

# Pascha at the Duckpond

Mother Melania

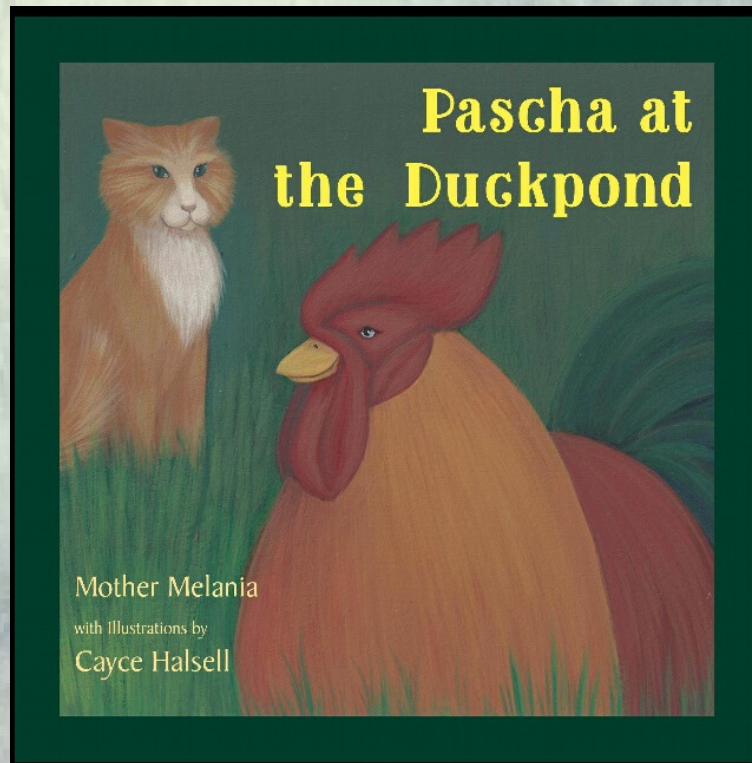
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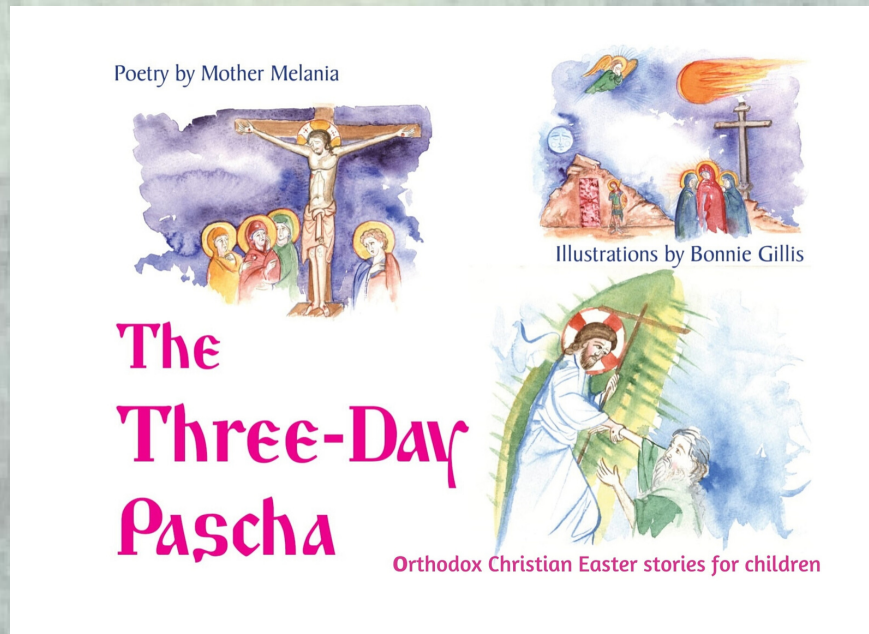


