

Crib scenes now so familiar at Christmas were originated by St. Francis of Assisi.

Saint Invented World's First Christmas Crib

By FATHER JAMES I. TUCEK

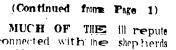
Greccio, Italy -- (NC) -- The heart of the Catholic world is attracted during the days before Christmas toward a little hermitage in the Valley of Rieti where the first Christmas crib scene the and accuracy. Near the her

world ever knew blossemed like a winter flower 734 years mitage of Greccio there was a ago. cave carved in the rock of the mountainside that gave the

On Christmas Eve in 1223 Greccio became the "Bethlehem of Italy." From a tiny monastery, perched like an eagle's nest on the rocky top of a mountain here, the pastoral poetry of the Christmas creche was to suread through out the world

Its "inventor," St. Francis of Assist, had longed all his life to make a pilgrimage to the country of Jesus,

After organizing his company of the Little Friars, he



connected with the shepherds could be traced to their life in the wilderness. Here life often meant the survival of the fittest. Shepherds had to be ready for anything, ready day and night to face unexpected danger.

Beside them as they slept ney clutched clubs ready for use against wolves preying on their flocks or for clealing with suspicious strangers. You need ed courage to live in the wilderness and some of these shep. herds could boast of killing with only their barre hands a lion or bear every as King David had done when he was still a shepherd bery in these same pastures no und Bethle hem.

These shepherds were touch men They had to be. And as usually is the case in matters of class prejudice, they were not all as black as their critics painted them. In the ranks of the shepherds were honest and humble men. Armong them were many devoled to the one true God and fait infully wat tag for the coming of the

*

sheep when he went forth to

slay Goliath and lead the

armies of Israelin victory over

God called from the fields of

Bethelehem was a preligure of

the Messias upon whose a dvent

all Israel waited_ God had

promised, moreover, that the

descendant of Dawid Bethle

hem's most famous shepherd.

The Messias King would be

the shepherd-king s. son. and

God promised Da vid, "I will

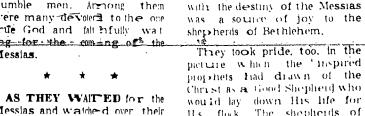
Messias would be a blood

This shepherd king whom

Messias.

Bethlehem

the Philistines.



Messlas and watched over their flocks these shephierds could look on nearby Bet hlehem and remember the days of aracient glory.

Here a thousance years before God took ashaepherd boy of Bethlehem and raised him to the throne of Israel. This was King David who had received his royal ancinting from the prophet Samuel here in

Here in thes e pastures around Bethlehem_ the shepherd youth David, "ruddy and beautiful to beholed and of a the lips of Ezechielt_ comely face." had left his

.my (Ezechiel 31:23).

and divine momises were not enough the lown shephords could joint to the tradition which said that the Christ would be born here in Bethleherra, the town where David, the shepherd king, was born.

COURIER JOURNAL. Friday, December 13, 1957

"For there has been born to you today in the town of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

are for the second and the second second

wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

As the shepherds listened to the angel's message, he was joined by a host of other angels maising God and singing:

and peace on earth among men of good will."

and when the angels had departed into heaven, the shepherds had a chance to gather their wits. They understood the angel's message, all right. The Savior had come at last. The shepheids were surprised at the news, surprised too that about it.

the town of David as the Re-The shepherds had no difficulty, however, in believing the good news. They had no difficulty. in ' believing - that the Savior was born in the lowly town of nearby Bethlehem. This was the way, after all, that the shepherds had always dreamed that it would be that the Christ would appear first in the town of the ancient shepherd boy David.

> The shepherds lost no time. "Let us go over to Bethlehem." they said, "and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

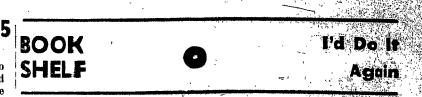
As the shepherds kept the night watches over their flocks. They hurrled They knew the and huddled near their camp way to Bethlehem, even out of fires, something strange hapthe wilderness. The angel had pened, strange even for mengiven them a sign "an infant who were ready to expect alwrapped, in swaddling clothes and iving in a manger."

