

THE MIRACULOUS INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE

Fr. Peter Davies, O.Carm.

In 1945 came the end of the Second World War. As soon as the gates of a concentration camp near Prague were flung open, a certain holy priest walked out that day from the place which he had never expected to leave alive. A deep gratitude filled his heart as he directed his steps immediately towards the Church of Our Lady of Victories. There he celebrated his first Mass in freedom beneath the statue of the Holy Infant of Prague, so much revered by his people. A few months later this holy man was nominated and consecrated Archbishop of Prague, and a little later still his name was to become a household word throughout the world; for this was Archbishop Beran, the prelate who has suffered so much in his struggle with the communists.

THE STORY OF THE STATUE

What is the history of this image of the Child Jesus, beloved of the Czech people, to which devotion has spread among all the peoples of the world? It is a story intimately connected with the Order of Carmel, and shows the loving care of the Divine Child for the Order which has as its aim the glorification of His Mother.

The image itself is beautifully moulded of wax, and is eighteen inches high. Copies of it may be seen in very many convents, churches and homes. The child's figure is crowned with a golden crown, the orb is carried in the left hand, and the right hand is extended in blessing. It is usually seen dressed in a white tunic, a ruff around the neck, and wearing a long embroidered cloak. Over the centuries many splendid votive gifts have been made to it, and it has thirty-nine magnificent robes and mantles, many adorned with diamonds and other jewels, and of all colours.

FROM SPAIN TO BOHEMIA

The image of the Infant is of Spanish workmanship. St. Teresa of Avila had strongly inculcated a devotion to the Christ Child which she always practised herself. On her journeys she always carried a statue of the Divine Infant. She prayed to Him, and recommended the devotion to her nuns. She used to sing lullabies to the Holy Child, and once in a rapture of happiness, she danced before His statue with her tambourine in her hand. From her convents devotion to the Christ Child had spread among the Spanish people, and especially among the nobility.

We first hear of the statue we now know as that of the Infant of Prague in the family of Maria Manriquez de Lara, a princess of the Royal House of Spain. She was a relative and close friend of St. Teresa of Avila, and it is possible that the Saint herself designed the statue and gave it to her. Another legend has it that the statue was given to Maria's mother by a holy Brother who had carved it after seeing a vision of the Holy Child.

MARIA TAKES THE STATUE TO PRAGUE

The Hapsburg Royal family had taken over the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1526, and from then on the kingdom formed very close ties with Spain. The culture of the land soon became tinged with that of Spain, and it became fashionable for the nobility to marry into Spanish families. The Emperor Maximilian himself chose the daughter of Charles V, the Infanta Maria, as his bride. When she left Spain for Prague, she took Maria Manriquez de Lara as her personal lady-in-waiting. When Maria Manriquez left for her new home in 1556, she took the statue of the Infant with her.

IN MARIA'S HOME

In Prague Maria Manriquez de Lara met a Czech nobleman, Vratislav z Perstejna, who was a very influential member of the Emperor's court. She married him, and bore twenty children, of whom only seven survived. Maria Manriquez was a devout and holy woman, and the statue of the Infant was always venerated in her home. Her children were encouraged to pray to the Divine Infant, and model their behaviour on that of the Christ-Child. Needless to say, the family was an exemplary one.

WEDDING GIFT FOR POLYXENA

Maria's youngest child was named Polyxena, and she must have been the favourite of her mother. Polyxena as a young girl was introduced into the life and activities of the Emperor's court. There she met and fell in love with Prince Sidonius z Lobkowicz. When they married, Maria gave her daughter her most highly prized possession, the statue of the Infant. It was placed in an honoured place in their home, and the couple led an ideally happy life for eleven years. When Prince Sidonius died prematurely in 1623, Polyxena gave herself up to a life of prayer and charity. Among the worthy causes she espoused was the assistance and support of the Carmelite Fathers who had recently been brought from Spain and established in Prague.