**Pascha at the Duckpond**

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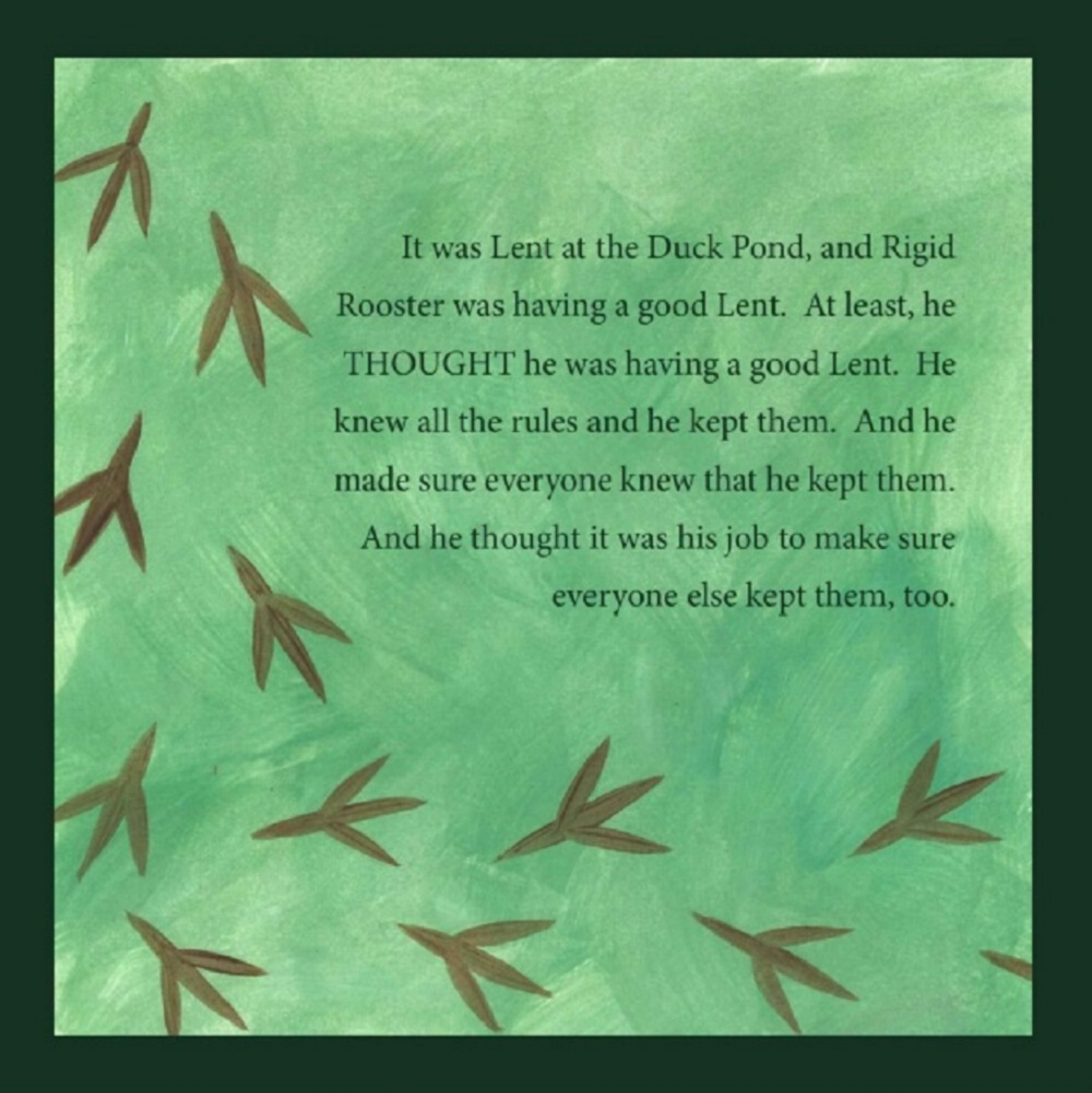


Mother Melania  
with art by  
Cayce Halsell



# **Pascha at the Duckpond**

Holy Assumption Monastery  
Calistoga, CA  
2020



It was Lent at the Duck Pond, and Rigid Rooster was having a good Lent. At least, he THOUGHT he was having a good Lent. He knew all the rules and he kept them. And he made sure everyone knew that he kept them.

