

around the year

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEASONS AND THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

THE STORY OF SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS

by Amy Steedman

AN EXCERPT FROM *IN GOD'S GARDEN: STORIES OF THE SAINTS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN*

It was a cold winter's day in the city of Amiens, and the wind swept along the great Roman road outside the city gates with such an icy blast that the few people who were out of doors wrapped themselves closer in their cloaks, and longed for their sheltering homes and warm firesides. But there was one poor old man who had no cloak to wrap around him, and no fireside of which to dream. He shivered as the searching wind came sweeping past him, and his half-blind eyes looked eagerly up and down the road to see if any one was coming who might help him in his need. One by one the people hurried past and paid no heed to the beggar's outstretched hand. It was much too cold to stop or to think of giving help, and not even a beggar could expect it on such a day as this. So they left

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From the Editor's Desk

November 1, 2015

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the very first *around the year* monthly newsletter!

Because the celebration of holy men and women plays such an important role in the church year, what better month to start a new spiritual journey than with November – the month that begins with **All Saints Day**?

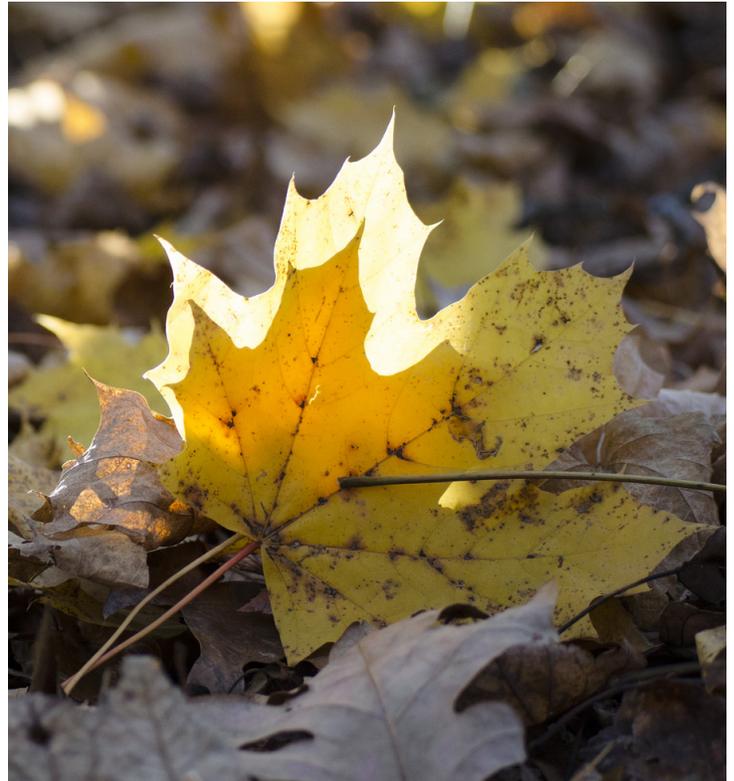
In this newsletter you will find a beautiful story of the life of **Saint Martin of Tours** (whose feast day is November 11th), written by Amy Steedman in 1906. Mrs. Steedman was a British author of children's books, many of them religious in nature. Her book *In God's Garden: Stories of the Saints for Little Children* is now in the public domain and can be found in its entirety at Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/36674>).

I've also included instructions for creating a **Martinmas lantern** using just a glass jar, some tissue paper, and glue. This is a wonderful activity for children, and a tradition that will bring the whole family joy for years to come. For a sweet ending to your celebration of Saint Martin you can indulge in some **Vanilla Horseshoe Cookies** (see page 6).

>>>Visit aroundtheyear.org/martinmas for additional photos, musings, and menu ideas.

In the spirit of new beginnings, we find that November also brings the **First Sunday in Advent** on the 29th. This special day marks the beginning of a new liturgical year. I plan to have some ideas and suggestions for celebrating Advent up on AroundTheYear.org in the coming weeks, so be sure to check [facebook.com/aroundtheyear.org](https://www.facebook.com/aroundtheyear.org) for updates!

Kelli Ann Wilson, Editor
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Coming to *around the year* in December:

alternative advent wreaths, St. Nicholas cookies, a handmade nativity & more!

the poor old man hungry and cold and homeless. Then a young soldier came riding past, but the beggar scarcely thought of asking alms of him, for the Roman soldiers were not the kind of men to trouble themselves about the poor and suffering.

The old man closed his eyes, weary and hopeless, for it seemed as if there was none to help nor pity him. Then in a moment he felt a warm cloak thrown around his shoulders, and in his ears sounded a kind voice which bade him wrap it close



GLITTERING STARS AND PAPER OAK LEAVES MAKE LOVELY MARTINMAS DECORATIONS

around him to keep out the cold. Half bewildered the beggar looked up, and saw the young soldier bending over him. He had dismounted from his horse and held a sword in his hand, with which he had just cut his own cloak in half, that he might share it with the shivering old man. The passers-by laughed and hurried on, but the soldier did not care if they mocked him, for he was quite happy to think he had helped one who needed help so sorely. The name of this young soldier was Martin, and he served in the Roman army with his father, who was a famous general. Most of Martin's fellow-soldiers were pagans, but he was a Christian, and served the emperor well, because he served Christ first.