FATHER DOMINIC, POPE'S LEGATE

The Carmelite Fathers had only recently come to Prague. When Ferdinand II of Austria was crowned King of Bohemia, the Protestant nobles rose in rebellion against him. They invited the Calvinist Elector, Palatine Frederic, to the throne and duly crowned him king. Ferdinand II then made an alliance with Maximilian, the Catholic Duke of Bavaria. The Pope sent the General of the Discalced Carmelites, Father Dominic of Jesu-Maria, as his Legate to this alliance. This holy old man joined the Catholic forces when he had arrived in Bohemia. He was most zealous in administering the Sacraments, and investing the soldiers with the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

OUR LADY'S HELP IN BATTLE

On November 7, 1620, the Catholic and Protestant armies met near Prague. The Protestant forces were much superior in numbers, equipment and in the strategic position they held. The Catholic leaders feared to give battle under such disadvantages. Father Dominic entered the council of war and exhorted the generals to place their trust in Our Lady Help of Christians. He showed them a mutilated picture of Our Lady which he had found in the castle of Strakowitz. It had been mutilated by the heretics. As a result of his intervention, the Catholic generals decided to attack.

A GREAT VICTORY

On November 8, the following day, Fr. Dominic rode up and down the ranks on horseback, holding the picture aloft. He encouraged them to invoke the Mother of God in the battle, and make "Maria!" their war cry. The battle was joined, and the Catholic forces won a decisive victory.

CARMELITES COME TO BOHEMIA

In thanksgiving to God for this miraculous victory, and the timely intervention of Father Dominic, King Ferdinand founded several Carmelite monasteries: one at Vienna in 1622; one at Prague in 1624; and later a third at Graz. In Prague a house and a former Protestant church were given to the Carmelites. The church was solemnly blessed on September 8, the Nativity of Our Lady, under the title "Our Lady of Victories" (Maria de Victoria).

AN UNFORTUNATE MONASTERY

In spite of the grant given to them by King Ferdinand, the Prague monastery did not prosper. At first they were able to manage a meagre existence, but Emperor Ferdinand, their founder, moved his court to Vienna, and the friars were soon in dire want, often lacking sufficient food. Princess Polyxena heard of their great need, and sent them what aid she could. She became very attached to them, and decided to give them that which she prized most. One day she appeared at the door of the monastery with the statue of the Infant Jesus and gave it to the Prior. Her words on that occasion were prophetic: "Father, I am giving you what I prize above all things. As long as you honour this image you will never want."

VENERABLE FATHER CYRIL OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The statue was set up in the chapel of the monastery, and there twice a day special devotions were performed before it.

The novices were particularly devoted to the Holy Infant. Their confidence was soon rewarded. That same year (1628) the Emperor sent an unexpected gift of two thousand florins and promised a monthly allowance for their support. Many other spiritual and temporal blessings followed. One of the novices, Brother Cyril of the Mother of God, was immediately delivered from a deep spiritual dryness and depression on praying to the Divine Infant. His devotion to the little King remained throughout his long and holy life.

THE CLOUDS OF WAR

This first outpouring of devotion to the Divine Infant was, however, but short lived. The clouds of war were gathering again, and in 1630 King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and his Protestant armies threatened the city of Prague. Most of the community, including Brother Cyril, were sent off to Munich for safety. Only two Fathers stayed on, and in the troubled times, devotion to the statue was neglected. On November 15, 1631, the Protestant armies entered Prague and sacked all the religious houses and churches of the city. The two Carmelite Fathers were imprisoned and their property seized. The church was plundered, and the statue thrown on to a heap of rubbish behind the high altar. The hands were broken, but otherwise it suffered no serious damage.

