

AMERICAN CARDINAL READERS

For Catholic Parochial Schools

BOOK TWO

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WHOSE BIRTHDAY WAS BEST?

One night Mother, Father and the children were in the living room. Jean and John were talking about the best time to have a birthday.

John said, "I think it is fine to have a birthday in winter. There is snow to play in then. There is ice to skate on, too. I am glad my birthday comes then."

"I am glad mine comes in the spring," said Jean. "The birds that went south for the winter come back then. Pretty green leaves come out on the trees and bushes. Flowers begin to bloom and there is grass on the ground. I think spring is the best time to have a birthday. Don't you think so, too, Mother?"

Mother said, "Spring and winter are both fine times for birthdays, Jean. I like the time of your birthday. I like the time of John's, too; but I like the time of Baby's birthday best of all."

“I have forgotten when Baby’s birthday is, Mother. Please tell me,” said John.

“It is September 8,” said Mother.

“Why is that such a fine day for a birthday, Mother?” asked Jean.

Jean’s mother said, “Long, long ago, before Jesus came from Heaven, a beautiful baby girl was born on September 8. She was born in a country, far, far away. Her mother and father loved God dearly. They wished their little girl to love and serve Him all her life. So while she was still very little, they taught her to pray. They taught her what she must do to please God.

“When this little girl grew older, her parents brought her to the Temple. There she learned to do the things all girls learned to do then. She learned to spin and weave and sew. She learned to keep a house in order. She learned to read and write, too. In her work she always tried to please God by doing her best.

“Every one who knew her loved her, for she was always gentle, kind and good. She never did anything that was not pleasing to God. She prayed each day that she might do only what God wished her to do.

“After many years God showed her how much He loved her for being so good. He chose her to be the Mother of Jesus.”

“O Mother,” said Jean, “I know now why September 8 is such a beautiful time for a birthday. It is the birthday of our Blessed Mother.”

“Yes, Jean, it is,” said Mother.

Then Father said, “We named our baby Mary because she was born on our Blessed Mother’s birthday.”

“Then I think we should call her Mary and not Baby,” said John.

Father, Mother and Jean said they thought so, too. So after that the baby was always called by her own beautiful name—Mary.



THE CHRIST CHILD

The Christ Child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.

HOW RUTH FOUND HER WAY

Ruth and Robert lived with their mother in a house at the edge of the woods.

It was a long walk to the nearest town. The road to it ran through the woods.

Every day Robert went to this town to sell the little cakes his mother made. Sometimes he took fresh eggs to sell, too.

One day Robert was ill and could not go to town. His mother could not go, for she had to take care of him.

Ruth said, "Mother, please let me take the cakes and eggs to town to-day. I have gone there so often with Robert, I am sure I know the way."

Ruth's mother said, "There are many paths in the woods, dear. I am afraid you would not find the right one without Robert's help."

“O, I am sure I know the right path, Mother. Please let me go. Let me try to help you as Robert does,” begged Ruth.

Ruth’s mother thought for a while. Then she said,

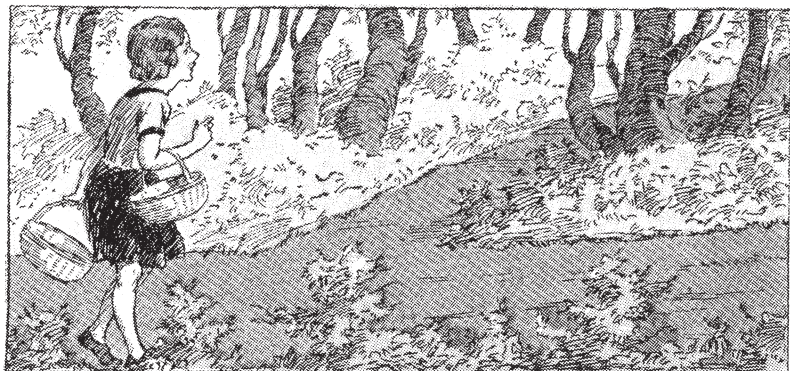
“You may go, dear. Your Guardian Angel will take care of you.”

The cakes were packed neatly in one basket. The eggs were put into another. Ruth took a basket in each hand and started off.

It took her a long time to reach the town. It took her a long time to sell all the cakes and eggs, too. It was late when she was ready to start for home.

“I must hurry. I want to be home before it is dark,” she said to herself.

Ruth ran through the woods as fast as she could. At last she came to a place where two paths met. She did not know which path to follow. It seemed to her that she had never seen this place before.



Ruth thought she was lost but she was not afraid. She knew her Guardian Angel would help her. She prayed,

“Beautiful Angel,
My guardian so mild,
Tenderly guide me,
For I am thy child.”

Then she walked along one of the paths.

Before she had gone very far, she saw a big flat rock under one of the trees. “O,” she said, “I know now I am on the right path. Robert and I have often rested on that rock, on our way home from town. Thank you, Guardian Angel, for helping me.”



Ruth ran along this path. It led her out of the woods and right to her own home.

“I am so glad you are safe at home again, Ruth,” said her mother.

“My Guardian Angel took care of me, Mother,” said Ruth. Then she told her mother about the two paths in the woods.