

Site of First Crib a 'Bethlehem'

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there St. Francis and his brothers would establish their abode. St. Francis began to pray, a child took a stick from a burning pile and hurled it into the air. While everybody thought that the stick would travel only a very short distance, it seemed to take flight in the air and actually came to rest against a rocky corner of the mountain. On that spot was built the monastery, and it exists today and is occupied by the Friars. A monastery? One should see the rooms open to all the winds, exposed to the rigors of the winter season which is most severe in this locality deprived of everything that might even vaguely recall the comforts of life.

And it is in that so-called monastery, one looks for the little cells which are the rooms of the Friars who will find little holes in the rock. One shivers at the thought of the sacrifices that St. Francis and his companion underwent. Today visitors come from all parts of the world to view this monastery.

When, at Christmas time in the year 1223, St. Francis inaugurated the custom of erecting the Christmas crib, he had just returned to Greccio from Rome, radiant with joy because Pope Honorius III had approved the Franciscan Rule.

St. Francis, who was at the monastery of Fonte Colombo, went to Rieli in 1225 while Pope Honorius III was at that very city. The "Poor Little Man" of Assisi had such a worn-out and torn tunic that he could no longer decently wear it and he said to a companion: "I would be pleased, brother, if you could get me some cloth to make a tunic."

Next morning the brother went to collect offerings and confident that Providence would allow him to find the material for a tunic and just as he left the house he saw a man standing at the door with a parcel in his hand who said to him: "Brother, here is some cloth to make six tunics, one of which you will keep for yourself and five the others to whom you like."

The brother, full of astonishment and admiration returned to St. Francis who thanked God saying: "We render thanks to Him who takes such care of us." At Rieli itself, St. Francis, sick and suffering, found himself in the house of Teobaldo called the Saracene, in a room with a window which can still be seen. One day St. Francis asked for Brother Pacifico, nicknamed the "King of Verses" because before he became a brother he had been a poet and musician, and said to him: "Brother, the people of the world do not understand holy and divine things, because they use those musical instruments which should serve to praise the Lord for their pleasure."

Therefore wish you would borrow a sither and sing honest verses so as to give less pain to my poor brother's body, discouraged by suffering." The brother refused as he feared that that song might give

REBEL MOVE GAINS FORCE IN MEXICO

Arrest of Two Officers Reveals Munition Plot To Aid Rebel Forces

MEXICO CITY—Messages from Guadalajara, capital of the State of Jalisco, tell of further activities of accomplices of the rebel leader Gen. Lauro Rocha.

Following the arrest of Miguel Luna, Lauro Rocha's aide, and 22 Jaliscoans, some of whom had been active in the Cristero rebellion, two officers of the Federal Army have been charged with selling ammunition to the rebels.

Major Ignacio Santa Fe, Captain Miguel Sabagottia Barron, Melchor Fernandez Mora, Sebastian Corona Garcia and Carlos Adams were arrested at Mexico City by agents from the Office of the General Inspection of Police Corona Garcia has confessed that he bought ammunition for delivery to Mariano Urueta, Simón López and an employe of the Universal Bazaar, who in turn confessed that he got it from the Captain who had acquired it from the Major. The Major sold to the Captain who had been given to him more than a year ago by General Amaro and that he had certainly not withdrawn it from the supply under his command.

Slavic Yuletide Celebration Lasts For Entire Month

Observance of Christmas extends over whole month in Czechoslovakia.

The celebrations really being on St. Barbara's Day, December 4, and the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, is a great day for all the children, with gifts being exchanged.

From that time until Christmas Eve, the children are told stories of the coming of the Christ Child and adults lend aid to one another in their preparations for the coming feast.

Christmas Eve is filled with expectancy and Christmas itself is a great and solemn Feast. The children receive on Christmas their second gifts of the season, December 25 in "Koleda," or the day of carol-singing. The festive activities keep up until January 6, the last day of the Christmas season in Czechoslovakia—the Day of the Three Kings.

Christian Christmas Customs Owe Little To Pagan Yuletide

While a number of Christmas customs observed today are traced back by some to pagan origins in Rome and in the observance of the Yule among the Northern peoples, authorities point out that these are purely social customs observed among non-Christians as well as Christians and have no relation to the fundamental meaning of Christmas.

The pagan celebrations, they point out, arose out of festive customs ranged by the pagans for the purely natural reason of counteracting the dullness of the winter season.

