

The Messenger

CEYLON'S CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Vol. 91 No. 50

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1959

Registered at the G.P.O.
as a Newspaper.

15 Cts.

The Light of the World

Verse by Harrison Peiris

Cover design by James Bulner

Let me recapitulate Thy beginning from the
time when the Word-made-flesh dwelt among us
Dear little Infant Jesus, Babe of Bethlehem,
Light of the World!
Let me lift the mists over our raucous years
to that silent-and-holy night's beginning
Across the gaping chasms of Time, caterpulted
through one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine years.
Thou hadst no baby-pillow, blue-embroidered,
to lay Thy tiny head, no blanket to cover Thee
From the howling, biting cold, from the blast of
the blizzard winds that cut through Thy body —
(Modern babies have lambs-wool-puffs, baby
blankets, golden rattles, colour-coronalled cradles!)
Impoverished and destitute was Thy coming into
this bleak crib of straw where Thou didst take Thy lowly place.

In Thy beginning was Chastity, in Thy beginning
was Poverty, in Thy beginning was Obedience
The three golden stars flaming like orb'd signal
fires hovered over Thy coming
Lighting the derelict and blind trails of the
world's road-ways henceforward —
And history caught the flame of the triune
orbs and the alleys of the world were
lit from Bethlehem fires that night . . .
Let me enter this dim abode tonight — and there
beside Thee, behold the Chalice of Chastity
The Most Perfect Flower of Silence, Mary who
bore and mothered Thee, without one word of sigh or pain,
Behold her, she who was the Chosen-of-all-
ages, who has worn the crimson-stained robe
Held the cups of the sorrows of the days to come
in the shelter of her inmost heart's recesses.

And O God! do I dare to fondle Thy holy hands,
Thy dimpled fingers rose-bud pink,
To kiss the ineffable sweetness of Thy feet, to
touch and caress Thy wonder-bright eyes;
Already in Thy innocent Babyhood stirs the
God-head heaviness of the dark, dark Crucifixion
Over Thy Infant Brow spans the sin-band
of the world, and the blood and the nails awaiting Thee.
Many men have passed Thee by, still pass Thee by, unknowing,
uncaring Thou who art the very God,
In Thy beginning was Chastity, in Thy beginning
was Poverty, in Thy beginning was Obedience —
In that orb'd trinity, in that insignia we
pin our simple faith in Thee
Glimpsing Thy God-head tonight Dear Little Infant
Jesus, Babe of Bethlehem, Light of the World!



Bulner

Christmas Number



Christmas-time is Song-time

Notice

The Colombo Catholic Press will be closed on December 24th, 25th, 26th, and 31st (half-day), and on January 1st and 2nd for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

He's nearer you in stables

MOST fittingly night skies blaze forth His birth
The King of Kings.
And three crowned heads track down His astral sign
To Bethlehem.
Surprised but yet not scandalized
The Three Kings worship at the Crib.
They think: "Who chose His birth amongst the burdened beasts,
(Not man, there was no room for Him)
His yoke it must be sweet,
His burden light.
Perhaps, our sceptres are a mocking reed,
Until the poor possess the land,
And only then shall we be justly Kings?"

It seems to all mankind
There is some topsyturvydom
Portended in His birth;
Who knows, the Lion may yet feed with the lamb?
And Love hereafter vanquish Hate?
Who knows?

Kings from strange lands forsaking all
Were not more privileged than these who kept night watch
And God is still preoccupied with Commag Man.
He hastes His angels to the shepherd's side.

Brother, He calls in stars across the skies to kings,
But to us human derelicts, slum-dwellers and
The unemployed, and waifs and strays and tramps
His messengers directly sing:
He's nearer you in stables
Than in the Palaces of Kings
And Heaven's not expounded but in a Little Child.

Sing
Hosanna in the Highest
And from the lowest, You!

VERNON LAWRENTSZ.

"Sing merrily this happy day
Sing, brothers, sing this carol gay,
That to us on Christmas morning
Christ was born..."

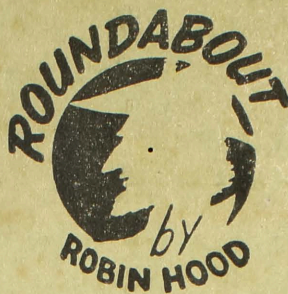
—so runs the translation of the traditional carol attributed to the Czechs. Somehow it was to those lines my mind returned as I began my frantic chase after the Director of the Catholic Choral Society fresh from his still reverberating triumph of last Thursday's public Concert, and finally tracked him down to his lonely room at St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

He was deeply absorbed in the blueprint of some future programme.

As someone said: "he works like a demon!"

Against a background of quivering semi-breves, quavers, and throbbing cadenzas, Fr. Ignatius Perera stood silhouetted — like a Sonata — against the deep-bluish daze of a December noon-tide, chiselling a decimal power here, chipping into shape a mote of sweetness there, injecting LIFE into a new-born symphony...

The maestro agreed whole-heartedly that "Christmas is the time for singing." Music, I discovered, was not only a passion with him, it was his firm conviction too that men



with music in their blood owed it to God to harness their talents to the greater glory of God.

The Catholic Choral Society's primary purpose, he reminded me, "was to bring to the people the beauty and the glories of Sacred Music in particular."

A secondary function, he stated, was

to augment and improve the standards of choirs in other parishes. This has been achieved to an eminent degree of success.

FR. IGNATIUS PERERA paid an eloquent and very high tribute to the members of the group who, he said, were deeply conscious and aware of their calling. The fine team spirit displayed by them, he expressed with keen satisfaction, was one of the strong props on which the success of the Society had been achieved.

There was a rigid discipline maintained in the entire ranks of the Society, I was told. The slightest misdemeanour on the part of an individual, or a report from one's parish priest, meant an outright dismissal.

All the members were working men and their devotedness, patient hours and clock-like-regularity rehearsals (twice a week) added greatly to their stature and integrity.

"Instruments are secondary, the voice

is everything, and fine standards in vocal music is our target" declared the Director.

The Catholic Choral Society started, he said, because he saw the need for a first-rate Male Voice Choir.

The Church, he said, has laid down a ruling that the voices of males and females were to be trained apart; as such, female voices were being trained separately by MISS RACHEL FERNANDO.

The Catholic Choral Society has achieved wonderful results in the last few years and today it is a group which could justifiably take pride of place in the island.

Did you know?



CHRISTMAS singing is as old as Christmas? On that first morn, so St. Luke tells us in his Gospel, "suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly army praising: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." This message, which fixed the singing pattern for all time, is sometimes called the world's first Christmas carol.

CAROLS originated as ring dances among the Greeks, but in the time of St. Francis of Assisi they took the form of happy, single songs based on a religious theme?

IN A.D. 129, Telephorus, Bishop of Rome, ordained that "in the Holy Night of the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour, all shall solemnly sing the Angel's Hymn?" One version of this which has come down to us is "Angels We Have Heard on High."

Child and a selection of Negro Spirituals in modern style arrangements by Gerry Crake and rendered with joyous and gyrating gusto by The Quartet.

These renderings brought in their wake a thunderous outburst of cheering from the audience.

Poetic sensibility, chaste restraint and an exquisite tenderness marked the *Adoramus Te Christe* and *Hodie Christus by Palestrina* and the popular Carols.

The *Chorales by Bach* and the *Motets of the Roman School of Music* (16th century) were rendered with a finesse and sweetness that bespoke of many laborious hours of training and months of intense preparation back-stage.

Certainly if any Art could serve as an adequate reparation and compensation for the terrible atrocities and bestialities inflicted by man on man in this modern day, it is such music as presented by the Catholic Choral Society.

COLOMBO'S FESTIVAL OF CHORAL MUSIC

CAROLS in KANDY



Members of the Kandy Catholic Association rehearsing Carols for Christmas.

LAST Thursday, 17 December, like Cleopatra, the Catholic Choral Society held enslaved a packed audience of music-lovers at St. Peter's College Hall. It was nearly one hundred and twenty minutes crammed with all the inflections and nuances of good music that ranged from mordant intensity to hushed delicacy.

The Concert had its ravishing moments marred by only a single lapse which tripped over in blissful unawareness in the rich infinitudes of variety provided from the opening magnificent and unexpected flick of vocal excitement of *Handel's Judas Maccabaeus* to the final stinging dramatic impact of the *Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah*. The Catholic Choral Society had arrived.

It was way back in 1954 that the Society was founded under the patronage of His Grace the Archbishop of Colombo, the Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Cooray, O.M.I.

The group with its present strength of nearly 100 members had given earlier many items in different concerts, including several performances over the air. But last Thursday it was their first-ever full Concert.

BLEND AND BALANCE

The first Programme was in every way a happy choice and the festival of choral music was remarkable for its blend and balance.

Ideally, it will be readily granted that a maestro should have complete and untrammelled control over his creation. But that way certainly lies rigidity and the blacking-out of spontaneity which gives LIFE to a work.

It redounds greatly to the musicianship of the Catholic Choral Society's Director, Fr. Ignatius Perera, that the Programme included *La Spagnola*, *Mary's Boy*

FULLY BOOKED!

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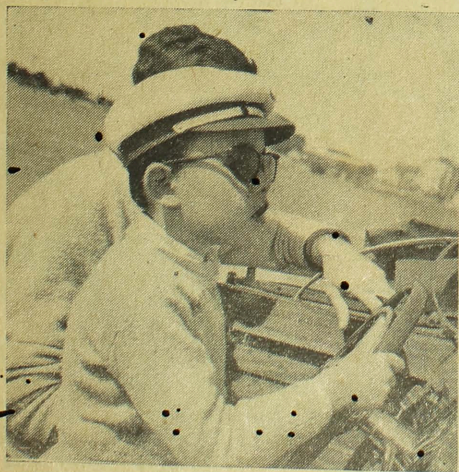
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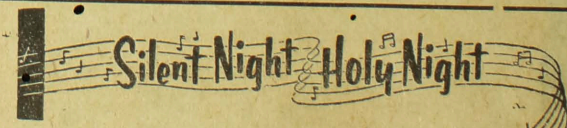
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IT came upon the starry night
That heav'nly song of old,
From Angels bending near the light
To sound their harps of gold:
Glorify be to God on high
And peace on earth for ages by.

Still floats the music of that song,
Still reigns that blessed peace,
That was foretold for ages long.
Though wars may rage and empires
cease,
Yet far above all earthly strife,
Its message sure shall reach our life.

And lowly shepherds heard these strains,
And saw the glorious throng,
It banished all their fears and pains,
So peaceful was the song,
Proclaiming Christ the Saviour born,
That joyous Christmas morn.

And through the years the words shall ring
Till men with God abide.
And as the faithful rise and sing,
The gates of Heav'n shall open wide,
And Angels' trumpets sound,
When Heav'n and Earth with praise resound.

Florence Martyn

from SONG to STORY

Christmas is a love story...the greatest love story in the world. We present this Christmas story written by the winner of a Messenger Journalism Award

THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

LOOKING back on it now, it seems almost a halcyon existence, our life in the sleepy Southern town where my parents lived way back in the early years of this eventful century. A prominent landmark in this town is a hill, typical of the granite out-thrusts which rise here and there to break the level monotony of the Low Country plains. On and around its gently sloping contours was a cluster of houses, like chicks nestling round a mother hen.

This sense of security was heightened by the church of solid rock that crowns the crest of the hill—the date on its facade was 1874, the year my mother was born, and somehow the two are forever linked in my memory—my mother and the church.

My mother has been gone these many years, but the church is still there, though I have not seen it for many decades, and the hill, I hear, is greatly changed and has taken on a new and more fashionable look.

Is the little house still there, I wonder, where we lived in the very shadow of the church? Mount Calvary they call the hill, appropriately enough, for the church is dedicated to Mary, the Mother of Sorrows.

Halcyon Times

Yet ours was a happy existence, untroubled and even gay, though disciplined by the strict observance of the Catholic rule of life. All around us were Catholic families, some poorer, some richer, but all united in a sturdy, common faith and by the activities of parish life.

The routine was pleasant and kept an even tenor with minor variations. We got off to a good start with early Mass at 6-30 in the morning. Returning from school, we would linger in the shade of the old gray walls, playing on the steps that rose like a Jacob's ladder to the very buttresses of the gaunt edifice.

Now and then we raided the plantation belonging to the Mission House, which was forbidden territory, for unripe plantains, and incurred the wrath of the fierce lay brother, whom we children knew as 'Kukul' Brother, because of his association with the poultry farm.

The evenings would find us round the piano, or if it was the month of May, the little harmonium which was my father's favourite instrument. But everything came to a halt when it was time for Evening Prayers at 7-30—the little bell would be rung, and we would all troop into my mother's room, where the brass 'pana' was lit before a picture of the Sacred Heart.

Prayer and Song

And on this diet of Prayer and Song we thrived, for man lives not by bread alone. Life flowed sweetly on, and there was not a hint of the Calvary in our lives, though a momentary shadow had been cast by the departure of my eldest brother to England on a scholarship.

But I was only four and this sorrow, if sorrow it was, was mitigated for us children by the bumper gifts he sent us at Christmas time. One

year, particularly, he sent us boxes of toys, enough for a Christmas tree not only for ourselves but our playmates.

To be sure, we had no fir tree, not even a branch of cypress, but these details did not bother us in that tolerant old-fashioned town. We tied the gay parcels to a flowering shrub in the front garden—there was something for everyone, even the dhoby's

bigger and better doll when he returned in a few months from England.

At the Front

Alas for my hopes! The year was 1914, and a pall seemed to settle even over our small serene community.

by

Mrs. Jan Cooke

Everywhere there was talk of war—in school there were knitting classes to provide comforters and mufflers for soldiers at the front.

"At the front"—soon something of the meaning of this phrase began to penetrate even into our childish perception. There were many Belgian and French nuns in the Convent.

HAPPY FAMILIES AT CHRISTMAS



● This delightful picture of a Ceylon family expresses the festive spirit in many homes this Christmas. But what of the have-nots? Please remember them too!

daughter, whose name was Madelena and lived in a little shanty on the less exclusive side of the hill.

She was lucky in the draw and to my great chagrin carried off a handsome big rag doll of the male sex, called Pat, with which I had fallen in love at first sight. I was almost inconsolable until my mother promised that big brother would bring me a

and as the war took its toll of human life, the sadness now on one or the other of their placid countenances showed a personal loss and bereavement.

At home, my mother's plump smiling face began to wear a worried look and my father back from circuit was not so ready to romp with us as before.

One day there were Australian troops in town—khaki-clad giants with ruddy faces and enormous boots. We small fry were fascinated yet terrified, though we knew they were going to fight the Germans, a name which had become synonymous with the giants and ogres of fairy tales.

Then there came the time when everybody was talking of the Emden—it had been sighted off the coast of Ceylon, they said, and for a time we lived in dread, fearing we knew not what.

As the day for my brother's return came and went, my mother began to look a little sad. There was talk of ships being lost at sea—words like 'submarine' and 'torpedo' cropped up frequently in conversation, and I gathered that my brother might have to postpone his return home for some time.

Christmas 1914

Christmas was approaching once more and my parents did their best to Continued on page 5

★ Hang a star in the sky—that's what we like to say in presenting our second Christmas short story by yet another Ceylon writer

I RUBBED my hands on my coat-sleeves to keep them warm because it was a cold night and the nights had been like this for some time now.

Somehow I felt happy as we sat close to each other on a little bench in the corner of the park and we listened to the crickets in the ground. The bench was like any you'll find in parks, only I let Bessy find this one because her judgement was better than mine sometimes.

We sat in the park every night and listened to the crickets and didn't talk much because Bessy who sat close to me was a dog and couldn't talk, but wagged her tail and licked my hands and I knew she listened. And I thanked her for listening by running my fingers along her ears every now and then.

