



St. Catherine's Academy Gazette®

Holy Mother Church has Dedicated this Month to
Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church

Issue 42

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OH! COME AND MOURN WITH ME A WHILE

Feasts and Fasts This Month

March 19th - St. Joseph, Patron of
the Universal Church

March 25th - The Annunciation of
the Blessed Virgin Mary

March 27th - Feast of Our Lady of
Sorrows

March 29th - Palm Sunday

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OH! come and mourn with me awhile;
See, Mary calls us to her side;
Oh! come and let us mourn with her:
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.

Have we no tears to shed for Him
While soldiers scoff and Jews deride;
Ah, look how patiently He hangs !
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.

Seven times He spoke seven words of love,
And all three hours His silence cried
For mercy on the souls of men:
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.

Come, take thy stand beneath the Cross,
And let the blood from out that side
Fall gently on thee drop by drop:
Jesus, our Love, is sacrificed.

A broken heart, a fount of tears
Ask, and they will not be denied;
A broken heart Love's cradle is:
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.

O love of God! O sin of man!
In this dread act your strength is tried;
And victory remains with love:
For He, our Love, is crucified.

Father Faber

Source: Hymns for Catholic Children, 1870

SAINT JOSEPH

THE SPOUSE OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN, THE FOSTER-FATHER OF JESUS CHRIST,
AND PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.¹

DIED A.D. 22. AD²

ST. JOSEPH,³ whose glory is as old as Christianity and as wide as the world, was nobly descended from the ancient patriarchs and the greatest of the kings of Juda. His life has not been written by men. The Holy Spirit himself has recounted the principal actions in his career.

He was born at Nazareth, but reverses of fortune, in which we can trace the hand of God, led him to Jerusalem. The Divine Redeemer was about to visit this sin-stained world. In the natural order of things, He would require a protector and the Most Holy Mary would need a virtuous companion. But who could be found worthy of those lofty distinctions? There was one. It was Joseph.

When thirty-three years of age, he was espoused to the Most Blessed Virgin.⁴ He was then, it is said, well made, agreeable in person, and with a countenance which beamed with inexpressible modesty and goodness. At the age of twelve he had made a vow of chastity, and his life was as pure as a lily.

St. Joseph seems for a time to have been unacquainted with the fact that the Holy Spirit had accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation in his Immaculate Spouse. He was aware of his own chaste conduct towards her; but many an anxious thought crossed his upright mind on finding that, in spite of the holiness of her life, he might well be assured that she was about to become a mother.⁵

1 The great and holy Pius IX. proclaimed St. Joseph " Patron of the Universal Church" shortly after the Council of the Vatican.

2 This date is founded on the account given by the Venerable Mary of Agreda in her celebrated work called " Cite Mystique de Dieu," wherein it is stated that St. Joseph, at the date of his holy death, was sixty years of age, a little more than twenty-seven of which he had spent in the society of the Most Blessed Virgin.



3 Joseph is from the Hebrew, and signifies he shall add.

4 Others aspired to that honor, but the divine will was manifested by a miracle. The various suitors deposited their wands in the Temple over night, and next morning the rod of the just Joseph, like that of Aaron, was found to have budded forth into leaves and flowers. The painters do not forget this beautiful incident.

Writing of this, Mary of Agreda says: "All were engaged in prayer when they saw blossoms burst forth from the rod borne by Joseph, and at the same instant a beautiful dove was seen to descend and to alight on the head of the saint." According to the same authority, he was related to the Immaculate Virgin in the third degree.

5 Mary had not informed him of anything. There were two causes for her silence: (1) her confidence in God, in whose care for her reputation she reposed entire confidence; (2) her prudence an occurrence of this nature could not be credited on her report. Heaven must speak to make it credible. - De Ligny.

Undoubtedly God could have shortened these sufferings of Joseph by sooner revealing to him the mystery of Mary's pregnancy; but his virtue would not then have been put to the test. - Bossuet.

He was, however, as the Holy Book styles him, "a just man," and, of course, possessed of all the virtues, especially mildness and charity. So after carefully weighing the whole affair in his mind, he determined to leave our Blessed Lady without saying a word. He neither accused nor condemned. He committed the matter to God, and God mercifully sent an angel from heaven to clear away his doubts, and to reveal to him the adorable mystery of the Incarnation.

"But while he thought on these things," says the first of the Evangelists, " behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. "And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins."

"Now all this was done that the word might be fulfilled, which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: "Behold a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." "And Joseph, rising from his sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him."

The humble house of Joseph, we are told, consisted of but three chambers. One of these was his own bed-room. Another he used as a workshop.⁶ The third contained a small bed which was made by our saint. Here the Blessed Virgin slept and made her abode. It might, in truth, be called the apartment of the Queen of Heaven. These holy personages kept no servant. Mary did her own work. Their nourishment was very frugal; but they partook of it every day together. St. Joseph sometimes ate flesh-meat, the Most Holy Virgin never. Their usual diet consisted of fish, fruits, bread, and cooked vegetables, taken with great moderation, and varied according to circumstances.⁷

The journey to Bethlehem and the birth of the infant God in a stable are wonderful events known to every one in our day. But St. Joseph was the first man to witness them. How tenderly he saw and adored the new-born Saviour of the world! How faithfully he acquitted himself of the double charge of educating Jesus and guarding His Blessed Mother! "He was truly," says St. Bernard, " the faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord appointed master over His household, His foster-father, the comfort and support of His Mother, and His most faithful co-operator in the execution of His deepest counsels on earth." "What a happiness," continues the same great doctor, "not only to see Jesus Christ, but also to bear Him, to carry Him in his arms, to lead Him from place to place, to embrace and caress Him, to feed Him, and to be a witness of all the sublime secrets which were concealed from the princes of this world!"

We would be ungrateful to this illustrious saint if we did not remember that it is to him, as an instrument of God, that we are indebted for the preservation of the Divine Infant from the fiendish malignity of King" Herod. " An angel of the Lord," says St. Matthew, "appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: ' Arise and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him.'

6 From St. Matthew it appears that he was a carpenter. St. Ambrose says he was a carpenter; but St. Hilary asserts that he wrought in iron as a smith. Mary of Agreda speaks of his trade as that of a carpenter. Butler thinks it probable that he worked both in wood and iron; and St. Justin favors this opinion by saying: "He and Jesus made ploughs and yokes for oxen."

