

# The Children



The Little Flower.

A MESSAGE TO  
PRIESTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS  
and all Lovers of Christ's Little Ones.

By

Joseph Husslein, S. J.—Associate Editor of AMERICA.



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# NOTICE.

The enclosed pamphlet has been prepared to interest the Reverend Clergy and the teachers of our Catholic schools in the work of the Association of the Holy Childhood.

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV, has recently expressed his "lively and strong desire that the Association of the Holy Childhood be established in every school and college of the United States and Canada."

As National Director of the Association for the United States I feel a sacred obligation to realize this cherished wish of the Vicar of Christ, and I therefore humbly appeal to you for your valued co-operation.

In the beautifully written pages of "The Children" you will find motives, forceful and abundant, for establishing the Holy Childhood amongst the children committed to your care.

I earnestly ask you to accept this opportunity of rendering a noble service to the cause of Christ, and shall appreciate a favorable reply in the near future.

Very respectfully,

EDWARD J. KNAEBEL, C.S.Sp.,

Central Director



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and all Lovers of Christ's Little Ones.

By

Rev. Joseph Husslein, S. J.

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the National Catholic Weekly Review  
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## TO THE READERS:

One of the most romantic incidents in history is the children's crusade of the Middle Ages. But there is a crusade of our own time far more wisely planned. Successive Pontiffs have expressed their earnest desire to see all children of the Catholic world enrolled beneath its banner. Already it has achieved results no less vast than the salvation, through Holy Baptism, of millions of dying little ones, and the Christian education of countless others, rescued by it from death or a life of misery in the slavery of paganism. It is still continuing with every day its conquests for the Faith in lands the most remote and unknown.

The methods employed are simple as they are beautiful. It would unite our children about their divine Head, the Christ Child Jesus, model their lives upon His and make of them co-workers with Him in the great mission for which He came into this world, the salvation of souls. Alms and prayers are the mighty lever and the fulcrum wherewith it would move the earth and lift it up nearer to God.

The progress of this great work depends upon us, upon the help of priests, teachers, parents and all lovers of Christ's little ones. By opening the gates of salvation to millions of unfortunate children in pagan lands, and obtaining for our own happier millions at home the Christ-like spirit of charity and zeal, we too may hope to enter with them into the wide-open doors of the Sacred Heart and become with them the favorites of His love.

St. Joseph's Day, March, 1915.

## THE HARVEST OF SOULS

We are told of a heroic nun in China who, together with her assistants, baptized three thousand dying infants in a single year. It is interesting to know that she bore the name of Sister Xavier.

Wonderful as this work appears to us, it is only a trifle compared with that which we ourselves can accomplish by our united efforts in co-operation with the Association of the Holy Childhood. During the first seventy years of its existence twenty million souls are said to have been sent directly to Heaven by its help. What a gift for the Infant Saviour!

Surely it was more than human wisdom which inspired the apostolic Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson with the thought of making the Catholic children of the world the instruments of salvation for their little pagan sisters and brothers. Such is the conviction beautifully expressed by Cardinal Gibbons. "I am very glad to recommend the noble work of the Holy Childhood, so warmly encouraged by the Holy See," he wrote. "To have the children of Christian lands securing the blessings of Faith to the children of pagan lands is an inspiration from Heaven itself."

Do we realize that ten thousand infants are yearly exposed to a cruel death in the capital city of China alone? Similar abominations exist elsewhere in pagan countries. It is stated that in many of the South Sea Islands seventy per cent. of all the children born are put to death. Yet of the abandoned children of heathen nations countless thousands can receive the inestimable blessing of Holy Baptism, if so we desire. Hundreds of thousands, indeed, are thus favored every year by the magnificent work of the Holy Childhood.

"The last time we were out baptizing, we found three infants tied up in trees, the crows feasting upon them," writes a Sister of Charity from Ningo-Po City, China. "Sad to say we were only in time to baptize one. The others were already dead. Some of the children brought in ill from neglect, after a little care, revive; and then



we have to keep them. We have now 450 in the house, of all ages and sizes, and 250 babies out to nurse. It is a large family to provide for and we are very poor and can give our children only rice to eat."

