



THE HOLY FAMILY.

LITTLE PICTORIAL
LIVES OF THE SAINTS

WITH REFLECTIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

Compiled from "Butler's Lives" and Other Approved Sources

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
LIVES OF CERTAIN SAINTS CONTAINED IN THE
CALENDAR OF SPECIAL FEASTS FOR THE
UNITED STATES AND OF SOME OTHERS
RECENTLY CANONIZED



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THE MOVABLE FEASTS.

MOVABLE FEASTS are so called because they have no fixed place in the calendar ; their celebration happening sooner or later, year by year, according as the feast of Easter itself occurs at a different period. The latter feast is always celebrated on the Sunday which accompanies or follows the first full moon after the spring equinox. As the movable feasts afford useful lessons, we ought to take them fully to heart.

ADVENT.

THE time of Advent cannot exactly be considered festal, nor can it be classed among the movable feasts; and yet the first day of Advent is, in another sense, *movable*, inasmuch as it happens always on the fourth Sunday before Christmas—which festival itself falls on different days of the week. Advent means *coming*, and the four weeks whereof it consists represent the four thousand years which preceded the *coming* of the Son of God into this world. Formerly, Advent-time was observed by fasting, abstinence, and mortification, but not in a manner so rigorous as that of Lent. Notwithstanding the alleviations which the Church has thought well to introduce in the course of time, Advent has still remained a period of recollection and prayer. The true Christian ought to take ad-

for man's redemption; and having made all creatures subject to His rule He might deliver to the Father a universal and eternal Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, of love and of peace.

Reflection.—The royal standard of Jesus Christ is the Cross, He rules the nations from a Tree. We are therefore His faithful subjects if we imitate His example of obedience, humility and sacrifice.

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January 1.—THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

CIRCUMCISION was a sacrament of the Old Law, and the first legal observance required by Almighty God of the descendants of Abraham. It was a sacrament of initiation in the service of God, and a promise and engagement to believe and act as He had revealed and directed. The law of circumcision continued in force until the death of Christ, and Our Saviour being born under the law, it *became Him*, Who came to teach mankind obedience to the law of God, *to fulfil all justice*, and to submit to it. Therefore He was circumcised that He might *redeem them that were under the law*, by freeing them from the servitude of it; and that those who were in the condition of servants before might be set at liberty, and *receive the adoption of sons* in Baptism, which, by Christ's institution, succeeded to circumcision. On the day that the divine Infant was circumcised, He received the name of JESUS, which signifies SAVIOUR, which had been given Him by the angel before He was conceived. That name, so beautiful, so glorious, the divine Child does not wish to bear for one moment without fulfilling its meaning; even at the moment of His circumcision He showed Himself a SAVIOUR by



March 21.—ST. BENEDICT, Abbot.

ST. BENEDICT, blessed by grace and in name, was born of a noble Italian family about 480. When a boy he was sent to Rome, and there placed in the public schools. Scared by the licentiousness of the Roman youth, he fled to the desert mountains of Subiaco, and was directed by the Holy Spirit into a cave, deep, craggy, and almost inaccessible. He lived there for three years, unknown to any one save the holy monk Romanus, who clothed him with the monastic habit and brought him food. But the fame of his sanctity soon gathered disciples round him. The rigor of his rule, however, drew on him the hatred of some of the monks, and one of them mixed poison with the abbot's drink; but when the Saint made the sign of the cross on the poisoned bowl, it broke and fell in pieces to the ground. After he had built twelve monasteries at Subiaco, he removed to Monte Casino, where he founded an abbey in which he wrote his rule and lived until death. By prayer he did all things: wrought miracles, saw visions, and

prophesied. A peasant, whose boy had just died, ran in anguish to St. Benedict, crying out, "Give me back my son!" The monks joined the poor man in his entreaties; but the Saint replied, "Such miracles are not for us to work, but for the blessed apostles. Why will you lay upon me a burden which my weakness cannot bear?" Moved at length by compassion he knelt down and, prostrating himself upon the body of the child, prayed earnestly. Then rising, he cried out, "Behold not, O Lord, my sins, but the faith of this man, who desireth the life of his son, and restore to the body that soul which Thou hast taken away." Hardly had he spoken when the child's body began to tremble, and taking it by the hand he restored it alive to its father. Six days before his death he ordered his grave to be opened, and fell ill of a fever. On the sixth day he requested to be borne into the chapel, and, having received the body and blood of Christ, with hands uplifted, and leaning on one of his disciples, he calmly expired in prayer on the 21st of March, 543.

Reflection.—The Saints never feared to undertake any work, however arduous, for God, because, distrusting self, they relied for assistance and support wholly upon prayer.

March 22.—ST. CATHARINE OF SWEDEN, Virgin.

ST. CATHARINE was daughter of Ulpho, Prince of Nericia in Sweden, and of St. Bridget. The love of God seemed almost to prevent in her the use of her reason. At seven years of age she was placed in the nunnery of Rishburgh, and educated in piety under the care of the holy abbess of that house. Being very beautiful, she was, by her father, contracted in marriage to Egard, a young nobleman of great virtue; but the virgin persuaded him to join with her in making a mutual vow of perpetual chastity. By her discourses he became desirous only of heavenly graces, and, to draw them down upon his soul more abun-