

Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem!
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.

Yet, in thy dark street shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years,
Are met in thee, tonight.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts,
The blessings of His heaven.

No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him
The dear Christ enters in. [still]

Oh, holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad-tidings tell;
Oh come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel. —THE BROOKS.

Christmas Day

In the year from the creation of the world, when in the beginning God created heaven and earth; five thousand, one hundred and ninety-nine; from the flood, two thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven; from the birth of Abraham, two thousand and fifteen; from Moses and the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, one thousand, five hundred and ten; from the anointing of King David, one thousand and thirty-two; in the sixty-fifth week, according to the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two from the founding of the city of Rome; in the forty-second year of the empire of Octavian Augustus, when the whole world was at peace; in the sixth age of the world, Jesus Christ, eternal God, and the Son of the Eternal Father, desirous to sanctify the world by His most merciful coming, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost, and nine months having elapsed since His conception, is born in Bethlehem of Juda, having become man of the Virgin Mary. The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Thus, in solemn chant rising with each note to a plane of higher joyousness, is the Church announcing to the world the consummation of the hopes of the Old Testament. Thus does she enshrine in language of unparalleled simplicity the fears of our first parents, the protection of the chosen people, the founding of the Royal line, the sighs of the Prophets, the unspoken and unthought for destinies of Greece and Rome, the mysterious hypostatic union of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity with the human nature that He deigned to take from the fairest of the daughters of God, the virgin birth of God made man, Jesus Christ, the Ancient of days, the first-born of all creation, the Image of the invisible God, the Brilliance of the Eternal Light, the unspotted Mirror of God's majesty, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, the Head of all principality and power, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of the kings of the earth, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father by whom all things are made, God alone, unapproachable, incomprehensible, unsearchable, Jesus Christ, the sum and total of Christmas Day.

—AMERICA

How to make A Merry Christmas

A Merry Christmas will be yours: If you forget yourself in service to your neighbor;

If you give to the Lord in the person of His poor;

If you begin the day in the spirit of the Church by a worthy reception of the Sacraments;

If you can say "Thy will be done," and mean it.

CORRESPONDENCES.

The Catholic Orphanage,
Prince Albert, Sask.,

PRINCE ALBERT, Dec. 11, 1919.

A few words to the address of the many friends and benefactors who read the St. Peters Bote.

A few days ago whilst discussing the present situation of the orphanage with a friend of long standing, the latter asked me this question: "Why don't you appeal to the readers of the 'Bote'?" I simply replied that I did not dare to do so as these good people had been actually drained by the many appeals, drives, and collections during the past years.—"Yes, this is true," my friend replied, "many have called on these people, and if you come with a call, you will find that there is still something left for you."—Ask and you shall receive.

However, before asking for further help I offer, first of all, to our many friends my sincerest thanks for their kindness during the past. I hope that God has rewarded with His choicest blessings every act of charity performed towards the inmates of the Orphanage. We pray every day for the welfare both spiritual and temporal of our many devoted friends. To all therefore we wish a holy, joyful Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year. May 1920 bring to all the fullest realization of their hopes, success to all their endeavors, but above all the blessings of God on themselves, their families and all their undertakings.

Yes, let us trust that the new year will bring greater prosperity than the old one. For many of us 1919 has not fulfilled our expectations. At least as far as the Orphanage is concerned I must confess that trials and crosses have not been wanting. Indeed we all have to be tried in some way. Thanks be to God, we all escaped the much dreaded "Flu". It seems only right that we should have had trials of some other kind. They have come from early spring till fall under the form of all kinds of failures. We sustained considerable losses amongst our cattle. Then came the continued drought of spring and early summer followed by an almost uninterrupted rainfall during the latter period with a sudden setting-in of winter early in October. The result of all this is that now there is shortage of all that is necessary for the maintenance of the Institution. There is no grain worth mentioning, no vegetables, no potatoes, as the whole crop was destroyed by frost early in October, there is neither a sufficient supply of feed for the live stock. Wherever you turn you meet with SHORTAGE. Still we have to do our best to get through this rather critical situation, that if everything else fails, God at least will not fail us. With His help we shall again see better days.

How will God help us? How will He dispense to us His blessings? You, my dear friends, are the dispensers of the gifts of God. God looks upon you as His co-operators, as His assistants. God will give to us, but His gifts pass through your hands. In other words, you give from your own in the name and in behalf of God. But here you ask me what you ought to give so as to become a co-operator of God? My dear friend, give anything you can spare. A donation of money is always acceptable; if you have none to dispose of, perhaps you can spare a sack of vegetables or a sack or two of potatoes which may be sent when the weather allows so next spring. May be you can spare a chunk of meat, or a few pounds of butter, shortly whatever you can use in your own home we can use here, and everything is welcome.

How should such things be sent? It is very simple. Whatever is not

injured by frost may be sent any time, either by freight or express, all depends on the quantity. We will pay the expenses if you can not afford to do so. Now such things as are easily injured by frost may be kept in some corner of the cellar till next spring. Perhaps some of those who read these lines may be in business. In this case they have occasionally a quantity of what is called shop-worn goods, goods faded by being in the show-windows for a certain length of time, or small remnants that cannot be sold. If such articles were sent to us they would be put to excellent use. What possibly might have been a complete loss to the owner is now turned into an asset for Heaven.