FORGOTTEN AND UNHONOURED

Peace came again in 1637, and soon afterwards the Carmelites returned to Prague. In their cares and anxieties they seem to have forgotten the statue, which they threw out with the accumulated rubbish from their despoiled church. For seven years the Little Infant remained in the refuse, mutilated, unhonoured and forgotten. As long as this state of affairs persisted, a peculiar misfortune seemed to rest on the monastery. No Prior or Master of Novices was able to hold out for the term of his office; misfortune, burdens and annoyances caused them to resign their positions. Many other religious asked to be transferred because they felt uneasy in this monastery. Fervour and zeal were at a low ebb, financially the house was, at the point of destitution, and tensions were rife in the community. Nothing prospered.

THE STATUE REDISCOVERED

Then in 1637, Father Cyril of the Mother of God (the former novice, Brother Cyril), was sent back to Prague. The devotion he had always practised to the Divine Infant from the days of his novitiate in this monastery was undimmed. On his return from Munich, he searched every place in the house for the statue he loved. At last he discovered his long-lost treasure buried in a pile of rubbish. Filled with joy, he cleaned it as best he could, and obtained the Prior's permission to put the little Child King back in His old position over the altar, even though it was grimy and battered and had lost its hands. Here the community renewed its devotion to the Divine Infant. They poured out their troubles before it, offered their fervent prayers, and soon received consolation and help. A new spirit of prayer and zeal pervaded the monastery, and material relief came abundantly and speedily.

“GIVE ME MY HANDS”

As in former years, Father Cyril was the most zealous disciple of the Holy Infant, and spent many hours in prayer before the statue. One night, long after the rest of the community had left the chapel, he remained a long time in prayer before it. As he prayed, the statue seemed to come to life, and the holy priest heard these words: Have pity on Me, and I will have pity on you. Give Me my hands, and I will give you peace. The more you honour Me, the more will I bless you. It was only then that the astonished Father Cyril folded back the mantle which covered the statue, and realised that the Infant Jesus was without His hands.

FATHER CYRIL'S PLEA REFUSED

Father Cyril begged the Prior to have the hands repaired and replaced on the figure; but his pleadings were in vain. The Prior considered the other needs of the house were too great to allow him to incur this seemingly needless expense. This

Prior lacked Father Cyril's deep confidence in the Divine Child, and the rest of his rule over the monastery was dogged with misfortune.

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

Father Cyril took the statue to his cell, and in tears, begged the Holy Infant to send enough money to have the repairs done. His faith was rewarded. A few days later he was summoned to attend a wealthy man who was seriously ill. The good priest told him the story of the statue, and the sick man gave Father Cyril 100 florins to have it repaired. He returned with the money to the monastery, filled with happiness that at last the image of the Holy Infant could be restored.

THE NEW STATUE

But his joy was short-lived. The Prior, after due consideration, thought it better that a new statue should be commissioned instead of repairing the old one. The new statue was eventually delivered and erected in place of the old one. Scarcely had it been put up when a heavy candelabrum which had been firmly fixed to the wall, unaccountably fell and smashed the figure into fragments. It was clear to Father Cyril that the old and mutilated figure was to be the object of veneration in the monastery.

FATHER DOMINIC BECOMES PRIOR

Soon after this incident, elections were held in the Order, and a new Prior, Father Dominic, became superior of the monastery. Father Cyril went to him and begged him to have the old statue repaired. Father Dominic assured him that he would gladly do so, but could only give him a small sum, quite insufficient for the work. Father Cyril seemed as far as ever from the object of his desires.

OUR LADY'S GIFT

Once more Father Cyril took his troubles to the Divine Infant, and prayed long and fervently. Scarcely had he finished when he was summoned to the church. There on the altar steps of the shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a beautiful lady of great dignity, unknown to him, placed a large sum of money in his hands. She said: "The goodness of God sends you these alms to succour your well-known poverty." Before he had time to recover from his amazement to thank her, she disappeared. Father Cyril always believed that it was the Virgin Mother of the Divine Infant who had heard his plea.

FURTHER DISAPPOINTMENT

Once again the joy of the good priest was short-lived. The Prior promised to have the work done, but only if it could be done for a certain price. The modeller asked twice the sum allowed, and the image remained as it was, battered and without its hands.