Suddenly "an angel of the The shepherds found the Lord stood by them and the angel's sign in a cave at the glory of God shone round about edge of the town. There in a them." This dramatic appearsheepshed in the hillside, the ance of the angel struck tershepherds found Mary and Joror into the hearts of these seph and the swaddled Infant.

fearless plainsmen. Although As they knell, the first to they looked for anything to find and adore the Infant happen in the desert wilder-Christ, the shepherds underness, they were not looking for stood the message of the angel "there has been born to you Quickly the angel quieted in the town of David a Savior,

the frightened men: who is Christ the Lord." "Do not be afraid," the angel The diriy faces of the shepsaid to them, "for behold, I bring you good news of great

herds broke into smiles of joy and understanding as they starred into the face of the Divine Infant. They saw the Son



Sr. Margaret Teresa, Nazareth College

I'D DO IT AGAIN, by former and that his type of government. Mayor and Massachusetts Gover of ability to keep a big city solnor Curley (a Prentice Hall vent in depression, his type of ook in is the answer to a chall charity, will often be seen again, lenge that Curley would not dare That charity covers a multitude offset the romance of Edwin of sins is not a church law nor a O'Connor's THE LAST HUR state law, but God's law,

RAH, with its beloved hero Skef. The laughter that fills the fington, by publishing the truth. book, the chuckleworthy events. as Curley calls them (such as

as curiey cans them toted as THOUG-H MARRED through the arrival at one point of a conout by one repeated epithet that gratulatory telegram from Hou-Webster cloes not print and that dini, as from one artist to an-Curley's mother would have other), the political scrimmages, washed his mouth for (and in 51 per cent hilarity if 49 per cent retaining it his editors showed seriousness - should not be poor judgment, since this man missed. The score between Cabwould have "come through" even ots and Lowells (one of whom, a if his every word were given in University president, invited Cur-Zulu or baby talk)-this book pre ley to dinner seeking patronage sents a great mayor, a fighter, a for a protege, and walked out on builder, a far-sighted, benefactor his guest when refused) and Curof his city. We hope his cam leys, ought to be known . paign methods are past history;

NO SIR, the Jesuit who has James Curley for father needn't of God lying on the floor of the be ashamed of him-and must world, born in a cave like the love him to death. Curley is Skelson of any poor shepherd fington, and something more

At last the Lord God had come "like a shepherd" to gather the Lambs and "take them Has 13 Vacancies

Vatican City - (NC) - The HERE IN BETHLEHEM ON death of Cardinal Piazza, 73, Secthe first Christmas night, the retary of the Sacred Consistorial despised shepherds came into Congregation, reduces to 57 the their own. Here in a cave the members of the Sacred College of Cardinals. The traditional outcast shepherds found the Good Shiepherd who was also complement is 70.

destined to an outcast from the Cardinal Piazza is the 18th world. "I am the good shep-Cardinal to die since Pope Plus herd," He would tell the world. XII brought the college up to "The good shepherd lays down full strength in January, 1953. his life for his sheep." (John] Cardinal Piazza died on November_30th.



Be a Carmelite! Mary's own Order is caling for volunteers. Write for informa-tion today to Fr. Simeon, O. Carm., 106 South St., Auburn, N. Y. story of the good shepherds who had come to Bethlehem.