Similar tales of glorious work and altogether inadequate means pour in from many sides and from all our mission lands. It is the task of the Holy Childhood to be God's almoner to His heroic workers. During the hot seasons, "when children die like flies," the Sisters, going up and down the country in their boats, dispensing medicine to the sick and baptizing the children that evidently can not survive, may administer Baptism to scores of infants in a single afternoon. As their coming is announced through the streets the mothers crowd out to them, each holding her piteous little one and crying for help. Yet this work, too, calls for means. We who abide at home must likewise extend God's kingdom abroad.

A few pennies, we are told, might often help to save a child; a few dollars, to keep open the doors of a Catholic school; a comparatively small sum, to maintain the indispensable service of a trained catechist. "These helpless, unregenerated little ones seem to stretch pleading hands towards us in this country," continues Cardinal Gibbons in the letter quoted, "To teach our children to give and to make sacrifices for the salvation of those little pagan souls will bring a double blessing to our own Catholic families and parishes. It will foster both the spirit of self-sacrifice and the apostolic missionary spirit so intimately dependent the one on the other."

Quickly the little rills of alms pouring from thousands of schools, form into a stream, and the stream swells into a river, till the river itself expands into an ocean. Fully thirty-two million dollars were contributed to the missions by the Association during its first seventy years of existence. Such estimates, we must remember, include the modest beginnings of the organization. During the last of these years its collections were already approaching the yearly total of from \$800,000 to \$850,000. By how much shall we multiply these sums in years to come? Who knows what the sacrifices of our little

ones and the prayers which accompany them shall mean for souls? Yet who can estimate the value of even a single soul saved by us? Filled with at least something of the self-consuming love and zeal of the Little Flower we may well animate ourselves with her sublime principle:

“A thousand deaths were gain, not loss,  
If but one soul I help to save!”



## THE VOICE OF THE VICARS OF CHRIST

The voice of the Roman Pontiffs urging upon us the institution of a work of zeal is the voice of Christ. Their desire, insistently repeated, is the pleading of the Sacred Heart. Seldom have such appeals been more frequently and fervently made than in regard to the Association of the Holy Childhood.

Passing over the approbation given this work and the favors and indulgences already graciously bestowed upon it by Pope Gregory XVI, we at once come upon the request of Pope Pius IX asking for the establishment of the Association in every diocese. A few brief quotations from his direct successors to the See of Rome will show how completely united were the sentiments of the Sovereign Pontiffs upon this important subject.

"It is my earnest wish," Pope Leo XIII announced to the faithful, "that all the children of the Catholic world should become members of this beautiful Association." (*Sancta Dei Civitas*)

Pope Pius X could not refrain from expressing his enthusiasm in even more fervent words. He proclaimed himself "Filled with the ardent desire of seeing all Catholic children enrolled in the pious and most salutary Association of the Holy Childhood." (*Autograph of Dec. 7, 1913*) To his vision this vast enterprise assumed the appearance of an international army, marshalled by nations for the spreading of the Gospel and the salvation of souls.

Our Holy Father's most ardent desire," wrote Cardinal Vanutelli during the last months of the life of Pope Pius X, "is to know that all Catholic children belong to the Holy Childhood."

Need we wonder at this solicitude? The ancient crusaders gave their lives to redeem from the infidels the Holy Sepulcher of Our Lord. Surely a worthy cause. But by the modern crusade of sacrifice and prayer on the part of our favored Catholic children we would gain for Him instead millions of living tabernacles where God shall dwell within the souls He loves so much, the souls of His pure little ones.

"We make our own the desire of our lamented Predecessor of holy memory: to see the ranks of the Holy Childhood increased," was therefore the declaration of Pope Benedict XV soon after his accession to the Chair of St. Peter. His wishes were made known even more explicitly than those of his predecessors. We may find them fully expressed in a message of appreciation sent to the Cardinals of the United States and Canada, containing his thanks to them for the encouragement given the Director General of the Association. The letter has been made public to all the world in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. (Febr. 8, 1915.)

"His Holiness," wrote the Papal Secretary of State in the name of the Holy Father, "while continuing to show toward this pious work the paternal benevolence so generously bestowed upon it by his immediate Predecessor, has not failed to manifest his own lively and strong desire that the Association of the Holy Childhood be established *in every school and college* of the United States and Canada."—The Vatican, Jan. 9, 1915.

