favor. It is customary to kneel before an altar or picture of the Nativity of Our Lord for the reciting of these prayers.

Being fully recollected in spirit, and respectfully kneeling before our altar, we address the following petition to our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, beginning with the Sign of the Cross.

PETITION

O most holy Virgin, and blessed St. Joseph, obtain for us the grace to perform this novena with such attention, devotion, and ardent charity, as will entitle us to join the angels in rendering glory to God. Amen

Let us say twelve times the Hail Mary, in remembrance of the care and solicitude shown by our Blessed Lady towards the Infant Jesus till His twelfth year.

Let us make three aspirations, to incline the Infant Jesus to turn His favorable attention to us.

O Divine Infant of Bethlehem, Whom we adore and acknowledge to be our sovereign Lord, come and take birth in our hearts. Amen.

O Infant Jesus, grant that each moment of our lives, we may pay homage to that moment in which Thou didst begin the work of our salvation. Amen.





O holy Mother of Our Infant Saviour, obtain that we may so prepare for His coming, as not to be separated from Him for all eternity. Amen.

Let us pray.

Most holy Infant Jesus, true God and true man, our Saviour and Redeemer; with all earnestness and respect, we beseech Thee, by that charity, humility, and bounty which Thou didst display in Thy Infancy, graciously undertaken for love of us, that Thou vouchsafe to grant us the favor we now beg, if it be for the honor of God and our salvation. Amen.

*Here each one will beg in spirit
the particular favor desired.*

Pause for a short time.

O most amiable Infant Jesus, we are most unworthy to be heard in this our petition; but Thy holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, and the great St. Joseph, Thy foster-father while on earth, are worthy to be heard soliciting in our behalf. Then, O divine Infant, being mindful of their most sublime merits, especially those they acquired during the

time they served Thee in Thy infancy in Bethlehem, Thy flight into Egypt, and Thy childhood at Nazareth, vouchsafe to grant our request, and give us grace to promote the honor of Thy omnipotent infancy, to serve Thee with fidelity, as domestic servants, all the days of our lives, and to obtain a happy death, assisted in that last hour by the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, whose zeal for Thy honour will lead us to praise and bless Thy divine mercies forever and ever. Amen.