I don't know why, but I was happy sitting there in the dark.

...IT IS DARK

I don't know why, but I was particularly happy tonight. It was cold but I was happy and asked Bessy if she was happy and she cuddled closer to me.

Her nearness was warm and

By JAMES BULNER

soft and it felt good to have her close to me always. I put my arm around her and she sighed with contentment. I caressed her little head and combed her neck with my fingers.

★ Suddenly the crickets stopped their singing and there were footsteps coming along the path in front of our bench. I tried to look but it was dark and Bessy raised her head because she could see.

The footsteps came nearer and the voices sounded very happy. They grew louder and louder but I couldn't follow what they were saying because everyone spoke together as they came nearer.

The voices passed over the bench and Bessy dropped her head and it was really cold now. I didn't know what time it was.

As the quiet came back the crickets began their chorus again. I was wondering why I felt happy sitting there in the dark with my dog, when more footsteps came along.

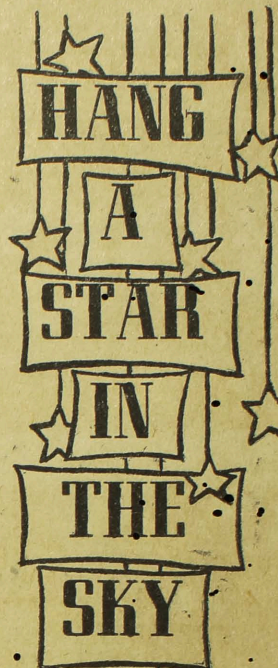
★ Young voices were laughing and talking and they were happy like the group that passed us before.

These people stopped in front of our bench and a woman in the group said, 'Hey, look, John there's a man here and a dog!'

'Uh-huh! Must be a beggar, dear!'

'Oh, John, he looks starved, the poor man!'

Someone was humming a tune



and the others were talking and the man said, 'Come on, everybody, let's hurry to Mary's house.'

I gripped the cold edge of my bench and thought a lot of things. 'Oh, John, wait a minute! How about singing a carol for this poor fellow? Huh?'

Carols? Then it must—'All right! All right!' Everyone spoke at once.

The night was silent—then quietly they began to sing.

Silent Night, Holy Night...

Then it must be Christmas! So it must be Christmas! Christmas! I sat frozen on my seat and didn't even feel Bessy at my side because I felt hard marbles in my throat.

All is calm, all is bright...

So it was Christmas. That's why I had felt happy. I knew now why I had felt so happy.

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child...

The woman said, 'John dear, have you got any coins?'

Holy Infant so tender and mild...

'Sure, sure. I got some coins, darling!'

Sleep in Heavenly peace...

'Put them in his hat, John. He has his hat there!'

Sleep in Heavenly peace...

★ My hat was held between my knees, and so many coins were thrown into it that it got heavy and slipped to the ground and I didn't care. I didn't care because it was Christmas and I was happy and they were singing.

Silent Night, Sacred Night...

'Look, John, he doesn't want the coins!'

Shepherds first see the Light...

'It's all right, darling. He'll pick them up later!'

Hear the Alleluia ring...

'Look, John, look! The woman held the lantern so close I felt the heat on my face.'

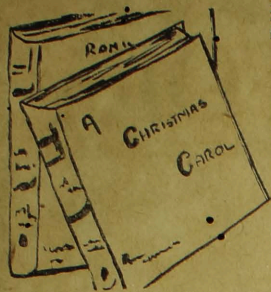
Which the Angel choirs sing...

'What's the matter, darling?'

Christ the Saviour has come...

'Lord Jesus! Look, John! The poor man!'

He... he's stone blind!'



LIGHT READING for CHRISTMAS

If you like some light reading for this Christmas-time, I can strongly recommend **COME RACK! COME ROPE!** by Robert Hugh Benson available locally from St. Michael's Bookshop, 6-10, Jampettah Street, Colombo 13 for Rs. 2/60. The Publishers are Burns and Oates.

It is a moving love story of Robin and Marjorie who give up their life-time's chance of happiness together, in order to serve God with a devotion that could only end up with... the rack and the rope.

Directly based on historical facts it also gives a graphic account of Blessed Edmund Campion and his fellow priests and martyrs who bravely faced the perils and died to keep alive the Catholic faith.

The book carries an introduction by Hugh Ross Williamson.

H. P.

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BOOKS FOR FAMILY READING

THE RIDDLE of THERESE

THE HIDDEN FACE by Ida Friederike Gorres (Burns and Oates, locally available at St. Michael's Bookshop, Colombo 13. Price Rs. 22/50).

Here's still another study of that ever-popular saint, Therese of Lisieux — and these 414 pages do not pro-

vide just another "life," but rather a deep and profound study, a quest into the real "Little Flower," a work that has an amazing depth and power combined with an attraction all its own.

Right through the book, it is obvious that the author is in search of an answer to the "riddle of Therese," and hence she provides the reader with the entire background of Therese's life, the influences at work, the

spirit of the times, and even the environment of the France in which Therese lived.

This is not a book to be read: it is one for lovers of the Little Flower who will go through it with the care and the love that are essential for any appreciation of this saint.

Controversial points are of course taken up (such as for instance the neurosis to which Therese was supposed to be subject), and although one may not fully agree with the author's conclusions, it must be said that they are, on the whole, fair.

Of one thing we were particularly glad. Considerable use is made of the much-publicised "restored" text of Therese's autobiography, but — and on this we were fully in agree-

ment with the author — it is considered to have made no significant contribution or addition to what was already known of the Little Flower's sanctity.

Here then is a work of power and strength, a work of depth and profundity on the "most important saint of modern times;" here we have indeed the "hidden face" of a saint who has rather easily been misunderstood at times. The author concludes her splendid work most aptly in the following words: "We see in her girlish face the hidden face of the Church, the Face of the Hidden Church, which in the chaos of time flowers, eternally young and beautiful, to greet the returning Lord."

G. M. M.

THE CHURCH — an abode of God

ABODES OF GOD: THE CHURCH — OUR LADY by Rene Voillaume (Geoffrey Chap-

man). Available at St. Michael's Bookshop. Price Rs. 2-45).

The author of this book is the co-founder and Superior of the Little Brothers of Jesus, the Order which was the life-long dream of Charles de Foucauld. According to Father Voillaume the work of transforming the world will never be effective unless it is inspired by those mysteries of the faith: Mary, the Church and the Cross. And so he develops his theme of the Church as one of the abodes of God, continuing the physical presence of Christ on earth, to understand the mystery of which we need a humble heart that can throw itself open to the secret teachings of the Holy Spirit.

In the second part of his book the author makes new and striking observations about Our Lady.

This illuminating book, though simple in its approach, is profound in its understanding of its subject.

W. P.

THE COMMUNICATION OF CONVICTION by Michael Day Cong. Orat. (Geoffrey Chapman). Available at St. Michael's Bookshop, Colombo 13. Price 1-75.

The first three of the five chapters of this book can be read with profit by all teachers, not by teachers of religion only. The reading of the whole of it will give religious instructors, whether parents, priests, nuns, lay teachers or catechists, a new orientation.

W. P.

and is by the reputed French Egyptologist, Etienne Drioton. Here is a brief but authoritative account of Egyptian beliefs and mythologies, the development of Egyptian religion, and the religious practices of the Egyptians.

In Part II Fr. Georges Contenau deals with the religions of the Middle East — Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Babylonia, Assyria, and those parts



of Western Asia that came to be called Syria and Asia Minor.

Part III is devoted to the religion of ancient Iran, and is written by Professor Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin. Important is the section which deals with Zoroaster and the religion he announced which, even after Islam had swept over Iran, still survives in parts of Persia and amongst the Parsees of Gujerat, Bombay and Ceylon.

Though this book will be welcomed particularly by the specialist and the student, even the general reader will be fascinated by its pages.

J.

FAITH AND FACT SERIES

THE FIRST SPIRITUAL WRITERS by F. Cayre (Burns and Oates, London, locally available at St. Michael's Bookshop. Price Rs. 5/60) is No. 39 of the Faith and Fact Series which is a kind of twentieth century encyclopaedia of Catholicism. The volume under review deals with the Fathers of the Church from apostolic times to the seventh century. It is such a pity that Ignatius, Clement, Polycarp, Leo, Gregory, Basil, Ambrose, are no more than names to so many Catholics. Their contribution to the life and thought of the Church has been something tremendous, and the story of this contribution makes fascinating reading. No better introduction to such a study can be found than this slender and bright looking volume which contains so much within such short compass. The author, Fr. F. Cayre, is one of the clearest and most authoritative writers on the subject.

J.

RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT EAST by Etienne Drioton, Georges Contenau and J. Duchesne-Guillemin (Burns and Oates, London, locally available at St. Michael's Bookshop, Colombo 13. Price Rs. 5/60). No. 141 of the same series, is divided into three parts. The first describes the religion of ancient Egypt,

★ AIDS TO MEDITATION

GOSPEL MEDITATIONS by Alfred O'Rahilly (Brown and Nolan Ltd., Dublin, locally available at St. Michael's Bookshop, Colombo 13. Price Rs. 13/50).

This is little more than an ordinary book of meditation. Into one hundred little chapters, none of them more than six pages of delightful reading, Dr. O'Rahilly has compressed years of reading and experience, a virile

spirituality, scholarly exegesis and solid theology.

Although the book is not written in the style of a meditation manual in point form, with practical applications, yet there's plenty of food for thought and reflection. Some of the most controversial topics are woven into the meditation in such a masterly way, that one's fund of knowledge is considerably increased with each

meditation.

Both priest and layman will find enough matter for prayerful reflection and, what is more, these meditations will increase his personal admiration and affection for Our Lord.

K. P.

THE PLAINTS OF THE PASSION by Fr. Jude Mead, C.P. (Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee — locally available at St. Michael's Bookshop, Colombo 13. Price Rs. 17/50).

In a simple yet forceful style, the author presents to the reader a series of useful, instructive and thought-provoking meditations on the simple yet sacred Good Friday Liturgy. Having read Fr. Mead's work, the Good Friday Liturgy is rendered more intelligible and enjoyable. The memorable reproaches are analysed historically and spiritually and rendered meaningful. The spiritual, mystical and figurative sense of each reproach is ably treated and scholarly presented.

To both priest and layman the book is valuable spiritual reading. God's tender love and mercy to sinful man is so well emphasized that the reader's appreciation of the Master's Passion is deepened, which really, as the author reveals in his Epilogue, is the author's own hope and prayer.

K. P.

CHILDREN'S BOOKSHELF

VISION Books need no introduction. They are now recognized as excellent reading matter for modern teen-agers from 9 upwards.

Two new titles in the series that have come out to Ceylon and are available locally from St. Michael's Bookshop, 6-10, Jampettah Street, Colombo 13 at Rs. 9/35 each, are **KIT, CARSON OF THE OLD WEST** by Mark Boesch and **ROSE HAWTHORNE** by Arthur and Elizabeth Odell Sheehan, respectively.

Boys especially will revel in the adventurous exploits of Kit Carson whose colourful career included scouting, trapping, fighting, buffalo hunting. Kit Carson was only sixteen when he first rode the Santa Fe Trail

west to New Mexico from his home in Missouri. He was baptized a Catholic at 32.

The second title has a strong appeal especially for girls. It is the actual story of Rose, daughter of the famous novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose life-story from a teenager at student and a young wife of a writer to her goal in life as Mother Alphonsa, foundress and superior of the Servants of Relief for Incurable Cancer, a Dominican Congregation, is recounted in detail.

Both books are profusely illustrated and make delightful gifts for any Catholic teen-ager, this Christmas.

H. P.

Gifts in Season

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THE NEW ST. JOSEPH CHILDREN'S MISSAL: With beautiful coloured pictures. By Fr. Hoeber. Rs. 4/75.

I PRAY THE MASS SUNDAY MISSAL: By Fr. Hoeber. Rs. 6/50.

SAINTS

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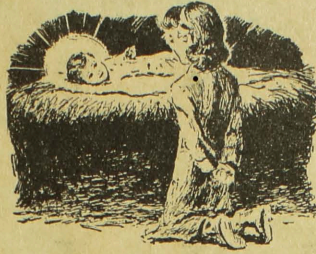
COLOMBO.

THE PRINCE of PEACE

BETHLEHEM TODAY IS A LITTLE CITY OF ABOUT 7,300 INHABITANTS, SITUATED ON TWO HILLOCKS, VERDURE CLAD AND TERRACED WITH VINES AND OLIVE TREES, ABOUT 2,500 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, AND APPROXIMATELY SIX MILES FROM JERUSALEM TO THE SOUTH. ON THE UPPER HILL IS THE OLD CITY OF THE BIBLE, WITH ITS NARROW, DIM, WINDING STREETS, EXCEPT FOR ONE MODERN WAY DONE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. THE NEW CITY, WITH THE BASILICA OF THE NATIVITY, STANDS ON THE LOWER HILL. THE PLAIN BEYOND IS PASTURE LAND.

Here in the days of Our Lord, the few sheep owned by the inhabitants of Bethlehem were gathered at night into the surrounding caves and stables, but the large flocks remained always out on the heath with some shepherds to guard them. Night and day, summer and winter, those numerous beasts with their few guardians formed a community apart that lived on and from the plains. Shepherds like these had the very worst reputation among the Scribes and Pharisees for their unclean habits and rough behaviour.

Since they led a nomadic life on the open plains, where water was scarce, they were dirty, smelly, ignor-



Among all the exalted titles conferred on Augustus, we do not find

life, laws and principles have lost their power of internal compulsion, and justice rests not on the Divine laws but on such stuff as dreams are made of. Peace cannot be effected by political manoeuvres and diplomatic skill, for it can fail under the pressure of other political moves and clever diplomacy. Peace can be lasting only when principles are everlasting, i.e., God-given. Peace is the fruit of the works of justice.

Change of heart

As nations are made up of individuals, the change of heart and adherence to God's law, so essential for peace, must begin in the individual. Every one of us must remember that peace is not something just abstract, concerning only nations or groups of States, but that it is something essentially concrete and personal. World peace, or national peace, or peace in the family, is the manifestation and extension of personal virtue, personal peace. Thus every time one

By

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris O.M.I.
BISHOP OF CHILAW

ant of the most elementary prescriptions about the washing of hands, the purification of utensils, the choice of foods, etc., and hence, more than any others were, from the viewpoint of the Pharisees, deserving of the most cordial contempt.

But when the Divine Saviour was born at Bethlehem, these shepherds received a heavenly invitation to attend the court of the new-born Son of David, in David's own royal City. St. Luke, the Evangelist, relates the incident in these simple words:

And there were shepherds in the same district living in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by night. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them and they feared exceedingly. And the angel said to them: Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring to you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For there has been born to you today in the town of David a Saviour who is the Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you will find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth among men of goodwill (Luke II, 8-14).

The rough fustics of the plain went forthwith to see the thing that has come to pass, which the Lord had announced to them; and, when they had satisfied themselves, they glorified God and broadcast the good news. The angel, after offering praise to God in the highest heavens, wished peace to men of goodwill.

Pre-Christian era

In the years immediately preceding the Christian Era, there was peace in the Roman Empire. In 15 B.C. the tribes between the Alps and the Danube had been subjugated; in 13 B.C., the Dalmatians and the Panonians had been reduced to obedience; in the following year, Roman Rule was supreme along the Rhine. Even the defeat of Quintilius Varus in the forests of Teutoburg had not disturbed the period of peace. Emperor Augustus was hailed as the author of the *Pax Romana*. Horace sang of the Augustan Age:

*Tua, Caesar, aetas
Fruges at agris retulit uberes
Et signa nostro restituit Jovi
Derepta Parthorum superbis
Postibus et vacuum duellis
Ianum Quirini clausit et ordinem
Rectum evaganti frena licentiae
Injecit emotivae culpas
Et veteres revocavit artes.*
(Odes iv, 15).

