

# CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

## A happy farmer

By Janaan Manternach  
NC News Service

Isidore grew up in a small village just outside Madrid in Spain. His family was very poor. There was no money for Isidore to go to school or to travel. He probably never learned to read or write.

To help his parents, Isidore began to work as a young boy in the fields of a rich landowner, Juan de Vergas. He worked hard in the fields all his life until he died in 1130.

When he was a young man, Isidore married a young woman as poor and uneducated as he was. He and Maria loved each other very much. They had little more than what they needed to live the simplest of lives. But they were very happy.

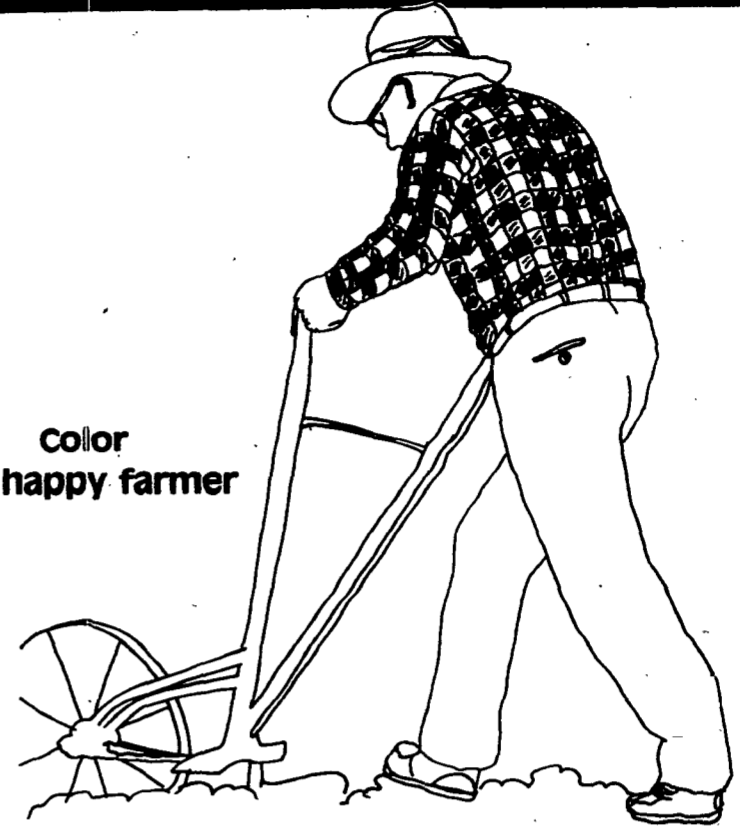
They were overjoyed when Maria knew she would have a baby. One of the happiest days of their lives was when their son was born. But their joy soon turned to sadness. Their only son died as a very young child and they were not able to have other children.

Isidore worked in the fields from sunrise to sundown. Maria took care of their small house. They went to Mass each morning before Isidore went out to the farm. They prayed together every morning and evening. On Sundays they often took walks through the great city of Madrid, stopping at the many churches in the city.

Isidore loved nature. He noticed everything as he walked behind his plough or worked with his hoe. He loved the feel and smell of newly ploughed earth. He rejoiced at the first signs of green sprouting from the ground in spring. Everything reminded him of God. He found it easy to talk with God during the day as he worked in the hot sun or rested in the cool shade.

The landowner for whom he worked admired Isidore and his wife. Juan de Vergas had money, education, a big house with many servants, large farms with many workers and an important place in the world. But he saw how happy Isidore and Maria were and how generous. The two shared the little they had with people even

Color the happy farmer



poorer than they were. Isidore's fellow workers liked and respected him because he was a good worker and a caring man. Their one complaint was that from time to time Isidore came late to work from church.

As the years wore on, Isidore and his wife could not work the long hours they once did. They prayed more and enjoyed being with their many friends.

When he and Maria died, peo-

ple were very sad. They loved this farm worker and his wife. The church honors Isidore and Maria as saints.

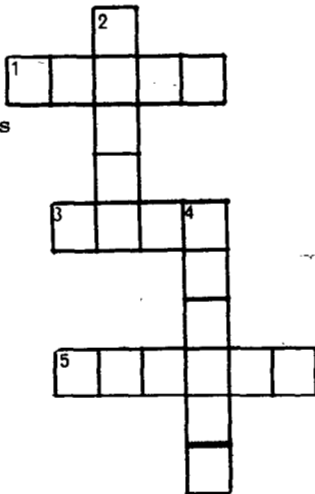
Isidore is the patron of farmers and of the National Rural Life Conference of the United States.

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

### Word Game

Read this week's children's story. Then work the puzzle based on the story.

1. Country where Isidore lived
2. Isidore's wife
3. Isidore worked on a \_\_\_\_\_
4. City where Isidore walked on Sundays
5. Isidore is the \_\_\_\_\_ of farmers



Answers: 1. Spain, 2. Maria, 3. farm, 4. Madrid, 5. patron

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

Isidore loved the world of nature. What did he learn about God as he walked behind his plough? Do you catch a glimpse of God's beauty through the beauty of nature?

#### Children's Reading Corner

People, no matter what their lifestyle, no matter what their age, are precious. In the story titled "Jesse and Abe," by Rachel Isadora, Jesse is a little boy whose friendship with Abe, his grandfather, brings them together every Saturday night. What happens is always the same but always wonderful for Jesse. One Saturday, when Jesse fears something has happened to his grandfather, he discovers how important their relationship is. Read the story. Afterward talk about someone who makes a big difference in your life. (Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. 1981. Hardback. \$7.95.)



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