

# SODALITY OF CHARITY NEWSLETTER

*In the soul, like sun, reigns Charity alone*



6/2021 December ▪ [www.sodalityofcharity.net](http://www.sodalityofcharity.net) ▪ 4900 Rialto Road, West Chester, OH 45069

Dear members and friends of the Sodality of Charity,

Have a merry and blessed Christmas and a happy New Year. We have finished the first full calendar year of our Sodality, and our current enrollment is 27 members. Our greatest achievement of the year was the Girls Camp in June, which was for the first time arranged and organized by our members. Thank you to all our members for a very successful year.

On Gaudete Sunday, the twelfth day of the twelfth month, twelve of our girls arranged our Lucia procession. And our Lucia Maiden this year was Natalia, who is twelve years old. This procession is very popular in Sweden and Finland, and Swedes and Finns in America often celebrate it as well. I introduced a custom of having a girl lead the procession carrying a pair of eyes on a platter, to remind of this Saint's miraculous restoration of her vision, and also because she is the patroness of eye diseases. There is also a tradition in Friuli, Italy, where St. Lucy brings gifts for children on the night between 12 and 13 of December. But children cannot watch her delivering these gifts, or she will throw ashes in their eyes.

Our immediate Christmas preparations were overshadowed by the death of Fr. McGuire's father, Mr. Kyle McGuire, who was so much liked and loved by many of the families and individuals of St. Gertrude the Great. It is one of the greatest acts of charity to pray for the dead, and he whom

we loved in life, must not be forgotten in death. Thank you to all of you who have remembered him in your prayers, as well as supported the family in their sorrow.



At the parish of St. Hugh of Lincoln in Milwaukee, where I spent my Christmas, we had our traditional Holy Innocents' party on December 28. The Mass, which is at the same time very sorrowful and so consoling, always ends in the blessing of children, a party for them, and a story. As this year's story I read *The Sabots of Little Wolff* by François Coppée. He is quite little-known French author, who was a very faithful Catholic, patriot, but also firm defender of the poor and needy.

Christmas-time is not over, but the season continues all the way until the feast of Purification, February 2. So if you wish you can leave your Christmas decorations up all the way until then, and they should be left up at least until the octave of Epiphany, January 13. Our Epiphany celebration this year will be more solemn than usual. On January 6, four of our Seminarians of St. Gertrude the Great will be ordained Deacons. That means that they can preach, baptize, and distribute Holy Communion. They will be ordained to the priesthood later in 2022. Hope you are all able to attend, and we'll see you there.

Yours in Christ and Mary,

*Fr. Lehtoranta*

# ST. ANASTASIA, THE CHRISTMAS-DAY SAINT

St. Anastasia, who is commemorated in the second Mass of Christmas, is a very great saint of Charity. She is one of the seven women commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass. Her father was a noble pagan man, and her mother was a saint herself, St. Fausta from Sirmium, nowadays in Serbia.

Anastasia was baptized when she was a baby and secretly raised to the Catholic Faith. Following the death of her mother, Anastasia's father gave her in marriage to the Publius, who was a pagan, but by her virtue she convinced them to live as brother and sister.

During the horrible persecutions of Emperor Diocletian, St. Anastasia visited the prisons and cared for the imprisoned Catholics. She would give them food, treat their wounds, and pay for their liberty. But her servant informed Publius of this, and now he had had enough; Publius locked her up and beat her.

In her captivity, St. Anastasia began secretly corresponding with her spiritual advisor, another saint of the Canon, St. Chrysogonus. He told her to be brave, be patient and accept the Lord's will.

Publius died while on a trip to Persia, and after receiving the message of this, Anastasia distributed her property to those less fortunate and suffering. She then set off and joined St. Chrysogonus, who had been imprisoned by Diocletian. Chrysogonus was personally interrogated by the Emperor but he remained firm in his faith. Therefore Chrysogonus was ordered to be beheaded and thrown into the sea.

After his death, St. Chrysogonus appeared to a priest named Zoilus. He told Zoilus where to find his body, and also told about three sisters, Agape, Chione and Irene, who were then held in prison and were in danger of losing their faith. St. Chrysogonus told Zoilus to send Anastasia to the three

sisters to encourage them to stay strong and die as Catholics. And nine days later, Anastasia visited the sisters just before they were tortured. After they were martyred, Anastasia buried them.