A PROMISE AND A CURE

Shortly after this, fresh trials fell upon the monastery. The pestilence called the "black plague" was raging through the land. Some of the community became ill, others had to be sent away. The cows and horses of the friars were stolen by marauding soldiers. In all this trouble, the Prior himself was attacked by the plague, and was brought to death's door. Father Cyril urged him to invoke the aid of the Divine Child. The Prior then and there promised that if he recovered, he would offer a novena of Masses before the statue of the Holy Infant. At once he felt relief, and in a few days was completely restored to health. He became a fervent promoter of devotion to the Divine Child, and assigned a special chapel for the veneration of the image of the little King.

THE IMAGE RESTORED

But the hands of the statue had not even yet been restored. Alone before the image one day, deep in prayer, Father

Cyril seemed to hear a whisper: Place Me near the entrance to the sacristy and you will find someone who will have pity on Me. The priest at once did so, and his blind obedience was rewarded. A stranger approached, and without preamble offered to have the statue repaired at his own expense. The offer was gladly accepted, and in a short time the renovated statue was exposed for veneration in the church. The Divine Child amply repaid the generous benefactor whose name was Daniel Wolf. This man had been accused of having discharged unfaithfully his office as Chief Commissioner of War. He had lost his good name, his position and his property. He was enduring a very severe trial at the time of making the offer. Within a few days he received an Imperial Decree clearing him of the charges, and restoring all his property, his good name and his position. Daniel Wolf then provided a beautiful shrine in the public church where the image could be fittingly venerated by all.

THE DEVOTION SPREADS

Reports of these happenings spread rapidly, not only around the city of Prague, but throughout Bohemia. Soon the Shrine of the Divine Infant was thronged with people who came to pray before it. Many wonderful answers to prayer increased the veneration in which the statue was held. Cures and miracles without number were wrought through devotion to the Divine Child. Copies of the statue were made, and devotion to the "Infant of Prague" spread throughout the whole world.

A PERMANENT HOME

In 1642 the Baroness Benigna of Lobkowitz had a splendid new chapel built to house the Divine Infant whom she venerated highly. To the great joy of Father Cyril, this new chapel was dedicated on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, 1644, and Holy Mass was celebrated there for the first time. From that time the Feast of the Holy Name has remained the principal feast of the miraculous Infant.

THE DEVOTION APPROVED

The Holy See was not slow in recognising the spiritual value of devotion to the Infant Jesus. Many prayers were approved and Indulgences granted. In 1913 Pope St. Pius X established the Confraternity of the Infant Jesus of Prague to unite all who were devoted to the Miraculous Infant, and granted its members many spiritual favours. The Confraternity is established in Australia at the church of the Carmelite Fathers, Middle Park, Victoria.

THE LITTLE FLOWER, ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

In practically every Catholic school you will see a statue of the Divine Infant of Prague. It has become the symbol of devotion to the childhood of Jesus, and provides the young people of our times with a tremendous model and an inspiration to form their lives on that of Jesus. The spiritual teaching of St. Therese of Lisieux is often called the Way of Spiritual Childhood. The little saint of Lisieux was not only Therese of the Child Jesus in name, but throughout her life she had a particular devotion to the Infant Jesus just as her great spiritual mother, St. Teresa of Avila, had. She placed His statue in the novitiate at Lisieux when she had charge of the novices, because she knew how many blessings the Divine Child brought to the Carmelite novices in Prague when it was placed in their midst. The same statue still stands in the cloister at Lisieux.

WAY OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD

The Little Flower is the saint who has perhaps shown best to the world the virtues of that spiritual childhood which Our Lord has commanded all His followers to cultivate. In her simplicity she was a child at heart; her utter confidence and abandonment to God through all her life were the virtues of a child whose trust in its loving Father is complete. Her love for the Divine Infant and her meditation on Him were important in the development of her deep yet simple spirituality. It was not for nothing that she chose the name "Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face". She combined devotion to

the childhood of Christ and to the Sacred Passion to form the basis of her spiritual life.