The Christian observance of Christmas—one of joy—is prompted by the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the coming of the Redeemer, far from Christmas owing anything to the heathen event commemorated in the Christian Feast struck a death blow to the very foundations of heathen custom.

The celebration of three masses by each priest at Christmas Day, the mass at midnight, because, according to tradition, the birth of Our Saviour took place in the middle of the night, and the practice of erecting Christmas crèches in churches and in homes are Christian customs that are entirely unrelated to pagan observances.

Christmas Stocking Practice Believed Begun In France

The practice of placing shoes before the fire and of hanging stockings on the mantle Christmas Eve is held by some authorities to have originated in the early part of France.

Those holding this theory point to a legend that a penniless child, wishing to make poor Christmas gifts to the Infant Jesus, gave up his wooden shoes and placed them beside the mantle which his parents had set up. The next morning his shoes were still there, but they were filled with golden coins, the gift of the Infant Jesus.

Yuletide Legend Of Honeysuckle

There is in the south of France a tradition that happens and soon as the infant rested upon it, the flowers flushed with happiness, recognizing Him as the Creator of the world.

One of the loveliest of Christmas legends concerns the honeysuckle. The French honeysuckle, a legend in that country says, was its distinctive rose color when the Blessed Mother laid Our Lord in the manger. This little plant, the story says, was growing there, and as soon as the infant rested upon it, the flowers flushed with happiness, recognizing Him as the Creator of the world.

May each Christmas as it comes and may each merry like Him Who at this time became a Child for our sakes, more simple-minded, more humble, more holy, more affectionate, more resigned, more happy, more full of God's assistance.

—Cardinal Newman.

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Catholic Near East Welfare Association

His Eminence Patrick Cardinal Hayes, President. Very Rev. Messrs. James G. O'Reilly, Ph.D., National Secretary. Rev. John J. Corrigan, Assistant Secretary.

An Altar

Surely any Catholic would have tried to improve the manger in which Christ was born. Today He is on our altars. In the Near East so many Catholic Altars are hideous. They are merely boards covered over with cloths. Fifty Dollars will pay for the erection of an Altar in a mission chapel. Would you give one to Christ?

THE PRIEST'S WORK

The priest continues the work of Our Blessed Lord. He offers the same sacrifice and dispenses to men the gifts of God. He is truly the other Christ for his work is the same and so is his message. The priest is the mediator between God and man, he is the pastor who leads the flock to the Eternal Home.

The missionary goes out to strange people, gives his life to save them. He announces the good tidings of Redemption and tells the beautiful history of the birth and life of Christ. Many listen and accept Christ, others turn away, some are hostile.

We need priests to continue the work. Young men must be prepared to shoulder the cross and carry on when others die. In the Near East the Bishops have students whom they believe will make zealous and holy priests. We must help to support and train these students.

It costs six hundred dollars to put a young man through the major seminary. The course is six years. One hundred dollars is needed for every year. Would you think of sponsoring one student? It would mesh so much if you did. Perhaps you can't—then do it for a year. Send us the amount required to suits to suit your convenience. Every ten dollars will support a student for a month. Perhaps you can afford this. If not, then do what you can. Help us to train other Christs.

A GIFT

Nearly any gift that you make to a friend will become old and in time useless. This is the way of material things. We have a suggestion for a gift that will benefit your friend during life and after death. Enroll your friend as a Perpetual Member in this Association. Those enrolled perpetually share not only during life but after death in Fifteen Thousand Masses every year. Such a gift will be of great benefit to your friend and to the missionaries.

The offering for Perpetual Membership is twenty dollars. We have beautiful Perpetual Membership Certificates.

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES

Christmas is two weeks off. It was in the Near East that our Divine Lord was born. Do not forget the missionaries who are working in this section. Send something for them. Even the smallest gift will be gratefully received.

FOR A MISSIONARY

Would you give a Chance to a missionary? In the Near East a plain but serviceable Chalice can be purchased for Ten Dollars.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

A picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help suitable for a chapel or school can be purchased for Five Dollars. Would you make this gift to some mission chapel?

MASS INTENTIONS

When you ask the missionary to say Mass for your intentions, you and his work both benefit. Ask him to do this for you.

OUR WORK

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association is a mission society. It was founded by Pope Pius XI. Our field is the Near East where there are over 100,000,000 Christians of the Separated Oriental Churches. In this section only \$1,000,000 are Catholics.

THE LONELY MISSIONARY

Keep in mind the lonely missionary. Ask him to say Mass for your intentions. He appreciates these remembrances for they help his work.