This desire is not, of course, limited to any country, but extends to all the world. The confidence of the Holy See is expressed in the same document that "the sturdy and valued support" of the hierarchy "will be seconded not only by the clergy and by Catholics in general, but above all by the teachers, in whose zeal and true Christian charity he places great hopes."

Nothing remains to be added. Successive Pontiffs can only confirm what has already been so clearly and forcibly said. Let us not reply that we have already many other works; that there are needs nearer home. Full account has been taken of all such arguments by the Holy See. The same reason might well be alleged by everyone—and what would then become of the apostolic mission of the Church? Our works at home will only prosper the more because we have heeded the divine call to remember likewise the field afar.

Here, therefore, is the opportunity of rendering a noble service to the cause of Christ. Its acceptance has been urged upon us by the Sacred Heart of the

Saviour, pleading with us through His Vicars upon earth. It is their "earnest wish," their "ardent desire," their "lively and strong desire" that "*all the children of the Catholic world*" be enlisted in this sacred enterprise, that "*every school and college*" be turned by it into a Christian palestra of charity and apostolic zeal.

God wills it! Let us mobilize at once the vast world army of our children. There is no time to lose. Those not of the fold are eager and active. Our opportunity lies in the present moment. Our help is imperatively needed. The Propagation of the Faith and other splendid organizations call for our assistance; but our children too must be prepared to seize the vast possibilities of the future: "It is of the greatest importance," wrote Cardinal Farley, "that we train our Catholic children in love and generosity towards our Catholic missions." Uniting with the forces of every kind for the extension of the Faith, at home and abroad, the children's crusade will aid to form a mighty and triumphant army which, with God's help, will march on successfully to the spiritual conquest of the world for Christ.



## AN IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL FACTOR

The "lively and strong desire" of Pope Benedict XV to see the Association of the Holy Childhood established "in every school and college" is based not only upon its vast possibilities for the salvation of souls in distant lands and the almost incredible results already achieved by it; but likewise upon its great educational usefulness. This in particular is brought home in the message of appreciation sent by him to the Cardinals of the United States and Canada for their encouragement given to this cause so near to his heart.

"His Holiness," the Papal Secretary was authorized to declare in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff, "calls attention to the fact that this Society is not only helpful to the missionaries in making our dear Lord known to millions of pagan children, but also most useful in the sound moral education of Catholic youth." It was for this reason among others that he confidently expected to see the efforts of Cardinals and Bishops in this important matter supported "above all by the teachers, in whose zeal and true Christian charity he places the greatest hopes."

This point, indeed, would seem obvious enough in itself, even had it been less clearly urged by the Holy See. No one can fail to realize the effect which this Association, when properly conducted, must have upon the minds of the children. As Pope Pius X briefly expressed himself: "It will admirably contribute to their good education."

It is the apathy of Catholics for Catholic causes that must primarily be combated everywhere in the Catholic class-room. To correct this weakness we must evidently begin with the children themselves. We must teach them the significance of their mission as Catholics. We must implant in them zeal for the salvation of souls and the propagation of their Holy Faith. We must bring home to them the important lessons of unselfishness and sacrifice. We must prepare them to labor for the promotion of Catholic interests in the missions afar as well as in

the extension of the Church at home. We must instruct them to rely upon prayer no less than upon material means for their future services to mankind. For all these purposes the Holy Childhood will prove itself of incalculable value, if prudently and zealously fostered according to the mind of the Holy See.

From a civic and social point of view it is equally important for the Catholic educator to have at command this splendid means of preparing his pupils to take in due course of time, an active, intelligent and Catholic interest in public undertakings. "It is a work," as Cardinal O'Connell rightly says, "that not only benefits those who receive financial aid from the Society, but it also helps to train our young people to take an active and broad interest in charitable work." It is thus that we can hope to fill in the future the ranks of our Ozanam societies, our conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, our settlement workers and of all the organizations engaged in the countless enterprises of Christian charity and zeal. It is to be noted that the countries most advanced in Catholic social and civic organizations are likewise, as a rule, most conspicuous for their support of the Holy Childhood.

