

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

A born storyteller

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Mary grew up in Savannah, Ga. Her father was a real-estate agent. She went to a Catholic school. There she learned more about life and Catholic teachings. Mary began to believe that Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church had much to say about life.

When she was 13, her family moved from Savannah to her grandmother's home in the town of Milledgeville, Ga. It became a very special place for Mary. A century before, one of the few priests in Georgia celebrated Mass regularly in that house. Her great-grandmother donated the land for the first church in Milledgeville.

There Mary began to write. She loved to write. She had a vivid imagination. She tried to write about her experiences of life and about what she saw in the world around her. She tried to write what she believed most deeply.

Mary wrote short stories and novels. They were filled with

ideas about life drawn from her Catholic faith.

She was a born storyteller. And she worked very hard to write well. She studied creative writing at the University of Iowa. Her writings began to be known and appreciated. She became known as Flannery O'Connor rather than Mary.

A famous author invited her to spend time as a guest of his family in Connecticut. She accepted the invitation. She wrote some of her best works there. During her stay she began her days with Mass every morning at a church four miles away.

Then she began to feel pains in her bones. Her father had died of a bone disease. She feared she had the same incurable illness. She was right. She spent months in the hospital.

Finally she was able to return to Milledgeville. She faced her pain bravely. She continued to write. She became better and better known for her stories.



Beside her typewriter she kept a Bible, a Sunday Missal and a breviary. She read and prayed from them frequently. She even prayed while she wrote. Her faith deepened as she struggled with the disease she knew would eventually kill her.

Flannery O'Connor used her imagination and her creative skills as a writer to share with the world a vision of faith and hope. Even after she had to use crutches to get around she continued to write stories that helped people believe

in God's love in a world filled with pain and evil.

Flannery O'Connor received many awards as a writer. She was invited to teach others the art of writing.

She was a writer who believed Christ was present everywhere in the world, even in the midst of suffering.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)

a game **Hidden Words** a game

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below. They may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. All the words are in this week's children's story.

A	E	I	N	R	A	E	W	H	D
F	B	I	G	Z	L	D	R	U	M
O	R	V	O	F	F	A	I	T	H
B	E	F	P	W	L	Q	T	Y	E
G	V	H	I	M	A	V	E	N	O
S	I	A	H	Q	N	U	R	O	T
S	A	V	A	N	N	A	H	V	W
W	R	C	B	I	E	D	J	E	Z
J	Y	P	A	X	R	S	N	L	K
B	G	P	K	T	Y	C	L	S	C

SAVANNAH, FLANNERY, IOWA, PAIN, WRITER, BREVIARY, FAITH, NOVELS

HOW ABOUT YOU?

□ What do you think "having a good imagination" means? How do you use your imagination? For example, have you ever imagined what life will be like when you grow up? Or have you ever tried to imagine how other people feel?

Children's Reading Corner

In her book, "A Writer," M.B. Goffstein suggests that to be a writer is "to be an observer, a shaper, a collector of images gleaned from the everyday world." This book is a wonderful one for children and adults to read together. Afterward talk together about it. Then each of you might write something of your own — for example, a little story about what makes good things happen in people's lives. (Harper and Row, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 1984. Hardback, \$11.95.)



Forgiveness

The promise of God's forgiveness is fulfilled as Father Robert Whalen, SJ, hears the confession of a prisoner in the Federal Medical Prison in Springfield, Missouri. Father Whalen's message of forgiveness and the love of God help heal the pain of confinement for large numbers of repentant prisoners.

With help from the Catholic Church Extension, Father Whalen introduces prisoners to basic Christianity. It's a tough job in a hostile environment.

Father Whalen is part of a team of home missionaries who, together with Extension, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in the

United States. But the team is too small to do the job without help. It needs new members. It needs you.

Join us. Become a member of the Extension Society team. Although you won't be present in the home missions personally, your impact will be felt in this holy effort. Together we can bring the Word of Christ to those who don't have it.

Write for a free subscription to Extension magazine today and discover the difference you can make. Together, and with God's grace, we can achieve His missionary goals here in our own beloved country.

 **The Catholic Church**
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