THE LITTLE KING'S RULE IN CATHOLIC HOMES

In many thousands of Catholic homes throughout Australia, the statue of the Divine Infant of Prague is enthroned in a prominent place. So many graces have been received through invoking the sweet Child Jesus, that the statue is better known as the "Miraculous Infant Jesus of Prague". There is a widespread confidence in the power of prayer to the Divine Infant for every kind of need. We read the following in an old book printed in Kempt dealing with the image of the Infant of Prague: "All who approach the miraculous statue and pray there with confidence receive assistance in danger, consolation in sorrow, aid in poverty, comfort in anxiety, light in spiritual darkness, streams of grace in dryness of soul, health in sickness, and hope in despair. From its beautiful eyes dart sparks of heavenly love; its smiling lips offer us spiritual riches, and its beauty conquers all hearts."

"No colic is so painful, no fever so violent, no tumour so malignant, no insanity so raving, no complaint so irritating, no assault of Satan so furious, no pestilence so infectious, no swelling so serious, as not to be dispelled or cured by this blessed Child. The Holy Infant puts an end to enmities, frees prisoners, saves those who are condemned to death, brings obstinate sinners to repentance, and blesses childless parents with offspring. In short, He is become all to all."

"YOU SHALL NOT WANT"

When Princess Polyxena first gave the statue to the Carmelites, she said: So long as you venerate this image you shall not want. The subsequent history of the statue of the Little King, its being honoured and forgotten, seemed to have had a marked effect upon the financial and material needs of the community which sheltered it. Perhaps for that reason, a vast number of people appeal to the Divine Infant of Prague in times of material and financial difficulty. Towards those who approach Him with love and confidence, the Divine Infant shows Himself as generous and openhanded as He was to the Carmelites of Prague. The favours ascribed to the intervention of the Divine Infant of Prague are beyond computing.

"HONOUR ME ... I WILL BLESS YOU"

Many of the statues of the Holy Infant of Prague have a little inscription on the base-the words which Father Cyril recorded hearing as he prayed before it: The more you honour Me, the more will I bless you. For that reason the image of the Divine Child is honoured in so many homes. Where the Little King reigns, there will be peace and happiness and unity. In that home in which the Divine Child holds out His hand in blessing, where the image of Our Lord's own childhood is clear and bright, where the family looks to Him as the provider of every spiritual and material need, the grace of Christ is poured out in abundance. Such a family makes its own the beautiful prayer written by the Venerable Cyril of the Mother of God:

*To Thee, O Jesus, now I flee
And through Thy Mother beg of Thee
From present straits to rescue me;
For firmly I believe in Thee,
That Thou canst well watch over me.
With all my heart I love but Thee,
By countless sins I have grieved Thee;
From which, a suppliant to Thee,
Jesus, I pray, deliver me.
The will to amend is strong in me,
No more shall I give pain to Thee;
So I give up myself to Thee
That I may bear all things for Thee.*

*My neighbour, too, as like to me,
I choose to love because of Thee.
O little Jesus, I beg Thee
From present perils save Thou me,
That I at last have joy in Thee
With holy Joseph and Mary
And the angels for eternity. Amen.*

PRAYERS TO THE MIRACULOUS INFANT OF PRAGUE

PRAYER OF THE LITTLE FLOWER

O Little Infant Jesus, my only treasure, I abandon myself to Thy every wish. I seek no other joy than that of calling forth Thy sweet smile. Grant me the graces and the virtues of Thy Holy Childhood, so that on the day of my birth into Heaven the angels and saints may recognize me as Thy little spouse.