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deemer's birthplace: They took pride, too, in the picture which the 'inspired prophets had drawn of the

unto me that is to be the ruler Christ as a Good Shepheid who would lay down His life for H.s. flock. The shepherds of

in Israel . . ." (Micheas 5:2). * * Bethiohem could not forget this messiance vision of the THESE WERE the dreams prop het Islauas (40/10/11)) and hopes of the shephends camped near Bethlehem on the

most anything.

a heavenly visitor.

people:

joy which shall be to all the

". . . the Lord God shall come . . . He shall feed his first Christmas night, the night that Mary's Son was flock like a shepherd; he shall born. gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom . . ."

memory of the shepherd king

In their lonely hours with . the.r flocks in the wilderness, the shephends also liked to recall the prophetic picture of Christ the Good Shepherd, which God had made through

"I WILL SET UP ONE SHEPHERD OVER THEM, and he shall feed them, even. servant David (that is, Christ who would be David's son); he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd."

And If these proud memories -

eight A Imost

AND THOU BETHLEHEM, EPHRATA, are a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall be come forth

To Bethlehem...

phet Micheas, God had named

They All Came

"And this shall be a sign to you: you will find an infant

"Glory to God in the highest,

THE VISION was soon over God would bother to tell them

wanted all the more to go there. and leave some of his followers in the Holy Land as a guard of honor.

His ambition was realized, and while visiting Bethlehem and saying his devout prayers in the grotto of the Nativity, he conceived an original plan that would speak with force and dramatic power to met of all times and places.

He decided that men should see with their bodily eyes "the want which the Son of God suffered, through the lack of all things necessary to a newborn, and the manuer in which he was placed in a manger and lay on hay between the ov and the donkey."

He later chose the place for his scheme with great intuition.

most moving tones that Christmas Eve. He was the actor, and he recited his part hefore a devout audience in the torchlit sllence.

Saint the exact impression of

THE INHABITANTS of the

Valley of Rieti at the floot of

the hill, joined by their Lord

Giovanni Vellita, were enthusi-

astic in preparing everything

according to St. Francis' in-

structions: the manger, the

animals, the altar, the Christ

child It was a simple and poor

poor people.

thing prepared by simple and

The dramatic sense of the

the grotto of Bethlehem.

THE FIRST creche of Greecio constituted one of the most moving pages, not only in the life of St. Francis, but in the history of Christianity. A contemporary writer has called it "the second birth of Christianity."

The best comment on the "Bethlemen at Greccio" is contained in the words of Tommaso de Celano, St. Francis' first biographer, who wrote:

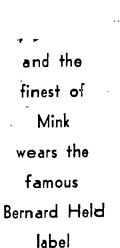
poverty is praised, and Greecio is almost turned into a new Bethlehem.

"Simplicity is honored here,

Her heart is set on

INK





BERNARD

EUCLID AT ATLAS ST.

······

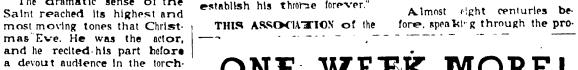
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ONE WEEK MORE! LAST MINUTE "SHOP.PING" IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY, YOU HAY WISH TO SEND A FRIEND OR A LOV ED ONE OUR SPECIAL AND LOVELY CHRIST-MAS GIFT CARD, TELLING THEM THAT YOU HAVE ARRANGED FOR MASS TO BE OFFERED FOR THEM AT CHARISTMEAS.

BE GOOD TO GOD AND GOD WILL BE GOOD TO YOU.

Your membetshing offerängs are string less gifts to God for the Missions. Living and deceased enrovaled (\$1 yearty, \$20 perpetually for individuals; \$5 jearly and \$100 perpetually for families). Members share in 15,000 Masses yearly by our missionaries and in the proyers and sacrifices of the outsand s of priests and Sisters.

ARRANGE NOW FOR GREGORIAN MASSES AFTER DEATH. ASK ABOLT OUR SUSPENSE CARD.

EARTHQUAKE RUINS PARISH CHURCH IN LEBANON.

in the village of ROUM; in the southern part of Lebanon we mave a parish church in ruins, due to severe carthquakes in that area. The faithful of the Parlsh are poor farmers and cannot possibly rebuild the church by themselves. We will try to raise \$4.000 for them iso that they will once again have a church in which to pray. Any little wift would be greatly appreciated.