There is still another consideration of no slight importance. The promotion of this work, intelligently and tactfully undertaken, will lend new zest to the class-room studies. Thus in the lessons devoted to geography the unfamiliar foreign countries will now mean more, as it has well been said, than merely Asia or Africa, China, India or Japan. "They are part of the Lord's vineyard." The children have no longer purely remote and impersonal interest in the strange names of distant cities, streams and mountains. They are taught to understand the interests of their holy religion which are involved here. They not only behold these lands with the eyes of Christ as fields white for the harvest; but they realize how their own alms and daily prayers, as part of the world-wide work of the Holy Childhood, are active here and accomplishing great things for the glory of God.

There is in all this no fiction, no mere imagining. They

are in very truth uplifting the hands of the missionary as it pours the saving waters; they are building out of their own funds the schools and asylums for their little brothers and sisters far away; they are sending forth the catechist upon his labors for souls and are seeking with the good Samaritans of Christian charity for the infants abandoned by their pagan parents. Along the banks of the Ganges and the Nile, in the streets of Algiers and Peking, and in our own Indian missions nearer home, they are constantly at work, filling Heaven with souls. Through them their little charges, saved from death or slavery and from darkest paganism, are being taught the Gospel truths and the ways of God's commandments in as many languages as the Apostles were heard to speak when the Holy Ghost had descended upon them on the first great Pentecost day.

Similar opportunities will present themselves in other classes. Special text books have been prepared to serve as aids to teachers in their various branches. (Mission Press, Techy, Ill.) Thus, as Cardinal Gibbons says, will the Holy Childhood "foster both the spirit of self-sacrifice and the apostolic mission spirit." It will lend new zest to old studies and will prepare our children for active Catholic enterprise in the future.

But the Holy Childhood is not only educational in the ordinary sense. It is doubly educational in its nature. While it trains the children at home in the noblest Christian virtues, it helps, through their alms and prayers, to educate countless other little ones in thousands of Catholic institutions throughout the pagan world. Here surely is a cause that should inspire with enthusiasm every true friend of Catholic education. This fact the following article will make still more clear.



## A GREAT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

In seeking for great social works to accomplish Catholics often commit the error of overlooking the most obvious and greatest of all, which the Church has placed beneath their very eyes. In the Association of the Holy Childhood, humble as it is and insignificant as it may appear, we have in reality one such undertaking. It comes to us unheralded by that flourish of trumpets which forms an almost essential part of so many of our modern social enterprises, more statistical than Christian. Instead it offers the most solid and lasting fruits.

Considered purely as a Catholic social work the Holy Childhood must be regarded as one of the most successful of social enterprises. It nobly assists in the support of thousands of Catholic orphanages, workshops, and schools. It takes up, nurses and educates hundreds of thousands of despised little ones cast away by heartless parents and left to die of starvation or be the prey of prowling beasts. It purchases from the equally merciless slaver the poor bruised victims of human cruelty to make of them true Christian men and women. Of several hundred thousand children educated in the Catholic mission schools for the year 1911 we find that no fewer than 22,906 had first been freed by the money of the missionary from the heartless captivity of a barbarous slavery.

The children rescued or purchased in many different ways are religiously educated, are instructed in trades or professions and are trained to become apostles among their own people. Through them is spread, ever more widely, the light of truth among the nations seated in darkness and the shadow of death. Our own Indian missions are not forgotten. Confessors and martyrs have gone forth from these schools and those whom the world has rejected may even, by the power of God, be raised to the highest dignity of man upon earth, the holy priesthood.

We have here therefore the first organized initiation of our children into the Christlike labors of Christian char-

ity, their preparation not only for the Propagation of the Faith, but for every Christian undertaking promoting the welfare of their fellow men.

To realize still more perfectly the great social, as well as spiritual and educational work of the Holy Childhood we need only turn to the official statement of the results actually achieved through its assistance. We may confidently place these statistics by the side of the best the world has done for our fellow men, even should we disregard entirely their spiritual significance, which is the one thing of supreme importance.

“It is estimated,” we read in a summary drawn up about seventy years after the foundation of the Society, which took place in 1843, “that the Holy Childhood now counts about twenty million associates; that it collects every year a sum varying from \$800,000 to \$850,000; that it supports 256 missions; that it educates nearly 600,000 children, saved from paganism and infidelity; that it baptizes about 500,000 children every year, many of whom die young, very many almost immediately; and that it has already in this manner sent not less than 20,000,000 children straight to heaven. The Association is now maintaining 1,550 orphanages, 11,650 schools, and 4,750 workshops.”