INDULGENCED PRAYER TO THE INFANT JESUS

Most Dear Lord Jesus Christ, who being made an Infant for us, wast willing to be born in a cave to free us from the darkness of sin, to draw us to Thyself, and to inflame us with Thy holy love; we adore Thee as our Creator and Redeemer, we accept and choose Thee for our King and Lord, and for tribute we offer Thee all the affections of our poor hearts. Dear Jesus, our Lord and our God, deign to accept this offering; and that it may be worthy of Thine acceptance, pardon us our faults, enlighten us, and inflame us with that holy fire which Thou camest to bring into the world and enkindle in men's hearts. May our souls thus become a perpetual sacrifice in Thy honour. Grant that we may ever seek Thy greater glory here on earth, so that we may one day come to rejoice in Thy infinite loveliness in heaven. Amen. (100 days Indulgence, once a day).

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE

O sweet Child Jesus, who didst manifest Thy power and mercy through a little waxen figure of Thyself in Prague, I wish to proclaim Thy Royal dominion over my soul and body.

Deign, O Little King of Heaven, to watch over my work, bless my enterprises both temporal and spiritual, to dispel my cares, to sanctify my joys, to alleviate my sufferings.

Grant me pardon for all the offences I have committed against Thee, for I know that Thou art good and merciful to the penitent sinner. Thine I am. Thine I wish to remain, ever loving and adoring Thee, Little King of Heaven. Take possession of my whole being; do with me whatever Thou wilt. I desire, like St. Theresa, Thy Little Flower of Carmel, to be Thy playmate. Make me love Thee more and more, that one day I will enjoy Thy sweet little face smiling from Thy throne in Heaven.

EFFICACIOUS PRAYER TO THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

(A revelation said to have been made by the Blessed Mother to the Ven. Servant of God, Father Cyril of The Mother of God.)

O Child Jesus, I have recourse to Thee through Thy Holy Mother; I implore Thee to assist me in this necessity, for I firmly believe that Thy Divinity can assist me. I confidently hope to obtain Thy holy grace. I love Thee with my whole heart and my whole soul. I am heartily sorry for my sins, and entreat Thee, O good Jesus, to give me strength to overcome them.

I am firmly resolved never to offend Thee again and to suffer everything rather than displease Thee. Henceforth, I wish to serve Thee faithfully. For love of Thee, O divine Child, I will love my neighbour as myself. O Jesus, omnipotent Child,

I entreat Thee again to come to my assistance in this necessity. (Mention It).

Grant me the grace of possessing Thee eternally with Mary and Joseph and of adoring Thee with Thy Holy Angels and Saints. Amen.

“FLYING” NOVENA

(This Novena is to be said at the same time every hour for nine consecutive hours—just One Day.)

O Jesus, Who hast said, ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you, through the intercession of Mary, Thy most Holy Mother, I knock, I seek, I ask that my prayer be granted. (Make Your Request)

O Jesus, Who hast said all that you ask of the Father in My Name, He will grant you through the intercession of Mary Thy Most Holy Mother, I humbly and earnestly ask Thy Father in Thy name that my prayer be granted.

(Make Your Request)

O Jesus, Who hast said “Heaven and Earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass”, through the intercession of Mary, Thy Most Holy Mother, I feel confident that my prayer will be granted.

(Make Your Request)

O Divine Child of Prague, and still the great omnipotent God, I implore through Thy Most Holy Mother’s most powerful intercession and through the boundless mercy of Thy omnipotence answer to the Intention I so earnestly ask for In this Novena.

O Divine Child of Prague, hear my prayer and grant my petition. (Say Three Times) (Our Father and Hail Mary-Once)

PRAYER IN AFFLICTION

O dearest Jesus, tenderly loving us, Thy greatest joy is to dwell among men and to bestow Thy blessing upon us! Though I am not worthy that Thou shouldst behold me with love, I feel myself drawn to Thee, O dear Infant Jesus, because Thou dost gladly pardon me and exercise Thy almighty power over me.

So many who turned with confidence to Thee have received graces and had their petitions granted. Behold me, in spirit I kneel before Thy miraculous image and lay open my heart to Thee, with its prayers, petitions and hopes. Especially the affair of [] I enclose In Thy loving Heart. Govern me and do with me and mine according to Thy holy will, for I know that in Thy Divine wisdom and love Thou wilt ordain everything for the best. Almighty, gracious Infant Jesus, do not withdraw Thy hand from us, but protect and bless us forever.