At the Nazareth of to-day a " little chapel is erected on the site of the workshop of St. Joseph. In this chapel an old wall is to be seen which is believed to have formed a part of St. Joseph's house."

"Who rising up, took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt. "And He was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

There is a tradition, handed down by the Fathers of the Church, that upon the Holy Family's entering the land of Egypt, the presence of the Child Jesus had the miraculous effect of striking all the pagan oracles of that superstitious country dumb. The statues of the gods trembled, and in many places fell to the ground. The Holy Family fixed their abode at Heliopolis.

On entering this famous city, they passed under a stately sycamore-tree, which gracefully bent down its branches as an act of homage to the Son of God. It stands to this day, a relic of venerable antiquity.⁸ Thus the city of the sun,⁹ in accordance with its name, saw the true Sun of Grace and Justice. Several years passed away, and Joseph was commanded to leave the land of the Pharaohs. "Now Herod being dead," writes St. Matthew, "behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: "Arise and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the life of the Child." Who, rising up, took the Child and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep, he retired into the parts of Galilee.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets—that he shall be called a Nazarene."

St. Joseph was a strict observer of the law of Moses, and, in conformity to its directions, he went yearly to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. When our Saviour had reached the age of twelve years, He accompanied His parents to the Holy City. After performing the usual ceremonies of the Feast, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph directed their steps homeward. But the Divine Boy "remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not." And thinking He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. "And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him." And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. "And all who heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers.

"And seeing Him, they wondered. And His Mother said to Him: 'Son, why hast Thou done so to us ? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.'

"And He said to them: 'How is it that you sought me ? Did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's?'" And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them.

It is asserted that its leaves afterwards cured many diseases. Of this renowned tree a learned traveller writes: " I took the road for Heliopolis, which is about three miles east of Cairo. . . We arrived at the Garden of Matarieh, where there is a famous sycamore-tree which, as a time-honored tradition says, had the honor of sheltering the Holy Family in their flight into Egypt. It is a noble and venerable-looking tree. I knelt on that spot which had been sanctified by the sacred presence of the Holy Family. I prayed there, meditating on the great mystery of the flight into Egypt. I kissed the ground consecrated by the feet of our Redeemer, and, gathering some limbs and leaves of this holy tree, I mounted my donkey, and in a short time was on the site where Heliopolis once stood." — Rev. Dr. Vetromile, Travels, 1869.

9 Heliopolis signifies city of the sun. At present there is nothing to indicate its ruins " except an obelisk, seventy feet high, which stands alone on a pedestal six feet two inches in diameter. This obelisk was erected by Ositarsen, 1750 years before Christ. It is the oldest monument of its kind in existence." — Dr. Vetromile

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.

"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."¹⁰

How full of rich, suggestive thought is the last sentence of the Evangelist, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men"! What a bright and precious example for the young, what a stimulus even for the old—to advance during this short and fleeting life "in wisdom and age, and grace before God and men"!

The Holy Book makes no further mention of St. Joseph; but we are not destitute of valuable information, from approved sources, in relation to the last years of his pure, simple, and beautiful life.¹¹

The cares, travels, and ceaseless fatigues which the great Saint had undergone for the support of the Most Holy Virgin and the Divine Child soon told on his delicate constitution. Long before old age his health began to fail. It seems that during the last eight years of his life he ceased working on account of his growing infirmities, and at the urgent request of the Immaculate Mother herself. "I beg of you to cease from this incessant toil and repose yourself," said the Blessed Mary to our Saint one day. "I will now labor for you, in testimony of my gratitude, and as long as the Lord shall give us life."

For some time St. Joseph hesitated, but at length her sweet arguments prevailed. He was thus relieved from labor, and for the rest of his days he gave himself to the practice of virtue and the contemplation of those sublime mysteries of which he had been a happy witness. With the Son of God and His Blessed Mother so near, it is not astonishing to learn that our Saint arrived at so high a degree of sanctity that next to his Immaculate Spouse—who stands alone among mere creatures—he surpassed all men.

Thus God graciously conducted His servant Joseph along the royal road of suffering. It was, no doubt, to increase his merits and his crown before his power of gaining merits had ceased—that in the last years of his life he was visited by certain maladies exceedingly acute; maladies which caused great debility, and racked his feeble body with excessive pain.

"But when his last hour drew nigh,
Oh! full of joy was his breast;
Seeing Jesus and Mary close by,
As he tranquilly slumbered to rest."

During the nine days that preceded the death of St. Joseph, he was tenderly watched day and night by Christ and the Most Blessed Virgin. "It was so arranged that one or the other was always present at his bedside. Three times daily the angels chanted celestial music for the holy patient. Thus cheered and fortified, the precious end came, and with his head supported on the bosom of the Son of God, and a last benediction from the Divine Lips brightening the path to eternity, this glorious guardian of the Holy Family, at the age of sixty years and some days, bade adieu to the toils and hardships of this world."

¹⁰ St. Luke, chap. ii.

¹¹ For the remainder of this sketch we follow in substance the account of St. Joseph's last years as given by the Venerable Mary of Agreda in her *U Cite Mystique de Dieu*."

As Pharaoh said to the Egyptians of old in their distress, "Go to Joseph" so may we with happy confidence ask Heaven for favors through the intercession of him to whom the Son of God was subject on earth.

St. Teresa chose him as the chief patron of her Order. "I choose the glorious St. Joseph for my patron," she writes, "and I commend myself in all things to his special intercession. I do not remember ever to have asked of God anything by him which I did not obtain. I never knew any one who, by invoking him, did not make great advances in virtue. He assists all who address themselves to him in a manner truly wonderful."

"To all who would holily live,
To all who would happily die,
St. Joseph is ready to give
Sure guidance and help from on high."

12 During the three last years of St. Joseph's life—which were those of his greatest suffering—the Holy Virgin never quitted him, day or night. If she withdrew for a moment, it was only to serve her Divine Son, who united with His Mother in assisting our Saint, except when He was unavoidably engaged in other works. Hence we may say that never was patient so well served. —Cite Mystique de Diet.

13 Our august Saint was one of those who enjoyed the privilege of exemption from the sight of demons at his death.—Cite1 Mystiquede Dieu.

