

# Armata Bianca

## The White Army

Director: Dr. Sheila Kuzmic  
Editor: Catherine Martineau



The Infant Jesus of Prague statue at  
St. Pius X Church.

### The Miraculous Infant Jesus of Prague

Prague is the capital city of Czechoslovakia which is located at the very center of Europe. (Just north of and not too far from Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina). The history of the Infant of Prague started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the statue was brought into Bohemia (now called Czech Republic) by a Spanish princess and was given to the Carmelites at the Church of Our Lady of Victory in Mala Strana, a small town in Prague. The history of the statue that has made this church famous began in Spain 1550. The popularity of the Child Jesus grew in the Baroque period (Spain) which may have been caused by the visions of St. Teresa of Avila, a Spanish Carmelite nun. She had a vision of Jesus and he appeared to her in his infancy. She used to bring a statue of the Infant Jesus with her all the time when founding convents. The Incarnation of Jesus, emphasizing the human side of Jesus Christ who had become a mere child, was very much alive in Spain at the time. The people of Spain are very decorative, they wear very colorful outfits. They are a very lively people and love to talk and use their hands. Spanish people love to pray and are very devoted to Jesus.

The Infant Jesus of Prague statue was obtained by Dona Isabella Manrique of Spain. When Dona Isabella's daughter, Duchess Maria Maximiliana married in 1556, she received this rare family treasure as a wedding gift and brought the Infant Jesus statue to her new home in Prague. Then later she presented the

Holy Infant to her daughter, Lady Polixena of Lobkovice when she got married in 1587. She loved the statue and prayed often to the Infant Jesus. When Polixena's husband died in 1623, she resolved to spend the remainder of her days helping the poor and doing charitable works of mercy. Towards the end of her life she decided to give the statue away. She gave the statue away to the Carmelite priests and brothers of Prague. In 1623, Lady Polixena presented her beloved statue to the Carmelites at the church of Our Lady of Victory with these prophetic words: "I hereby give you what I prize most highly in this world. As long as you venerate this image you will not be in

want.” This statue then became known as the Infant Jesus of Prague which stands nineteen inches high. It is clothed in a royal mantle and has a beautiful jeweled crown on its head.



Its right hand raised in  **blessing**. The three fingers symbolize the Trinity. He is blessing us in the fullness of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



Its left hand holds a **globe**, signifying sovereignty, Jesus' triumph over sin.



Dr. Sheila & the Armata Bianca children praying the rosary in front of Mary, the Infant Jesus, St. Joseph and St. Pius X.

For many years this statue had been enshrined on a side altar in the church of Our Lady of Victory located in the Czech Republic. Twice a day special devotions were performed before it. Here the religious sought relief in their bitter need from Him, who for love of humankind had become poor. The prediction of Lady Polyxena was verified. As long as the Divine Infant Jesus was venerated, God showed Himself a kind helper through his Son and the community prospered both spiritually and temporally. One particular devotee was Father Cyrillus, who was most devoted to the Infant Jesus and found sudden relief from interior trials through this devotion.

However, the devotion to the Divine Infant was short-lived. During the Thirty-Years War, the Saxons and the Swedes took turns to invade Prague and the church was pillaged. The most fervent worshipers of the Infant of Prague had departed. The special devotions held before the image were gradually neglected. The prosperity of the community declined, and need and distress were again felt. On November 15, 1631, the enemy took possession of the churches of the city. The Carmelite monastery was plundered and the statue of the Infant of Prague was thrown upon a heap of rubbish, behind the high altar. Both hands were broken off by the fall, but though it was made of wax, it was otherwise undamaged. Here the Miraculous Infant lay for seven years, forgotten by all. During this period the monastery suffered many reverses.

On the feast of Pentecost 1637, Father Cyrillus, the very one who while a novice had been delivered from a most annoying dryness of soul through his fervent devotion to the Holy Infant, returned to Prague. He remembered the favors formerly received through the Infant of Prague and with the prior's consent searched the monastery, until he found the long-lost treasure, almost buried in dust. Full of joy and gratitude, he kissed the disfigured statue and then placed it on an altar in the oratory. The long-forgotten devotions were now revived with renewed vigor. The religious disclosed their needs to the Divine Infant and with Him they found strength and consolation.

Father Cyrillus was the most zealous disciple of the Holy Infant. One day, when praying before the statue, he distinctly heard the statue talk and say these words: **Have pity on Me and I will have pity on you. Give me My hands and I will give you peace. The more you honor Me, the more I will bless you.** Father Cyrillus was awestruck at these words, for he had not noticed that the hands of the Divine Infant were missing, because of the mantle in which the statue was dressed. After great efforts, prayer and hardships, Father Cyrillus had the hands of the Infant Jesus statue repaired.