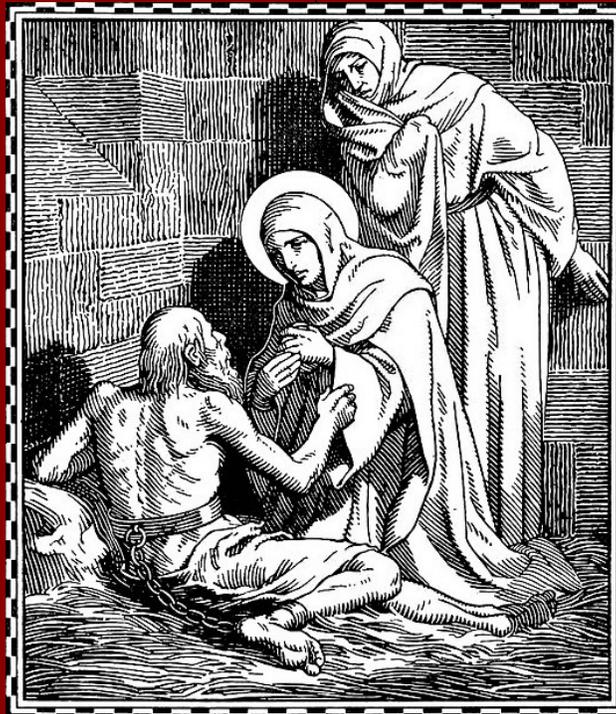
Anastasia now spent her time traveling from city to city caring for Catholic prisoners. Everywhere she healed their wounds and relieved their pain. She was finally arrested and taken to the pagan prefect. He tried to persuade her to deny her faith and threatened her with torture. But Anastasia could not be swayed, so she was given to the pagan priest Ulpian in Rome. He presented

her with the choice between riches or torture devices, and she chose torture. He gave her three days to reconsider. But Ulpian was struck blind, his head seized with extreme pain, and on his way to his pagan temple, he fell and died.

St. Anastasia was free, and she now set out to care for imprisoned Catholics of Rome. She worked side by side with another pious young widow, named Theodota. After Theodota was martyred, Anastasia was caught once again. She was ordered death by starvation and was held without food for 60 days. But

Anastasia's martyred companion Theodota visited her and gave her food during the imprisonment. The judge therefore decided that Anastasia and another prisoner Eutychianus, together with many other prisoners, would be killed by drowning. They entered a boat with holes in the base, but St. Theodota appeared and steered the boat to shore. Once they landed, Anastasia and Eutychianus baptized 120 men.

After many other adventures, St. Anastasia was imprisoned once again and taken captive to an island, where she would finally meet her martyrdom. There she was staked to the ground with her arms and legs stretched out and burned alive.



# Salut, Petit Jésus

by François Coppée  
(1842-1908)



Salut, petit Jésus, endormi dans la crèche,  
Né pour souffrir,  
Qui n'avez dans l'hiver qu'un peu de paille sèche  
Pour vous couvrir.

Salut, petit Jésus, tout petit, tout aimable,  
Aux yeux si doux,  
Souriant aux bergers, à genoux dans l'étable  
Autour de vous.

Salut, petit Jésus, enveloppé de langes,  
Enfant si beau,  
Adoré par les rois et servi par les anges  
Dans le berceau.

Salut, petit Jésus, dans les bras d'une Mère  
Silencieux.  
Enfant dominateur qui lancez le tonnerre  
Du haut des cieux.

Salut, petit Jésus, mon âme vous adore  
Roi triomphant!  
Mais vous me paraissez bien plus aimable encore  
Petit enfant.

Hail, little Jesus, asleep in the manger,  
Born to suffer,  
Thou who hast in the winter only a little dry straw  
As Thy cover.

Hail, little Jesus, very small and kind,  
With Thy sweet eyes,  
Thou smilest at the shepherds, kneeling in the barn  
Around you.

Hail, little Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
O child so beautiful,  
Kings Thee worship and angels Thee serve  
O Thou in the cradle.

Hail, little Jesus, in the arms of Thy Mother  
Thou art now silent.  
The Child who rules and who throws thunder  
From the heavens.

Hail, little Jesus, my soul Thee adores  
As the Triumphant King!  
But now Thou seemst to me much more  
The loving little Child.

# A CHRISTMAS LIKE NO OTHER

by Lillian Gish

Actress Lillian Gish (1893-1993) was known as “The First Lady of American Cinema.” She was from Springfield, Ohio, about 60 miles northeast from SGG. Her acting career extended to eight decades. From *Birth of a Nation* (1915) all the way to *The Whales of August* (1987) Gish starred and co-starred in numerous movies. This story is from her book *An Actor’s Life for Me!* where she remembers the times of her childhood, when she and her sister Dorothy were touring stages with their mother.

One special Christmas fell on a Sunday, a traveling Sunday. The manager of our troupe, a Mr. Schiller, had made arrangements for the company to move to our next town by freight train.

All of us rode in the train’s last car – the caboose. It was the only car with seats, even if they were uncomfortable, hard wooden benches along the sides of the car. This caboose happened to be damp and dirty. And it got damper and dirtier each time one of the trainmen threw open the door, letting in a blast of bitter-cold air and stamping his snowy boots on the already muddy floor.

Dorothy and I seldom knew what day of the week it was or even if it was a holiday. Our schedule never changed: We were either acting, or traveling between acting engagements. Sometimes we didn’t get to sleep in a real bed for nights on end.

As the freight train bump-bumped along, shaking up everyone’s insides, the company huddled together, vibrating in unison inside that dingy, ill-lit caboose.