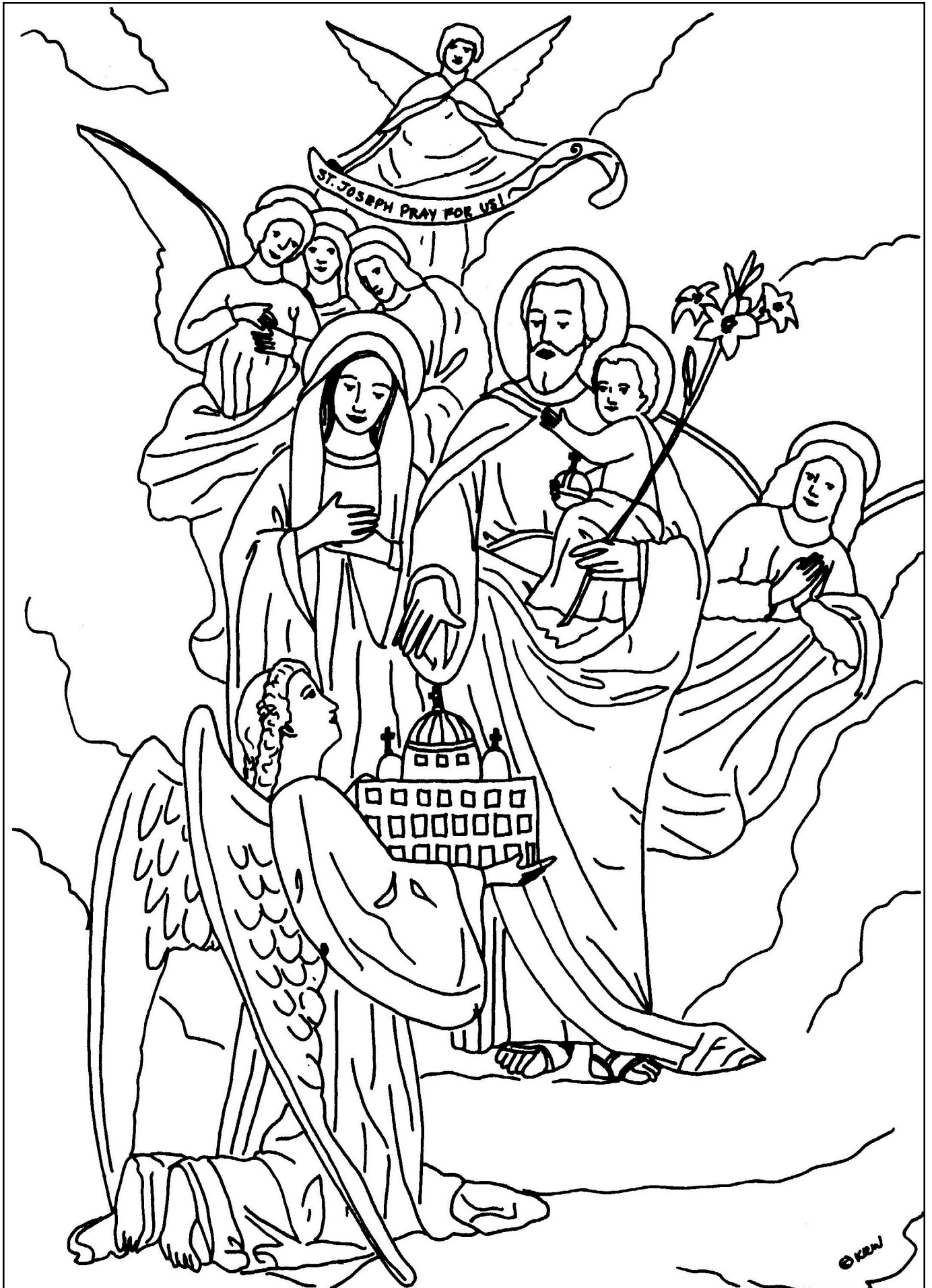
14 In the New World devotion to St. Joseph began at an early period. Canada chose him as its first patron in 1624. Indian war-chiefs, converted to the faith, gloried in bearing his name. In 1733 the first Catholic church in Philadelphia was erected under the name of St. Joseph. The cathedrals of Wheeling, Columbus, La Crosse, and Buffalo are dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Joseph. Countless churches bear his name and numerous confraternities are formed in his honor. Towns and rivers have been called after the head of the Holy Family. The city of St. Joseph in Missouri is the see of a Catholic bishop. Nearly a dozen colleges and theological seminaries in our country bear the honored name of St. Joseph.

Source: Little Lives of the Great Saints, Imprimatur 1880



PRAYER TO BE SAID EVERYDAY DURING LENT

O Lord Jesus, I offer up to Thee my fasting and self-denial, to be united to Thy fasting and sufferings, for Thy glory, in gratitude for so many benefits received from Thee, in satisfaction for my sins and those of other, and to obtain Thy holy grace that I may overcome my sins and acquire the virtues which I need. Look upon my, O Jesus, in mercy. Amen.



LENT

1. The preparation for Easter, commonly called Lent, is of Apostolic origin; its duration varied, being sometimes forty, sometimes fifty, sometimes sixty, or seventy days before Easter. Whence we get the names Quadragesima, Quinquagesima, Sexagesima and Septuagesima. It was only in the sixth century that Pope Gregory the Great regulated the time of Easter as we have it now. Lent may be divided into four parts,

- (1) The time from Septuagesima Sunday to Ash Wednesday—the preparation proper of Lent.
- (2) From Ash Wednesday to Passion Sunday.
- (3) Passion Week.
- (4) Holy Week.

2. The faithful should enter more and more into the spirit of the sufferings of Christ, "-be more moved with compassion, and inspired with a more penitential spirit.

3. From Septuagesima Sunday the Christian should resolve to follow Christ on the way of suffering and penance, especially on the three days preceding Ash Wednesday,—so called Carnival days, or Shrovetide, when the combat between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan is so powerful.

The Church has already put on the penitential violet color, and introduced many devotions, particularly the Triduum, or Forty Hour's Devotion, which St. Philip Neri and St. Charles Borromeo, in the sixteenth century, instituted for the first time at Shrovetide. This was instituted in order to keep the people from the excesses of these days, and to atone by penance and prayer for the sins committed during Carnival. Pope Clement XIII. attached a plenary indulgence to this devotion.