Anthem

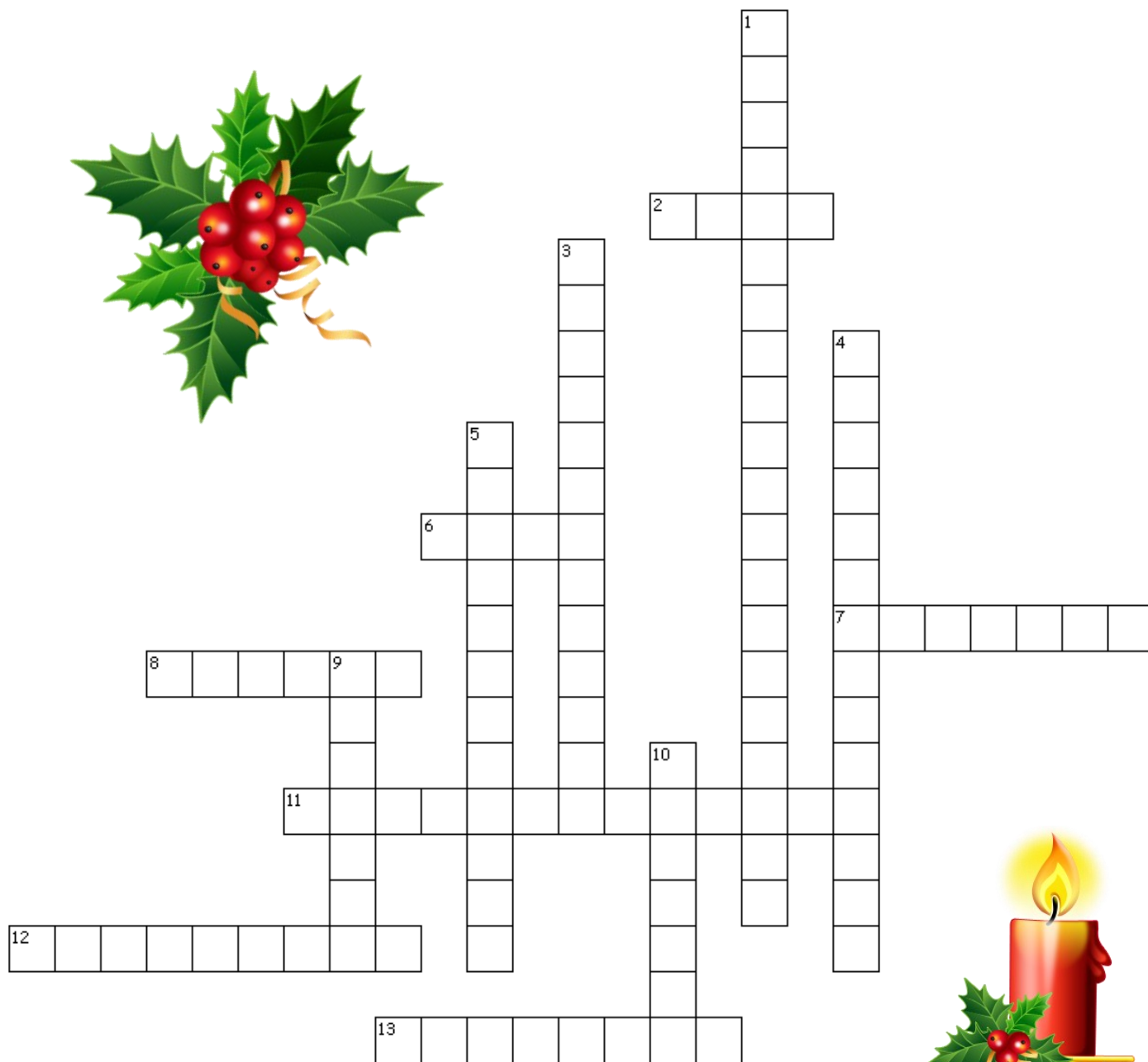
Whilst deep silence dwelt on all things below, and the night was in the midst of its course, the almighty Word came down from its throne. Alleluia.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus, Who didst, for the love of us, vouchsafe to reduce Thy incarnated divinity and most divine humanity to the humiliating state of birth and infancy; grant that we, acknowledging Thy infinite wisdom in Thy infancy, thy power in Thy weakness, and Thy majesty in Thy littleness, may adore Thee, a little one on earth, and behold Thee great in heaven; Who livest and reignest with God the Father, in unity with the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

~ Blessed Be God Prayerbook, Imprimatur 1925 ~

DECEMBER CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

2. Patron Saint of the Blind.
6. The Beloved Apostle.
7. He was the first martyr.
8. An apostle; also called Doubting _____.
11. Jesuit missionary; died before he could reach China.
12. Pope from 314-335 A.D.
13. The patron saint of Russia.

Down

1. Under what title did the Blessed Virgin reveal herself to St. Bernadette?
3. The name given to the baby martyrs Herod killed in Bethlehem.
4. Patron Saint of Immigrants.
5. Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162-1170 A.D.
9. His name means "immortal."
10. Her father was killed by a bolt of lightning.

THE HOME ORATORY

In each house a tiny altar
Cared for well, I fain would see,
Round it night and morning gather
All the Christian family."



HAT delight filled the heart of little John Janssen, later on a celebrated German historian, in the year 1837, when his mother bought for him in the town of Kevelaer a tin chalice, a white vestment and wooden candlesticks. Now indeed he should be able to make his tiny altar look really nice, and he could "say Mass" everyday. Night and morning he said his prayers before the altar, and many a day his voice went up to Heaven as early as the song of the larks, in the lines which he had learnt from his mother:

"My Lord and God, I Thee will praise,
Love, serve and honor all my days."

My little reader, will you not follow his example. I dare say you have had an altar for some time. Well, kneel down before it every day, clasp your hands, say your morning and night prayers reverently and attentively. And I do not think that your mother will mind your finishing up by singing a hymn.

God looks down with love upon a child saying its prayers. Good people rejoice at the sight, and it has been known that sinners have been converted by the words of prayer which they have heard fall from the lips of a little one.