The very night after Martin had divided his cloak with the beggar he had a dream, in which he saw his Master, Christ, among the holy angels, wearing the half cloak which Martin had given away that afternoon. And as he looked, he heard Christ's voice speaking to the angels, and saying: "Know ye who hath clothed Me with this cloak? My servant Martin, who is yet unbaptized, hath done this." Then Martin awoke, and he did not rest until Christ's seal of baptism was set



upon his brow, and he felt that he had enlisted truly in God's service.

Now Martin knew that to be God's servant meant doing everything day by day as well as it could be done, and serving his earthly master as faithfully and diligently as he tried to serve his heavenly commander. So it came to pass that for all the fourteen years he served in the emperor's army, he was known as the best and bravest soldier, and one who had never failed to do his duty.

But as he began to grow old, he longed to serve God in other ways, and so he went to the emperor and

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TOURS, FRANCE

Tours was a Gallic city called Turones that became part of the Roman Empire during the 1st Century AD. It was named "Caesarodunum" or "hill of Caesar," and remained so called until the 4th Century when the original name was revived and it became known as "Civitas Turonum," and eventually "Tours." By the end of the 4th Century, Tours was the metropolis of the Roman Empire. Perhaps its most outstanding figure was Saint Martin, the second bishop of Tours. The city became an important stop on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela during the Middle Ages.



asked for permission to leave the army. There was war going on just then, for Rome was ever fighting with the barbarians who came up against her, and the emperor was very angry when he heard Martin's request. "You seek to leave the army because you fear to fight," he said scornfully to Martin, who stood silently before him. "A Roman soldier should scorn to be a coward." "I am no coward," answered Martin and he met with unflinching look the angry gaze of the emperor. "Place me alone in the front of the battle, with no weapon but the cross alone, and I shall not fear to meet the enemy single-handed and unarmed." "Well said," answered the emperor quickly; "we will take thee at thy word. To-morrow thou shalt stand defenceless before the enemy, and so shall we judge of thy boasted courage." Then the emperor ordered his guards to watch Martin that night lest he should try to escape before the trial could be made. But Martin had no thought of



RED WINTERBERRIES MAKE A WONDERFUL ADDITION TO A MARTINMAS CELEBRATION

escape, and was ready and eager to do as he had said. Meanwhile, however, the enemy began to fear that they had no chance against the Roman army; and very early in the morning, they sent messengers to ask for peace, offering to give themselves up to the mercy of the emperor.

So Martin was set at liberty, and no one doubted his courage and faithfulness; since they believed that his faith in God had brought peace, and given them the victory over their enemies. Soon after this Martin was allowed to leave the army, and he journeyed from place to place telling those who had never heard it before the good news of Jesus Christ. In those days it was dangerous to go among the mountains unarmed, for robbers and brigands made their home there, and would swoop down on unsuspecting travellers and rob or murder them. But Martin took no companions with him, and with no weapon but the cross, he climbed the mountain roads defenceless and alone. One day, as he journeyed, a company of brigands appeared suddenly, as if they had started out of the rocks. They seized him roughly, and one of them aimed a blow at his head with an axe. But before the blow could fall, another robber turned the axe aside and claimed Martin as his prisoner. Then they tied his hands behind him and bound him fast, while they made up their minds which would be the best way to kill him.

But Martin sat calm and untroubled, and seemed to have no fear of these terrible men. "What is thy name, and who art thou?" asked the brigand who had claimed Martin as his prisoner. "I am a Christian,"



A SIMPLE TABLESCAPE FEATURING NATURAL ELEMENTS & CANDLES

answered Martin simply. "And art thou not afraid of the tortures which await thee, that thou dost seem so calm and fearless?" asked the robber, wondering at the peaceful look upon the prisoner's face. "I fear nothing that thou canst do to me," answered Martin, "for I am a servant of the great King, and He will defend His own. But I do indeed grieve for thee, because thou livest by robbery and violence, and art therefore unworthy of the mercy of my Lord."

The astonished robber asked him what he meant, and who this great King was whom he served; so Martin told him the whole story of God's love, and of the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

No words so wonderful had ever been spoken to this brigand before, and as he listened he believed that what Martin said was true. The first thing he did was to cut the rope which bound his prisoner's hands and to set him free; and after that he led him in safety through the mountain passes, until he reached a road that led to the plains below.

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Although Martin loved to dwell in lonely places, he was always ready to go where he was most needed, and so a great part of his life was spent in busy towns. When he was made Bishop of Tours and could no longer live in the solitude he loved, still he strove to be the best bishop it was possible to become, just as when he was a soldier he tried to be as good a soldier as he knew how to be.

Now Martin was growing an old man, yet he was very little changed since that long ago day when he divided his cloak with the poor beggar outside the gates of Amiens. It is said that one day when he was serving at the altar, in all his beautiful bishop's robes, he saw a ragged beggar standing near shivering with cold. He went himself and took off his gold-embroidered vestment and put it tenderly round the shoulders of the beggar. Then as the service went on, the kneeling crowd saw with wonder that angels were hovering round and were hanging chains of gold upon the upraised arms to cover them, because the robe Martin had given to the beggar had left them bare.