SANCTUARY LAMP

A Sanctuary Lamp must burn before every Altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Seven dollars will purchase a Lamp in the Near East. This Lamp will burn many years for your intention.

FIVE DOLLARS

Five Dollars will keep a missionary alive for a week. By active work you can keep his chapel open, visit the sick, etc. Send us Five Dollars.

PERSECUTION OF PRIESTS IN MEXICO ON INCREASE

Mexico City—Information from a reliable source has reached the Capital telling of increased persecution of Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Morelia in that portion of the archdiocese lying within the boundaries of the State of Guanajuato.

Catholics from all over the State have protested to the authorities of these committees, insisting that these priests are exercising their ministry without violating the Law on Religious Worship in force in Guanajuato.

So far no attention has been paid to those protests and the persecutions instead of waning, are increasing. The priests continue to be molested and charged with alleged violations of the law.

SENTENCE CHURCH THIEVES

Crowds of about 2000 men, some of them from Toronto and the other from Montreal, when they were found guilty here of theft of altar ornaments from the Catholic church in this town.

Spread Over World

The Saint, having sung these words, knelt down to meditate upon the sublime mystery of the Incarnation. The priest, with the candle took place. The throng of worshippers saw a brilliant light shine around the kneeling figure. Gazing upon the Divine Child in the reverent awe, they beheld an apparition of the heavenly glow, resting in the arms of God's poor little man.

THREE YULETIDE MASSES DENOTES THREE FOLD BIRTH

The Priest says three Masses on Christmas to indicate the three-fold birth of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, according to the distinctions of the two natures, and also of the grace which He confers on us.

The first Mass reminds us of Our Lord's divine birth from His Heavenly Father, according to His divine nature. The second Mass reminds us of the temporal birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary, according to His human nature. The third Mass reminds us of the spiritual birth of Christ in the hearts of Christians by His Sacraments and grace.

CATHOLICS HONOR JURIST

Jerusalem—Director Richmond of the Palestine Department of Antiquities entertained the representatives of the Jerusalem Catholic Community with an "At Home" at the American Hotel to bid farewell to the retiring Chief Justice and Lady McDonnell.

Incidentally the first unit of the "Agrarian Army" has been organized in Jalisco.

2,000 peasants belonging to the League of Agrarian Communities and the State Syndicate of Peasants, all of whom are well armed and equipped. This corps will be the disposal of Gen. Soto Lara for fighting Lauro Rocha.

To all appearances, Lombardo Tolezano and his Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) are attempting to dictate the policies of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Cabinet and the President.

Situation in Spain

The latest attempt along this line is to demand that Minister of Foreign Relations Eduardo Haya investigate the conduct of the Mexican Ambassador in Spain, Gen. Perez Trevino, and remove him immediately if the charges made against him by the CTM are found to be true. These charges include harboring of "dukes," marquis, counts and other personalities of the Spanish nobility responsible for the revolution. The CTM alleges that the Ambassador gave cards showing Mexican citizenship to "many Spanish Fascists." On the other hand, the CTM has asked the Mexican Government to furnish war supplies to the Madras Government and has called upon Mexican workers to contribute a day's wages to the Popular Front in Spain.

When called upon for a press statement, Minister Haya said the document had not yet reached his hands, but that meanwhile he deemed it advisable to state that the asylum afforded by the Mexican Diplomatic Mission in Spain does not implicate us in any complicity, complacency or undue political sympathy.

The Blique of the Chamber of Deputies held a special session at which Deputy Gilberto Flores Munoz presided, to receive members of the Spanish militia whose recent arrival in Mexico provoked considerable discussion. Two members of the delegation, Carmen Mercader and Lena Imbert, were seated beside Deputy Flores Munoz. The session was devoted to praise of the Azana Government and attacks upon Generals Franco and Mora.

IRISH WELCOME CHRIST CHILD WITH CANDLES

Two interesting Christmas customs may be noticed in Ireland. One is the practice of having candles burning in the windows to light the Christ Child as He way, and the other is that of leaving the door ajar. He said: "I am glad to see you and I am glad to see you."

Check Your Lighting

These new I. E. S. Better Light—Better Sight lamps are gifts that will brighten up every evening hour and help guard eyesight, too. End table, floor, wall, and study lamps in a variety of handsome styles and low prices. Every home needs several to help prevent eyestrain—every member of the family should have one to read by. And while you're about it, get one for yourself too.

Look for the I. E. S. tag. It is your assurance of scientific design and quality workmanship.

Ask for a Free Demonstration in Your Home

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