HUNGRY AT CHRISTMAS?

Won't you macrifice a little from your Christmas dimmer to help Father King, who is trying to feed some of the 930,000 homeless Palestine refargees in the Eloly Land. He tries to feed, clothe and provide schooling and medical care for these unfortiznate people. \$10 will buy a FOOD PACK-AGE which will feed an entire family for a week. In gratitude wwe will send you a lovely OLIVE SEED ROSARY FROM THE HOLY LAND.

JACOB AND XAVIER-FUTURE APOSTLES? During Advent Libe Church in her lEturgy

has us waiting for the coming of the Savtour, just as the Patriarchas of the Old Test ament, like Jacob, did. We'have two young seminarians in India, 'hne named Jatob and the other Xawier, anxiously waiting to hear that we have found a kind sponsor who will send us the \$100'needed each year during his six years' training for the Priestshood. Won't you? You can send it in any instaliments.



YOUR "STRINGLESS GIFTS" ARE THE LIFELINE THE HOLY FATHER USES FOR MISSION EMERGENCIES. CAN YOU SEND HIM A CHRISTMAN MITE TODAY?

SISTER LOREN CEAND SISTER BENJAMIN are begging

Would you like to have a heart full of grafie praying for you every day? SISTER LORENCE and SISTER BENJAMIN in India will never forget the friends who help them in their present difficulty. Each needs \$150 each year for two years' training before they labor for souls own the Missions. Their poor families cannot help. Wom't you? God will bless you aburndanily-

REMEMBER THE LORD AT CHRITSMAS! We give gifts to our friends and relatives-why not a little gift to God? The Mission chapels are in dire-need of the following articles.

Altar stone \$10 Mass bell 5 Picture 18 Monstrance ... 40 Sanctuary lamp. 15 Vestmen 25 50 Tabernacle 25

Lear East (Dissions FRANCES CARDINAL SPELLMAN, President May, Potert, Tushy, Nut'l Serly Sind all communications to: CATHOLIC NEAR EAST WELFARE ASSOCIATION 480 Lexington Ave. at 46th St. New York 17, N.Y.

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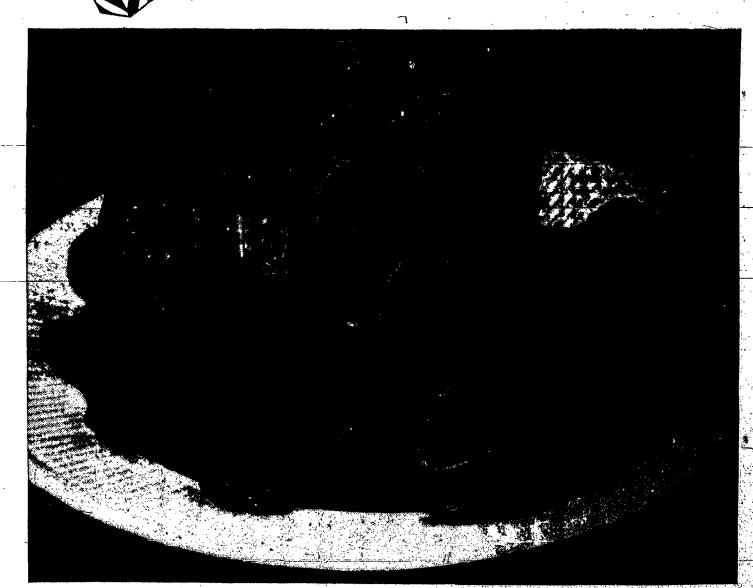
for a TASTY Christmas Dinner . . . for a PERFECT Christmas Gift

up into his bosom."

10:11),

seen and heard.

* 🛧 *



GIVE THE FINIST OF THEM ALL ARPEAKO Tenderized HAM

for Christmas America's G

the census decree, and the members of Mercy High School make Mercetta at gospel is the the census decree, and the Sinter Marguret, E.S.M., Will-alas the M