You see there are countless ways of helping one another, it takes but a little thoughtfulness to understand the various means of doing so. I am quite confident that after you have read these lines you will find that you could easily do without such or such a thing, and that it would cause you no inconvenience whatever to send it quietly to the Orphanage in Prince Albert. I hope that many, very many indeed will come to such a conclusion and that ere long we will have a good supply of those things that are now wanting.

The human heart longs for happiness; but it is said that the surest way to find it is: to apply oneself entirely to the promoting of the happiness of others. In other words: If we want to be happy we must try to make others happy. How would it be if you tried it during this Christmas season?

With kindest regards and best wishes to all.

FATHER BRUECK, O. M. I.

The Story Of A Christmas Hymn

It was Christmas of the year 1818. The vicar of Oberdorf, Joseph Mohr, came to the teacher of Arnsdorf, Franz Gruber, bringing a sheet of paper with him, saying: "Friend, could you set to music this little poem which I have written? You understand that sort of thing, and tonight we can have it sung at Christmas mass. It is simple and childlike, but it is well meant."

Gruber, whose duty it was to provide church music in Oberdorf on holidays, did not need much persuasion, and taking the sheet of paper, sat down to the piano and in a short time had struck off the tune.

On Christmas morning the church shone in the brilliant light of many candles, and was crowded with worshippers. The priest stood at the altar, clouds of incense ascended and the soft tone of the organ resounded. Suddenly a hymn arose such as only the angels in heaven might sing to the little Christ child. From the choir loft came its majestic tones:

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round our virgin mother and child,
Holy infant, tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds wake, touched with fright,
Glorious stream from heaven afar;
Heavenly hosts sing hallelujah,
Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God! Light of light!
O, how love beams from his face
With the dawn of heavenly grace,
At Immanuel's birth!

The mass was over. The faithful were returning home with divine joy in their hearts; but their lips kept repeating "Silent night! Holy night!"

Rapidly the hymn spread not only over the Salzburg country, but throughout neighboring Bavaria and Austria, Tyrol, Steyermark and the Alps. In the year 1834 it was sung in Leipzig by the Zillerthal singers, and in Leipzig it was finally published and thus became known throughout the world.

AN APPEAL From the Divine Lover of Children

A little over thirty-five years ago, on January 10th, 1884, the lifeless form of a French priest was ready to be laid into the coffin by some members of his sorrowing spiritual family. . . . The last prayers had been said amidst silent tears, but the passage to Eternal Life had been a real transfiguration. Over the dying Father's face a truly heavenly expression had spread, rendering it difficult for the numerous visitors who had come to pay homage to the remains of their departed friend, to take their eyes from him. . . . Still, the last ceremonies had to be performed; and the time to hide the dearly loved features from the eager gaze of the faithful attendants had come, when, to the surprise of all present, the room filled with a number of little children who had come, no one knew how or whence, to pray by the side of the Good Father! And it was only right that those innocent souls, whom he had loved so much, should have the last glimpse of the beautiful majestic face.

Indeed, Father Theodore Ratisbonne deeply loved children! His wide Roman cloak was a cosy shelter for many of them during his visits to the various schools of the Congregation he had founded. But, if all appealed to his fatherly heart, there were some who had a special claim on him—some of whom the Catholic world thinks little, or thinks in a scornful way—and to them Father Theodore Ratisbonne gave a particular place in his love; not because he, himself, was a child of Israel, but because they belong to the race of those children whom our Lord allowed to nestle up in His embrace, saying to the impatient disciples: "Suffer little children to come to Me."

Oh! those Jewish children, do we think of them as we should? Do we ponder over this fact that Israel still exists? Do we realise that Mary, the most pure Mother of Jesus, was a Jewess, that Joseph was a Jew, that the Apostles, the seventy-two disciples, the first converts to the Christian faith, also belonged to the race of Abraham, the head of the chosen people of God? Do we remember that our Lord commanded His Apostles: "Go ye first to the lost sheep of Israel?"

Do we go first? Probably not, because we forget many things,—among others the tears shed by Jesus over Jerusalem! And are not those tears a longing appeal to all Christian hearts to help the Divine Shepherd to bring into the true fold those loved souls, who blindly wander away, awaiting another leader; or, forgetful of the Kingdom of Heaven, greedily seek for earthly possessions?

Once the light of the true Faith was given to Father Theodore Ratisbonne, the desire of his life was to share it with his blinded brethren. Sufferings, strenuous work, unceasing prayer especially, deserved for him the unspeakable bliss of seeing his own brother enlightened by Our Lady herself. . . . And the marvellous interview was the origin of the work carried on zealously by the brothers Theodore and Marie-Alphonse Ratisbonne, the aim of which is to answer the appeal of Our Lord's Sacred Heart on behalf of His own people—the object of His last prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Signed: N. D. S.

(The readers of St. Peters Bote are reminded that Reverend Mother Superior, Convent of Our Lady of Zion, Prince Albert, will gladly answer all enquiries concerning the aim and work of the Congregation. To the Convent, at Prince Albert, are attached a boarding school, and a novitiate for both Choir and Lay Sisters.)

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