Ever since the statue was fixed, a number of miracles had occurred and the word began to spread. In thanksgiving for the numerous graces and cures received, the consecrating Bishop of Prague solemnly crowned the Holy Infant on April 14, 1655 on a Sunday after Easter as a sign emphasizing the royal and divine dignity of God who has become a child. The anniversary of this coronation has been celebrated ever since with a festive Mass on the Ascension holiday which is the culmination of the Easter mystery considered by the New Testament to be the real coronation in the glory and the fulfillment of God's Incarnation.

**When you pray to the Infant Jesus he will grant you many graces.** Love for our Infant Savior teaches us to accept—as He did—our **littleness**, our **poverty** as creatures. It teaches us, as St. Paul was taught, that "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in infirmity" (2 Cor. 12, 9). This devotion shows us that **God's power is attracted by our very weakness, for when dealing with our human frailty, God's power is mercy.** **The proud and arrogant, God scatters,** "He has put down the mighty from their thrones," as our Lady sang in her Magnificat. **But the little and humble He loves. "He has exalted the lowly"** (Lk. 1, 52).

The very qualities of child-like simplicity, trust, humility and dependency that characterize children need to be contemplated, accepted and eventually adopted in our own lives as we live and struggle in a world of challenges and contradictions. Not so much 'childish' as child-like in nature, through prayer we humbly ask the Holy Infant to wean us of our need to control our family, friends and own personal lives as He teaches us to surrender all things to His will. **With trust and faith in His words, "Ask and you shall receive, knock and the door shall open", we actively place our needs in His little hands in the hope that He will continue to show us what it means to be more like Him.** As our encounter with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords deepens, the lessons taught and shown to us through this particular devotion become even more crucial to our ability to successfully navigate through a chaotic world.

One day, Dr. Sheila was heading up to Providence and she had heard about a terrible fire that burned down a beautiful estate. When she was driving by the area there were a bunch of items that were removed from the house. The fire happened a few days back and something told her to pull over on the side of the road and take a look. There was a table with a sign on it that just said, "Take-Free". The one item she noticed was a statue of the Infant Jesus about the same size as the actual statue in Prague. This statue from the fire had a missing hand, just like what happened to the original statue. For three days the Infant of Prague sat there on the side of the road on the table because nobody wanted it since it was broken. But since Dr. Sheila knew about the real story of the Infant of Prague, she couldn't wait to take the statue home and that's exactly what she did. Then she went up to the Shrine of Lasalette because she knew that they had a mantle for the statue there in the gift shop. There are all different color mantles for the Infant depending on the season. She put the statue in a little prayer room in her house near her front door to greet you, because he wants to be seen and honored every day. The Infant Jesus is part of her family and they have devotion to him. Jesus loves to be venerated and honored in his infancy and many miracles happen through him.



Dr. Sheila handed out a special, beautiful prayer (shown on the next page) to say to the Infant Jesus. She let the children know that the first place they should go to when they enter the church is to the Tabernacle, because that is where Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity is. Then they can go over to the side altar to visit Mary, St. Joseph and little King Jesus, the King of the world. Jesus likes to be small because he is showing us how to be humble. Children and babies are not hard to understand. When you look at an infant you see the beauty and love of that child. An infant needs to rely on us and needs someone to help them. Jesus needs us, when he was an infant he needed his mother. Jesus is God and doesn't need anything but he wants our love, he created us to love him and to serve him. So he does need us, we are part of the plan. We were part of the plan all along.

## CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY CHILD OF PRAGUE

O Divine Child Jesus, only-begotten Son of the Father, You are the true light that enlightens everyone coming into this world. It is through You that I am, it is through You that all things have been made, and without You nothing would be. It is therefore just that I devote myself to You without reserve.

In gratitude for all the love with which You love me, I devote to you all the love my heart is capable of. I ardently desire to love you still more, to offer You a heart less unworthy of You. Accept this ardent desire, O amiable Child-God, and kindly bless it.

You have suffered for us and have borne Your infirmities, in order that we might one day deserve to be associated with Your eternal happiness. I want to unite my sufferings to Yours, so that You may give them merit and they may be sanctified. As You have been weeping for me, because of my sins, help me by Your grace to weep for them myself.

I also devote to You all my joys. I only have the ambition and the will to seek those pleasing to your service, by the practice of the virtues taught in the mysteries of Your Divine Childhood. I beg You to help me by Your grace to acquire the gentleness, the humility, the childlike simplicity, the filial confidence and the perfect obedience, of which you give me such a splendid example.

May I progress in holiness and one day possess the rewards promised in heaven to those who practice the lessons of your Holy Childhood. Amen.



The original Infant Jesus of Prague statue at Our Lady of Victory Church before it was dressed, without the royal mantle, crown and globe.

Pictured to the left is a map showing the location of Prague, Czech Republic in relation to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina.



**“Families that pray together, stay together.”**