

A
Christmas
Tear Drop

INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, the joyful sound of bells chimed all through the convent. Sister Marcelline was humming along, as she took out the holly, ivy and other greenery decorations from the shelf. She then opened a small box. Taking out a figurine of a hobo and the Infant Jesus, she read the inscription, "Blessed Christmas - Holy Year, 1983."

Sister Marcelline was so elated as she proceeded to read the story of the figurine.

THE BEGINNING

Looking through the kitchen window, Bernice saw her friends. She ran to join them for their usual ice skating in the park.

Harry the Hobo would be there sitting on a public bench. As he brushed the snow off the bench, the children would sit and tell their friend, Harry, stories of Jesus. He watched as the children did all sorts of tricks on ice.

The sound of Christmas music could be heard in the far distance.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

“Guess what,” said Liz. “I’m leaving to spend Christmas in Quebec with my grandparents.”

Brushing the snow away from her face, Jean said, “My Aunt Shirley from Texas will be here for the holidays. I can’t wait, because she always brings a lot of goodies with her.”

Little Cathy, with a gleam in her eye, spoke up, “Let me tell you about all the special things happening at our church. Father Jude, our pastor, has invited leaders of different denominations from all over the world to our parish. Our Holy Father has announced 1983 as a Holy Year, so we will have a

special midnight service. It is the 1,950th Anniversary of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Our President also declared this "The Year of the Bible." Joseph Cardinal Bernardin will give the homily. Later, he will ask each person to place a piece of straw in the manger. We will all bow and proclaim, "Jesus as King of the Universe."

THE GIFTS

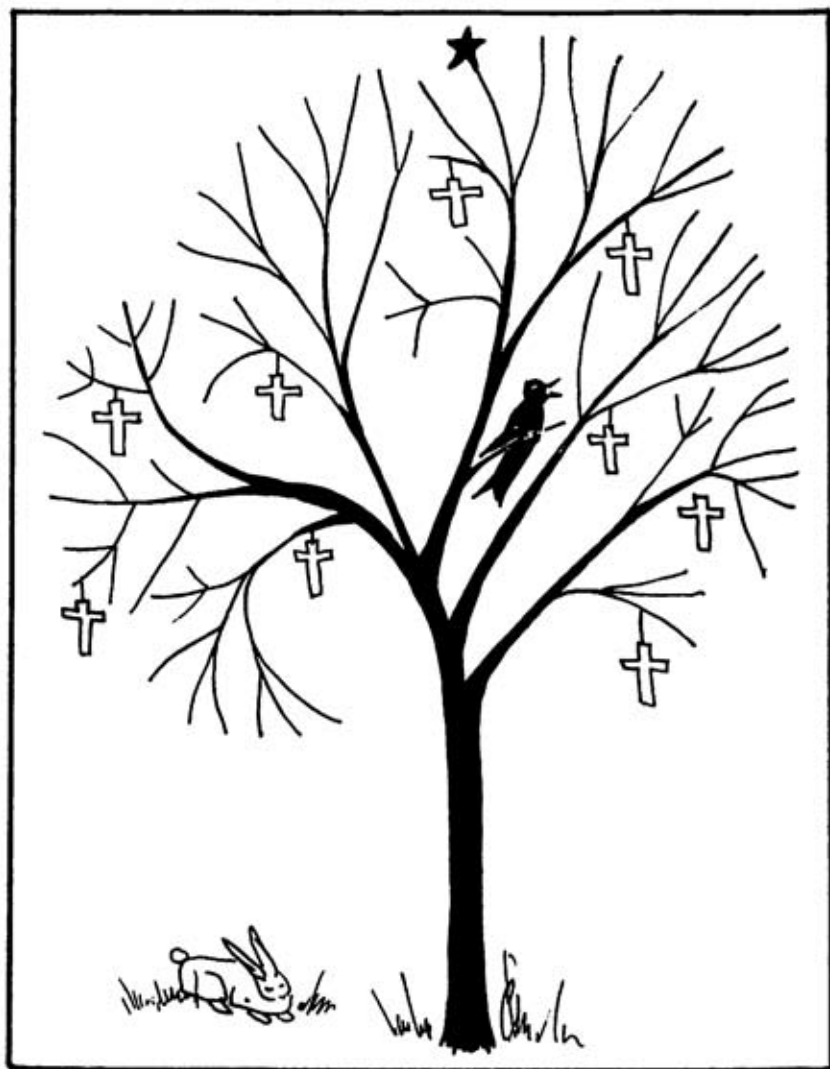
The following day, the children gave many gifts to Harry. The red scarf and gloves came in handy. It was a very cold day. They could hear the harsh winds howling in the park.