Caesar, thy reign;
Has given back golden harvests to our fields;
Our standards torn from Parthia's haughty walls,
Restored to Roman Jove;
Closed gates of Janus, vacant of a war;
To righteous order rampant licence curbed,
Thrust from the state, the vices which defiled,
And in their stead, recalled
The ancient virtues to their fatherland.

(Trans. by Lord Lytton).

that he was ever called "the prince of peace." The *pax Romana* was the result of the subjugation of the weaker races by a powerful empire, and it was maintained with twenty-five legions, which nevertheless proved insufficient at Teutoburg, thereby embittering the last days of the Emperor.

Hebrew prophecy

But seven centuries earlier a Hebrew prophet bestowed the title of the Prince of Peace on the future Messiah as a final and definitive appellation:

For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. [Is. X, 6].

Zachary, the father of the Precursor, St. John the Baptist, hailed the coming of the Lord, as the light "on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk. I, 79). At Christ's final entry into Jerusalem, the hymn of Bethlehem once again rang, as the crowd shouted, saying: *Blessed is he who comes as king, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.* [Lk. XIX, 38].

Our Lord's farewell message to His disciples was, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give it to you" (Jn. XIV, 27); and, His greetings after the resurrection begin with the word Peace.

First condition

According to Our Lord's teaching, the first condition for peace is reconciliation with God, through repentance and a change of heart for the better. The cardinal point of Christ's mission on earth, the purpose of His teaching, the end for which He died on the Cross, was to reconcile fallen man with his Maker. "God," says St. Paul, "has reconciled us to Himself through Christ" (2 Cor. V, 19). The spectre of sin, of enmity with his Creator, stalks behind the sinner, disturbing the peace of his soul. Cain killed his brother in anger and jealousy, and thenceforward became a vagabond and a fugitive upon the face of the earth; the prodigal son had no peace till he returned to his father; Judas, after betraying his Master for money, put an end to his own life. "The wicked are like the raging sea, that cannot rest" (Is. LVII, 14).

Second condition

The second condition for peace, implied in the first, is the observance of God's laws. These laws are old, as old as the human race, but as they are laws given by God, the omniscient and immutable, they cannot become outmoded or impracticable with the passage of time. World peace as well as individual peace cannot exist, except on the basis of justice, charity, humility and truth.

In spite of conferences, charters, international agreements and goodwill missions, the present mood of the world is anything but peaceful, because with the exclusion of God from international

refrains from the sharp word, the unjust act, the rash insult, the uncharitable criticism, one contributes to the peace of others, to world peace or national peace. You are powerful, let us say, and you are rich; but, thinking of the mercy of Christ and His poverty, you refrain from harming the weak and oppressing the poor. You make thereby a valuable contribution to world peace. Peace is your business and mine. The Prince of Peace is at our door and the chant of the herald angels is already in our ears

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of goodwill.

Like the Coventry Players of the Middle Ages let us join in singing

*Here is God now, here is unity
Heaven and earth are pleased with Peace.*

Short Story

Continued from page 3

hide their growing anxiety.

Christmas Eve arrived — we went to Midnight Mass and there as the sweet strains of "O Holy Night" heralded another Noel, and the veil in front of the crib fell away to reveal again the beloved picture of God made Man for

us, we forgot for a little while a world torn by war, the sufferings and sacrifices entailed, and the absence of dear ones.

Christmas Day dawned clear and bright, and we were up early to see what Santa had brought us.

Presently we sat down for morning tea and my mother dispensed thick slices of breuder and fat 'Koli kut-

World Week of Brotherly Love this Christmas?

THE Social Service Secretariate of Mauritius has suggested a World Week of Brotherly Love from December 25th to January 1st. This is how they outline the idea:

IT WOULD BE SO BEAUTIFUL IF AT LAST WE ALL DECIDED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER!

Why should we not, as from this year which has opened to man new ways in space?

Christmas and the New Year are close at hand. From North to South, from East to West, these are memorable dates in human history, from the cradle to the grave.

If, from CHRISTMAS TO THE NEW YEAR, each of us put an end to trickery, spite, disorder, antagonism, criticism, back-biting calumny and other wickedness...

If each of us tries every means to give pleasure not only to our parents, friends and acquaintances, also to all those with whom we come in contact...

FOR ONE WEEK THERE WOULD BE A RADICAL CHANGE, FOR MEN WOULD NOT TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE WOLVES.

And who knows but after this truce all the other days to follow in 1960 would be more charitable.

If preachers, educators, writers and all those who control the principal means of propaganda lent their valuable help, who knows but this week of fraternal charity would become a reality in Mauritius and elsewhere...

★ POPE'S CHRISTMAS BROADCAST

WEDNESDAY, December 23, at 4.30 p.m. Ceylon Time, on Vatican Radio (19.84, 25.67, 31.10, 41.21 and 196 m.).

too' plantains, but ate very little herself. Was she wondering what kind of fare my brother was having on this Christmas morning, so far from home in a harsher clime?

Silence reigned and the very air was heavy with lassitude and sleep. Suddenly there was the click of the garden gate, and footsteps crunched on the gravel path. Was it the postman? Visitors so early?

But there was no knocking on the door — instead the footsteps continued and the visitor walked right in, a strange young man whom I couldn't remember seeing before.

"Happy Christmas, Mama," he called as he came — it was my brother. Then pandemonium broke loose — such huggings and kissings, and questions and explanations. He had unexpectedly got the chance of sailing, and in spite of many alarms had finally made it.

He showed us the bag tied round his neck, in which his motherly landlady had put his money for safe keeping. He told us about the time a submarine had been sighted, and how the Captain expecting an attack had ordered the passengers to wear their life-belts and stand by in readiness. But Providence had looked after him and brought him home to make our Christmas complete.

My mother's face was shining with happiness — she, too, had got the Christmas present she wanted.



THE Messenger offers its prayerful wishes to His Grace the Archbishop, whose patronal feast falls on the 29th instant.

On his feast-day, His Grace will, as usual, say Mass at 7 a.m. in Archbishop's House Chapel.

Eucharistic Fast

THE Reverend Fathers are advised to remind the Faithful that those approaching the Holy Table at Midnight Mass should refrain from solid foods and alcoholic drinks for 3 hours and ordinary liquids one hour before Communion. Water does not break the fast.

Vicar-General.

OFFICIAL

Clergy Retreat

THE Diocesan Clergy Retreat will take place at Archbishop's House, Borella, from the 3rd to 9th January. The Fathers are expected to be at Borella at 5.30 p.m. on the 3rd January. The following will take part in the Retreat:

Very Rev. Fr. D. J. Wettasinghe, Rev. Frs. Manuel Aponso, Nicholas Perera, Joseph Bede, Arthur Fernando, Noel Perera, Alex Ranasinghe, Justin Perera, Gerard Abeysekera, W. L. Don Peter, Ignatius Perera, Stanley Mellawa, Joseph Fernando, Manik Muktukumar, Peter Mendis, Lionel Abeywickreme, Harold Panditaratna, Joseph Perera, Joseph Nehasinghe, Timothy Peiris, Charles d'Souza, John Gomes, Dalfas Soysa, W. Don Sylvester, Stan. Wijewickreme, Lucian Dep, Frank Marcus Fernando, Patrick Sapramadu, Neville Emmanuel, Oscar Abeyratna, H. Don Anselm, Oswald Gomis, Anselm Croos, Artie Amaratunga and Bernard Costa.

Notice to the Clergy

ALL the Reverend Fathers of the City and its suburbs are kindly requested to attend the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament (with Misereere and Te Deum) at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena, at 5 p.m., on 31st December. After Benediction, as is customary, the Clergy will offer His Grace their New Year wishes.

Charles Reymann, O.M.I.,
Vicar-General.

New Year — Midnight Mass

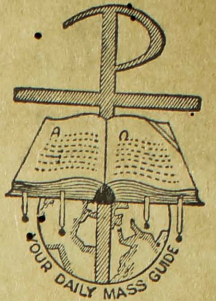
THE Reverend Fathers are reminded that in virtue of a special Indult given to the Archdiocese, they may have midnight Mass on the night of December 31st-1st January in all the churches and chapels in the Archdiocese. It would be practical to have the usual Misereere-Te Deum ceremony of the 31st December, immediately before midnight Mass.

Annual Retreats

Notice to Superiors of Communities, Principals of Schools, Directors of Sodalties, Associations, etc.

SUPERIORS of Religious Communities, Principals of Schools, Directors of Sodalties, etc., are kindly reminded that they should forward to His Grace the Archbishop the lists for Retreats for 1960, furnishing details about the precise dates, language in which they are to be preached, etc., before the 24th December, 1959.

Vicar-General.



Wednesday, 23 December: Mass of previous Sunday (fourth in Advent). Violet.

Thursday, 24 December: Vigil of Christmas. Violet. Omit prayer prescribed.

Friday, 25 December: CHRISTMAS DAY. White. Omit prayer prescribed. Creed. Proper Preface and Communicantes for entire Octave. 2nd Mass (2nd prayer of St. Anastasia). 3rd Mass (last Gospel of Epiphany).

Saturday, 26 December: St. Stephen. Red. 2nd prayer of the Octave of Christmas.

Sunday, 27 December: St. John. White. 2nd prayer of Octave.

Monday, 28 December: Holy Innocents. Violet. 2nd prayer of Octave.

Tuesday, 29 December: St. Thomas. Red. 2nd prayer of Octave.

Wednesday, 30 December: Mass of the Sunday within the Octave. 2nd prayer of Octave.

Thursday, 31 December: St. Silvester. White. 2nd prayer of Octave.

Friday, 1 January: CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD. White. Creed. Preface and Communicantes of Christmas. Saturday, 2 January: Mass of Our Lady. White.

Sunday, 3 January: MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS. White. Creed. Preface of Nativity.

Unless otherwise stated, the prayer prescribed is always said. (Archdiocese: "in time of any tribulation").

Messenger Christmas Greeting

May the Holy Infant of Bethlehem reign in your hearts and homes ... is our prayerful Christmas wish to all our readers, advertisers and friends.

CHRISTMAS
NUMBER

The Ceylon's Catholic Weekly Messenger

WEDNESDAY, 23rd DECEMBER, 1959

CLOUDS OVER CHRISTMAS

JUST as on the first Christmas, the world shut the door in the face of Christ and His Mother, so today, the same process is being repeated. And just as on that first day of bliss, over the wondrous joy and happiness of the angelic choirs there hovered the pathetic clouds of blindness, so today the message of Christmas and the true and genuine joyfulness that accompanies it are being slowly but surely blacked-out by selfishness, hatred and envy. This is a hard and bitter fact; and yet, we make no excuses for dwelling on this somewhat discordant note amidst the preponderant goodwill and happiness that should prevail at this period.

The discordant note is struck by those who cry out today in the glib, subtle, "civilised" language of the modern world, that there is no room for the Son of God in the inn of their lives. The jarring accents emanate from those who will bring in considerations of wealth, of egoism and selfishness, of caste, race and creed, where the Christmas message speaks of "peace on earth to men of goodwill."

And so, in the shadow of the crib, it would do all of us some good to search deep into our hearts, and to see whether the integrity of the Christmas message is being given a chance.

The big truth that confronts everyone of us, not only at Christmas but right through our lives, is that as man could not arise and walk in truth, justice and peace by himself after the fall, so man cannot continue to walk in truth, justice and peace without the Incarnate God supporting him. This is indeed the challenge of the Christ-Child; it is the challenge of every Christmas that we celebrate; it is, in fact, the challenge that confronts us every time we say "Happy Christmas" to another. Is it to be a life with Christ, or is it to be a life without Him? Is to be a life with Christian values, Christian standards, and Christmas ideals, or is it to be a life in which we gently, but surely, take Him out of our living? In other words, is Bethlehem to be the fountainhead of our lives, or is it to be relegated to the limbo of forgotten memories, as a mere historical fact, without a vital message for our everyday living?

On the personal level, Christmas has its implications, which no Catholic can evade; for it reminds everyone of us of the supreme importance of our own soul.

But Christmas is also a family feast, and as such Christmas has a message for the Christian family as well. For, Christmas is the feast of family love — which means strength, courage, unselfishness, forgiveness, true charity, patience, and self-immolation.

If we look still further, we will see that there is no such thing as a genuine Catholic who has no parish nor pastor. And that is why we say that Christmas is also a parochial feast; and that too is why one looks aghast sometimes at the vast numbers of so-called "good Catholics" especially in larger places, who belong to no parish, and who are some kind of spiritual free-lances or free-wheelers. The stable of Bethlehem places before us this question as well — our love for our parish, for our pastor, for all those who should belong, with us, to the wider family of the parish.

There is one last sphere into which we would wish to project the meaning of Christmas, for there too, the menacing clouds of self-seeking and selfishness have pierced most dangerously, and destroyed the image of Christ and the love of Christ. We refer to society and the message that Christmas has for the society in which we live. Those Catholics who dissociate Christmas from their workaday lives, from their business and their professional pursuits, from their relationships to others (especially those of other creeds and races), and who build up some kind of an impregnable fortress between their social and their personal lives, are shutting out the Christ-Child from their lives, just as surely as it happened on the first Christmas. The world cries out that profit and fat bank balances and physical comforts alone matter; the stable cries out that man must take up a cross and follow the bloody path to Calvary. The world cries out that caste or race or clique alone should prosper; the stable cries out that love overcomes all barriers and distinctions.

And so the story of Christmas goes on. It is alas very often a story of overhanging clouds, that seek in vain to take away the hardship, the poverty and also the beauty of the original Christmas message: for, there are indeed so many unChristian Catholics, who forget that the God who redeemed them, lay a helpless little Babe in an unwanted stable of Bethlehem.

This is the wish that we extend to our readers this Christmas: that, with God's grace, they may all have the courage to pierce through the gathering clouds, and listen to the Christian message in all its pristine purity; and that, having heard, we may all have the courage to fulfil it in our lives.

CHRISTMAS AND

I HAVE BEFORE ME A COLLECTION OF CHRISTMAS CARDS. ON ONE IS A COTTAGE WITH COLOURED GLASS WINDOWS. BELOW IT IS A SPRAY OF HOLLY WITH A BLUE CANDLE AND A RED CANDLE BURNING ON IT. ON ANOTHER IS A BELFRY WITH A BELL, WITH TWO BIRDS SINGING IN THE SNOW. ON ONE IS A BOUQUET OF TULIPS AND FORGET-ME-NOTS. ON ANOTHER IS A BOUQUET OF VIOLETS. ON ONE IS THE PICTURE OF "CANNE HARBOUR" BY CHURCHILL.

CANNES

On one is a grinning Kandyan dancer. On another is a smiling woman with a pot of water on her hip. Behind her is the rock of Sigiriya.

I spread the cards on the table and thought a while. Yes, of course. The last was good for a cheap advertisement for locally manufactured tooth-paste. The first was not too bad to illustrate a housing scheme in an election manifesto. The one with the bell somehow reminded me of the days of King Elara. In his day, says legend, there was a bell in the royal city. Any man with a grievance rang it and told the tale to the king. But that "Cannes Harbour" thing... what... was it doing in that gallery?

Exit Christ?

Thus has Christ gone out of Christmas. Thus has Cannes Harbour come into it. Thus has a woman with a pot on her hip come into it. From the choice of cards one makes, we find out what one's idea of Christmas is.

By FR. MARCELLINE JAYEKODY O.M.I.

In the giddy whirligig of time Mary with her baby has gone out of Christmas and a woman with a pot has come into it. Of course even she will not stay there very long. Soon there will be a sputnik crashing through space with the legs of Hollywood stars dangling out of a window or a man on a jumping stick with money lenders behind him. Or a picture of holiday makers in the moon. Anything may be good enough to push Christ out of the stable.