One evening; it was the 13th of July 1880, a poor family had just finished its supper, which had consisted of nothing but a bit of black bread and some coarse oatmeal boiled in water. "Where is Father?" asked little Charlie, "is he not coming home?" "Be quiet, my boy," said his mother consolingly; "we will say our prayers now." And as she spoke she quietly wiped away a tear, for her husband had been a drunkard for some years. He left the house almost every evening before supper, and never came back till very late. But on this particular occasion he happened to be earlier than usual, and as he drew near the house he heard through the open window the voices of his three children praying earnestly to God to make their father stop at home in the evening. He began to weep and stood outside till there was silence. Then he entered the room, threw his arms round his poor wife's neck, drew his children to him and said in a choked voice: "Now I will turn over a new leaf." And so he did. From that day forth he stayed at home, and joined in the evening-prayers of his children. Often he helped them to adorn their little altar. And, as you will easily believe, happiness and peace and comfort returned to the family.

Say your prayers then children! It is your duty, for all good gifts come from God. God gave

you your parents ; He gives you food and clothing, health and a home ; He gives you grace to keep out of sin. If God were to leave off helping you, you would fall into sin after sin, and would finally lose your souls. I dare say that in the little garden before your house, you have all kinds of pretty flowers. If you were to take them and put them down in the cellar, far from the light and the sunshine, they would fade away in a few days. It would be just the same thing with you, if you were to leave off praying. God would take away from you the sunshine and the light, that is to say His grace and you would be done for.

A great saint, St. Alphonsus Liguori has said: "All the blessed in Heaven have been saved through prayer. All the damned have been lost, for want of prayer; if they had prayed, they would never have fallen into hell."

A child who does not pray is like a lamp without oil, a body without food, a plant without moisture, a soldier without arms. What happens to a lamp, in which there is no more oil ? It goes out. How does a body get on without anything to eat? It dies. What becomes of a plant, which is taken out of the moist earth ? It withers away. And a soldier without arms cannot fight against the enemy for, as the rhyme says:

"A man who is a soldier
Must have a musket tall,
And always keep it loaded
With powder and with ball.

He at his side must carry
A sword of sharpest steel,
So shall he slay his foeman,
And deadly blows shall deal."

Ill fares it with a child, who does not pray. Without prayer there is no real virtue, no strength against evil, no good death, no salvation. Alas for a child who leaves off praying; he will never get to Heaven.

Do you know why you should pray every day, morning and evening, and before and after meals ? Do you know why you should pray when the devil tries to suggest evil to you? Directly you pray the wicked spirit is forced to retire ; directly you pray God gives you grace to live piously and to get to Heaven. Therefore never forget your prayers. Our divine Saviour Himself has told us that "we ought always to pray and not to faint."

You must also pray with special earnestness, when you are in need, as when your parents are in trouble. I will tell you some stories about that.

The last coals were burnt out, and the last pence were spent for bread. The father and mother and two children shivered with hunger and cold. "We will pray once more," said the weeping mother; "perhaps God will help us after all?" They all knelt down and said the rosary. Then the father took hold of an old chest, which had belonged to his mother, tossed out the few rags it contained, and began to break up the wornout bit of furniture,

so as to use it for firewood. When he attempted to take out the bottom, suddenly out rolled pieces of gold,—the trunk had a false bottom. The amazement of the whole family knew no bounds, they could hardly believe their eyes. They picked up the money and found that it amounted to five pounds. Father, mother and children again fell on their knees, and thanked God for the help He had sent them.

In the Spring of 1884 there was a long drought. A little boy heard his parents consulting as to what was to be done, because there was so little hay. He ran up to his father, took his hand and said with childish confidence : "You need not be unhappy, father; I will tell our Lord to let it rain." In a short time he went to bed, and added this touching petition to his night-prayers: "Dear Lord, see how sad my father is. Do make the rain come soon, so that the hay may grow. You can make such nice grass." When the little lad woke next morning it was pouring in torrents. With one bound he sprang out of his little bed, hurried on his clothes, and ran full of joy to his father, crying: "There; has not our Lord heard me ? We must always tell Him things and not worry ourselves about them."

So should you in every necessity go to God. When the children of Israel, who had been nearly fainting away from thirst in their journey through the desert, found a spring whose waters were bitter and undrinkable, what did Moses do? He prayed and God helped him. Before Judith undertook her perilous journey to the enemy's camp in order to save her people, she retired into her chamber and prayed, and God helped her.