4. The fast of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts till Easter Sunday; during this time there are forty-six days, but as we do not fast on the six Sundays falling in this time, the fast is just forty days. For this reason it is called the forty days of Lent. Moses, Elias, the Ninivites, and even our Lord fasted forty days. The first Christians imitated their example, not only in abstaining from meat and other nutritious food, such as milk and eggs, but waited until sundown before breaking their fast. Since, in the course of time, the penitential spirit had grown lax, the Lenten regulations were mitigated, so much so, that now our fast, in comparison with the fasts of the early Christians, does not even deserve the name of fast.

5. We should fast, ist, in order to imitate Christ, who fasted forty days and nights before he began His combat with Satan, thereby teaching us that in Lent we must overcome temptation and evil inclinations by mortification.

2nd. We should fast to purify our hearts from sin, to do penance for sins committed, so that we may arise with Christ to a new and spiritual life. In the Preface of this season the fruits of penance are briefly given; namely, the suppression of sin and the elevation of the soul enriched with virtues and merit.

6. In this time of penance the Church forbids marriage festivities, and even avoids all signs of joy; for example, the Gloria and the Alleluia at Mass, are omitted. It also increases the public devotions and reminds us of the sufferings of Christ, or admonishes us to do penance. The Christian too should endeavor to be recollected, avoiding all pleasures

and gayeties, and meditate especially upon the Passion of Christ, in order to correspond with the admonitions of Lent. Money saved in Lent should be bestowed in charity. Through such practices the heart will be moved to contrition and be prepared for a worthy reception of Communion at Easter.

PASSION WEEK

The third division of Lent begins with Passion Sunday; from this day on, the Church meditates exclusively on the sufferings of Christ. The Christian should also do this, and increase his practice of mortification and self-denial. From Passion Sunday on, all the crucifixes are covered, or veiled, every joyous thought should be set aside, and our minds turned to that cross which is to be erected upon Golgotha. We should meditate upon our Redeemer, Who in His sufferings concealed His divinity and clothed Himself entirely in the garb of an ambassador. The crucifix is covered with violet to remind the faithful that their hearts should be penetrated with sorrow at the sufferings of Christ, and with contrition for their sins. In the office of the day the Prophecies of Jeremiah are read, the Gloria is omitted, also the psalm Judica at the beginning of Mass, unless a feast of our Lord or the Saints is celebrated.

Source: The Ecclesiastical Year for Catholic Schools and Institutions, Imprimatur 1903



*Prayer in Commemoration of Our Lord's Passion,
to be said at three o'clock on Fridays.*

I bless Thee, Thou Lord of heaven!
Whose life for sinful man was given.
Let not Thy cross and bitter pain
Have been for me borne all in vain.

*Prayer for the Souls in Purgatory,
to be said when the Church Bell is Tolloed or after the Evening Angelus*

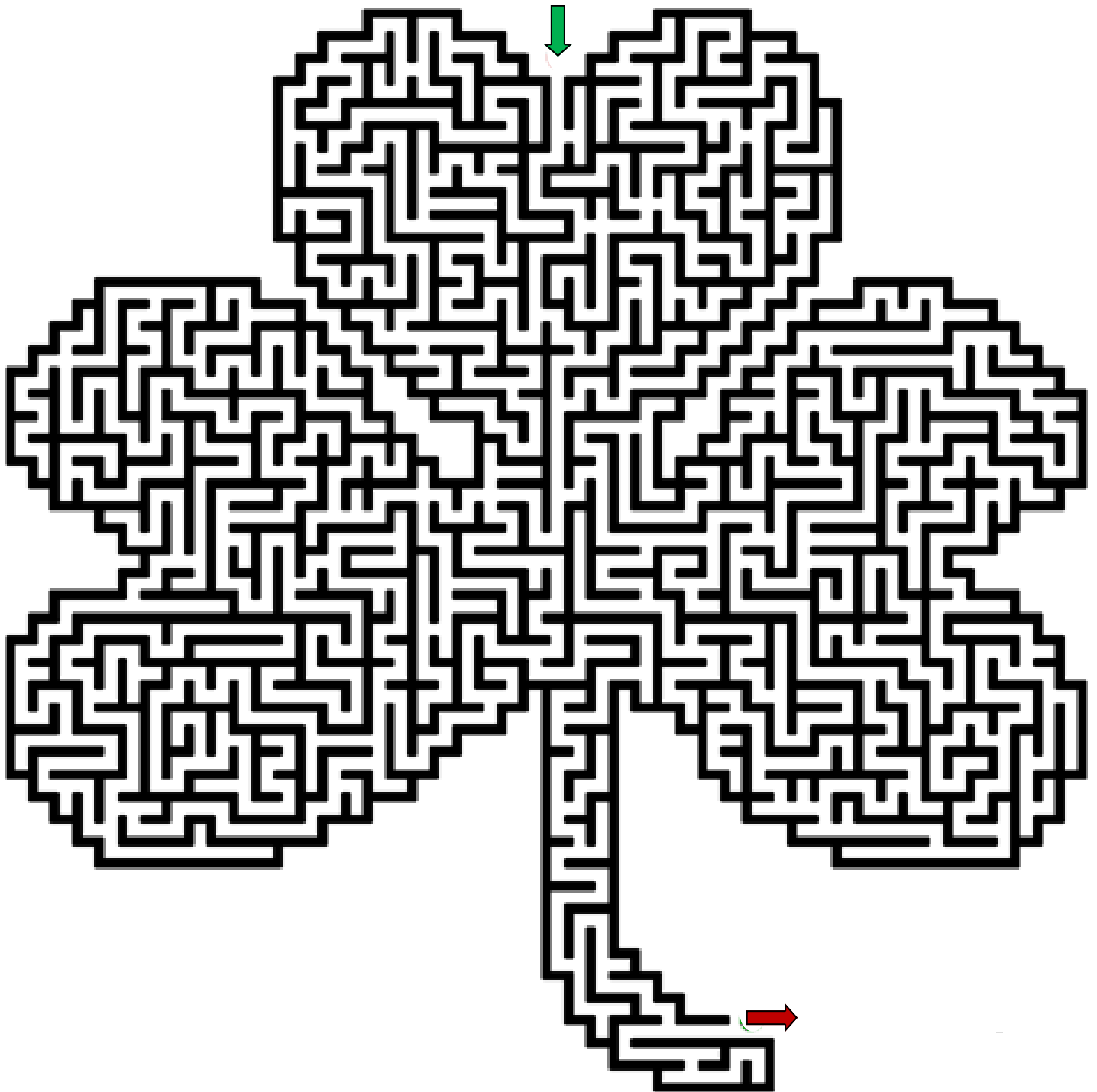
Thy mercy, Lord, we humbly crave
For souls whom Thou didst die to save.
Suffering amidst the cleansing fire,
To see Thy face they yet aspire.
Grant them, Lord, a swift release,
And bring them where all pain shall cease.