I read in an Anthology of Modern Verse a poem on "Star-talk." I forget what each star told the other. But they talked, mostly about themselves. I sometimes pick up bunches and sprays of social-star talk which descends occasionally to such trifling topics as Christmas in the shape of recipes for puddings; turkey and ham for dinner; and, of course, Christmas shopping. For some, it would seem, that the vision of Christmas lies not in the manger but in the kitchen and on the dining table, in the brimming wardrobe. In the nylon net and the fantastic hair style.

This, I suppose, is a by-law of evolution.

We need change. We need variety. We need to be saved from boredom. We need progress. We need something new.

But do we remove the hair for a new hair style? Do we remove Christ for a new idea of Christmas cards? Aye, there's the rub. Do we?

Christmas, it must be remembered, is neither pudding in a painted bowl nor champagne in glasses with long stems. It is a renewal of life. A rich and subtle spiritual experience. A voyage to two thousand years ago, carrying gold and perfume.

Forget it, and it comes down to cocktail parties where dress suits and orchids swing round shimmering silks, modelled on satin slippers as the cathedral bells ring in Christmas. And then

the needles-and-pins aftermath, with scorpions stinging in the head and the heart and jaded looks in the eyes that shone like diamonds in the glow of the glittering lights.

Think of it

Think of it and we become wise men following a new star.

The Christmas day as we have

HARBOUR

it now was not chosen before the 5th century and joy became its theme only after another thousand years. In England, long before



it was converted to Christianity, a pagan festival was celebrated on the 25th of December. The Roman Saturnalia were celebrated till the 19th of December.

The Christian reaction to these pagan carousals was the joyful celebration of Christmas. The carols, which were sung by groups of singers going from place to place, were a part of it. The singers sometimes took the very songs the pagan revellers sang and added Christmas touches to them. We have one clear example:

*The holly and the ivy
When they are both full grown,
Of all trees that are in the wood
The holly bears the crown.*

*The rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ
Sweet singing in the choir.*

In the meaning of the Druids the holly represented man and the ivy the woman. We can see that the "organ" and the choir have been added to give the song a Christian touch.

By the 15th century Christmas was Christian with its meaning and message coming into the hearts of men. It brought greater symbolism when Francis of Assisi brought the crib into Christmas. The riches of its beautiful message are captured, like bees in amber, in the deeper Christmas hymns and homilies. And in the lives of men.

One little verse from a carol of the 15th century gives us an idea of how Christmas had come to stay in the heart:

*O my dearest young Jesus sweet
Prepare thy cradle in my spereit
And I shall rock thee to my heart
And never more from thee depart.*

Christmas went on thus for centuries gathering momentum. With the slow passage of time the spirit of the Roman Saturnalia crept back again and the sound of revelry and the midnight dances began to be heard. Whether we are only half way up or are on the peak of the old Roman paganism

we do not know. We have yet only the drinking and the dancing with its acrid sweat and sordid aftermath. The Roman carousals did not end there. We might end up with them one day.

Christmas is none of these. Not even "Cannes Harbour" by Churchill. Essentially it is the following of our star with gold in our hearts and perfume in our lives. It is a festival of the spirit which reshapes and readjusts our perspective on material things. It is a feeling and a realisation which the clochards living under the bridge of the Seine or any prince living in the Palace of Versailles with its 1,500 rooms each differently furnished, might well experience. Tapping feet and cocktail parties are only the pagan fringe of it. Nor can it be reached with thin, long manicured fingers, standing on ballet shoes. It is something to be grasped with

rough hands and we kneel to reach it.

Christmas Framework

If ever man achieved anything, he did so in the moments when his undimmed vision was fixed on what the Greeks called the imponderables: love of beauty, honour, grace, courtesy, delicate feeling. Love of God and love of man. Virtue and fine living. These make the framework of Christmas.

Christmas is a kind of measure by which we find the amount of Christianity and paganism in us before we step into a new year.

Having wandered through the intricate paths of a year in search of Christ we at last reach the Bethlehem of Christmas at the cold end of December. There we come to the end of our search.

It should be a tragedy, having gone all that distance of time to discover there the Cannes Harbour or the woman with the pot of water on her hip. Dancing couples and drinking parties.

This does not mean that joys must be banished for ever from life which is full of pain, sorrow and even misery. Here the pleading is not against joys but in favour of Christ being brought back to Christmas. There is no Christmas without Christ.

It is during Christmas that we open our jewel boxes and count the gold and finger the perfumes we carry. It is during Christmas time that we take our hearts out and examine their working. It is during Christmas time that we find whether we took the inn for the dancing and told Mary to go to the cow-shed if the baby must be born.

It is during Christmas time that we hang up "Cannes Harbour" by Churchill on the wall and take the Baby Christ to our hands.

BISHOP SHEEN SPEAKS

WHAT is Christmas?

Christmas is both an event in history and an event in every human life. What is the event in history? The birth of Christ the Son of the Living God. At Bethlehem He Who made the earth came to live in it; He Who existed from all eternity in His nature as God, began to exist in time in His nature as man; He Who before was "way up there in the heavens" now began to walk among men so that they might see His Mercy, His Love and His Goodness. He was not like a stranger walking into a studio, but like an artist walking among His own creations.

Unique

Was the Birth of Christ at Bethlehem like any other birth in the world, for example, like that of Caesar or Napoleon or Washington?

No, His Birth was a pattern or a model birth; was not something that happened, but something that is to go on happening. His Birth was like a die from which the government makes coins; an original which is to stamp others and give them value.

Ourselves

When does the Birth of Christ as an event in history become an event in the life of human beings?

When they are born of Christ and stamped with His likeness. It profits Christ nothing to be born in Bethlehem unless He is also born in our own hearts. His life is to become our life; His Truth our truth and

His Love our love.

But how does this take place?

The Bible tells us two ways in which it does not take place:

- "Not from human stock," that is not from human generation or human blood; parents cannot communicate Christianity to their children; no one in all the world is born a Christian.
- "Not from nature's will or man's." Nature or evolution does not push us onwards and upward until we become God-like; furthermore, as man by an act of will cannot add to his height one inch, neither can he by an act of his own will become a partaker of the Divine Nature which Christ brought to this earth in Bethlehem. Not by the persuasive power of a preacher nor the resolute decision of a man to become better is the new birth brought about.

Baptism

If then one does not become a Christian by being kinder and more generous, or by being born of Christian parents, how does Bethlehem become a reality in us?

By being born of God. Oxygen does not live in the grass unless the grass takes it up into its nature; grass does not live in the animal unless the animal with its higher nature descends to it and incorporates it to itself; chemicals, vitamins, plants and animals do not become a part of man unless he goes down to those lower natures and gives them birth in his higher nature which is able to think and love. Neither can man live in God, share in the Divine Nature, have the Divine Life throb in his soul unless what happened in Bethlehem is repeated in us, namely, God must come down to us and elevate our nature to be something that it could not be of and by itself. This birth takes place by baptism; either of water, or when that is not possible, by desire or by martyrdom.

Inequality

Are there, therefore, any inequalities among men?

There are no inequalities of race or blood or colour, for all men have a soul and all have been redeemed by Christ. But the inequalities which are basic are those which men decide for themselves, namely, whether they will be just creatures or children of God; whether they will have only the life of their parents in them, for whether they have the life of God. Not all are willing to do this, hence all those who welcome Him become the "children of God."

Tragedy

Is it a tragedy not to have the Divine Life within us?

Yes, as it is a tragedy for a champagne glass to be filled with water instead of champagne, or a beautiful gold setting to have a pebble in it instead of a diamond, or for an electric lamp to be filled with dust instead of electricity. The tragedy of life is not what men suffer, but what they miss.

Christmas

What then do we mean by Merry Christmas?

We express the heart's eager desire that every person in the world may be made merry by having Christ born in his poor heart, as He was once born in a stable. (Copyright... Reproduction in whole or in part forbidden).

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• A Christmas Meditation

Every Christmas brings the Grace of God into our hearts

WE are always quick to speak of the cold December mornings that herald Christmas. But I really felt the cold when on a Christmas morn in Holland, I walked into the streets covered with snow. There were no crackers and fire-works. The people were at home. It was a feast of the home. But that feast takes shape according to the warmth that has come into the home by the Grace of Christ in the souls of men and women. Christmas after all is the birth of Christ.

It is so refreshing at the present time to see the efforts of people to put 'Christ into Christmas.' I am not speaking of that nostalgic song on radio, but the 'Poster Campaign' was good. It had impact. It made any heart melt to see the old old story of Virgin and Child. In spite of the pavement hawkers (who provide us with all we want at cheap prices!) Christmas always holds its own. But I am wondering whether its spirit has got colder as the years have rolled by. The long queues at the Confessional; the midnight Mass; the Carols; the visits to friends (and as children, woe to the relatives who didn't give us crackers); the Postman with his big pile of letters and his hundredth 'shot' of arrack (one Christmas we had to lift the postman); — well, all this has been the external pattern revolving round the Mystery of Christmas, which is centred round the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It's the liturgy that helps us to grasp the very heart of the feast. That's why all Priests look back on those 'ethereal' days, when in the Seminary they sang Matins and Lauds on Christmas Eve, and took part in the Solemn High Mass. Every Christmas brings the Grace of God into our hearts to make us stronger in the Christian ordeal. I say 'ordeal' because 'ordeal' implies sacrifice, and a recognition of the will of God in the things that happen to us. It is so hard to say 'Thy Will be Done' when

everything seems lost, and when the Hand of God is not apparent in the pattern of our life. This is the great lesson and Mystery of the crib. God was Creator of the Universe and yet he bowed down to creation. Of his own Choice He became Man to redeem men, because it was the Will of His Father.

To see the will of God in the numerous happenings of life is an acknowledgment of the love of God and Faith in his ever loving Providence. There is such a lot of unhappiness, disappointment, ill-feeling, and what I might term 'fed-up-ness' in our daily life, that we begin to lose our courage and Faith. This becomes very apparent when our future is not mapped-out with the precision and clarity that we desire. It is only the Christ of Bethlehem who can give us that measure of Grace necessary to strengthen our hearts to say: 'Thy Will Be Done Oh God.'

For Jesus Christ came in the form of frail flesh to do the Will of His Father. On Christmas Day at Holy Mass, he will come into our souls in Holy Communion. This is the greatest Reality of Christmas. Everything else is accidental. The pulse of true Christmas is found not in the vast crowds in the Pettah, but in the queues in the Confessional, and in the crowds at the Communion Rail. We need the Peace of Christ today more than ever: the country needs it, the family needs it, the individual

needs it. 'Ask and you shall receive.'

O Child of Bethlehem come into my heart with Thy reign of Love; Let this Christmas be to me a time of true Joy in the Lord; help me to keep Thy Commandments; let me accept from Thy tiny arms the Crosses that come my way; above all give me the Joy — the true Christmas Joy, that is so necessary for Peace of Soul.

Here's a scrap I read on radio many years ago: "Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children; to remember the weakness, the loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear in their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts — and a garden for your kindly feelings with the gate open — are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas. Are you willing that love is the strongest thing in the world — stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death and that the Blessed life that began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal love? Then you can keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone."

By
Fr. Noel Cruz
O.M.I.

The Essence of Christmas

I DO not think that I have turned Scrooge but the approach of Christmas no longer evokes in me the same anticipatory joy I used to experience a couple of decades ago. A vague feeling of insouciance has taken its place. The prospect has ceased to be thrilling. It is almost saddening.

What is the explanation for this change? Age? Certainly not. Because Christmas is as much a festival of the old as of the young. Could it be the high cost of living or rather the cost of high living? Perhaps so, but even then it could be only a part of the answer. The main explanation ought to be sought elsewhere.

THE ESSENCE

The essence of Christmas is goodwill. It is the corner stone on which the spirit of Christmas is built. Take it away and Christmas is as bereft of

by
S. M. J. LOUIS

meaning and as centred around food, drink and gay clothes, as any pagan festival in the long-houses of Borneo. The message of Christmas is direct and simple. Peace on earth to men of goodwill. Where there is no goodwill there can be no peace. And without peace there can be no true happiness.

Our fathers looked forward to Christmas. They certainly were not paragons. They quarrelled, fought and made many enemies during the year. There were violent disagreements, misunderstandings and jealousies. Family dissensions were galore. But they always made up their differences at Christmas time. I remember my father and his next-door neighbour cousin used to have the most awful rows over a common boundary fence which was mysteriously mobile. They would not speak to each other for varying periods, the duration of estrangement depending on the length of the interval between the date of their quarrel and Christmas. On Christmas day they would call on each other, eat at each other's house and have a good time together. Every grievance was truly forgiven and truly forgotten. They would of course quarrel again but to them and to others of their genera-

tion Christmas was the season of fortiveness, goodwill and peace.

CHRISTMAS TODAY

Is Christmas the season of peace and goodwill with us too? Have we not begun to associate Christmas more with expensive clothes, heavy eating and drinking, merry-making and doubtful pleasures than with the true spiritual significance of the feast? Christmas comes and goes but our hatred, feuds and dissensions go on for ever. We make no attempt to forgive. We forget to forget. Having banished the Prince of Peace from our homes, we do not invite Him to our hearts even when His birthday comes round. We pay no heed to the message of Christmas.

Hatred gets us nowhere and is the most unrewarding of all emotions. It hurts both spiritually and physically. When we hate we not only offend God grievously but also do ourselves more harm than we do the victims of our malice. It actually hurts physically to let rancour gnaw at our hearts, to carry ill-will against those who have given us cause for offence. Forgiveness is the easiest and most pleasant thing, in the end. Every day we beg God, on our knees, for forgiveness. Let us, at least during Christmas, forgive those who have trespassed against us. This is the minimum Christ expects of us by way of sanctifying the season of peace and goodwill.

LEGENDS OF THE CHRIST CHILD AND HIS MOTHER

FROM the earliest days of Christianity there existed a pious desire on the part of the faithful to know more about the hidden years of Christ's life — the years of infancy and childhood passed over in silence by the Evangelists. This desire was met by the wealth of traditional anecdotes supplementing the Gospel narratives that were current in Syria, and the adjacent countries, some of them dating from pre-Apostolic times.

This tradition perished when the Arab conquest swept over these lands, but by that time much of it had been enshrined in those books we know today as the Apocryphal Gospels. To these were added, after the conversion of Western Europe, many others which, more folk tale and legend than tradition, were told every Christmastide by the fireside in cot and castle while snowstorms howled outside.

The meaning of the word legend has so sadly deteriorated that it is now too often used as a synonym of fairy story. This is completely untrue. In all legends, particularly in Christian ones, it is the foundation belief that is important far more than the poetical story that is wrapped around it. It is for this reason that the Church permitted them, in the words of St. Aelred, as an incentive to devotion. Our Lady naturally finds an honoured place in them, and the belief that her intercession is all-powerful with her Son is present from the beginning.

After the Angel warned him of Herod's evil intentions, St. Joseph set out for Egypt immediately and soon entered the great desert that lay to the South. Knowing this barren country was infested by robbers, who lived by plundering travellers, St. Joseph resolved to take his precious charges across this dangerous stage of the journey by night, hoping to

slip past unobserved.

So it was that Dismas, a rough brutal man, (who worked alone as no comrade could stand his boorishness), peered from his hideout in the ruins of a deserted village and

By
Cecil Jayawardana

saw, in the pale light of a fickle moon, the Holy Family approaching. Observing that this was an easy prey, consisting of one man burdened with the care of a woman carrying a baby, he uttered his customary fearsome roar and rushed from his lair, brandishing his club.