At last we came to a stop in what looked like a big town. With a freight train, there was going to be a lot of backing and switching

before getting under way again. Since this took a while, most members of the company left the car and went into town. Somehow Dorothy and I fell asleep while they were gone.

When we awakened, the train was moving, and in the middle of that dreary little caboose stood a small green Christmas tree. It smelled of fresh pine and was decorated with popcorn balls and candy canes. There were two oranges apiece for us, too, with lemon sticks to suck the juice through. This was Dorothy’s and my favorite treat in the whole world!

We were certain that Santa Claus himself had managed to find us out there. How clever of him! Only years later did we realize how the tree came to be where it was. Though actors had little spare cash for frivolities, they were often extraordinarily generous to children in the troupe. In those days, a tree probably cost ten or fifteen cents, and it would have taken a quarter or more to decorate it so beautifully – not negligible sums back then.

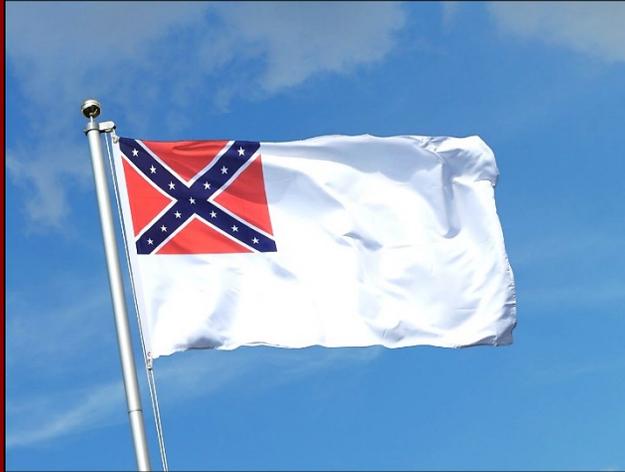
I never see a caboose or read about one now without recalling that beautiful Christmas surprise so many years ago.



# Santa Claus

By Mary A. M'Crimmon.

Because of new lockdowns and restrictions, many children probably had a very toned-down Christmas yet again. One company even arranged virtual Santa Claus visits for children for \$35-\$75 per computer-session. It brought to my mind this old Civil War time poem, where Santa's visit is spoiled by the aggression coming from the north. It was published in *Southern Illustrated News* on December 27, 1862.



'Twas colder than Zero on Christmas eve night,  
When far off in Lapland, the great "Northern Light"  
In streams of wild beauty illuminated the skies,  
Like joy when it sparkles from innocent eyes.

Old Santa Claus, seeing the hour at hand  
When children get sleepy all over the land,  
Put eight tiny reindeer to one little sleigh,  
And seizing a bundle, he started away

For over the mountain and over the snow,  
As light as a feather and swift as a roe.  
At last on our chimney he drew up his team,  
And stole out as silent and soft as a dream,

Lest hearing the footsteps on top of the house,  
The children, all sleeping as "snug as a mouse,"  
Might wake up and catch him with pockets and hat  
Stuffed full of nice candy, and much more than that

Nuts, raisins and apples, and all sorts of toys –  
Exactly the thing for the girls and the boys.  
As a light as a feather he came down the flue,  
That seemed to grow wider to let him get through;

And there in the corner, all ranged in a row,  
Were four little stockings, as white as the snow.  
He smiled when he saw them, and winked his old eye,  
But waited a moment and then passed them by,

To peep through the curtains of two little beds,  
Where, wrapped in sweet slumber, lay four little heads;  
And he read in the faces of each little pair,  
Who'd acted the wisest throughout the past year.

If one had been naughty, and told a white fib  
Another got angry and tore up her bib  
If he had his parents neglected to mind,  
Or she to her playmates been rude or unkind,

From them he'd have taken to give to the rest,  
For "Santa Claus" always gave most to the best.  
But these little fellows, it seems, had done well,  
For how much he gave them I hardly can tell.

To one he gave candy, a drum, and an apple;  
Another a pony – a beautiful dapple  
Birds, baskets and dollies, with sweet flaxen curls,  
Fruits, flowers and ribbons he left for the girls.

If either was slighted, I cannot tell which,  
For all received something – and no one a switch.  
"Good night, little darlings," old Santa then said,  
And shaking with laughter, he turned from the bed,

And mounting the chimney, he started to go  
Far over the mountain and over the snow.  
This happened one Christmas. I'm sorry to write,  
Our ports are blockaded, and Santa, tonight,

Will hardly get down here; for if he should start,  
The Yankees would get him unless he was "smart."  
They beat all the men in creation to run  
And if they could get him, they'd think it fine fun

To put him in prison, and steal the nice toys  
He started to bring to our girls and boys.  
But try not to mind it – tell over your jokes  
Be happy and cheerful, like other good folks.  
For if you remember to be good and kind,  
Old Santa next Christmas will bear it in mind.

# PHOTOS OF THE 2021 LUCIA PROCESSION



