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Christmas Tree Angel
By CONSTANCE VAN KIRK
(Reprinted from the Nazareth College GLEANER)

This is the most wonderful world. It must be wonderful to live here all the time. What a shame I only see it three weeks during the whole year. Can it always be so pure white and sparky as this? Why, the snow is even shinier than my dress; I wonder if it is all sequins, too. But it's so cold! I remember last year when Sally brought a ball of it into the house and I touched it. Ooohh, it makes me shiver to remember.

Every year Sally and Bobbie change so much. Some day when I look at them they are going to reach right up to the top of the tree and take me down. Then they won't believe that I'm the little angel who tells Santa Claus whether or not they're good. I wonder if all Mamas tell their children the same thing about Christmas-tree angels: that they are here all year long watching to see how good the children are, and then appear on top of the Christmas tree to tell Santa Claus what presents to leave.



Sally and Bobbie believe that, but next year they'll be six and it will be different. But even if it is, I hope they'll still love me as much. I really don't mind being all covered up and locked away for 344 days if everyone will love me when I stand up here. After all, I don't miss much, because I'm here for the end of the Old Year and the beginning of the New Year. Everyone thanks The Child for the past year and resolves to do better during the new year.

THAT MUST BE Sally and Bobbie I hear; they're always the Angel back again. Oh, how pretty! It was so hard to remember all the naughty, mischievous tricks they had thought of during the year. Clad in their

white sleepers, Sally and Bobbie presented a perfect picture of the cherubs who must be singing in Heaven this day.

"Mama, Mama! Daddy! Hurry, hurry! Angel's back again, that means we were good 'n get what we asked Santa for Hurry, hurry so we kin see what he left!"

THE ONCE silent house resounded with excited cries and squeals. Angie was excited herself after all, hadn't she noticed her first of all? Each year she held her breath to see what they would notice first, and each year they greeted her before doing anything else. And no matter how old they grew, Angie knew that Sally and Bobbie would go on loving her. Things were sure to change, but Angie would always be there smiling at them from the top of the tree.

WHAT, MIE wondered, did people do who didn't have an angel on the very tip-top branch? Nothing, not even a star, could take the place of an angel; she knew that from watching how the children caught their breath when they looked at her.

After all, didn't they see real stars in the sky every night, but who had ever seen a real angel? Of course, there were real angels, all bright and shining with their golden halos and wings above the "purr white gowns," but who had ever seen one? Sally and Bobbie knew they would know if a real angel appeared to them because it would have to look exactly like Angie. There couldn't be an angel who didn't look like Angie.

"OH, BOBBIE, look! Isn't she beautiful? My little baby's gone to be called Angie, after Angie, our Angel." Sally ruffled her new doll, forgetful of the other packages bearing her name. "Go to sleep, go to sleep, little Angie," she crooned in an offkey.

"Why, Sally, you just got your little baby and now you're putting her to sleep. Don't you want her to see the beautiful tree and presents?"

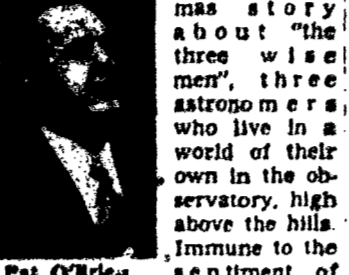
"Oh, she kin see 'em later. Mama, I want her to sleep now so she can stay up tonight with our Angel. Are you goin' to let me stay up too, Mama?"

"We'll see. If you and Bobbie are very, very good I'll ask Angie what she thinks. Here, now, what do you suppose is in this pretty package?"

ANGIE SMILED to herself. If Mama had said she would ask Angie, that meant Sally and Bobbie would be up later than usual tonight. When the time came to go to bed, they would be too tired to protest. Bobbie had already begun to assemble his train when Mama took the twins off to dress for Church. Quiet would soon envelop the house again. But Angie

Pat O'Brien Plays Wise Man On Family Theater

Pat O'Brien and Francis X. Bushman will appear Dec. 20 in "Star of Wonder", a warm and moving Christmas story about "the three wise men", three astronomers who live in a world of their own in the observatory, high above the hills.