But as he reached them his club clattered harmlessly on the stones, his raucous voice died away and the ferocious ruffian fell on his knees before Christ, nestling in the arms of Our Lady. "Surely," he cried, "if God had a Mother I would say that thou wert she!" With all thoughts of robbery forgotten he insisted on leading them to his house for rest and refreshment. There his wife was tending her little boy who was seriously stricken with leprosy and who, with the pain of his disease, was consistently crying. Our Lady was filled with compassion. "If thou wilt bring me clean water wherein to bathe my Son," she said, "I will render thee a service."

The robber's wife did as she requested and after bathing Jesus, Our Lady said to her: "Now place the son in this water. I have him all over and his leprosy will be cured." Trustingly the woman obeyed and when she dried the child, lo! his skin shone

white and smooth! With tears of joy overflowing her eyes she poured out her thanks, and the robber was no less grateful.

The little leper thus miraculously cured was named Dismas, after his father, and as a grown man followed his father's nefarious profession. Apprehended at last before Pilate, he was condemned and crucified beside Jesus Whom he recognized as his Lord, repented, and was promised entry into Paradise. "So," concludes the fourth century writer, "was he accounted worthy through the grace of the merciful God and His Mother to bear witness to Christ upon the Cross."

Another very pleasing story tells how the daisy got the pink undertips to its petals. When Jesus was just growing out of babyhood Our Lady wanted to give Him a posy of flowers for His birthday, and, as flowers are difficult to come by at Christmastide, she carefully embroidered a bunch of artificial ones. While working on a small white flower with a yellow silk centre she pricked her finger with the needle, so that some spots of blood, stained the back of the white petals.

When the Holy Child received her gifts He treasured this flower above all the others and in spring planted it in the garden. He breathed on it and watered it from the golden cup the Magi had offered at His Crib, and it took root and flourished. Now it has spread in its modest glory throughout the world, blossoming from the first warm days of spring to the coming of the autumn frosts — the little daisy with its golden heart and white, pink-tipped petals.



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Women's Page

Speaking of Christmas

There is no better time than Christmas to take stock of the passing year. Seated round the Christmas Tree (preferably) or the Radio, it is suggested that you work out with your family your

FAMILY RATING

... you can score 1, 2, 3 or 9, -1, -2, -3 and add up the totals

QUARRELS

to be answered by Mother

Has the Family quarrelled on the average: once a week only (score 1); only on wet Sundays (score 2); never through the whole year (score 3)?

resorted to bad language or was disobedient (score -1); kept out late on nights without adequate reason (score -2); disturbed the peace of the home (score -3)?

been described by neighbours as a united family (1); been commended for rendering aid to others (2); been referred to flat-teringly by your Parish Priest (3)?

Have you argued mildly doing this test (-1); found no time for it (-2); deplored it (-3)?

RELIGION

To be answered by Mother.
Has the family been faithful to the Religion by attending Mass: every Sunday and day of obligation (3); only on some Sundays (-1); practically never (-3)?

MOTHER

To be answered by Father (please be strict)!

Has she sewn 15 buttons (1); darned 30 socks (2); prepared at least six new appetizing dishes out of the ordinary (3)?

complained of household chores (-1); hired foreign servants to invade the home to do the work (-2); got you to do a portion of it (-3)?

does the household chores with a smile (1); greets you with a smile in addition (2); is compli-

mented by neighbours for being so industrious and a model wife (3)?

Do you think she is a brilliant conversationalist (-1); she tends to be too talkative (-2); just gossips away (-3)?

FATHER

To be answered by the children.

Has he tried hard to please the family (1); shown willingness to learn from the family (2); made good progress through the year (3)?

bossed over the house like a master of all he surveys? (-1); talked about the old days when he was a boy (-2); got your homework wrong (-3)?

taken you out for excursions (1); given you pocket money without grumbling (2); been a real pal to you (3)?

attempted to chastise you

This is Christmas in our Home

CHRISTMAS in our home really begins on December 1st, not with a frenzied bout of shopping, but with the singing of one carol every day after the Family Rosary. The children sing lustily putting their hearts and all they have into the Christmas songs, so that besides that special nip in the air you really get that Christmassy feeling.

Our home is a humble one. But in spite of this there is that indefinable air and quiet excitement that pervades December and what with polishing and the children querying every once in a while, "Mama what about the curtains?" or "Ma, aren't you getting fresh

by MONICA PERERA

wall paper?" and also that air of secrecy permeating the home, with a whispering campaign going on almost incessantly.

As the 25th approaches the tempo heightens and quickens. We live in an outstation, and as I sally forth off and on to Colombo, the children come to me like real conspirators, Cudah whispering "Mama, I have collected 20/- What shall I get for Daddy and

on every possible occasion (-1); violently disagreed with you (-2); spurned your advice wholesale (-3)?

CHILDREN

FATHER: have they remembered your birthday (1); let you choose the Radio programmes (2); listened with respect to your remarks (3)?

do you think they are typical members of the awful younger generation of today (-1); ought to be boarded (-2); ought to be ignored (-3)?

MOTHER: have they remembered your birthday (1); have they helped you in your chores (2); made you feel proud of them (3)?

have they been fairly noisy (-1); terribly noisy (-2); hideously so, to bring the roof down (-3)?

LUCK and BAD LUCK

To be answered by Father.
Have you had a vote of thanks (1); won a Galle Gymkhana or Hospital Sweepstake (2); a rise in salary (3)?

Are you behind with the Rent (-1); neglecting the family (-2); reading the Situations Vacant column (-3)?

AFTER CAREFULLY TALLING UP YOUR SCORES JOT DOWN YOUR FAMILY TOTAL.

P.S. —For your own information, if your Family Rating is:

- 30 to — 25: we would prefer not to comment and leave you to Heaven!
- 25 to — 1: you may be better next year if you strive hard.
- 0 to 15: you are a moderately happy family.
- 16 to 25: a very happy family.
- 26 to 30: this is really too good to be true. We suggest you deduct 10 for a fairly accurate report.

In any case PATIENCE HOPE c/o The Catholic Press, Borella is interested in your tally. Jot it down (only the total please) on a post card and send it to her.

Christus Natus Est

IN the rough manger He smiles on the world,
His Mother's sweet face is Love's banner unfurled.
There with the oxen He takes His first rest,
On Christmas morning Christus natus est!
Poor shepherds His courtiers who come to adore,
No carpet to kneel on, but just the rough floor,
We give Him our worst, but He gives us His best —
This Christmas morning — Christus natus est!

Rasu Tampoe.

the others?" or Rohan comes saying, "Ma I have 10/-, what am I to get for Cudah, Nimal and Chandrani and Rohini?" and I have to cudgel my brains, trying to stretch these various amounts to bring something that will please givers and given. The presents for me are bought at the local Co-op or shops, when I'm away.

On the 24th all the children assemble and with their daddy start on the crib with much chatter.

The Christmas tree is an apology for one. It is a weeny one with just a soupcon of tinsel to please the children.

Midnight Mass is not for us, my husband not being able to go, so, after morning Mass, we return home and after the greetings are over, there is a trooping into the dining-hall where the table is laid out. Really grand it looks on this morning with the presents in their gaily be-ribboned wrappings and the festive fare which the children set to with gusto. At lunch too there is much fun and laughter.

In the evening prayers are said and on this day all the familiar carols are sung in front of the crib.

But something strikes me; it is an article my daughter who died, wrote in last year's Christmas number of "The Messenger." Young as she was, she realized that Christmas is being commercialized too much, and that we are apt to lay too much stress on the feasting and merry-making, whereas she imagined a picture of a thorn-crowned Christ in a dim lit window asking sadly, "Is it my birthday you celebrate?"

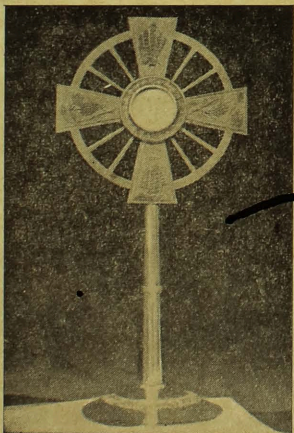
This year and hereafter, all the children will have to sacrifice, from their collections, their mite towards the missions. I am sure there can be no better gift to the Lord on His Birthday, and my daughter will surely smile on the gesture.

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"EDRAJ"

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LITHOGRAPH

READERS of this series, those especially who follow it closely to know how near we are to finding holy Fr. Vaz's tomb, will remember that Mr. Fred Medis called our attention to a lithograph by Deschamps depicting the "Start of the Kandy Lake." This was on 18th August this year and we were not slow to realize that by carrying us back to the beginning of the 19th century such a picture would give us an idea of the lie of the land before all the changes of these 150 years of urbanisation came in. From that we might be able to get closer to what the land was like in Fr. Vaz's time and infer where the church could, and where it clearly could not have been.



To Mr. Medis's hesitant offer, then, we replied without delay: "Yes, this lithograph certainly interests us; we would like to know where it lies." "Where it hangs" would have been more correct; for, according to this first report, the picture was on show in an antiques shop. (Like his father, Mr. Fred Medis is, as we found out later, a passionate antiquarian).

Weeks went by and as there was no further correspondence our Knight E. R. Templer was detailed for the errand of tracking Mr. Medis and, through him, the lithograph. Circumstances helped; for, just then Mr. Templer needed to get away from a home that was very empty since this daughter went across the Pacific for her wedding. On the other hand, too, Mr. Medis was forced by circumstances to be in when called upon: he was warded in the General Hospital. (This explains his silence). To cut the story short would be to deprive our Readers of all the adventure behind it; but a newspaper column goes by the printer's gauge and columns themselves are rationed by the Editor even when Christmas tales are told.



The turning-point came when in a flush and flurry Mr. Templer rang our Secretariate to announce his discovery: the lithograph was in Col. Vandersmagt's Auction Rooms just near the Y.C.W. Club; it should be inspected without delay. (30th October). Accordingly a signal went out to Fr. Justin, suggesting that this might be an occasion to give the Y.C.W. a chance of showing their spurs. In a way it is a pity the plan failed—but only because, before we knew where we were, the lithograph changed hands. It left the Colonel's cobwebbed walls for the files of our (dusty) office. Knight Templer had been over himself and got it.

The next scene of the story is Fr. Justin, Fr. Dalpatado of Ampitiya (who usually deals with ideas and, only when it happens thus, with pictures), Draughtsman Harold (in his sphere, but discreetly in the background through Josephian reverence for his "guru") and the Secretariate pouring over the shop-soiled print. Taking it for granted that this was the Lake, to make anything out of it for our Quest we had to determine the artist's angle—the cardinal point: which was Deschamps' north. The best one to correlate picture to reality was, of course, Fr. Dalpatado (not because he heads the Philosophy department at Ampitiya Seminary, but as being just down from Kandy). So, there right in one of the alleys (to the uneasy puzzlement of the domesticated spotted deer) we drew diagrams in the sand, drew conclusions but had to agree that, far from revealing the decisive clue to Fr. Vaz's grave, the lithograph was holding back its own story.



The truth leaked out this way. On repeated and insistent signals from our worker, Mr. Thommanpillai, the Secretariate made up its mind to dare it—to penetrate into the Government Archives (N.B.), get hold of the original "Secret Minutes" of 1729 mentioned by Fr. Boudens when he lists "a church and a chapel at Candia"

and explore the full text and context of these Dutch Records for inferences regarding the site of Fr. Vaz's church and tomb.



Carefully timed (circumstances too combined to favour it), the move was carried out on 3rd December (feast of St. Francis Xavier), in full daylight, in fact by one of

to the plates at the end of the book. Here was our famous lithograph—the Medis-Templer one; it was number 10 in the series and at the bottom of it was the printed indication: Rock of Mulikirigalle.

Was that not disappointing? There was nobody to see us ggle at our mistake and on the whole we had a feeling of relief. All the disquieting features of the lithograph (those that went counter to our previous conclusions about the way to Fr. Vaz's grave) disappeared

Strands of the Story 221

Nuwara Eliya's fitful spells of sunshine. The doors were wide-open and in good form we signed the Visitor's Book. How we finally got at the hefty brown-papered volume D. 51 (739) and what we carried away from it is a separate story—raw material for another

FATHER VAZ
FEATURE

Strand. To get at it we had to get round the staff and this is how we came face to face with John DESCHAMPS. The Archivist on duty at that early hour was Mr. Ranasinghe. Perhaps he was a bit taken aback at the rather abrupt statement that we had come from Colombo to quote the exact volume of the Archives; but what put us straightaway into communication and collaboration was the casual mention of Deschamps and the lithograph. After a moment's hesitation about the name as we pronounced it in good French, Mr. Ranasinghe went into his office and came out with a well-bound book. It was "Scenery and Reminiscences of Ceylon" printed in London (Strand) in 1845. In a Preface the author, John Deschamps, explains that he had composed it from "original drawings and notes" made during his nine years of service in Ceylon (in the Royal Artillery) and meant it as a souvenir for friends back home. It consists of a collection of 12 views of "scenes and objects most familiar to those who are acquainted with Ceylon."



While the office assistant was rummaging upstairs for Vol. 51 of the Dutch Records we busied ourselves with Deschamps. The introductory "concise History... from the earliest times to the British conquest" offered many inducements to linger over these first pages: but we hurried to turn over

RADIO
LOG

English

DEC. 23: 8 a.m. "A BOY IS BORN"—Christmas playlet by Rev. Fr. Marcelline Jayakoddy. Produced by Mark Bartholomew.

DEC. 24: 6-45 to 7-15 p.m. CATHOLIC HOUR SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

Sinhalese

DEC. 24: 8-15 to 8-30 a.m. CHRISTMAS TALK by Rev. Fr. Bede Fernando. 8-45 to 9-00 a.m. CHRISTMAS FEATURE by Callistus Jayasinghe, Esq. 9-00 to 9-15 a.m. SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME by Rev. Fr. Nicholas Perera. 9-45 to 10-00 a.m. SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME by Patrick Jayasinghe, Esq. 9-30 to 10-30 p.m. CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME by Rev. Fr. Don Sylvester.

DEC. 25: 8-15 to 8-30 a.m. CHRISTMAS MESSAGE by His Grace the Archbishop of Colombo. 8-45 to 9-00 a.m. CHRISTMAS CAROLS by A. P. P. Fernando, Esq. 9-00 to 9-30 a.m. SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME by Rev. Fr. Joseph Jayasuriya, O.M.I. 10-30 to 10-45 a.m. DEVOTIONAL SONGS by Rev. Fr. Joseph Jayasuriya, O.M.I. 7-45 to 8-15 p.m. CHRISTMAS SILVER LINING by Gratian Dias, Esq. 9-30 to 9-45 p.m. DRAMA by St. Cecilia's Radio Club. 9-45 to 10-00 p.m. SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME by W. J. D. Gunaratne, Esq.

Tamil

DEC. 24: 7-00 to 8-00 p.m. NATIVITY PLAY by B. Tarcisius, Esq.

DEC. 25: 6-55 to 7-00 a.m. CHRISTMAS MESSAGE by Rev. Fr. S. E. Wijeratnam, O.M.I.

MORNING
OFFERING

DIVINE Heart of Jesus, I offer Thee, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, all my prayers, works and sufferings of this day, in reparation for our sins and for all the intentions for which Thou dost offer Thyself continually in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I offer them in particular for the intentions of the Apostleship of Prayer and for those proposed by the Holy Father for this month.

INTENTIONS FOR
DECEMBER

GENERAL: That Catholics may not slacken in their zeal to help their persecuted brethren by prayer, word and action.

MISSIONARY: That the spirit of Christmas may preserve its true meaning among Asian and American nations and lead them to a true knowledge of Christ.

Classified ADS

IN MEMORIAM REST IN PEACE



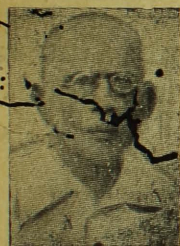
Maria Perera
Died 9-12-59 Tudella
I thank all Rev. Fathers, Religious, relations and friends who attended the funeral of my dear mother and also those who sent messages, of sympathy, floral tributes and Mass cards. I request of you kindly to pray for the soul of my mother.