Dominic invited Harry to his home for Christmas dinner. "My Uncle Jerome from Michigan will read the story of St. Francis of Assisi and the first crib. We also have some presents for you," said Dominic. Harry just smiled.

Just then, they heard Cathy yelling while running towards them, "The statue of the Infant Jesus is missing. We need it for tonight!" and away she ran. Her friends ran after her.

SEARCHING

Alone now in deep thought, Harry pondered over the missing statue. Making some crosses from the gift paper, Harry placed



The 1,950th Anniversary of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

them on a tree nearby. He watched as its sturdy branches swayed in the breeze. The tree seemed so majestic with a silver star on top, signifying "Shalom."

Harry then started to walk into town. He stopped to smell the delicious aroma of bread as he passed by the bakery. The streets were lit up with beautiful decorations. Some carollers were singing, "We wish you a Merry and Blessed Christmas."

Down the walk between drifts of snow, Harry hobbled into the alley. He looked into one trash can after another. He was just about to hide a box under his coat when the police rode by. Harry was then put into a paddy wagon and taken to the police station for vagrancy.

Sergeant Henry looked into the box, shook his head and released Harry. "Stay out of the alleys," shouted Sergeant Henry, but as Harry was leaving he whispered in a low voice, "and a Merry Christmas."

A CHRISTMAS TEARDROP

It was now almost midnight and Harry hurried towards the Church. The sky was dark and clear, clustered with stars. One star was brighter than the others -- "The Christmas Star."



"Oh, Harry! You are a part of me," said Jesus, "I am Love."

Harry entered the Church. A spotlight was on the manger. Thinking he was alone, Harry took out a statue from the box and placed it in the manger.

Bowing his head, Harry spoke to Jesus from deep within his heart. "The children said that you are the Son of God. Are you?"

Jesus whispered, "I am."

"Was the Virgin Mary your mother and Joseph your foster father?"

"Yes, they were," answered Jesus.

"Is the Mass a remembrance of the Last Supper?"

Jesus whispered, "Yes, it is."

"Are you really coming back to earth again? Will I see you? I am only a hobo."

"Oh, Harry, You are a part of me, " said Jesus, "I am Love."

Harry thanked Jesus for the gift of faith. As he bent over the manger, a Christmas Teardrop fell in the small hand of the Infant Jesus.

Suddenly the lights were turned on. Everyone, especially the children, looked in awe at the manger. The statue of the Infant Jesus had a patch over its broken eye. Standing there was Harry the Hobo with a small patch missing from his pants.

The spirit of joy filled the air, as Joseph Cardinal Bernardin spoke these words to all God's people.

The Priests, Sisters, Deacon and Parishioners of Saint Frances of Rome Parish, Cicero, Illinois, along with the entire world wish Pope John Paul II, a Happy 5th Anniversary.

May God Bless Him!

“God brought us love on that first Christmas through the Infant baby Jesus in Bethlehem. We too can express our love by sharing the gifts of the Holy Spirit with one another.”

The End

WRITER: Mrs. Helen Suire

PRINTER: Oak Park Press

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