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SAINTS OF THE EUCHARIST

by *FATHER FRANCIS*

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Boy Who Carried Jesus (St. Tarcisius)	2
God's Little White Saint (Blessed Imelda)	9
The Pope of Little Children (St. Pius X)	16
A Lily in God's Garden (St. Maria Goretti)	24

A Boy Who Carried Jesus

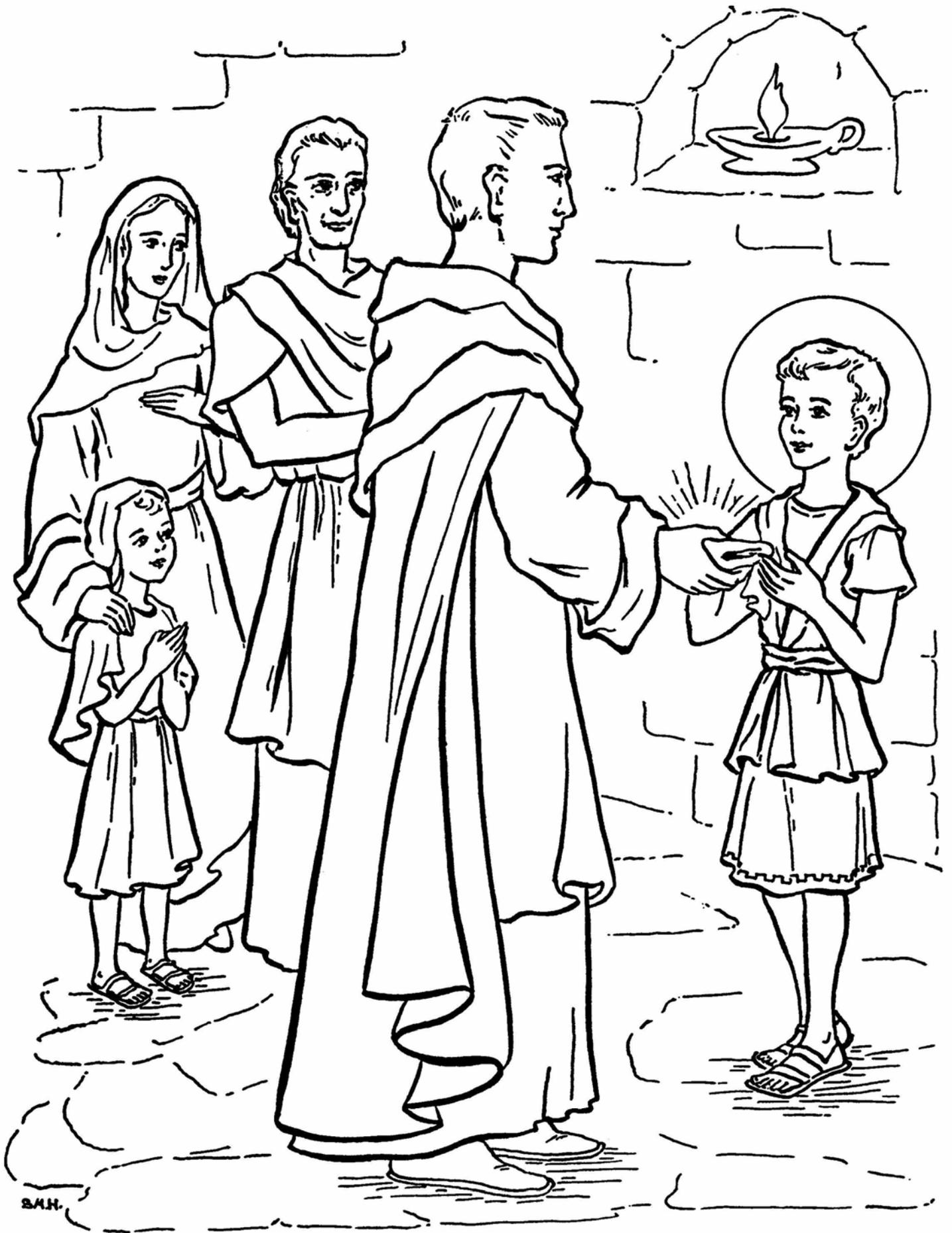
This story really happened long, long ago. At that time there were many people who hated the Christians. These bad people were called pagans. They did not want anyone to love and serve God. But the Christians were brave. They remained true to God. They served God all the more.

Many of the Christians built caves in the ground. The caves would keep them safe. Here, too, the priests could hide. Here the priests could offer Holy Mass every day, and the Christians could receive Holy Communion. This would help keep them brave. It would help them to be strong so that they would even be ready to die for Christ.

Sometimes the pagans found the hiding places of the Christians. They would take the Christians to the prisons, and then they would kill them. That is what happened to the mother and father of a little boy named Tarcisus. Now he lived with the priests and other Christians in secret caves under the ground. Tarcisus became an altar boy and helped the priest in many ways.

One morning these good people had just finished offering Holy Mass with the priest in their underground cave. The kind priest thought of his friends in prison. Turning sadly to the people, he said, "If only I knew of someone who could take Jesus to the prisoners. It must be someone who will take good care of this Holy Treasure. But these pagans know too many of us."

Before anyone could answer the priest, little Tarcisus, who loved Jesus more than anyone in the world, said in a loud voice, "Oh, Father, please let me carry Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to



Tarcisus takes Jesus to the Christian prisoners.

the prisoners. I am not afraid. And no one will ever think I have the Treasure, for I am still a child. I will promise to keep Jesus safe."

At first the priest did not wish Tarcisius to go. This would be too dangerous an errand for such a small boy. But as he looked into the beautiful pure eyes of the child, he said, "Tarcisius, you are still a little boy, but your love for Jesus is very big. You can be His altar boy and His priest today. I know that you will always remember that it is dear Jesus you are carrying to the prisoners. Hold Him fast, no matter what happens."

"Father, I would rather die than let anything happen to my God!" answered the happy boy.

Very carefully the priest took the sacred Hosts and put them into a clean white cloth. He gave the precious Treasure to Tarcisius to put under his coat - close to his heart.

"God be with you, my boy!" were the last words Tarcisius heard the kind priest say.

"Thank you, Father, and God be with you, too!" called Tarcisius, as he slowly left the cave. How happy the little boy was as he carried his Lord and Savior so close to his heart! Only Tarcisius knew the secrets that Jesus whispered to his little priest on the way.

So far no one had seen Tarcisius. No one had stopped him. The happy boy felt safe with his God. But just as Tarcisius began to cross a field he heard some boys call out to him.

"Hi, Tarce, come on over and join us. We need just one more for our game."

"I'm sorry, boys, but please don't ask me today - I have an errand to do. I'm really in a hurry." Tarcisius started walking fast. He



Tarcisus keeps his Treasure safe from the pagan boys.