Volume V.

Five Cents per Copy

ROCHESTER, N. Y., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1933

Statesription Terms

MIDNIGHT MASS IS FEATURE OF CHRISTMAS IN BELGIUM; MANGERS IN ALL CHURCHES

By REV. ANTHONY COPPENS (Written for N. C. W. C. Christmas Supplement)

While it must be confessed that old customs are slowly dis appearing in the face of modern developments and expansion, still the country folk of Belgium, in their observance of Christmas, adhere to practices, many of which go back to the Middle Ages, when the Mystery Plays were at the height of their popularity and influence. Moreover, a study of old documents, and especially of folklore, is contributing in a large way to the revival of many customs which were merely dim recollections in the minds of

particularly a day for the exchange of supply a proper Christman atmopresents, as it is in the United States. sphere.

parents at this time. They present are works of real artistic merit.
their god-parents with illuminated. The universal practice of visiting letters which have been prepared with the mangers set up in the various

of Mass, the rendition of Christmas duties.

Christmas Day in Belgium is not hymns on carillons, has served to

Nor is the Christmas tree much in productions of the stable in Bethle-In all churches are to be seen re evidence at this time, as it is in the hem. There is the manger in which United States. The decoration of fir lies the Holy Child. The Blessed trees at Christmas was more or less Virgin, Saint Joseph and the shepin evidence in Antwerp before the herds kneel close by. The cattle are War, when Antwerp had a consider- there too. The manger scene remains able German population, but now that of this composition until the Feast practice has virtually disappeared.

The exchange of presents in Bel. Men supplant the shepherds. These gium is deferred until New Year's reproductions of the Bethlehem stable Day. Formerly it was more or less are a great attraction with the chilconfined to the family circle, and dren of Belgium, and, in towns even now, when it has extended more where there are several churches, the or less generally to include other little ones will visit them all. Manrelatives and friends, it remains a gers are also erected in the private great day for god-children, who will homes, and often, particularly in the never miss a visit to their god aristocratic homes of Antwerp, they

the greatest care at school under the churches of the towns and villages special supervision of the teachers, often results in people returning to and these are read with great rover- the proper practice of their Faith nice. Presents are exchanged, and Parents who have grown lax in the not infrequently kisses, and even practice of their religion, and there tears, are a part of the ceremonies. are many cases of this kind in in-The great feature of the observ-dustrial centers, will visit the manance of Christmas in Belgium is Mid- gers in many instances just to show Mass. whether it be in a them to their little ones. These vis chapel with but a small congregation its often stir again the religious senin attendance or in a great cathedral timents in the breasts of these carewith a large outpouring of the faith- less ones, and they return to proper, ful. For hours before the beginning faithful practice of their religious

The Night of Christmas Eve

A CHRISTMAS STORY

No one in the valley had ever, thrown at the sky as Christmas Eve known such a bad season. Frost and passed hour by hour with little sign snow, snow and frost for the whole of improvement. We would fain of Advent and the week before have made the tollsome journey Christmas had been distinguished by Dinglewards though he knew once he a howling, pitiless, never-ending left the upper road the going would snowstorm. Even the old people be all but impossible, for the house remembered nothing like it. To get had none of the customary festive to Dingle for the usual festive shop- fare and even the bacon and flour ping was unthinkable. No horse or were low. The snow did not cease to even donkey could travel with the fall, however, until late in the aftersnow piled in drifts at every turn in noon, when it would be foolish to the road. So those who had a roof think of starting in face of the reand a fire thanked God for them and turn journey, which would have to pitied any unfortunate abroad in

such weather. Miceal O'Connor's little house was perched on the side of the hill Grelteacht householder will omit on overlooking the upper road. More Christmas Eve. He struggled across and more anxious were the glances

Pagan Effort To Hide Saviour's Birthplace Proof of Authenticity

It is a striking fact that the efforts of a Roman Emperor to desecrate the place where Our Lord was born have furnished one of the strongest proofs that this spot was held in veneration by the faithful from earliest times.

The Emperor, says St. Jerome, endeavored to wipe out the remembrance of Christ's birth by defiling the grotto by the worship of false gods, as he did also Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre. "Our Bethlehem" (the manger) writes the great Doctor, "the most august spot in the universe, was overshadowed by a wood consecrated to Thamus—that is to say, to Adonis—and in the grotto which had heard the tender wailings of the infant Christ men benoamed the 'beloved of Venus.'" However, the statue and grove of Adomia disappeared in consequence of the lack of worshippers. and this holy place continued to remain the object of the levins wation of Christians.