Fr. Nicholas. 185

25TH ANNIVERSARY

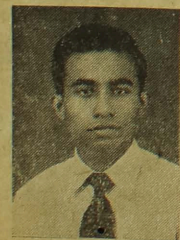
of
I. N. Costa
Died 23 Dec. 1934
We mourn for you in silence
No eye can see us weep,
But what the parting cost us
No one knows how deep.
They who sleep in the Lord
sleep in Peace.
Fondly remembered by his loving
wife and son.
"Oslen Lodge"
Hendala. 204

SECOND ANNIVERSARY



W. George De Alwis
Died 1st January 1958
A Requiem High Mass will be sung for the repose of his soul on Monday, the 4th January, 1960, at 6-15 a.m., at St. Mary's Church, Mattakkuliya. Please pray for his soul. Affectionately remembered by his wife and children.
62, Kelaniganga Mill Road, Mattakkuliya. 189

In Commemoration
of
the first Anniversary of the death of
my beloved son



Douglas Jayawardena
Born 22.3.1937
Died 20.12.1958
One year of grief has ended,
Each day I mourn your loss,
In silence, I watch you daily
In a frame that hangs on the wall
Your memory is my comfort
Whenever sorrow steals in through
For your cheerful face doth tell me
That in Jesus, you are safe with
Him.
Inserted by his sorrowing mother,
12, Nelson Place,
Wellawatta. 173

MARRIAGE

MR. & Mrs. Sunny Pate will be pleased to see all friends and relations at the solemnization of the marriage of their daughter **Florence** with **Mr. Mervyn Carol** (of the Ceylon Marine Engineers) on Saturday the 26th December 1959 at St. Joseph's Church, Grandpass at 8 a.m.
64/2, St. Joseph's Street, Grandpass. 206

THANKSGIVINGS

MY grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady and St. Jude for favours received.
Mrs. Florence Fernando
Kirillapone. 169

Our sincere and humble thanks to the Divine Heart of Jesus, Blessed Mother of Perpetual Succour, St. Joseph, St. Jude, St. Anthony, Blessed Martin de Porres, Sister Alphonsa, Pope Pius XII, All Saints and Holy Souls in Purgatory for petitions heard and answered.

Mr. & Mrs. E. L. & Children.
Wall Street,
Kotahena.

HUMBLE thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, mother of Perpetual Succour, St. Anthony, St. Joseph, St. Jude, St. Francis Xavier for great favours granted.
E.J.R. 188

HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

HOSTEL accommodation available for Boys and Girls in the J.S.C. and S.S.C. Forms. Apply Manager, St. Philomena's English School, Horana. 67

FLOWERS FOR X'MAS!

FLOWERS are best symbolical expression of spirit of Christmas. Do it with flowers in your homes this Christmas! Inquire: **Joeben & Co., Florists and Seedsmen, Nuwara Eliya.** 71

MILK FOODS

"NOMAD" Brand Fullcream Milk Powder—thousands have acclaimed "Nomad" as the best milk from the Country of Milk—Holland. You'll love it too when you taste "Nomad." Rich, delicious and economical. Available at all good stores chemists and the Importers, Setrac (Ceylon) 29 1/1, Gaffoor Building, Fort, Colombo.

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PUROL Medicated Powder and Ointment—the unfailing remedy for Eczema, Prickly Heat and Tropical Skin Ailments. Available at all Chemists and the Importers Setrac (Ceylon) 29 1/1, Gaffoor Building, Fort, Colombo.

DAMPO Vapour Rub and Nose Drops—the magic cure for colds, chills, body pains, rheumatism and quick relief for Asthma, Hay Fever. Available at all Chemists and the Importers, Setrac (Ceylon) 29 1/1, Gaffoor Building, Fort, Colombo.

BYLOOS Eau de Cologne—the unfailing friend of school-children. Rids the head of lice, Nits, Dandruff, and all invisible germs. Available at all Chemists and the Importers, Setrac (Ceylon) 29 1/1, Gaffoor Building, Fort, Colombo.

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with
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for
The New Year
to
All our Patrons*

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NUWARA ELIYA

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Proctor S.C. & Notary Public,
St. Margaret's, Hendala,
Wattala.

ORDER NISI IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF COLOMBO

No. 19056/T
In the matter of the Intestate estate and effects of the late Muthukuda Aratchige Don Siprianu of Palliawatta, in Hendala in the Ragam Pattu of Aluturu Korale. — *Deceased.*
Gamalath Aratchige Dona Maria Alexandra of Palliawatta in Hendala in the Ragam Pattu of Aluturu Korale. *Petitioner.*

- AND
1. Muthukuda Aratchige Dona Mary Theresa.
 2. Muthukuda Aratchige Don Nicholas.
 3. Muthukuda Aratchige Don Francis.
 4. Muthukuda Aratchige Dona Mary Philomina.
 5. Muthukuda Aratchige Dona Mary Johana.
 6. Muthukuda Aratchige Don Joseph Anthony.
 7. Muthukuda Aratchige Don Leo Isidore, all of Palliawatta, Hendala the said 5, 6 and 7th respondents are minors appearing by their guardian-ad-litem.
 8. Hewagama Mudalige Vithoris Appuhamy of Palliawatta, Hendala. — *Respondents.*

This matter coming on for disposal before J. E. A. Alles, Esqr., Additional District Judge, Colombo, on the 13th day of November 1959, in the presence of Mr. H. J. H. Milroy Fonseka, Proctor on the part of the petitioner and the affidavit of the petitioner dated 11th October 1959 having been read:

It is ordered that the 8th respondent abovenamed be and he is hereby declared appointed Guardian-ad-litem over the persons of 5th to 7th respondents abovenamed.

It is further ordered that the petitioner abovenamed be and she is hereby declared entitled as widow of the deceased abovenamed to have Letters of Administration to the estate of the said deceased issued to her accordingly unless the respondents abovenamed or any other person or persons interested shall on or before the 28th day of January 1960 show sufficient cause to the satisfaction of this Court to the contrary.

Sgd. J. E. A. Alles,
Additional District Judge.
The 13th day of November 1959. 149

ORDER NISI IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF COLOMBO

No. 19048/T.
In the matter of the Intestate Estate and effects of Angodage Constantine Pigeira of "Ransiri" Welivita, Kaduwela, Colombo. *Deceased.*
Alice Mary Bridget Pigeira of "Ransiri" Welivita, Kaduwela, Colombo. — *Petitioner.*
Vs.

1. Angodage Anton Niranjan Pigeira.
2. Angodage Cecil Siriyantha Pigeira.
3. Angodage Bernadette Siri-mathi Niranjala Pigeira all of "Ransiri" Welivita, Kaduwela, Colombo.
4. David Perera Wanigaratne of "Ratnavila" Welivita Kaduwela. — *Respondents.*

This matter coming on for disposal before J. E. A. Alles Esquire Additional District Judge, Colombo on the 10th day of November 1959, in the presence of Messrs. Moonesinghe and Jayamaha, Proctors on the Part of the Petitioner and the affidavit of the Petitioner dated 6th day of November 1959 having been read:

It is ordered that the 4th Respondent above named be and he is hereby declared appointed Guardian ad litem over the persons of 1st to 3rd Respondents minors abovenamed.

It is further ordered that the Petitioner abovenamed be and she is hereby declared entitled as the widow of the deceased abovenamed to have Letters of Administration to the estate of the said deceased issued to her accordingly, unless the respondents abovenamed or any other person or persons interested shall on or before the 28th day of January 1960, show sufficient cause to the satisfaction of this Court to the contrary.

Sgd. J. E. A. Alles,
Additional District Judge.
This 10th day of November 1959.

A GOOD X'MAS. BARGAIN

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✠ OBITUARY ✠

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A funeral may be entrusted to us in the knowledge that every religious need will be reverently observed, and that cost in relation to quality of service, will prove most moderate. Embalming a speciality.

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DRESSED CHICKEN	Rs. 2-20 per lb.
DRESSED DUCK	Rs. 1-90 " "
DRESSED TURKEY	Rs. 3-50 " "

PLEASE PLACE YOUR CHRISTMAS ORDERS EARLY TO AVOID DISSAPPOINTMENT — SPECIAL TERMS TO THE TRADE — ALSO OPEN ON SUNDAYS.

PALLYS

24, (John & Co. Bldg.) Turret Road, Colpetty.

Phone 3063.

At St. Peter's College Prize Giving, Senator Cooray says:

SINK ALL PETTY DIFFERENCES FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Politics mixed with Religion

Ex-Speaker's Tribute to Catholic Schools

(from a "Messenger" correspondent)

"At a time when the State did not accept full responsibility for the education of its future citizens and when good and adequate education was confined to the principal cities and favoured areas of Ceylon, the Catholic Church provided satisfactory schools in some of the areas away from the big cities and economically important places," said Mr. H. S. Ismail, Ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives, speaking at the Prize Giving at St. Xavier's College, Marawila.

One such institution was St. Andrew's, Puttalam, but for which he would not be addressing them today. These various Catholic institutions helped many talented persons to positions of eminence.

Mr. Ismail went on to speak of the spirit of devotion and discipline that was fostered and encouraged in these schools.

In the course of his Report the Principal, Rev. Fr. J. B. Andradi, referred to the problem of the medium of instruction and in particular to that of indiscipline in schools. He called for a close co-operation between parents and teachers.

His Lordship the Bishop of Chilaw stressed the need for a religious education in the complete education of youth.

After the distribution of prizes a variety entertainment brought the proceedings to a close.

Ratmalana Parish Union

(from a "Messenger" correspondent)

THE Secretary's report and President's speech at the first annual general meeting of the Ratmalana Parish Union, held at the Catholic School Hall, Ratmalana, on 6 December, revealed that the Union was treating a lively interest in Catholic activities and inducing a sense of solidarity in the parish. The Spiritual Director, Rev. Fr. L. Don Ensebius, O.M.I., appealed to all parishioners over 18 years of age to join the Union and help in the good work it was doing for the parish.

At the election of office-bearers for the ensuing year, Muhandiram A. Lloyd Seneveratne was re-elected President. Messrs. Francis Silva and Joseph Ryan were nominated as joint secretaries and Mr. Oswald Herath as Treasurer. Ten members were elected to the Parish Council and ten were nominated by the Parish Priest.

At the conclusion of the meeting, light refreshments were served.

President Eisenhower visits Pope



Holiness Pope John XXIII reads a welcoming message in English to President Eisenhower and his family during their call to the Vatican.

"I SHOULD have thought that if the tragic developments of the last three years would have taught us anything, it would be the truth of the maxim that they who take up the sword of religious fanaticism shall perish by it," declared Senator Edmund J. Cooray, at St. Peter's College, Colombo, prize-giving last Saturday.

Deploing the mixing up of religion and politics in the recent past the speaker stated that it had done no good either to religion or to politics, nor, said he, had it proved beneficial to the politicians themselves who had exploited religion for political purposes.

POLITICS VS. RELIGION

Referring to the inherent dangers in mixing religion with politics, Senator Cooray added that the dangers would be pretty evident to any statesman, but possibly not to a politician who was only eyeing the next elections.

On the other hand, he said, the statesman would be thinking of the next generation. "That is why a statesman of the stature of Nehru would not countenance for a moment the proposal made by certain extremists to set up a religious state in order to restore to its rightful place Hinduism which was the religion professed by the vast majority of Indians," Senator Cooray added.

Addressing a plea to all men of good-will, the speaker asked: "At a time when the country is faced with the greatest crisis in her recent history, is it too much to expect all men of good will to sink all their petty differences for the country's common good?"

Turning his attention to the controversial schools issue, Senator Cooray pointed out that even with the co-operation of so many assisted schools the State found itself unable to provide even primary education to all school-

going children. According to recent statistics some 700,000 of the school-going-age of children were not receiving any education because the Government was unable to provide the necessary schooling facilities.

"What can you therefore make of the mentality, or indeed sanity, of people who instead of first calling upon the government to put its educational house in order, are insisting that the same disorder should extend to assisted schools as well," he asked.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Senator Cooray also quoted from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights about the "parents prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children," and expressed the opinion that the practical way it can be done under present conditions in Ceylon was by continuing the existing dual system of State and Assisted schools functioning side by side.

"We are glad to hear the Prime Minister's recent announcement that he is still of the view that it would be a calamity of the first magnitude, and a crime against the rising generation to take over the assisted schools," he added.

Senator Cooray concluded stating that he personally felt the time for plain speaking was right now when the country was faced with the gravest crisis in her recent history.

Santa Claus at Dematagoda

(from a "Messenger" correspondent)

SANTA Claus arrived at St. John's College Hall at 4-1 p.m. and, after an address delivered by Mr. X. J. S. Rasanayagam, Principal of the College, gifts were distributed to 135 children and 58 adults by Mrs. W. Purvis, wife of the Managing Director of Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.

Refreshments were served during a musical interlude at which the choir of St. Anthony's Church, Dematagoda, rendered Christmas Carols and Mr. Clement Coomaraswamy entertained the gathering with his piano accompaniment.

School Front

THE Rev. Local Managers and Heads of Schools are hereby kindly informed that according to a new system as from next year those admitted to the Training College will be for the most part teachers presently employed in Schools. Their places will be filled for a period of one year by non-teachers who have been successful at the Training Entrance Examination, so that they could enter the Training College direct on study leave with full pay.

In view of the above system, I shall not be in a position to give appointments to S.S.C. qualified youth. Rev. Fathers are kindly requested not to send S.S.C. qualified girls and boys to my Office in search of employment.

2. From 21st December till 2nd January 1960 I shall be away from Office.

Wishing all our teachers and pu-

Nawalapitiya's Centenary Celebrations

(from our Nawalapitiya correspondent)

THE recent Novena in preparation for the Feast of the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception at Nawalapitiya was also the final celebration of the Centenary of the foundation of the Mission.

The regular evening Mass was well attended and there were nearly five thousand communicants. Young and old actively participated in the Dialogue Mass at which they approached the Sacraments. Old missionaries who preached during these services recalled with gratitude the won-

derful graces God had bestowed through Mary in this church and the old pioneers, Frs. Papilio, Craner, Cingolani, Pagnani and Fr. Lima, the planner of the present church and builder of the main portion of it, were prayerfully remembered.

Ten adults were christened on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

On Saturday His Lordship, the Bishop of Kandy, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara, was welcomed by the Parishioners on his first official visit to the Parish. Led in procession through the town, at the School Hall he was offered an address paper that was read in three languages. His Lordship spoke to his children in English, Sinhalese and Tamil. After the pontifical Vespers and Benediction the Cable from the Holy Father giving His Apostolic Blessing on the Priest and people was read and the Final Act of the evening was the Offering of the Spiritual Bouquet made by the people during the Novena.

The Rosaries alone of this spiritual bouquet counted over 11,500. The candle light procession which was attended by about 700 people was followed by the renewal of the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

On Sunday, after Pontifical Mass, a solemn High Mass was sung and Pontifical Benediction was imparted.

pils a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Philip C. Dissanayake, O.M.I.,
General Manager of
R. C. Schools.

Borella,
15-12-59.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AND AILING, remember them during this season

PETTAH PHARMACY

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offers from stock, appropriate gifts suitable for these friends.

PATENT MEDICINES and MEDICATED WINES

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FOR

CHRISTMAS

AND

NEW YEAR

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FOR THE SEASON

20 years' honest service

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SCHOOLS-MAG Christmas Edition

Vol. 2. No. 40

WEDNESDAY, 23rd DECEMBER, 1959

FREE

The Schools-Mag wishes its members a happy Christmas



First Christmas

THE snow flakes fell upon the ground
Around the stable bare.
The cattle gathered round to see,
The babe that nestled there.