Eternal rest give unto all the faithful departed, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

Amen.

Source: The Catechism Explained, Imprimatur 1899

March Maze



OMNES MARTYRS

IT was the year 477, in the old city of Carthage. Huneric, the Vandal Emperor, had recently ascended the throne of his father, Genseric. The laws against the Christians had been severe, but in the first few years of his reign the new Emperor was lenient toward Christianity.

Up to this time, the Christians had been forced to hear Mass in poor stables or underground caves, sometimes even in a cove left dry by the outgoing tide where the hymn of the waves and the prayers of the faithful ascended in praise together. Again, the Holy Sacrifice had been offered in the home of a noble proconsul, a Christian. But whether in the cove by the sea or in the consul's marble halls, it was the same dear Lord that was present.

And now, for the first time, the Christians were free. The little caves, so often reddened with the blood of martyrs, were abandoned, and chapels, small, but as beautiful as love could make them, were built in the midst of the city. Gladly did those who had wealth give of their abundance, and even the little children did their share in the giving. Gardens were stripped of their fairest flowers, and loving little hands decorated the white altar, where the King might now be honored openly. The golden dove, whose hollow breast held the Christ in His sacramental presence, was hung in a very garden of rosy lights, little votive lamps, whose flames seemed prayers of fiery, impetuous love.

Twelve little children, boys and girls, companions in a Christian school near one of the chapels, made the care of the altar especially their own. How their hands trembled as they approached that little hanging dove which concealed Our Lord as truly as the golden door on our altars conceals Him now! Half in fear of coming danger, as were all in those days, even in their new liberty, the little ones were taught to be prepared, should the persecution be renewed.

Each morning, when they received our Lord in Holy Communion, they asked Him for grace so to love Him, that they would be willing to suffer torture, even death, rather than deny Him. Not that they were sad or long-faced. Their love for God made them so happy, that they were the merriest at play and the brightest at home.

For three short years, there was peace, and through those years, those who were older and knew the danger of the times, prepared themselves and their loved ones for possible combat.

In the year 480 the blow fell. Christian worship was forbidden under pain of death, and back to their caves the Christians fled. The twelve little children, lovers of our Lord, were brought to the court one day. Wholly afraid, yet full of earnest love, they clung to each other. No strong teacher was there now, to counsel them to repeat the prayers they had learned at Jesus Feet, but their angels did what human loved ones would have done, and whispered comfort and courage into the noble hearts.

Bravely they looked beyond the guards, beyond the damp stone walls, beyond the pale sunlight without, as though they did not see them. Before them gleamed the pearly gate which, Saint John tells us, leads to heaven, and at the gate Jesus was waiting.

To the questions of the judge their answers rang out with childlike sweetness, and no threat of torture could make them give up Christ. They were condemned to be beaten to death, not in one terrible hour of torture, but little by little, day after day, that they

might grow weak in their love for God. Far from weakening, these sturdy little ones encouraged each other as the slow days dragged by. They were only children, and it was so hard to be silent under the heavy, leaded whips, when the old bruises were opened again and the blood ran! It was harder still when the long night came, and there was no soft bed, but only the rough prison floor for their poor, torn limbs. The eldest was perhaps twelve, it may be even younger, yet not a complaint came from their lips.

One by one, the children gave their lives for Jesus, one by one they were folded in His arms, until all were before Him, not in trembling awe, as in the little chapel, but in wonderful love, close to His Sacred Heart, as were the little ones who came to Him by the lake of Galilee, in the days when He walked on earth. *Feast Day Unknown. . .*

Source: Children of the Kingdom, Imprimatur 1914



CATHOLIC QUIZ ON THE BIBLE

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "Bible"?
2. Why is the Douay Version of the Bible so called?
3. What is a concordance of the Bible?
4. For what are these mountains remembered: (a) Sinai, (b) Ararat, (c) Olivet?
5. The whole New Testament was written in two languages originally. What were they?
6. What is the Apocalypse?
7. What is the Vulgate?
8. In the New Testament, what was a publican?
9. What is a parable?
10. Must Catholics believe that the Old Testament is inspired?

Source: A Catholic Quiz Book, Imprimatur 1947



Habit, Religious

“Put on the new man, which has been created according to God in justice and holiness of truth.”

St. Elizabeth, princess of Thuringia, was the first in Germany to wear the Third Order habit. Although she lived during the time of St. Francis himself, the two never met in this world. However, the said of Assisi was so delighted with reports of her holiness and heroic devotion to the Crucified One that he wished to give her some special fatherly favor.

Before he died St. Francis requested the brethren to send his very own mantle to her after his death, as a token of esteem and affection. The friars carried out the Poverello’s wish.

Picture the joy of this saintly woman when she received the mantle that had been worn by one who was known as the closest follower of Jesus Christ, the mantle reddened with blood from the stigmata, the mantle that meant so much to the many who followed the Little Poor Man.

In a similar sense everyone who puts on the habit of St. Francis, whether in the First, Second or Third Order, is really receiving the garb from the saint himself. It is his very own uniform. It is the dress of those who follow him in following Christ.

The same can be said of every religious habit, whether it is that of the many followers of St. Benedict, St. Dominic, St. Francis or any of the many religious founders. It holds for the sisterhoods and brotherhoods too. To don the habit means to put on the garment that identifies some great spiritual leader.

Religious habits are sacramental. They help the wearer and they help the beholder to remember the heroic life of some saintly founder, to remember the spirit of his or her religious family, and to remember the work and program of those who profess that particular rule of life.