Pat O'Brien... "Star of Wonder" was written for Family Theater by John McGreevey, and the program was directed by Joseph F. Mansfield. The Mutual Orchestra is conducted by Harry Zimmerman. Family Theater is heard over the Mutual Network at 9:30 p.m. EST.

first one up on Christmas. Won't they be happy to me here again! "Ooohh! Look, there's Angie could picture just what the rest of the day would be like.

They would eat breakfast after going to Church and the big dinner wouldn't be served until late afternoon. Angie loved that part of the day; she could look right into the dining room and see the candles sputtering, the smell of roast turkey would fill the house and, then, to crown the dinner, a real English plum pudding in flames.

She always felt a special glow of warmth after the feast when Sally and Bobbie, with their Mama, sat around in front of the crackling fire and listened to Daddy tell them all the Christmas stories first would come the story of the first Christmas and the tiny Christ Child, then the sweet, said tale of poor little Carol Bird, and last they would hear about the Old Scrooge. This was the best part of the day, with the family gathered together. Then, despite all efforts to stay awake real late, almost 'til midnight, Sally and Bobbie would fall asleep. This happened every year, and every year as the twins were carried to bed, they would stir and remember to say "Good Night, Angie, Our Christmas Tree Angel."

Pat O'Brien... "Star of Wonder" was written for Family Theater by John McGreevey, and the program was directed by Joseph F. Mansfield. The Mutual Orchestra is conducted by Harry Zimmerman. Family Theater is heard over the Mutual Network at 9:30 p.m. EST.

AMONG WOMEN
Candle As A Symbol

By MARY LENNON SHYDER

The use of candles during the Christmas season is another modern symbolism which has its roots deep in Christian life. Today in many homes the wax candle has been replaced by electrically lighted ones, but the use of candles suggests to a Catholic one thought summarized by one Catholic author in this manner:

"Thus light symbolizes Him Who is the light of the world, the splendor of the Father, the source of all knowledge and truth. 'LIGHT HAS always been the figure of truth. Knowledge in the soul is called light; the Gospel is the light of the world. The Church has always been the fountain of knowledge and the guardian of learning. She uses these lights (candles) in her services as truths of the wisdom and the truth with which she enlightens all men of their duties in this life and of their destiny in the other.' (Meagher, 'Teaching Truth by Signs and Ceremonies.')

So to a Catholic the Christmas candles are another reminder that the Light of the World has come into His world. They also call out to us that just as the candle lights up a dark place, the light of God's truth as found in His Gospel came into the world to dissipate the errors of the world. In every Irish Catholic home where the traditions of the Old

INDEED IN IRELAND where the Christmas weather is appreciably milder than in our climate it is customary not only to light the Blessed Candle but also to leave the door of the home open as a sign of the welcome awaiting Him. One of my earliest Christmas memories is of my mother admonishing us not to turn on any electric lights until she had paused long enough in her busy round of last minute preparations to light the Holy Candle. And as we light our own Christmas candles, nostalgia floods our hearts as we remember those no longer with us who kept Christ in our happy childhood Christmases and who by old and simple customs reminded us that Christ comes first in every Christmas.

Lourdes Reports Pilgrim Increase

Paris (RNS) — Pilgrims to the famed Roman Catholic shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes numbered 1,832,000 from March 13 to October 22 this year, or 222,000 more than the total for the corresponding period of 1950.

Four hundred and sixteen special trains were commissioned to bring visitors to the shrine from all parts of France and from many countries abroad. Among the pilgrims were 10,813 members of boy scout organizations. Sick persons brought to Lourdes during the 1951 period totaled 24,224. More than a quarter of a million pilgrims were immersed in the waters of the Lourdes spring.

Ave Maria Hour Features 'Nonie'

Garrison, N. Y. (NC) The Ave Maria Hour will forego its usual format to broadcast a special play for the Christmas season by the well known Irish playwright, David Hayes.

"Every once in a while an exceptional radio script comes to our desk," said the Rev. Terence Cummings, S.A., director of the Ave Maria Hour.

"When we read 'Nonie' we knew we had the makings of a great show. Can you imagine a story in which the leading character doesn't speak a line? Yet she's there all the time, haunting you with her childlike innocence. This man Hayes can write. It's a fiction story, something we rarely do, but Hayes has caught so well the warmth and spirit of the Holy Season of Christmas."

"NONIE," the story of a bawdy ward child in a little Irish town at Christmas, will be heard by Ave Maria Hour listeners on more than 350 stations coast to coast on December 23.

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