I pray Thee, sweetest Infant, in the name of Thy Blessed Mother Mary who cared for Thee with such tenderness, and by the great reverence with which St. Joseph carried Thee in his arms; comfort me and make me happy that I may bless and thank Thee forever from all my heart. Amen.

PRAYER FOR A HAPPY DEATH

O precious Infant Jesus! I approach Thee now to ask most devoutly for a happy death. When my last moment draws nigh, then come Thou to me in holy Viaticum; remain near me, bring Thy Virgin Mother and St. Joseph with Thee. Alleviate my sufferings, banish my fear, let me valiantly overcome all temptations, and give me grace willingly to offer up my life as a satisfaction for my sins, in the expectation of everlasting bliss in heaven.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR GRACES RECEIVED FROM THE INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE

I prostrate myself before Thy holy image, O most gracious Infant Jesus, to offer Thee my most fervent thanks for the blessings Thou hast bestowed on me. I shall incessantly praise Thy ineffable mercy and confess that Thou alone art my God, my helper, and my protector. Henceforth my entire confidence shall be placed in Thee! Everywhere will I proclaim aloud Thy mercy and generosity, so that Thy great love and the great deeds which Thou performest through this miraculous image may be acknowledged by all. May devotion to Thy holy infancy extend more and more in the hearts of

all Christians, and may all who experience Thy assistance persevere with me in showing unceasing gratitude to Thy most holy infancy, to which be praise and glory for all eternity. Amen.

THE INFANT JESUS CHAPLET

Directed by heavenly guidance, Venerable Sister Marguerite of the BI. Sacrament (1619-1648), a Carmelite nun, fashioned the Infant Jesus Chaplet. Because its recitation pleases Him so very much,

Jesus promised Ven. Sister Marguerite that the faithful who recite it in memory of His Birth, His Flight into Egypt, and His Hidden Life at Nazareth, will not only be granted the special graces of purity of heart and innocence, but in addition will be unfailingly assisted by His Divine Help in all their spiritual and temporal wants. Moreover, to encourage the use of this Holy Chaplet, P. Pius IX granted a '100 days indulgence for each recitation, also applicable to the Poor Souls (Aug. 9, 1855).

While meditating on the goodness of the Infant Jesus whose Image is portrayed on the medal, say

“Divine Infant Jesus, I adore Thy Cross and I accept all the crosses Thou will be pleased to send me. Adorable Trinity, I offer Thee for the glory of the Holy Name of God, all the adoration of the Sacred Heart of the Holy Infant Jesus.”

Next devoutly recite the Our Father three times in honour of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Before each Our Father says the aspiration

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.”

In memory of the twelve years of Jesus’ Sacred Infancy, twelve Hail Mary’s are now recited, and before each one the same aspiration is again said: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

In conclusion, the invocation is said, “Holy Infant Jesus, bless and protect us.”

PRAYER TO BE RECITED BY A SICK PERSON

O merciful Infant Jesus! I know of Thy miraculous deeds to the sick. How many diseases didst Thou not cure during Thy blessed life on earth, and how many worshippers of Thy miraculous Image do not ascribe to Thee their recovery and deliverance from most painful and hopeless maladies. I know, indeed, that a sinner like me has merited his suffering and has no right to ask for favours. But, in view of the innumerable graces and the miraculous cures granted even to the greatest sinners through the veneration of Thy holy infancy, particularly in the miraculous statue of Prague or in representations of it, I exclaim with the greatest assurance: O most loving, most pitiful Infant Jesus, Thou canst cure me if Thou wilt! Do not hesitate, O Heavenly Physician, if it be Thy will that I recover again from this present illness; extend Thy most holy hands and by Thy power take away all pain and infirmity, so that my recovery may be due not to natural remedies, but to Thee alone. If, however, Thou in Thy inscrutable wisdom hast determined otherwise, then at least restore my soul to perfect health, fill me with heavenly consolation and blessing, that I may be like to Thee, O Jesus, in my suffering, and may on my sick-bed glorify Thy providence, until Thou, by the death of the body, bestowest on me eternal life. Amen.