Here indeed is a record of actual achievement which will put to the blush our vaunted commercialized social endeavors. As no lavish salaries are to be paid, comparatively small means have accomplished wonders. Yet what has been done in the past is only the merest indication of what can be done in the future by the united co-operation of all our Catholic homes and schools. Silently, constantly, the mighty work continues, pennies dropping from little hands, like the silent falling of the dew in the watches of the night, and full as fruitful. Alms and sacrifices and prayers are the means by which the world must be converted to God.

What valid reason therefore can be alleged why we should not fulfil the ardent desire of Christ expressed through His Vicars upon earth, that every Catholic child be enrolled in this Association, and that every Catholic

school no less than every Catholic home should enthusiastically support it? Other works can be done without leaving this undone. We have a manifold duty toward our neighbor, and the missions abroad and at home, in both of which the Association of the Holy Childhood is concerned, have a rightful claim upon our generosity. "It is of the greatest importance," wrote Cardinal Farley in commending this work, "that we train our Catholic children in love and generosity towards our Catholic missions." So will they learn to take an active interest in all other Catholic enterprises.

We have here therefore, a true social work, performed in large measure by the hands of our favored little ones. It conflicts with no other similar undertaking, but is the preparation for every form of Christ-like charity whether expressed in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in the extension of the Church in our country, in Negro and India mission work, in the amelioration of the condition of the poor or in any other noble and unselfish cause promoted in the name of the Saviour. Wisely, therefore, Pope Pius X assigned as the reason for his "ardent desire of seeing all Catholic children enrolled in the most pious and salutary Association of the Holy Childhood," the fact that this work "will admirably contribute to their proper education and draw down upon their families the choicest heavenly graces."

At the head of our Catholic social works let us then write the Association of the Holy Childhood. It is the beginning of all Catholic social service; for even from their infancy our children may be enrolled in its ranks.

## CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The conditions of the Holy Childhood are simple and within the reach of all our children. Nothing more is required than a monthly contribution of at least one penny and the daily recitation of a "Hail Mary" with the invocation to our Blessed Lady: "*Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us and for poor pagan children.*"

The contributions can even be made annually or semi-annually in advance. The greater the offering the better. But the least gift is not despised. The pennies of the little ones are dear to Our Saviour as the widow's mite. Special provisions have likewise been made for the membership of adults to which we shall here refer after first describing the establishment of the Association in the schools.

To honor in a particular way the twelve years of the Holy Childhood of Jesus the children in our schools and parishes are gathered into groups of twelve, who monthly make their offering. More frequent contributions may of course be welcomed and a mite-box kept at hand.

The Association itself is considered to have been properly introduced into a school or parish as soon as it numbers twelve members. Twelve groups form a sub-division, and twelve sub-divisions constitute a division. Thus the army is marshalled. The pastor becomes a director as soon as he has enrolled at least twelve associates. Other priests however may be appointed by him for this work. No canonical establishment or authorization is required. Even the entering of the names upon the Association's list is not a necessary condition. One fourth of the Christian names thus registered are however chosen by lot to be given to the children baptized in pagan countries. Ceremonies are not prescribed but a program is suggested in the Association's manual.

Plenary and partial indulgences are offered to the members by the Holy See and every month two Masses

are said in one of the sanctuaries dedicated to the Holy childhood of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. Bethlehem, Nazareth and Loreto have been favorite shrines for the saying of these Masses in the past, of which one is offered for the associates and benefactors and the other for the poor children for whose salvation the Society labors. Two yearly Masses are said where a division is established. Special privileges are likewise accorded the priest directors.

The success of the work in the classroom will necessarily depend upon the zeal and tact of the teacher. The same holds true of the presiding officers of sodalities and Sunday schools in which this apostolate can be fruitfully carried on. Sodalists in particular may serve as zealous promoters.

As an illustration indicating how even the most unlikely classes can be made to interest themselves in the work we may quote here a conversation between a diocesan director of the Holy Childhood and a first grade teacher of a large parochial school.

Without any pressure she had collected the sum of fifty dollars during one school term "Upon the tips of my tongue," he remarks, "was the observation, 'You evidently have a very well-to-do class of children.' She read my thought, and quick as a flash said, 'I know what you have in mind. No, my pupils do not come from wealthy or even comfortable homes. Two-thirds of the little ones have their lunch at a nearby day nursery.' 'Which means,' I added, 'that their poor mothers go out to work.' Exactly," she replied."

