



**National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague
Prague, Okla.**

The INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE

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Prayers to the Infant Jesus for All Occasions
with
A Short History of the Devotion

Illustrated



CATHOLIC BOOK PUBLISHING CORP.
NEW JERSEY

PREFACE

THIS new book in honor of the Infant Jesus of Prague is the result of an extensive research into all available historical as well as ecclesiastical sources relating to the devotion to the Infant. Documents of the Sacred Roman Congregations as well as privileges granted by various Popes were consulted to establish clear official approval of the devotion.

Abundant material in various modern languages—Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, etc.—was especially helpful in an effort to show the prayerful mind that it must first understand devotionally the historical promise of the Infant of Prague (“The more you honor Me, the more I will bless you!”) before it can fully reap its rich benefits.

I am indebted to many authors and publishers of foreign language works which provided helpful guidelines, to many Sisters’ convents and monasteries who gave information of their novenas, and to hundreds of devotional booklets, novena leaflets, and prayerbooks for the reconstruction of devotional practices of all kinds. All historical prayers were taken from P. Emerich of St. Stephen, *Pragerisches Gross und Klein* (Prague, 1737) as rendered into English in my book *The Great and Little One of Prague* (1959).

It is my fervent hope that this little book will win fresh love for the Divine Infant and direct the steps of countless Catholics to the veneration of the Infant Jesus.

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Part I

History of the Holy Child of Prague

Origin in Spain

THE origin of the miraculous statue is Spanish. In 1556 Maria Manriquez de Lara brought this precious family heirloom with her to Bohemia, a part of the present Czechoslovakia, when she married the Czech nobleman, Vratislav of Pernstyn.

Spain at that time excelled in spiritual strength, especially with the mysticism of the great St. Teresa of Avila (1582). She emphasized the devotion of the Holy Childhood, and the humane littleness of God's greatness as a means of establishing the proper relationship of creatures to their Creator. Her mysticism found a way to express these spiritual values in the representation of the Holy Child as King, Whom only the little ones are willing and able to worship. The best reflection of this is embodied in the miraculous statue of the Infant of Prague.

However, the home of the Infant is the city of Prague, capital of Czechoslovakia, a city in which every stone speaks of rich history. It is housed in the church of Our Lady of Victory from which it provides spiritual uplift for millions who have adopted the Holy Infant's call to humility, simplicity, and sincerity—to become little in order to become great and pleasing before Christ the King.

Part II

Patronages of the Infant of Prague

THE patronage of the Infant of Prague is the area of human problems in which the faithful are most benefited by honoring the Infant. Although there is no such word as “limit” when we speak of Divine Power, nevertheless history reveals, very faithfully, that the Infant’s patronage was most effective everywhere.

1) Infant of Prague—Master of Vocations

THE first to witness the experience of the Infant as a Master of Vocations was Father Cyril of the Mother of God, the first promoter of this devotion, who found reassurances of his own religious vocation. The whole story of the statue itself is centered around this point. And it is logical that the Infant King takes good care of His servants, dedicated primarily to “seeking the kingdom of God.”

This is why the religious Orders and Congregations have their monthly novenas, held from the sixteenth to the twenty-fifth of each month, for vocations. The diversity of such novenas, performed in different ways, indicates the spontaneous urge of all those who want to be one of the “chosen.” The complexity of every vocation needs a special Divine patronage, because “being chosen” depends entirely on Divine choice.

Part IV

Historical Prayers

IT is certain that the historical prayers, inspired by the first promoter of this devotion, Venerable Father Cyril of the Mother of God, and used in the Shrine of the Infant of Our Lady of Victory Church of Prague, are of the utmost importance, revealing the basic characteristics of the devotion to the Infant King.

Aspirations of Venerable Father Cyril

MY JESUS, Holy Child, I love in Thee
The Son of God and of the Virgin Mary;
I pray, from present needs deliver me:
For truly do I firmly trust in Thee
That Thou as God canst provide for me.
Wherefore, confidently, I place my hope in Thee
That Thy favors will be granted to me.
Hence with heart and soul I cherish Thee;
Sorrow for my sins deeply grieves me.
Because of them humbly I beseech Thee,
O Jesus, to root them out completely.
I promise never more to offend Thee,
And therefore, Jesus, surrender all to Thee.
My neighbor as myself I love for Thee.
Most powerful Jesus, hear my prayerful plea
To suffer and to serve Thee faithfully,
And I adore and worship Thee accordingly.