The religious habit is the distinctive uniform of some group who devote themselves to the work of God in this world. It is like the uniform of a nurse, a policeman, a soldier, a chief justice, or even a king. When you see someone dressed in the uniform of the United States Army you know he is a soldier sworn to defend the United States, one who is following to the best of his ability a certain set of regulations which govern the life of a soldier. To the uninformed a particular religious habit may seem fantastic and meaningless. Yet, it has a fascination and a meaning.

We might briefly explain some of the more common parts of religious garments, especially women. The veil is worn to cover the head and often part of the face. A woman’s hair is her adornment, a source of pride and vanity. Sisters cut their hair to remove this possible cause of pride.

Cutting the hair is also a means to cleanliness and comfort. The prayer said in putting on the veil helps us understand:

“I have despised the riches and adornments of this world for the love of my Savior Jesus Christ, the sole object of my faith, my hope, and my love. Guard Thou, O Lord, my eyes that they may not give way to vanity.”



Some groups wear headbands and some do not. In putting it on the nun prays:

“My Bridegroom has placed a mark upon my forehead, which will not permit me to regard a friendship other than His own.”

The scapulars or panels and the cowl are a carryover from the church gowns of the doctors of the church, just as a cap and gown are for the graduates of today. Placing it on the shoulders, the religious prays:

“My yoke is sweet and my burden is light. Grant that I may so carry it, as to obtain Thy holy grace.”

As the religious puts on the holy cord this prayer is said:

“Gird me, O Lord, with the girdle of virginity and purity so that with the wise virgins I may have access to Thee, my heavenly Bridegroom.”

The three knots represent the three vows – poverty, chastity, and obedience. The five turns in each knot remind us of the five wounds of our Lord.

Most religious ensembles include the Rosary, either the five or fifteen decade, or the seven decade Franciscan Rosary or crown, honoring the seven principal joys of our Blessed Mother.

The habit proper is the principal garment. Putting it on, the religious prays:

“Clothe me, O Lord, with the robe of salvation, and adorn me with the garment of righteousness.”

Generally it is simple in color and design, reminding everyone of the poverty of Christ and the poverty of His followers.

To the religious every part of his habit is soaked with inspiration. It recalls the rule he has professed to follow. It brings to memory the many thousands, nay, millions who have worn that habit with honor and glory.

To those who behold the habit comes the thought that there is one who follows St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Benedict, or some other holy founder. The habit represents a rule of life that requires every grace and help, including the inspiration of a special garb. The religious uniform is more of a help than a handicap. It sets the religious apart. It points him out as one of the devoted to a special work, a special way of life.

One mark of the genuine Catholics is reverence for the religious habit, whether worn by priest, sister or brother. It is easy to wear that habit and live up to what it means. But the great majority are trying their best to do that very thing. The respect of lay people is an encouragement to us.

One, for example, who has the glory of wearing the garb of St. Francis and can feel just pride and deep humility at remembrance of the long line of kings and queens, saints and scholars, preachers and penitents, missionaries and martyrs, who have honored that uniform through the centuries. That is the case with every religious.

Like St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, we say that it was given to us by our founder himself.

Amen.

March 12th

†

*The Garden fair of Paradise
Beheld the approach of pain and vice;
Where all Earth's beauties seemed to dwell
There Adam sinned, and there he fell.*

*The Garden of Gethsemane
Beheld the wondrous agony,
Where Christ in solitude began
His passion, borne for fallen man.
He felt our sins in all their weight,
Sinless he took our sinful state;
He laid aside His God-like power:
Can we not watch with Him one hour?*

*For all the world- for all - for us
The Lord of Heaven suffered thus:
And every sin for which we mourn
By Jesus Christ was long since borne.
He mourned our sins far more than we
Ever mourn for our own misery,
And that for which we love to live
Our Saviour deigned His life to give.
Remembering then that awful night,
Let us be children of the light,
Nor put again to open shame
The SAVIOUR and the SAVIOUR'S Name!*







“First Communion”

THE GREATEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE

"The Lord with thee would fain his dwelling make,
Behold Him standing knocking at thy door,
Oh! bid Him enter and possession take
Of thy heart's kingdom now and evermore."

WHEN Blessed John was a little boy he was once at Mass on a great feast, when many people were going to Holy Communion. Little John felt a strange and wonderful feeling come over him he longed to go up to the altar with them. Scarcely was Mass over than he sought out the priest, and besought him with such intense earnestness to let him go to Communion, that the priest, touched to the depths of his soul, said: "Well, prepare yourself very carefully, my child, and although you are certainly very young, I will give you leave to approach the Table of the Lord. " John was overjoyed. He prepared himself to the very best of his power the day before his First Communion, and received our Lord into a heart pure and innocent as an angel's. "This is the greatest and happiest day of my life," said he to his mother on coming home from church.

The day of a child's First Communion ought certainly to be the happiest day of his life, and he ought to prepare himself for it with the utmost care, for often his whole future depends upon it. If he approaches God's Table worthily he perseveres in goodness, but if his first receiving of his Saviour is unworthy, he usually sinks deeper and deeper, gets blinded and hardened, and sometimes even dies in his sins. Therefore, my dear children be glad and rejoice when the great day draws near, but at the same time take all possible pains to get your mind and heart ready for it. Learn your Catechism quite perfectly, never miss any religious instruction, and during the lesson be all eyes and ears, so that you may understand the full depth and beauty of the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. So much for your mind. Of far greater importance is the preparation of the heart. Our Lord is going to dwell in your heart, therefore it must be pure. During the weeks of preparation before your First Communion pray more than usual, every evening say an "Our Father" that you may make a good Communion, and ask your parents and your brothers and sisters to pray for you. Go every month to confession.

A certain bishop of Mayence desired that all the children in his diocese should go to confession once a month for two years before their First Communion. And he was very wise! In the Sacrament of Penance a child learns to look after his own soul, he learns to examine his conscience, to repent of his sins for the love of God, he gradually gets a greater horror of sin, and is in a fair way of becoming more good and pious. His confessor helps him to lay his sins gradually aside, and to lead a life pleasing to God. Many a child is saved by confession from going to ruin in soul and body. So you see clearly that confession is the most powerful means of making a worthy preparation for Holy Communion.