Martin lived a long and useful life; but he was growing weary now, and when God's call came, he gladly prepared to enter into his rest, and to leave the world where he had laboured so long and faithfully. The night that Martin died he was seen in a vision by one of his friends who loved him more than all the rest. The saint's robe was shining white and his eyes were like stars and, as the friend knelt and worshipped, he felt a soft touch upon his head and heard a voice that blessed him ere the vision faded. And so Martin finished his earthly work, and went to hear from his Master's lips the gracious words: "Well done, good and faithful servant." - A.S.



November

by *William Cullen Bryant*

Yet one smile more, departing, distant sun!
One more mellow smile through the soft vapory air,
Ere, o'er the frozen earth, the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,
And the blue gentian-flower, that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days, in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the way,
The cricket chirp upon the russet lea,
And man delight to linger in thy ray.
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.

Quotes about November

Autumn is the eternal corrective. It is ripeness and color and a time of maturity; but it is also breadth, and depth, and distance. What man can stand with autumn on a hilltop and fail to see the span of his world and the meaning of the rolling hills that reach to the far horizon?

- *Hal Borland*

I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape – the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.

- *Andrew Wyeth*



MARTINMAS LANTERNS



The tradition of making Martinmas lanterns comes from Germany. On the night of November 11th, German children walk in processions carrying lanterns and singing songs. Oftentimes a man on horseback dressed like St. Martin walks along beside them.

It is possible that the lanterns arose out of the the traditional St. Martin bonfire, which is still lit in a few

cities and villages throughout Europe. The light from the bonfire and the lanterns symbolizes the light that holiness brings to the darkness of the world, just as St. Martin brought hope to the poor through his generosity and kindness.

Making homemade lanterns with your children or grandchildren and then processing around the neighborhood is a wonderful way to keep this Martinmas tradition alive.

A simple lantern can be made from a dry, clean jar, some colored tissue paper, and glue - I like to use Mod Podge because it leaves a glossy finish. Tear or cut the tissue paper to form pictures or abstract, colorful designs. Apply a thin layer of glue, place the paper on the jar, and cover with another thin layer of glue. Leave to dry overnight. Secure a wax candle tealight (or LED) to the inside bottom of the jar, and make a handle with string or wire.

Vanilla Horseshoe Cookies

- 1 c butter or margarine
- 1/2 c confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 c rolled oats, uncooked

Cream butter or margarine; add sugar gradually while continuing to cream; beat until fluffy and stir in the vanilla, flour, and salt. Knead the rolled oats into the dough while still in the bowl. Roll out about 1/4 inch thick and cut into strips 6" long by 1/2" wide. Shape strips into horseshoes on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove carefully, as cookies break apart easily.



NOVEMBER 2015

November 1st: All Saints Day

November 2nd: All Souls Day

November 5th: Feast of St. Elizabeth

November 11th: Martinmas or Feast of St. Martin of Tours

November 17th: Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of widows and young brides

November 22nd: Feast of St. Cecilia, patroness of musicians

November 22nd: Feast of Christ the King

November 25th: Feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, patroness of philosophers & preachers

November 29th: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

November 30th: Feast of St. Andrew, patron of fishermen

Stay in touch!

Visit AroundTheYear.org for more photos, crafts, recipes, and ideas for celebrating the natural seasons and the Christian year.

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I'm currently looking for individuals who might be interested in contributing to *around the year* (both the website and the newsletters). If you enjoy what I've created and would like to become involved, please contact me! kelli@aroundtheyear.org



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Recommended Reading

CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER



The Star Child, written by The Brothers Grimm, illustrated by Bernadette Watts

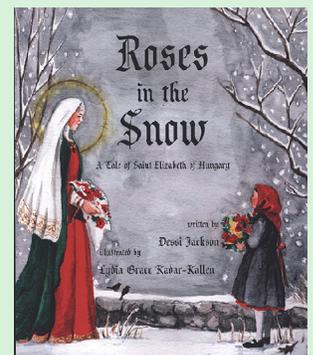
From the publisher: There was once a young girl whose only possessions were the clothes on her back and a piece of bread some kind soul had given to her. But even these few things meant much to others less fortunate than herself, and in selfless love, the girl gave the little she had away. In this beautiful

Grimm tale, her virtue is rewarded a thousand times over.

[Editor's note: This story makes a beautiful companion to a celebration of St. Martin and his selfless generosity.]

Roses in the Snow: A Tale of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, written by Dessi Jackson, illustrated by Lydia Grace Kader-Kallen

From the publisher: Elizabeth loves to hear her grandmother's stories, and none is more dear to her than the story of her namesake: St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Together the two recall the holiness and charity of this great saint while preparing to celebrate her feast day. Dessi Jackson's lively storytelling voice draws listeners into another time and place, while Lydia Grace's beautiful watercolor illustrations provide a richly detailed delight for the eyes. This charming tale is wonderful to read aloud for the young and young at heart.



[Editor's note: St. Elizabeth's feast day is November 17th.]