The incident proves that the Holy Childhood can find its proper place even in our poorer classes. We have here, as the story shows, the material out of which true Catholic men and women are made. If our well-to-do classes in schools and colleges can be taught to give in proportion our missions may well look forward to a hopeful future, and the Church to a generation of Catholics such as the world sadly needs today.

We are told of a method adopted with great success

by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Namure: "In each class-room the Sisters have placed a statue of the Infant Jesus. In honor of His birth the twenty-fifth of each month is set aside as a day of special devotion to the Divine Child. On this day the statue is adorned with flowers and lighted candles, and the children make their little offerings." Thus they are taught at the same time love for Our Lord and zeal for the spreading of His kingdom.

Teachers will readily find the methods which are most effective for their purpose. Opportunities to refer to this work can be found in any of the classes taught. Other causes need not be made to suffer because of this.

The Holy Childhood is primarily intended for children. But no age limit is set. Adults are welcome and their gifts can always help to advance the cause. To continue however to gain the indulgences after the age of twenty-one membership in the Propagation of Faith is likewise required. "By the grant of July 15, 1882," we are told, "grown up persons can become perpetual members and gain all the indulgences by making once for all a donation of twenty dollars." The daily recitation of the Hail Mary and Invocation may not of course be omitted. Thus can they hope to receive more readily and in greater fulness the grace to become as little children—the condition which Christ Himself has set for entry into His Kingdom.



## FOR ALL PARENTS AND LOVERS OF CHILDREN

The Association of the Holy Childhood must appeal to all parents and lovers of children. Particularly delightful is the custom of Catholic mothers who enlist their little ones in this great work on the very day on which they receive them back from the Baptismal font, the children of God as well as their own. What better way of showing their gratitude than by securing the same blessing for other children, far less fortunate than their own.

Until the little ones can themselves perform the two-fold obligation of alms and daily prayer, parents, sisters, brothers or other relatives should perform it in their stead.

What more beautiful work, indeed, than thus to make our children instrumental from their earliest years in the salvation of souls? The zeal enkindled, if properly fostered, will continue to grow until their little hearts are filled with something of that ardent longing which burned in the soul of that saintly child apostle, Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus. The very perfection of the spirit of the Holy Childhood is expressed in her song "To Our Lady of Victories":

"My prayers shall travel every day,  
Fast as a mighty river rolls;  
My brothers, missioned far away,  
Helped here by me shall conquer souls.

"And so the pure baptismal stream  
Shall make of many a pagan child  
A temple, where God's grace shall beam,  
And God with man be reconciled."

With the vow of poverty she had already given up all earthly possessions. The offering of herself for the missions was not to be accepted. She could give nothing therefore except her prayers, her sacrifices and her love; but these offerings were of priceless value in the

sight of Almighty God. Her burning words will still continue, with God's grace, to make apostles. Thus in her poem, "A Work of Love," meant for her fellow religious, she appeals no less strongly to us all:

"By prayers, by acts of love divine,  
His brave apostles we must aid;  
With them our grace we must combine,  
And fight their battles unafraid."

What nobler spirit than this can we hope, by God's grace, to instill into the souls of our children: to make apostles of them from their tenderest years, to teach them to pray for souls and make sacrifices for them out of their own small means. Surely Christ can not leave this love unrequited. Nor can He forget those who, having preserved or regained their spiritual childhood, have at heart the interests of these little ones at home and in the distant mission fields.

Doubtless Almighty God granted in an unspeakable way that fond desire of the Little Flower, which is a favorite desire likewise of all the members of the Holy Childhood, as it is the desire of the Sacred Heart; to

"\* \* \* see dear children fill

The heavenly courts where seraphs sing."

To accomplish this more abundantly there is a beautiful custom which can never become too popular. It is known as "the buying of a heathen child" for which the donor becomes sponsor, and to which he assigns the name it is to receive at the baptismal font. A gift of five dollars is usually made for this purpose. "I have ten thousand children to give you every year," says an African missionary, "but I will not be embarrassed in making the choice for you. Your little one shall pray for you and offer up her sacrifices to God for you." Such donations may be made in our own name or in the name of the little ones with whom God has blessed us. How far better than the purchase of fineries is this gift of a pure little soul to the Infant Jesus. Thus our little girls become true spiritual mothers of souls, and



# Association of the Holy Childhood

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our sturdy little boys are made even from their earliest years apostles of the Christ Child.