Thirdly you must work unweariedly every day at rooting out your faults. A child who loses his temper easily must keep down his anger, one who is disobedient must obey promptly and cheerfully; one who is not particular enough about modesty must avoid nothing so carefully as the slightest sin against purity. Your heart must be pure. You must be good and docile, well behaved and steady at home, out-of-doors, at church and at school. Everyone ought to know by your conduct that you are a First Communicant. It must be your first care to make your soul a dwelling as worthy as possible of your God. Leave everything else to your parents, and if you are a little girl be sure not to occupy your mind with thoughts of your clothes. Did you ever hear of that child in Paris who in

the absence of her parents, thought on the night before her First Communion that she would try on her new frock once more. She was much pleased with her appearance in the glass, and made her little brother hold a light for her. The boy came too near the white frock with the candle, set it on fire, and in two hours the poor little girl died in terrible suffering.

Finally make a general confession a week or two before your First Communion, and re-double then your zeal and devotion. Then indeed the day of your First Communion will be rich in the greatest blessings and graces. And when you have received the Body and Blood of your Saviour with good dispositions into a heart as pure as a child can make it, never fail from that day forth to approach the Sacraments at least every month, and try to do so as carefully, as though you were making your last confession and Communion. Thus you will remain pure, good and innocent, and will always be able to look death quietly in the face, for even if it should come suddenly it will find you ready.

German children often plant a young tree in the garden on their First Communion Day. It is a pretty custom, for as the tree grows and puts forth blossoms and bears fruit, so ought the child to wear the bloom of innocence and piety and to bring forth fruit which will ripen for Heaven. Every glance at the little tree reminds him of the great day of his First Communion and of the resolutions and promises which he made then. And if he should happen to stray from the right path the tree seems to stand before him like a friendly counsellor, and to say: "Go back to God. Go back to the innocence and purity of that great day."

The mere thought of their First Communion has sometimes converted even great sinners. Pere Milleriot, who did so grand a work for souls in Paris, once received a visit from an old man of eighty-three, who greeted him with the words: "I have brought you three francs for Peter's Pence." — "That is very good of you; God will reward you, particularly as you don't look like a millionaire." — "You're about right, I'm not rich, but I have a heart, and I love Pius IX, so I have saved this little sum out of my food." — "Well certainly a fellow like you ought to make sure of a place in Heaven. Come, tell me, aren't you a little bit behindhand with your religious duties?" — "Bather! but one can see to that some time or other." — "Why some time or other? Who can tell what is going to happen? Why not today! Did you ever make your First Communion?" "Oh! yes, but I have never been to the Sacraments since." — "Well that is a long time certainly, but were you not happy on your First Communion-day?" The old man was touched, and could scarcely get out the words: "Indeed I was, but my sins are too great now." — "Nay, God's mercy is inexhaustible, if you make a sincere confession of your sins, He will forgive you everything." — The old man shed tears. He made a long confession with the deepest, contrition, received Holy Communion the next day, and in the evening lay down to die. His last words were: "This is the greatest day of my life."



Source: The Dutiful Child, Imprimatur 1898

SEE WHAT HE SUFFERED FOR YOU

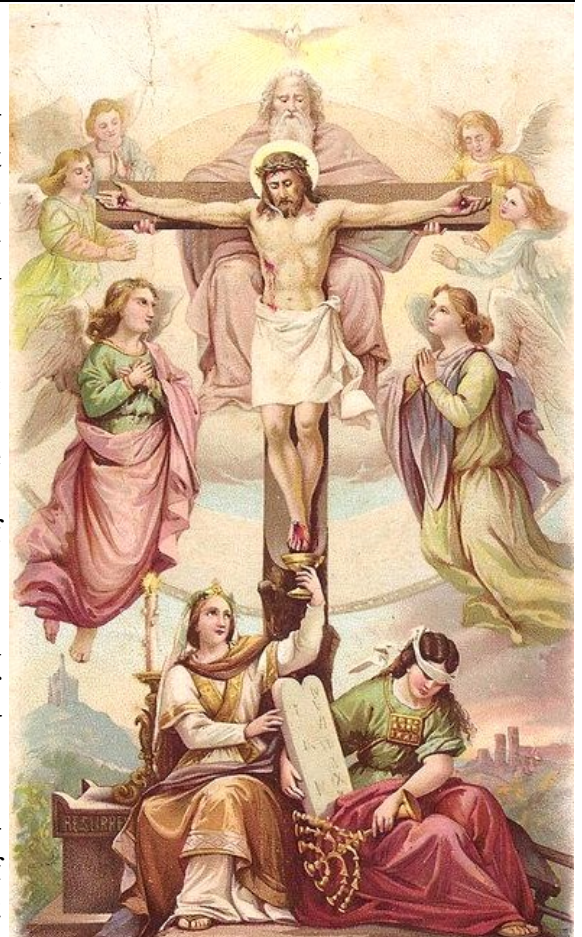
Each one of you knows what a crucifix is; and every good Catholic boy and girl has one somewhere. But we often look upon it and do not feel a bit sad; and yet if we love Jesus, our hearts go right out to Him in pity and in sorrow when we see Him nailed to a cross. Don't you think so? Well, my boys and girls, the best thought for these weeks of Lent is the thought of the Crucifixion. If we think rightly of the Saviour suffering on the cross, we will feel compassion for Him; reflecting that He endured that terrible death for us, we will be filled with gratitude towards Him; being so thankful we will love Him and love of Jesus is everything.

How would you feel if a building were burning, and a little boy were being burnt to death right before your eyes, and nobody could help him? See, the boy twists and squirms and cries in dreadful agony. What do you do? You grow pale and sick; you just feel his awful pains; you cry and moan too. Now you should try to think so much of the sufferings of Jesus, at this time especially, that they become just that real to you and you suffer with Him and want to ease His pain by loving Him with your whole heart and soul.

The suffering Jesus is compared to a lamb: "He was like a lamb to the slaughter." What a gentle creature a woolly little lamb is! What a lovely pet! Suppose you had a sweet, snuggling, trusting lambkin. And then suppose bad men would come and take your lambkin that had done no wrong and that could not help itself. And suppose they would drive stakes through its quivering body, and fasten it against the wall and slash its body right and left with a big knife and then leave it there to die. Oh, how that would break your heart, how bitterly you would weep over your poor little lamb.