The Shepherds came to worship,
And Kings from far off lands,
To receive the Holy blessing,
From the little Infant hands.



A big star shone up in the sky,
Brightening the dark weary world,
It's radiance bathing the earth below,
A soft charming light of gold.

Harmonious choirs from Heaven above
Echoed in the cold wintry air,
They lulled the Infant in the hay,
Lying in the stable bare.

Bethlehem was all aglow,
Happiness everywhere,
Rejoicing hearts sang aloud,
We've seen the baby fair.

Felicia Pereira

"GLORY to GOD in the HIGHEST PEACE to MEN of GOOD WILL..."

Picture by Pinibindu Art Circle, Kandana.

ON that first Christmas day, nearly two thousand years ago, Angels appeared over an unusually brightly lit sky over Bethlehem, proclaimed the birth of our Saviour, at the same time giving to mankind the message of peace to men of goodwill on earth.

From thence, this beautiful message has come down to us, over and over again, through these many years at every Christmas.

Have we profited by it? This is the question we must ask ourselves, this Christmas. The answer will doubtless be a sad No!

Why? Look around the world today. It is in complete disorder. We hear of wars, sudden deaths, bloodshed, people driven homeless by severe floods, starvation and many other ills that make men shrink in mortal fear and anxiety. There is no peace found anywhere.

Today's world

The way the world keeps moving today without God and religion; is the root cause of these ills, and it is God's anger that has thrown the world into such confusion.

We, who are Catholics, have our-

selves added to His anger. Many of us are Catholics by name only; we lead lives not pleasing to Him. We offend Him in the very Sacrifice

by
Philomena Neysum Rasiah

of the Mass. We don't practise our religion as we ought. In short, we are prodigals, we have run away from His Home.

Yes God is merciful. He wants us back.



Let us, therefore, hasten to repent make reparations, confess our sins, and return to God, saying like the prodigal son: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am not worthy to be called your son."

The return

He will come to us with open arms, embrace and receive us; He will cleanse us of the dirt of sin; He will clothe us with the best of robes.

Having so endeared ourselves to Him, let us welcome the Infant Jesus, the Prince of Peace, this Christmas, with the burning desire to remain ever faithful to Him. Take pride in being His children. Honour our Blessed Lady in the way most pleasing to Her, by daily recital of the family Rosary; be loyal to His representative on earth, our Holy Father, and so shine as models of Catholic virtue, that those yet away from His home may see in us a happy family in God, and return to the fold, before they are lost forever.

Then shall there be peace in every heart and home all the world over.

Uncle Ashley's Christmas Talk LESSONS from the CRIB

My dear children,
Christmas is with us once again and as I wish you all the Blessings of the Divine Babe let us kneel prayerfully at the cradle of God and learn the lessons from the Crib.

Peeping into the Manger-bed what is it that I see? God... Yes! God made man... Yes! the Lord God of Heaven and earth struggling helpless on a bed of straw and as I kneel prayerfully I learn the FIRST LESSON OF THE CRIB — HUMILITY: God has con-

descended to be man, nay, a helpless baby. Pride was the cause of man's fall and so the Infant Saviour overcomes Pride with an act of Infinite Humility. No more can I be proud of myself or any of the gifts and talents God has given me.

As I linger at the crib the stench of the oxen offends my nostrils, the darkness of the cave, the swaddling bands and the utter destitution bring into my mind the second lesson — THE POVERTY of the crib. In contrast I look at myself decked in the finest clothes seeking always the better things of life, with-holding even a wee little sacrifice. Christmas is with us once again. Let us try to make some sacrifice for some poor one in honour of the baby in swaddling clothes.

As I keep looking at the Divine Child, He seems to be talking to me on the third lesson from the crib — CHARITY. Love knows no half-measures, it counts not the cost, heeds not the wounds, seeks for no reward.

None of us can stand by the crib without learning the lesson of PATIENCE from the Holy Family. Denied the very fundamental human comforts, minus the very necessities of life, there is no word of rebuke, no impatience, no grumbling on their lips. As I learn this lesson I must resolve to curb the unkind tongue



and silence the grumbling lip, whatever be the contradictions and trials that await me this sacred season.

OBEEDIENCE and RESIGNATION are lessons that cannot fail to impress me. The obedience of Joseph to the decree of Caesar has placed them in this plight but authority is to be respected. In every unpleasant detail, in joy and in woe, in laughter and in tears, the "people in the Crib" are models of complete resignation, reminding me that I must be a model of obedience at home and at school.

The cave is dirty — and the filth and squalor of the place seem to terrify me but the PURITY of Jesus, Mary and Joseph captivates me. Soon! Yes! Very soon my heart too will be a sacred crib, a manger bed, a golden chalice whereon will rest the Baby of Bethlehem, and so as I kneel at the manger I shall promise our Lord to receive Him with sunnyside lips, and to keep my heart ever pure for His advent.

The Faith and Hope of Jesus and Mary are two striking virtues. Angels and shepherds — stars, visions, dreams had brought out the best in their Faith. Even as we kneel beside God in human form let us claim our faith in the Infant Jesus by sending naught but Catholic Christmas Cards.

Finally, before I rise I learn the lesson of HOPE. The long cherished one is with us... The hoped for of the nations has come and wrought our salvation... Let us always trust Him and hope for the reward of Eternal Salvation through Christ Our Lord. Yes; May the Baby in the crib and His dear parents bless you all and your loved ones and help you to live the lessons of the crib, through the New Year.

I am always in Jesus and Mary,

Uncle Ashley

★ A Symposium by Schools-Mag Members



WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO US...

DURING my early childhood, Christmas was to me a season of enjoyment, with crackers and bon-bons and toys. But through the years that vision has slowly faded, enlightening me as to the real meaning of Christmas.

It is the coming of the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, and my own true and loving friend.

He redeemed us from the slavery of sin and when He enters my heart, I am filled with indescribable joy. Now Christmas fills me with a happiness I did not experience before. It is the time for family gatherings and to remember the poor and help them during this season, in remembrance of the infant of Bethlehem.

Rohan Jayawardena.

Christmas Chimes

WHEN Christmas bells, chime, chime,
What happiness is mine,
For it is festive time
In honour of Jesus mine.



Ring ye bells loud and clear,
This is no time for fear.
All children love to hear,
Greetings for Jesus dear.

Ring 'Happy Birthday' ring,
We children then will sing
Carols to Jesus our King,
Chime bells, chime as we sing.

BARBARA BARSENBAUGH.

JESUS Christ was born to atone
for sin; we should lighten
His burden by mortification. Love
and Charity induced Christ to be
born to die for us, and we should



CLIVE RODRIGO.

Colombo 4.

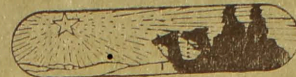
WHEN I was a little child I associated Christmas with receiving presents, Santa Claus, toys, and lots of nice things to eat. But now that I am older I think of Christmas as a season of giving, giving to glad the saddest, most abandoned of God's little ones, those of whom Jesus thought when he said "Whatsoever you do to one of these my least brethren, you do it for me." Surely it does not seem a discordant chord in the merry songs of Christmas to speak of them, plead for them, for in helping them we help the Babe of Bethlehem.

CRYSTAL EDEMA.

emulate these virtues, thereby reminding men of Him. Revelry should be shunned because it makes us sin more; Christ is nearer a poor man's home than a rich man's, having Himself been penurious.

During Christmas we should do penance and strive to be worthy of His (Christ's) goodness. It is a season during which I meditate on this goodness, glorify and thank God for sending Jesus to redeem us.

DEREK DE SILVA.



CHRISTMAS is a time of rejoicing at the birth of Baby Jesus. It is a time when I can go closer to God and to my neighbour in greater charity.

I thank God for giving us His Son for our salvation. Christmas reminds me that the humble and lowly of heart are dear to the Heart of Christ, for, were they not the first to visit Him?

Christmas gives me a chance to gladden the heart of some less fortunate children than myself.

In the midst of all the attractions of Christmas let me not forget the poor, for Christ shared their poverty.

MOYRA BERMAN.

CHRISTMAS is the commemoration of the birthday of our dear Lord. Since He was born to redeem us, Christmas is a day of great rejoicing. The joy of Christmas knows no bounds. Had we not that first Christmas that occurred thousands of years ago, we would not have possessed eternal happiness. Had not Jesus been born into the World, we would not have inherited this new life of liberty.

Christmas therefore, should be a time of thanksgiving. We should join with those at Bethlehem and make up for the cold with the warmth of our love, for love is only repaid by Love.

MANIK SANDRASAGRA.

CHRISTMAS is coming, and there'll be lots of fun.

With sweets and surprise for everyone;

The yule-log and the pudding will be there;

Oh! we'll be glad our joys to share,

With laughter and song and radiant smiles,

We'll scatter sunshine for miles and miles.

But when the 'Gloria' is heard at the midnight hour,

Then we know, our joy, nothing can mar;

For we look at the Crib and the little Child.

With Joseph and His Mother mild,

And we remember that the God Who came down to earth

Is the cause of all our laughter and mirth.

So we go down on our knees and say,

"Thank you Jesus, for what You've done this day."

SHEILA JASON.

Remember the poor this Christmas

CHRISTMAS, the birthday of Jesus, is celebrated by the whole Catholic world. It is the feast especially of little children whose hearts beat with joy and anticipation.

Houses are gaily decorated with balloons, streamers, twinkling electric jets, and the Christmas Tree sparkles merrily laden with toys. Everybody rushes about. Mummy and Daddy bring parcels which disappear mysteriously.

On Christmas Eve, as the bells of

peace ring out, we go for Midnight Mass and receive Holy Communion. Santa Claus brings us toys. At this season of goodwill we do not forget the poor, for was not Christ born in utter poverty?

ANIL CABRAAL.

22nd DEC. — JAN.

22nd Dec: W. D. Augustus Perera (Kelaniya), Princess Fernando (Colombo), Ingrid Rebera (Boralesgamuwa), Noeline Perera (Colombo 6), Damian Candappa (Colombo 9), Felix E. Mohan Pragasam (Colombo 10), Fatima Christine Jayatilleke (Gampaha).

23rd Dec: Noeline Mendis (Colombo 4), Marie De Alwis Paranawithane (Haputale), Neela Fernando

(Moratuwa), Swarna Perera (Dehiwela), Dayanthi Peiris (Mutwal), Claudia Fernando (Moratuwa), Daphne Fernandopulle (Colpetty), Gerard Wambek (Lunuvilla), Ranjit Amerasinghe (Dehiwela), Victoria Ranasinghe (Nugegoda).

24th Dec: Emil Weerakoon (Ratmalana), Francis Motha (Colombo), Rex Van De Poot (Madampe), Elaine N. Perera (Bandarawela), Shervin Bastians (Humapitiya), Noel B. Nugara (Dehiwela), Cedric Meynert (Neggombo), Algie Frankie (Kotte), George Cowley (Pannipitiya), Nimal L. Gunawardena (Colombo), Shirley Windas (Kegalle).

Dec. 26th: George Martinez (Angoda), H. M. Khan (Hendala),

25th Dec: Vincent Noel (Trincomalee), biwela), Noel Corteling (Nawala), Thelma E. Rupasinghe (Colombo 4), Noeline Fernando (Wellampitiya), Noeline Perera (Colombo 5), Yohan Cumariah (Navalapitiya), Dawn Ariyan

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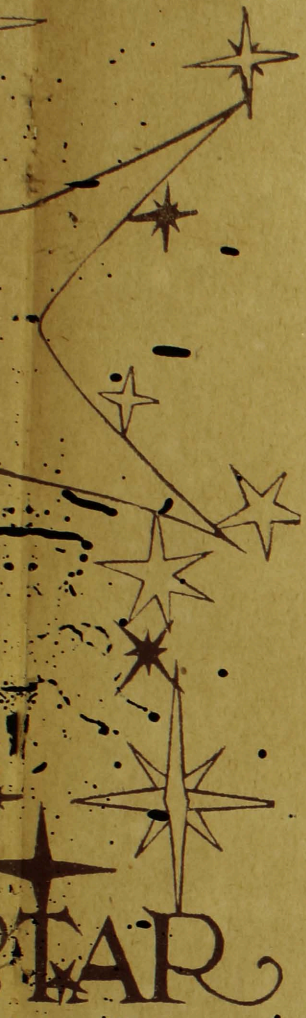
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THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

By
DEREK DE SILVA



BY freezing north winds blown the snow-flakes fall
And make for Autumn dead, a dazzling pall
Of purest white; a tree sepulchral stands
And seems to mourn for Autumn, while the hands
Of chill December winds forever stray
Amid its leafless boughs and sadly play
As on a lyre a dirge for Autumn gone
Away from earth the first November morn
Uncheering prospect! poet, lift thine eyes
And gaze upon the starry checkered skies
Where fires of love undimmed by fleeting time
Reflect the might of Him, Whose love sublime
Did make the earth and pardon Adam's crime!
How fair, above the earth they seem to shine
Ignited long ago by Breath Divine;
The glorious stars... But eyes in wonder see
Yon orb of argent flame in majesty
Roll on in midnight's bright and awful van
Unseen before by angels or by man
Unclouded by the vap'rous mists of snow
It seems an augury; of joy, or woe?
Of woe! Away, fell thought it is not so
For never ill is garbed in light so pure
It trembles o'er yon mountain for an hour
And then we hear a voice that rings afar
"Away, to Bethlehem! the Promise made
To man in Eden's fair umbrageous glade
Is now fulfilled. Go! in the manger see
The Saviour come, Bethlehem blessed be
The Christ is come, the Lord is born in Thee
'Ephrata Bethlehem!' the prophet cried
In Juda great indeed shall be thy pride
Far from thee shall He rise, the King, Divine
Who shall the sceptre sway, of Palestine!"

BEFORE a stable now we lay the scene
When that bright star doth shed a golden sheen
O, poet, kneel! in yonder stable see
The parents, and the King that dies for thee
The snow upon the gentle ring-dove's breast
And every rose that blows, in arbour's blest
Of Eden, now combine upon His cheek
To paint a hue of which no man can speak
For never had it been. How pure, how meek,
The Virgin who beside Him kneels to pray
And ever takes His Hand in happy play
Oh, lovely Hand! what music in it sleeps
And power to wake from Perfect Slumber's deeps
The man's departed soul. Ah, see it clasp
The Virgin's hand in firm but gentle grasp
Ah pity! must a nail pass through that hand?
Must sweat of blood upon that Forehead stand?
Must thorns press where that auburn look doth stray;
And Envy on a cross His Body lay
He shares the home of beasts — the King of Men;
A light is lit beyond the wand'rer's keep.
"Alas! why was He born?" my soul doth cry,
The Father answers: "He was born to die!
For sin committed now and long ago
This Baby's blood must in atonement flow."
O Saviour! may Thy death erase the stain
Of sin so that Thy Death will not be vain
O Jesus! I implore and lift my eyes
May I be worthy of Thy Sacrifice.

birthdays

Parakram T. Peiris (Negombo), Des-
fine Sherwood Peiries (Grandpass),
Noel St. Steve Direkze (Dehiwela),
Vernon E. B. De Silva (Kelaniya),
Christine de Soya (Dehiwela), Swarna
Fernando (Yatiyantota), Patricia Haw-
ke (Nawalapitiya), H. R. P. Meede-
niya (Meedeniya), Kenneth Talbot
Coenraad.

27th Dec: Bernadette Perera (Ke-
laniya), D. Joan Vaz (Colombo), Joyce
De S. Wijeyaratne (Moratuwa), Chri-
stine Casiechetty (Wattala), Melanie
Wijendra (Fori), K. Keerthisinghe
(Kandy), Don John Dolawatte (Kela-
niya), Josephine Perera (Kalutara),
Shiranthie G. Perera (Matale), Char-
les Phillips (Negombo), J. Henry Pe-
reira (Hatton), L. A. Xavier (Negombo).

malee), Bernadette Perera (Bom-
lana Elaine Langlin (Kandy), Noel
ando (Colombo 6), Noel Felsingar
bo 5), Rohini Perera (Kotahena),
Ariyanteleke (Marawilla).