LITANY OF THE MIRACULOUS INFANT OF PRAGUE

(For private devotion only)

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

* Have mercy on us.

† Deliver us, O Jesus.

‡ We beseech Thee hear us.

God the Father of heaven. (Have mercy on us. *)

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *

God the Holy Ghost. *

O miraculous Infant Jesus, *

Infant Jesus, true God and Lord, *

Infant Jesus, whose omnipotence is manifested in a wonderful manner, *

Infant Jesus, whose wisdom searches our hearts and reins, *

Infant Jesus, whose goodness continually inclines to aid us, *

Infant Jesus, whose providence leads us to our last end and destiny, *

Infant Jesus, whose truth enlightens the darkness of our hearts, *

Infant Jesus, whose generosity enriches our poverty *

Infant Jesus, whose friendship consoles the afflicted,*

Infant Jesus, whose mercy forgives our sins, *

Infant Jesus, whose strength invigorates us, *

Infant Jesus, whose power turns away all evils, *

Infant Jesus, whose justice deters us from sin, *

Infant Jesus, whose power conquers hell, *

Infant Jesus, whose lovely countenance attracts our hearts, *

Infant Jesus, whose greatness holds the universe in its hand, *

Infant Jesus, whose love-inflamed Heart kindles our cold hearts, *

Infant Jesus, whose miraculous hand raised in benediction fills us with all blessings, *

Infant Jesus, whose sweet and holy Name rejoices the hearts of the faithful, *

Infant Jesus, whose glory fills the whole world, *

Be merciful, spare us, O Jesus.

Be merciful, Graciously hear us, O Jesus.

From all evil, (Deliver us, O Jesus †)

From all sin, †

From all distrust of Thy infinite goodness, †

From all distrust of Thy infinite goodness, miracles, †

From all lukewarmness in Thy veneration, †

From trials and misfortunes, †

Through the mysteries of Thy holy childhood, †

We sinners, (Beseech Thee hear us. ‡)

Through the intercession of Mary, Thy virgin Mother, and Joseph, Thy foster father, ‡

That Thou wouldst pardon us, ‡

That Thou wouldst bring us to true repentance, ‡

That Thou wouldst preserve and increase in us love and devotion to Thy sacred infancy, ‡

That Thou wouldst never withdraw Thy miraculous hand from us, ‡

That Thou wouldst keep us mindful of Thy numberless benefits, ‡

That Thou wouldst inflame us more and more with love for Thy Sacred Heart, ‡

That Thou wouldst graciously deign to hear all who call upon Thee with confidence, ‡

That Thou wouldst preserve our country in peace, t That Thou wouldst free us from all impending evils, ‡

That Thou wouldst give eternal life to all who act generously toward Thee, ‡

That Thou wouldst pronounce a merciful sentence on us at the judgement, ‡

That Thou wouldst in Thy miraculous image remain our consoling refuge, ‡

Jesus, Son of God and of Mary, †

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Jesus.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Graciously hear us, O Jesus.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us, O Jesus.

Jesus hear us.

Jesus graciously hear us.

Our Father, etc.

LET US PRAY

O miraculous Infant Jesus! prostrate before Thy sacred image, we beseech Thee to cast a merciful look on our troubled hearts. Let Thy tender Heart, so inclined to pity, be softened at our prayers, and grant us that grace for which we ardently implore Thee. Take from us all affliction and despair, all trials and misfortunes with which we are laden. For Thy sacred infancy's sake hear our prayers and send us consolation and aid, that we may praise Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, forever and ever. Amen.

Nihil Obstat:

BERNARD O'CONNOR, Diocesan Censor.

Imprimatur:

✠ DANIEL MANNIX, Archiepiscopus Melburnensis.

Melbourne, 8/1/1963.