Jesus Christ Himself, God and man, before He went to His bitter Passion and Death, knelt on the Mount of Olives and prayed.

God helps those who pray, for He is almighty, full of infinite love and kindness.

It is of course an understood thing, that you must say your prayers devotedly; otherwise praying is no good at all. It is not enough that the lips should repeat the words of the prayers, the heart must utter them also, otherwise what the Lord once said of Israel may truly be applied to you: "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." Therefore during your prayers pay no attention to what is going on around you, do not look at what others are doing, but reflect with lively faith that God is present and sees you. Speak to Him. It is the greatest honor you can have, to be able to speak to God.

Neither must you murmur, if it often happens that God does not hear you at once, nor give you exactly what you ask for. Perhaps he wishes to put your trust in Him to the test, to see whether you will grow tired of praying, and sometimes in place of what you want He gives you something better.

He acts in such cases just as your mother does. When you ask her for a knife she gives you instead a harmless plaything, because you might cut yourself with the knife. You know how it fared with the peasant who in a dream begged that everything which his fingers touched might turn to gold. Everything was changed to gold, even the bread that he was going to eat, so that he would have starved in the midst of all his wealth. Next

morning he was very thankful to find that it had all been a dream, and he was for the future cheerful and contented with what God gave him. "My dream has taught me," he said to himself, ' 'that it is well that God does not instantly grant all our petitions ; many a man would like gold to be as plentiful as straw, and then would never be satisfied nor happy, and some people would ask for all sorts of foolish things, and would perish body and soul."

The holy Cure d'Ars was very fond of children. He often encouraged them to be good, but he made a point of impressing one thing in particular upon them, that was to say their prayers diligently and devoutly. "For," he used to say, "if you leave off praying, you are taking strides towards hell." Never forget that, children.

"In each house a tiny altar
Cared for well, I fain would see,
Round it night and morning gather
All the Christian family.
Such a house becomes a temple
Where the Lord well pleased may rest;
Round it holy angels hover,
Those within are safe and blest.

~ The Dutiful Child, Imprimatur 1898 ~



This is a series of Catholic Gazettes for children. We pray that it will help all to know and love their Faith better. It is put together by the students of St. Catherine's Academy as part of their Language, Religion, Art and Typing Courses. A.M.D.G. We hope you enjoy it. If you have any suggestions, ideas or comments please let us know at : <jwillson61@charter.net>

God Bless all of you! Tim, the father of this clan, Timmy, Mary, Sarah, Katie, Patrick, Elizabeth and the teacher, Julie. God is good!!

~ ALL ARTICLES ARE MEANT TO BE IN KEEPING WITH THE SOUND TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHICH IS THE SAME CHURCH FOUNDED BY OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST AND WILL LAST UNTIL THE END OF TIME.~

We have also started a Catholic website as another school project
you can check it out at: www.Crusaders-for-Christ.com

ANSWERS TO CATHOLIC QUIZ

1. The angel who announced the birth of Christ the Lord to the shepherds near Bethlehem (Midnight Mass of Christmas Day)
 2. This is the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, and is read as the last Gospel in most Sunday Masses.
 3. St. John the Baptist, when asked if he were the Christ (3rd and 4th Sunday of Advent).
 4. In reply to His mother who had reproached Him for staying behind in the temple at Jerusalem, where she and St. Joseph had found Him sitting among the doctors (Sunday in Octave of Epiphany).
 5. The Gospel as read on New Year's Day, the Feast of the Circumcision, less than thirty-five words. This text is also read on the Feast of the Holy Name.
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ANSWERS TO DECEMBER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS:

2. LUCY
6. JOHN
7. STEPHEN
8. THOMAS
11. FRANCIS XAVIER
12. SYLVESTER
13. NICHOLAS

DOWN:

1. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
 3. HOLY INNOCENTS
 4. FRANCES CABRINI
 5. THOMAS BECKET
 9. AMBROSE
 10. BARBARA
-

ANSWERS TO UNSCRAMBLE THE SAINTS NAMES

1. G, 2. E, 3. A, 4. H, 5. B, 6. C, D. 7, 8. F
-

ANSWERS FOR MATCH THE SAINTS TO THEIR SYMBOLS

1. D, 2. G, 3. I, 4. A, 5. B, 6. C, 7. E, 8. F, 9. J, 10. H