

The Junior Observer

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An Old Testament Story

A Mysterious Hand Writes on the Wall

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Catholic Courier

One day, King Belshazzar, the pagan king of Babylon, gave a great banquet at his palace for 1,000 of his lords.

During the feast, the king ordered that gold and silver vessels be brought in so that he, his lords, his wives and the entertainers could drink from them.

These vessels were very special. One of the previous kings of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken them from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem when he ransacked the city and brought its citizens to Babylon as captives.

As the people drank from the sacred vessels, they praised their pagan gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Suddenly, the fingers of a human hand appeared and began writing in the plaster on the wall.

When the king saw the hand, the color drained from his face. He was so terrified that the joints of his hips shook and his



(Illustration/Linda Jeanne Rivers)

Bible Trivia
What happened to King Belshazzar after Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall? (Hint: Daniel 5:30)

Answer: He was slain that night.

knees knocked together.

The king ordered Daniel to be brought before him. Daniel was a Jew who had been brought to Babylon as a captive. He also was a prophet of God and, in the past, had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The king said he would give Daniel valuable items and a position of power

in the kingdom if he could reveal the meaning of the words written on the wall: MENE, TEKEL and PERES.

Daniel refused the king's gifts but said he would read the words and tell him what they meant.

"You have rebelled against the Lord of heaven," Daniel said, explaining that the king had praised false gods while drinking from the Temple vessels. "But the God in whose hand is your life breath and the whole course of your life, you did not glorify. By Him were the wrist and hand sent, and the writing set down."

Then Daniel interpreted the meaning of the three words that had been written on the wall.

MENE, he said, meant that God had numbered Belshazzar's kingdom and put an end to it.

TEKEL meant that Belshazzar had been weighed on the scales and was found wanting.

And PERES meant that the kingdom of Babylon had been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Q&A

What did the king see on the wall?

Who did the king ask for help?

Read more about it in Daniel 5

Pray the St. Andrew Novena This Advent

Advent, the first season of the Church year, begins Dec. 3. This is the season when we get ready for Jesus' birth with kind acts and prayers.

One prayer (or lots of little prayers) you can pray this Advent is the St. Andrew Novena. It lasts from the feast of St. Andrew on Nov. 30 to Christmas Eve.

Every day, repeat the prayer 15 times, either all at once or throughout the day. The novena has a reputation for answered prayers — though our answer may be different than what we expect.

"Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen."

To keep track, you could make a beaded bracelet or a chart. But if you miss a day or a few repetitions, God will still always give His grace.

—OSV News.



(Photo provided/Sonja Keane)

Elgin Students Join Over a Million in Praying the Rosary

ELGIN—On Oct. 18, students at St. Thomas More School joined over 1,038,000 children around the world in praying the rosary for world peace and unity. Although many rosaries are said by the minute around the world, the foundation Aid to the Church in Need invited one million children to pray the rosary and rekindle their faith in the power of prayer.



(Photo provided/Carol Norman)

St. Mary Walk-a-Thon Brings Fall Fun

ELGIN—St. Mary School's Home and School Association sponsored its 10th annual walk-a-thon this fall. Students, parents, teachers and staff joined the cross-country team leaders on the course and took part in the celebration afterward. Highlights of the day for students included ringing a fire truck bell (with special permission from the Elgin Fire Department) and enjoying donuts. Proceeds from the fundraiser will be used toward supplemental educational programs for the school.