Maureen Deckker (Maradana).
28th Dec: Laxman Goonewardena
(Kelaniya), J. R. M. David (Ja-Ela),
Osmund Joseph (Colombo 13), Suran-
ganie de Coonghe (Negombo), Diane
Miso (Colombo 6), Ruby Struys (Co-
lombo 10), Andrian Conderlag (Co-
lombo 10), Swarna Dias (Kelaniya).

29th Dec: Elmo Emil Perera (Co-
lombo 5), Bernice Wannappa (Wat-
tala), Ignatius Paiva (Colombo 7),
Marguerita Fernando (Moratuwa),
Noeline Constance Isackson (Kiri-
lagonne), Christine Dia (Mutwal), An-
nesley Gred (Dehiwela), Florence
Meyner (Trincomalee), Valerie Mar-
tinez (Bambalapitiya), Annesly Aloy-
sius (Paiyagala), Yvette Holmes (De-
hiwela).

30th Dec: Silvana M. D. Lima
(Mattakkuliya), Anne Perera (Gintota),
Antoinette Swaminathan (Nugegoda),
Roger C. Labrooy (Colombo 6).

31st Dec: Anton S. Fernando (Ja-
la), Bonnie Casmere (Chilaw), Celine
Silva (Moratuwa), Lalith Rana

HE did not come as a king, nor as
a sick man. But he came as a
poor child to give example to man.

So during Christmas, what we have
to do is to think of the poor, living in
hunger and desolation. Thinking in
itself will not do what deeds will ac-
complish; so give some consolation
in the name of the Lord.

If you were poor you would long
for the blessings that you enjoy now.
If you have, give; if not, utter a
prayer, because the happiness
of the poor is what Christmas means
to me.

MICHAEL L. WANNIAPPA.

CHRISTMAS is the birth of Our
Lord. To me Christmas means
the presents, the pudding, the turkey
and the sending of cards to friends.
But Christmas also means the birth
of Christ, and I like going to Midnight
Mass, the Crib and the Christmas
Tree.

Christmas is a happy day for all
of us. And it is an exciting day too.
I wish you all a very happy and holy
Christmas and hope you enjoy
Christmas.

MARCELLINE GOMEZ.

singhe (Nugegoda), Norma De Hoedt
(Hatton), Nihal Ranasinghe (Pampi-
pitiya), Susantha Perera (Kandy),
Manilal Jayawardene (Dehiwela),
Ranjan Ariyanayagam (Bambalapitiya),
Elaner Senn (Colombo 9), Sylvia Sa-
paramadd (Hendala).

January 1st 1960: Isabel Gil-
lian Jones (Kandy), Stanley Milhui-
sen (Jambugahapitiya), John C. Pe-
rera (Trincomalee), Marlene Perera
(Dehiwela), Chandrapal Edward
(Jaffna), Shelton Livera (Madampe),
Justin Fernando (Dankotuwa), Ex-
pedit Soris (Ratmalana), Generine
Fernando (Moratuwa), Srimal C.
Perera (Matale), S. Ranil Perera
(Seeduwa), Robin Corera (Nuwara
Eliya), Generine Fernando (Col-
ombo 4), Diane Wickramanayake
(Colombo 3), Walwin Slammer-
nan (Talagana).

JULITTA FERNANDO.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

EVERY hour, every day brings as closer to the one thousand nine hundred and
fifty ninth anniversary of that great day that means so much to man-
kind.

To me Christmas means — the
Crib. Yet I can hardly imagine that
until St. Francis of Assisi brought to
life that homely scene on a lonely
mountain side no one had ever even
conceived the idea.

Today the crib is a common sight

in every Catholic home at Christmas.
And at my home too I shall kneel
before our little King of Love and
offer him my heart, desires, aspira-
tions and hopes.

FRANCIS WILLIAM SAMUEL.

Christmas

THE loveliest season of the year,
Is here again, our hearts to cheer
With candles and jets and lovely toys,
And carols and music to make us re-
joice;
We dance round the Christmas tree,
With hearts so happy and free:
But it's the crib with Baby Jesus there,
St. Joseph and His Mother fair,
And clusters of angels all around,
That make our hearts with true joy
abound.

FLORENCE SMITH.

To Baby Jesus

THE world around is glad and gay,
As I kneel before Thy Crib to
pray.

I see Thee lie on hard straw,
And grief my heart doth gnaw;
I see Thee tremble in the wintry cold,
And I am filled with pain untold;
I see two loving forms bend o'er Thee,
And oh! what joy to see that love en-
folds Thee;
Ah! Babe, I, a little child come Thy
pain and bliss to share,
For, besides Thee, for no other joys do
I care.

BERNADETTE CANDAPPA.

WHAT can I give you dear Jesus
For your birthday this year?
I like to give you something special
As it's getting pretty near.

Some lovely gift tied up in ribbons
Appeals the most to me
But I should be looking for some-
thing
That appeals to thee.

So I guess I'll have to give you
What I had planned from the start
I'll give you all my love dear Jesus
That comes right from my heart.

PRUDENCE ATTAPATTU.

MUSIC, CAROLS and the CRIB

I LOVE music. The air is filled with music at Christmas: our homes
resound with carols. I take delight in singing these carols, and in
thinking of the little Babe, in whose honour they are sung. I like to wel-
come Christmas with music in my heart. When the organ plays the Gloria
at the midnight Mass, my heart thumps within me. But I know that my
heart must be pure if I am to understand the full significance of the
"Gloria."

So I give generously to others, and I keep good, for I do want to sing
in my heart, the angel's song.

CHERYL GONSAL.

TO me Christmas recalls the happy family re-union. The whole family
joins in the singing of Christmas carols; they laugh as they send up
rockets into the air. Mummy and Daddy seem to forget their problems
and worries, and they join in the fun. It is a happy family that sits down
to the Christmas dinner. All their joy is centred round the little Child in
the crib.

They are filled with the real Christmas spirit at Midnight Mass,
when the whole family approaches the Holy Table, and they ask the little
Jesus to keep them together in His love.

MANEL PINTO.

C for Christ — the baby Jesus;

H for happiness — the Christ-
mas feeling;

R for Rex or King — Jesus, King
of kings;

I for the Innocent babe and also
the Holy Innocents;

S for the shepherds to whom the
angel brought glad tidings;

T for the Three wise men who
brought gifts to Jesus;

M for Mary the happy Mother;

A for Angels who sang "Gloria
in Excelsis Deo," and, finally,

S stands for the Saviour born
on Christmas day.

JULITTA FERNANDO.

Christmas is especially the feast of
children, because on this day we cele-
brate the birth of the Divine Child.
Let us not forget to centre all the joys
of Christmas round the Crib.

CHERYL MORTIER.

FOR me, the chief attraction at
Christmas, is the Christ Child
in the Crib. We see lots of other
things at Christmas — Santa Claus,
the Christmas Tree, the yule log, the
holly and the mistletoe. They feature
largely in the cards that are sent out
at Christmas. But, very often, the
Christ Child is sadly missing. It is
ridiculous to substitute any other
symbol for the Babe whose birthday
we celebrate at Christmas. There
should be a crib in every Catholic
shop and home at Christmas.

MAUREEN CANDAPPA.

Christmas stamps



PERHAPS the most attractive of
the many postage stamps is-
sued anywhere to commemorate the
Christmas theme is the trio brought
out by pre-Communist Hungary in
1943.

Designed by Gyula Toth and beau-
tifully printed in photogravure, the
designs show —
4f. green, Angelic Musicians with
Shepherds and Sheep; 20f. blue, The
Holy Family; and 30f. red, The Ado-
ration of the Magi.

The set illustrated is from the col-
lection of Schools-Mag member AD-
RIAN TAMBINAYAGAM of Mount
Lavinia.

Both unused and used, the stamps
are fairly easy to obtain, and should
find a place in the album of every
Catholic stamp collector.

Beside the Manger

THERE in the narrow manger
bleak and cold
My Lord Thou art;
And there within those Hands, so
soft and weak,
I lay my heart,
Beneath those tiny Feet I bow my
head,
O Blessed Child,
And kiss the straw that forms Thy
chilly bed
In Winter wild.
Show me Thy wondrous Babe, O
Mother Maid,
Foretold of yore;
The Treasure of Thy Virgin-
Bosom laid
Let us adore.
That small Hand place upon my
prostrate brow,
O Mother dear;
For crouching in His Infant-
presence now
I quake with fear,
Upon Thy fair and youthful face I
read
A look of love —
A look which bids me trust Thee
in my need,
Spouse of the Dove;
Mother of God commend me when
my task is done,
And life shall end.
A sinner kneeling at an Infant's cot
I call on Thee;
A sinner at the Cross forget me not
But plead for me.

MARY HAKEL.

Agency COLUMN

It is regretted that a number of
contributions have been shut
out owing to extreme pressure
on space. Prize winners will
be announced in the New Year
issue.

CHRISTMAS IN OUR HOME

EVERYONE SEEMS EXTRA BUSY AND HAPPY AND THE REASON FOR THIS: THE GREATEST FEAST OF THE YEAR IS NEAR AT HAND, THE BIRTHDAY OF CHRIST.

We start operations with the making of our little crib. A little shed is made to look like a stable, spread with straw. On it are placed the lovely statues of the Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph with the Shepherds and a few of the animals standing by. The Star of Bethlehem is seen poised on high.

Next we put up the gaily coloured streamers and balloons. We then await the arrival of the Christmas tree, and on the thrill and joy of my little brothers when they help in decorating it! Toys, balloons, bon-bons, electric jets, all go in to brighten up the tree.

Christmas Eve

Cake and wine are made far ahead of time, as my mother seems to think it best to get over this difficult task when we are at school. Letters to Santa are also written by my brothers, and the familiar Christmas greetings, are sent out. Everyone gets new clothes.



On the 24th night we get ready in our Christmas kit, and we join the procession of cars to church for mid-

By
Amrit Muttukumaru

night Mass. Everyone has previously been to confession and on this joyous night we receive Communion

and ask the Baby Jesus to bless our family. The rendering of Carols during the service at times seems to distract me from my prayers as the tunes are so familiar to us Catholics.

After midnight service is over we return home. At last we have our first taste of delicious Christmas cake and sparkling wine!

Everyone gets a Christmas kiss and then we are off to bed, hardly able to await the fun of the following morning when Santa has arrived and my little brothers are overjoyed with their Christmas surprises. The older ones are not forgotten in the exchange of gifts.

We start the morning with an elaborate breakfast followed by a heavy Christmas lunch. We visit the crib and our close friends and relatives and then end up the night by singing Christmas carols, lighting fireworks, crackers, and sparklers. Enjoying ourselves to our heart's content with all our little cousins and friends from far and near, Christmas in our home is something to look forward to, year after year.

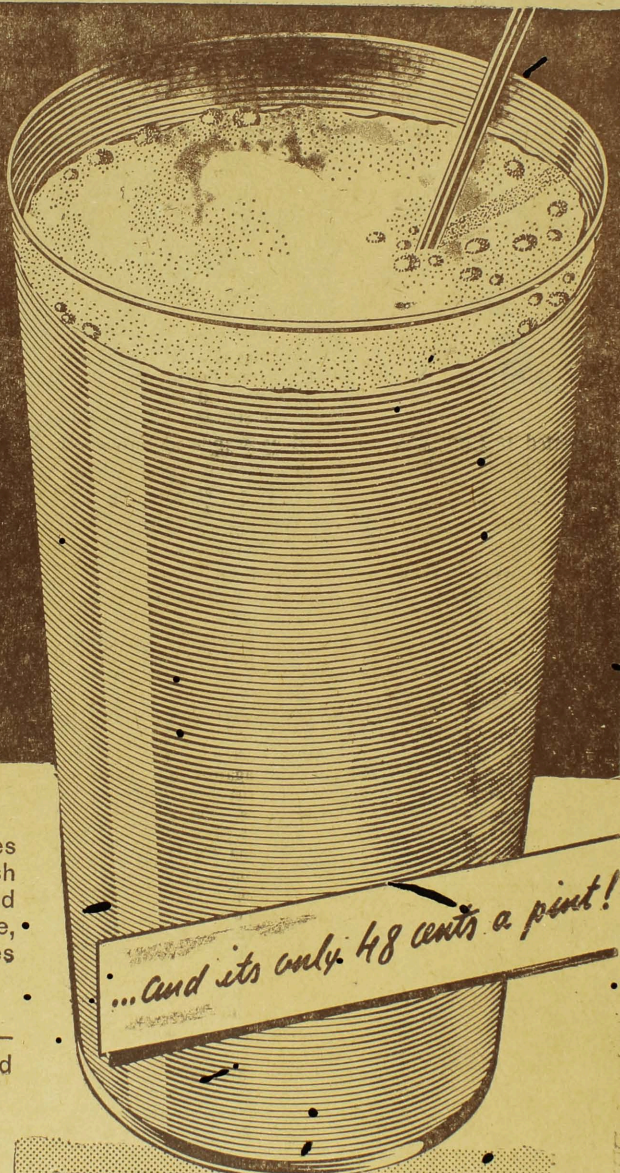
Christmas of the Poor



Schools-Mag members attending St. Cecilia's School, Batticaloa, played a prominent part in entertaining 30 poor children of the sister school of Mount Carmel, on 4 December. Picture shows the Crib made by the girls of St. Cecilia's.

15 pints of fresh creamy milk

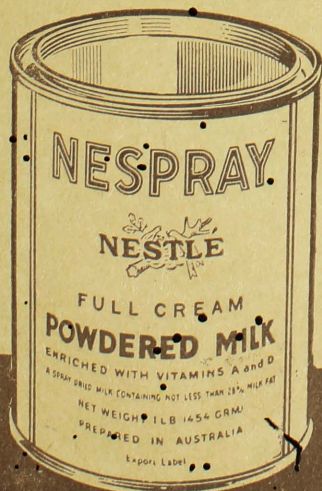
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For a free recipe folder write to: Nestlé's Products (Ceylon) Ltd., P.O. Box 189, Colombo.

NESPRAY

Christmas Greetings

A HAPPY Christmas to members all,
Of the Schools-Mag big or small.
Hearty Greetings to Uncle Ashley,
Wishes sincere to our Editor mostly.
May the New Year be happy and bright,
And joy and peace be yours throughout.
May the Infant Jesus bless you,
'Tis the best that I can wish you.

Clarinda Bastians

C is for the Christ-Child, in a manger born,
H is that Holy, glorious morn,
R is for Royal, for He was a King,
I is for Infant, His praises we sing.
S is for the Shepherds, who sought their King,
T is the Tidings, the Angels did bring.
M is Mary, His Mother adored,
A is for Angels, announcing the Lord
S is for Saviour, who loves us all.

MARIETTA EDEMA.



CHRIST'S birth we celebrate today,
HOLY angels join in our lay,
RING out ye bells the joyous lay,
IT is our dear Saviour's birthday,
SHEPHERDS to the Crib lead the way,
TO show us the Babe on the hay,
MAGI we'll join you if we may,
ADORING the Infant we'll stay,
SWEET Saviour give us peace this day.

ROSETTA OORLOFF.



CALM and still He sweetly lies,
HOW beautiful! neath starry skies,
ROUND Him heav'n's angels hover,
IN Mary's arms He now takes cover,
SHEPHERDS at His Feet bend low,
THEIR simple gifts on Him they bestow,
MAGI have come from afar,
AH! they have been led by a wondrous Star,
SOFTLY the night winds whisper His power.

WINIFRED OHLMUS.