(Written for N. C. W. C. Christmas Supplement)

be made after dark.

With a sigh Miceal Turned his attentions to the preparations no to the peat-stack and brought in not one but many arm-loads of the darkbrown turf, for the first tonight would be furnished with as much as it would safely hold and a pile for refueling would stand near it as well. That done the woman of the house swept the floor and laid the table with her finest and best, while he polished the windows till they shone cooping away the little drifts of now.

Candle in Window The animals had been fed and watered before Miceal and Kate sat down to a late tea on the wooden settle characteristic of Kerry houses some time ago. Minor occupations kept them busy until it was time for the Rosary. A stout candle had to

e fixed in the window and there lit. (Continued on Page 10)

Bethlehem Is Still

tinctive dress marks them out from tears fell from his eyes. ther inhabitants. Incidentally, the staff's carried by these shepherds are

Christmas Day Nineteen Hundred Thirty-Three Years Ago



At the Crib

Prote a painting by Martin Pouratein.

By KENTON KILMER

(Written for N. C. W. C. Christmas Supplement)

His timy, wax-pink fingers Like young vine tendrils curled, There lies the Vine whose vintage Will bring life to the world.

His eyes, bright sparkling, radiant, Give promise of the light Of heavenly truth, triumphant Over the dark of night.

His soft light hair will darken To brown-gold of ripe grain. His flesh, at time of harvest Will give us life again.

His warm red mouth will open To speak the word of love. He lies there, smiling, silent, As Mary bends above.

St. Francis Was First Midnight Mass Deacon

Not only is St. Francis of Assisi the first Midnight Mass.

Midnight Mass, biographers tell us, whether you have two Christmas Abode of Shepherds and took as his topic the poverty of Days, or none at all.

Greenville Piedmout.

TRAVELERS TO ORIENT MAY LOSE CHRISTMAS: 2-IN-ROW EAST BOUND

Bethlehem is still the abode of He was so moved in mentioning the the date line while headed toward Crib, and you wonder what gift you distributing their treasures. hepherds, and their rough and dis- Holy Child that his tips trembled and the Orient are deprived of December can best place in them, listen awhile 25 altogether, their calendars jump in the slience of the Holy Night. It from December 24 to December 26 may be that the gift He asks of you Reform must be slow in a world automatically. Chronologically speak is the gift of yourself, as an apostic used to help them up steep slopes and where none will listen to oreaching ing, they have no Christmas at all to these who have never heard the hours is over rough spots in the grazing except these who don't need it. - This happened to the passengers on Good Tidings of Great-Joy. Field Atar an American ship last year.

As the Infant Savior stretches ou

EPIPHEANY CHILDRIEN'S DAY

The great day for children in Spain is the Peast of the Epiphany Not only is St. Francis of Assisted and I you arrive at the international. But, it passengers are crossing the January 6, or "The Day of the first Christmas Crib, but he is date line in the Pacific Ocean on line, while heading toward the Pacific Coast of the United States, they forehand the children are in state of the United States, they forehand the children are in state of the United States, they forehand the children are in state of the United States, they forehand the children are in state of he first Midnight Mass.

St. Francis also preached at this 25. It all depends upon your direction two Christmas Days. to hed part their shoes (not their stockings) outside on the inicony, & that they will be of easy access as

POPULATION OF BETCHLERIES

the hom is cotinated in the seighb. of whom are Charles

place with a

contered around the C whom Kalght Rand vant. The Christiandis somiscition of Christ Krise Kringle nothing name for the liyounglers, The Chr the little mann symbol to the Germe

nos of out limes. tional feature. One of boautiful German Christin tells of its origin. Let me be from T. G. Oripson, who thus a it in his book Christmas Lore" (London 1988): "Christmas eve one ye quistly and without event lonely home of a forester, the chill wind whited the shorn branches of the tr around a cheerful fire the and his family had mont ! evening. Just so they open the retire for the night, the neight salene kiseking va bal side. The father opened the ing with sold and hunger, warmly welcomed, treated in the house afforder, and in instated that the guest supply his bed in which to stone next morning they were all ened by a choir of suggle of amazement they discover was the Christ Child whom enterlained, for He new a them transfigured. Bre peared. He took a twig tree, planted it in the said: I hayt gladly result gifts and here is mine to tree will never fall to bear

(Continued on Page 3)