The angel of the little one thus bought for Christ will not forget the act of charity, and the little one itself will remember its kindly friend and sponsor. It is a practice which should greatly appeal to every Catholic mother and to all lovers of children. Larger gifts can be made for the annual support or adoption of a child. The principle of charity is simple: "According to thy ability be merciful. If thou have much give abundantly: if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little." Such is the advice of the elder Tobias to his son.

We conclude with the words of an ardent apostle of this great work. His appeal is made in particular to the mothers of our little ones, but should be taken to heart by us all.

"Inscribe their names," he writes, "from their earliest infancy in the book of the Holy Childhood, and their Guardian Angel, you may trust, will transfer them into the Book of Life. Teach them to love the missions, immortal souls, and they will love God and you the more. Speak to them of abandoned souls and they will realize the value of their own souls. Tell them that Christ died for them, and they will answer: 'And for poor heathen children also. Mamma, let me send the missionary money to buy a heathen child. It will pray for me that I may remain good; for it is I that saved it.'"

To all those therefore who will devote themselves to furthering this noble work we would repeat the words addressed to the General Director of the Holy Childhood by the Apostolic Delegate for the United States, November 14, 1914:

"May Jesus our Divine Saviour, who so tenderly loves little children, bless your efforts and move the hearts of the generous to help you in the salvation of more little ones."

## THE LITTLE FLOWER'S PRAYER

With the Scripture text, "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you," the Little Flower introduces a short prayer which expresses the ardent wish of her soul:

*O Eternal Father, Thy Only-Begotten Son, the dear Child Jesus, belongs to me since Thou hast given Him. I offer Thee the infinite merits of His Divine Childhood, and I beseech Thee in His Name to open the gates of Heaven to a countless host of little ones who will for ever follow this Divine Lamb.*

It was the longing desire of this little Victim of Love to present to her Jesus the souls of these little children, pure from the sacramental laver of Holy Baptism:

"Thou, of my exiled soul, O Lord! full well dost know  
The ardent prayer.  
Fair Lily of the Vale, on Thee I would bestow  
Earth's lilies fair:  
These buds of spring I love, and long to find for Thee,  
Thou King adored.  
Grant the baptismal grace to each one tenderly,  
Then cull them, Lord!"

Lovingly she makes the Divine Infant demand:

"I must have lilies for My crown,  
The Lily of the Field am I!  
And I must have, to grace My throne,  
A sheaf of lilies in the sky."

These lilies are the souls of little children. They are languishing for the baptismal waters in the neglected fields of pagan lands. To wash them in the vivifying stream, to offer them in their chaste beauty to our Heavenly Queen that she may place them in full sheaves into the open arms of the Infant Saviour, is the work of the Holy Childhood Association.

“Their fair corollas, silvery bright,  
More brilliant than a thousand fires,  
Shall be the Milky Way of light  
’Mid all the starry heavenly choirs.”

Countless indeed as the points of light in the wondrous galaxy of the sky are the millions on millions of innocent souls of children saved by the sacrifices and labors, the alms and prayers of the Holy Childhood. Yet this is but one of the purposes it would accomplish. There are still other millions who must be prepared for the battle of life, and who, through us, may be made apostles and saints of God. Their training, their education, their likeness to the Divine Lamb, by Whose merits we ourselves hope to live the life of grace, depend upon our mercy to them.

Let each of us then contribute at least a humble share towards the promotion of this work. “We can not do too much,” writes a mission authority, “for this splendid organization.”

“The fruits of our apostolate  
Our longing eyes at last shall see,  
When, pressing on through Heaven’s gate,  
Our souls shall meet the saved and Thee.”



## NOTICE

The Holy Childhood has its Central Office for the United States at Pittsburg, Pa., 801 Pittsburg Bank for Savings Building, Fourth Avenue and Smithfield Street.

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**The fruit of our apostolate  
Our longing eyes at last shall see,  
When, pressing on through Heaven's gate,  
Our souls shall meet the saved and Thee.  
—The Little Flower.**