But then why don't you weep or at least feel very, very badly over Jesus, the Lamb of God? He was gentler, sweeter, more trustful, and more loving than anything we can imagine. He never did anybody any wrong, but did good to all. And yet bad men came and cut and gashed His Body from head to foot with terrible whips, and drove long, sharp thorns into His head, and threw Him down on the rough beams of the cross, and drove big iron nails through His hands and feet into the wood, and raised the cross up and let it drop into a hole, and then left Him there to die! Oh, ask Jesus to help you feel sad for Him! And how you just hate those who nailed the innocent Lamb of God to the cruel cross! But now, He died for our sins; sin nailed Him to the cross - also your sins. How you must hate all sin and promise Jesus never again to commit it!

Isn't a little baby that's just beginning to walk a darling thing too sweet for anything but one soft kiss and one loving hug after the other? Suppose you had such a dear babe at



home. And suppose that someday dreadful men would come, as once they came to butcher the boy babies in and around Bethlehem. And suppose they would take the baby in their rough hands and tear its clothes away, and stretch it out on the wall and fasten it tight by driving big nails through its little hands and feet, and then leave it there to die. Oh, how terrible! Wouldn't you scream and moan in terror and in fright and wouldn't your heart just burst with grief to see that tender baby treated like that? And still every time you look upon your crucifix you are reminded of the more frightful sufferings of our dear Jesus, Who was sweeter, lovelier, dearer, more innocent than ever a little child could be. You were shocked when I told you about the baby nailed to the wall. Are you shocked when the crucifix tells you about Jesus nailed to the cross? Why are you shocked at the one and not at the other? Ask the Saviour to help you feel sad, to be grateful, to hate sin, and to love Him more when you look upon the cross.

O, my boys and girls, it must surely make us love Jesus and be very good, this thinking of His passion and death. Surely, if we don't love Jesus when contemplating Him dying on the cross, well never love at all. Isn't it all sad though! It reminds me of the Old Testament story about Joseph. You remember how his wicked brothers took him and cast him into a deep pit and then sold him into slavery. And, remember, Joseph, their younger brother, did them no wrong. He came to see how they were getting along and to do them good. So it was with Jesus; He came from Heaven for our salvation; He went about doing good. But those for whom He did so very much did not cast Him into a pit and sell Him into slavery. No; they did worse; they sent upon Him torments of unspeakable sufferings and finally put Him to death on the cross.

Once there was a boy who wouldn't take the medicine the doctor had prescribed. It was too bitter. But his mother showed him a crucifix and said, "See what he suffered for you. Take the medicine out of love for Him." And the boy took it.

In how many ways are you going to show the love you feel for Jesus crucified by little acts of self-denial after this?

Source: Talks to Boys and Girls, Imprimatur 1930

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like to it; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these." *Mark xii, 30-31*



LEGEND OF THE PRISONER'S CHAINS

A YOUNG man named Theodoric was taken prisoner during a war in which he was engaged as a soldier, and he was cast into a dungeon within the walls of a gloomy castle.

After a while, having promised to pay the ransom which was fixed as the price of his liberty, Theodoric was moved from the dungeon into a room, and here he remained, being fastened with iron rings around his feet and manacles round his arms, which were attached to a chain and thus fixed to the wall.

Six servants were placed as a guard over this young man and the other prisoners, who watched them narrowly by day and by night. Before he slept, Theodoric always invoked the Blessed Virgin and his patron saints; and one night after doing so he dreamed, and it seemed that in vision he saw himself seated upon a horse, still chained by the arms and feet, and yet two of his own kinsmen were by his side, who said to him, "Do not go for our Lady of Kaisersbach has set you free."

At these words he awoke, feeling great joy, and scarcely knowing whether what had happened was true or whether it was indeed but a dream, and as he pondered over it all, he moved his fingers to one of his feet and touched the wearying, galling chain he had worn so long. Wonderful miracle! It fell from him without any difficulty, and so did the chain from his hand. Many a time before, he had tried to loosen his fetters, but in vain; now with a touch they were gone; but unfortunately the noise of the rattling roused one of the servants, and as he looked sharply round, Theodoric, in terror, tried to slip the chain upon his arm. However, it would not go on; long as he had worn it during his imprisonment, it seemed not too short and small; so he felt still more sure that he had been freed by a miracle, through the merits of Christ's most Blessed Mother; and keeping perfectly still he raised his heart in prayer for help, and the servant soon fell asleep again. He still had the chain fast to one foot; but he managed to rise softly, and getting to the window let himself down by a cord. After a while the same servant awoke once more and found the prisoner had escaped: an alarm was given, and men, blowing horns, pursued him in all directions. Many a time they were almost upon him as he crouched behind some thicket or trees; many a time their dogs nearly discovered him in hiding in the brushwood; but Theodoric was in the keeping of Mary, so nothing could harm him.

One morning, in the early dawn of day, the young soldier knelt before the altar of the Blessed Virgin of Kaiserbach, to return his thanks for her merciful assistance in setting him free from his long captivity; and there he laid the chains which had been loosened by a miracle, as a continual acknowledgment that it was her he owed his escape.

ANSWERS TO CATHOLIC QUIZ

1. It comes from the Greek, meaning "Book."
2. This English translation was begun at Douay in France.
3. An alphabetical list of the words in the Bible, with an indication as to where each word occurs, and a short passage including the given word.
4. (a) On Sinai, Moses was given the Ten Commandments, (b) Ararat is the site of the landing of the Ark after the Deluge, (c) Olivet was the scene of Christ's Ascension into Heaven.
5. Greek and Aramaic.
6. It is the last book of the New Testament, chiefly prophetic, written by St. John the Apostle.
7. The Vulgate is the Latin version of the Bible founded on the translation of St. Jerome and authorized by the Church.
8. A "tax-gatherer" employed by wealthy Romans.
9. A short fictitious narrative from which a moral or spiritual truth is drawn.
10. Yes. But they are not bound to a literal interpretation of all the statements made in the books.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE BOOK MATCH-UP

OLD TESTAMENT

DANIEL
 LAMENTATIONS
 I MACHABEES
 WISDOM
 ESTHER
 GENESIS
 NUMBERS
 DEUTERONOMY
 II KINGS
 PSALMS
 PROVERBS
 CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW
 HEBREWS
 COLOSSIANS
 APOCALYPSE
 I CORINTHIANS
 GALATIANS
 TITUS
 ST. JAMES
 EPHESIANS
 PHILIPPIANS
 ST. JUDE
 I PETER