And he thought it was his job to make sure everyone else kept them, too.



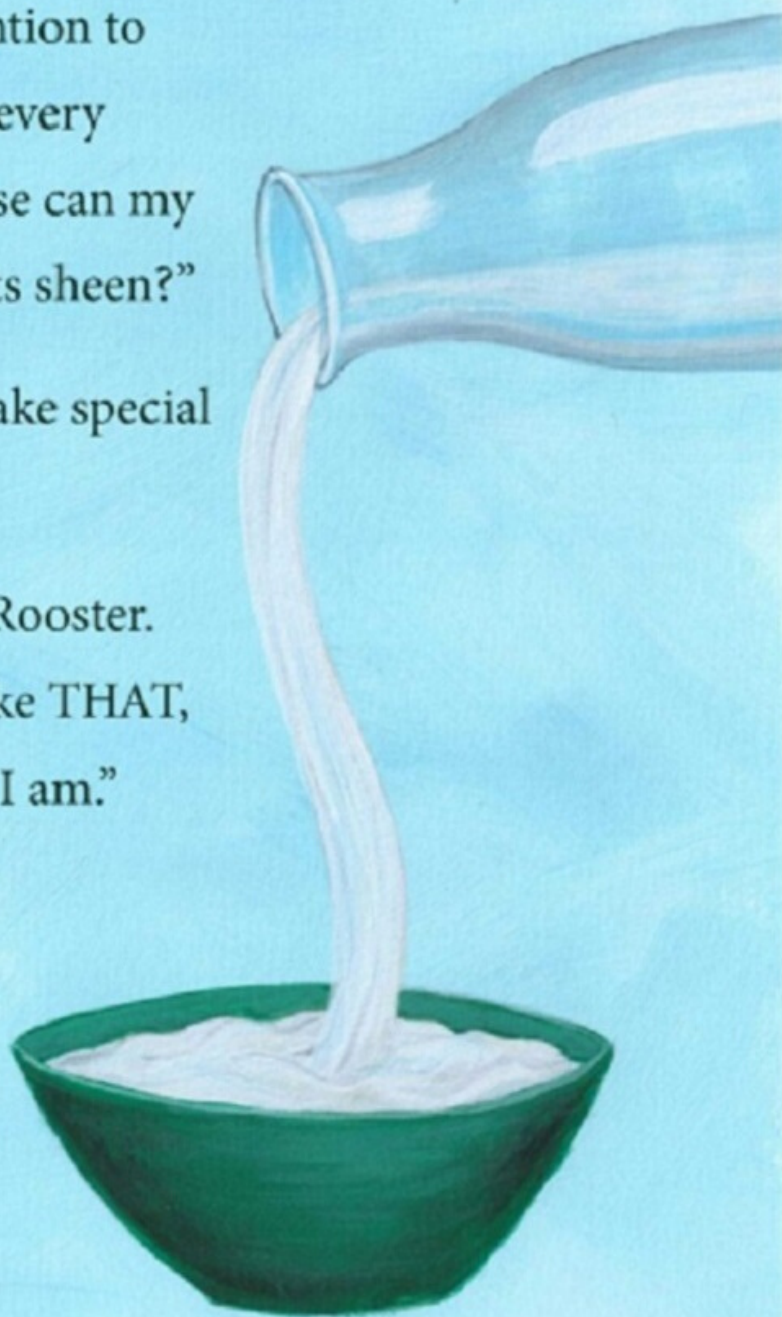


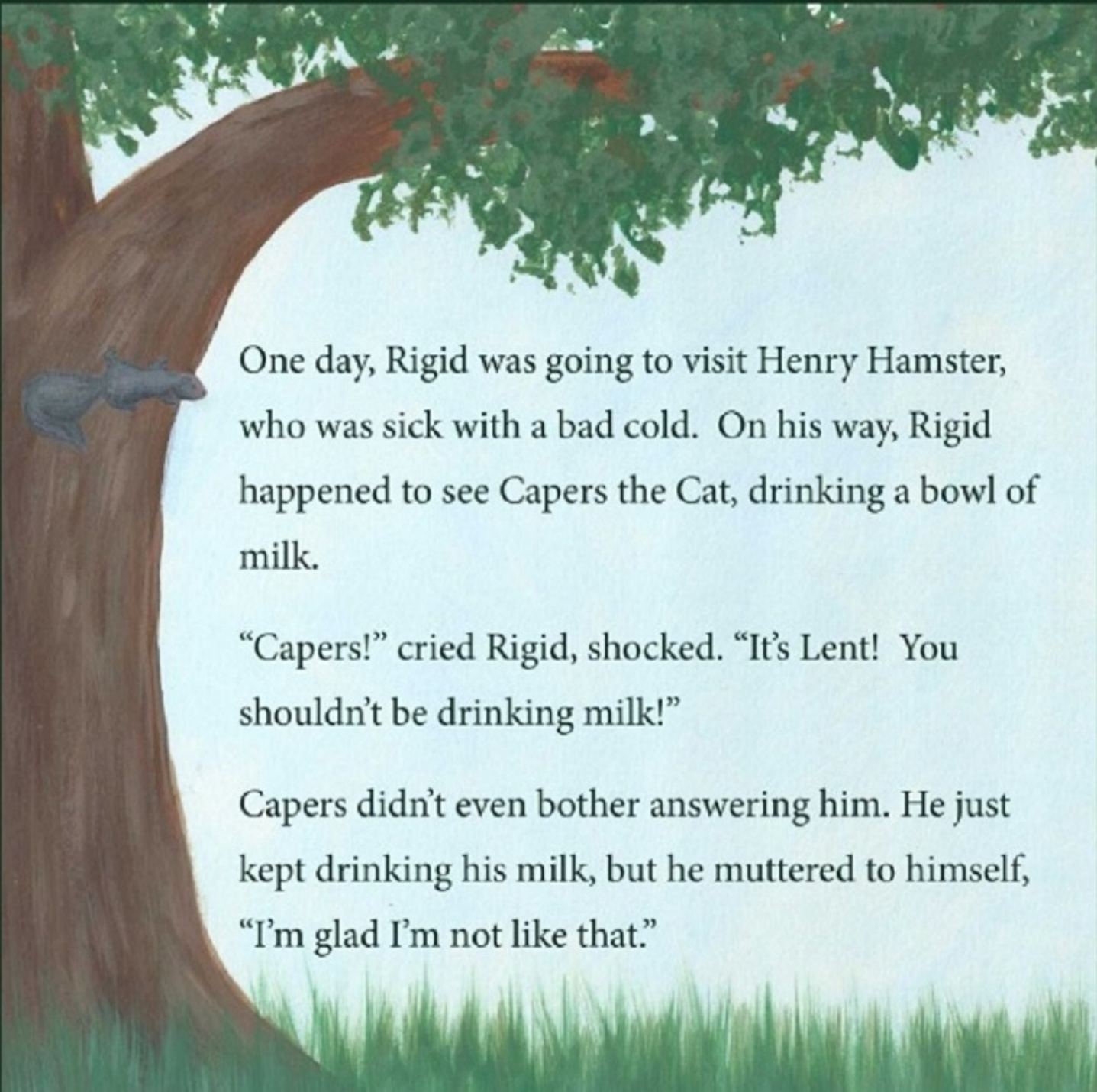


Capers the Cat paid no attention to Lent. “I have to drink milk every day,” he would say. “How else can my beautiful orange coat keep its sheen?”

“And I don’t have time to make special meals for myself.” “

And, anyway, look at Rigid Rooster. If keeping Lent makes me like THAT, I’m much better off the way I am.”





One day, Rigid was going to visit Henry Hamster, who was sick with a bad cold. On his way, Rigid happened to see Capers the Cat, drinking a bowl of milk.

“Capers!” cried Rigid, shocked. “It’s Lent! You shouldn’t be drinking milk!”

Capers didn’t even bother answering him. He just kept drinking his milk, but he muttered to himself, “I’m glad I’m not like that.”





Soon, Rigid arrived at Henry's house. "Henry," said Rigid. "I brought you a vaporizer. You know how easily hamsters get pneumonia."

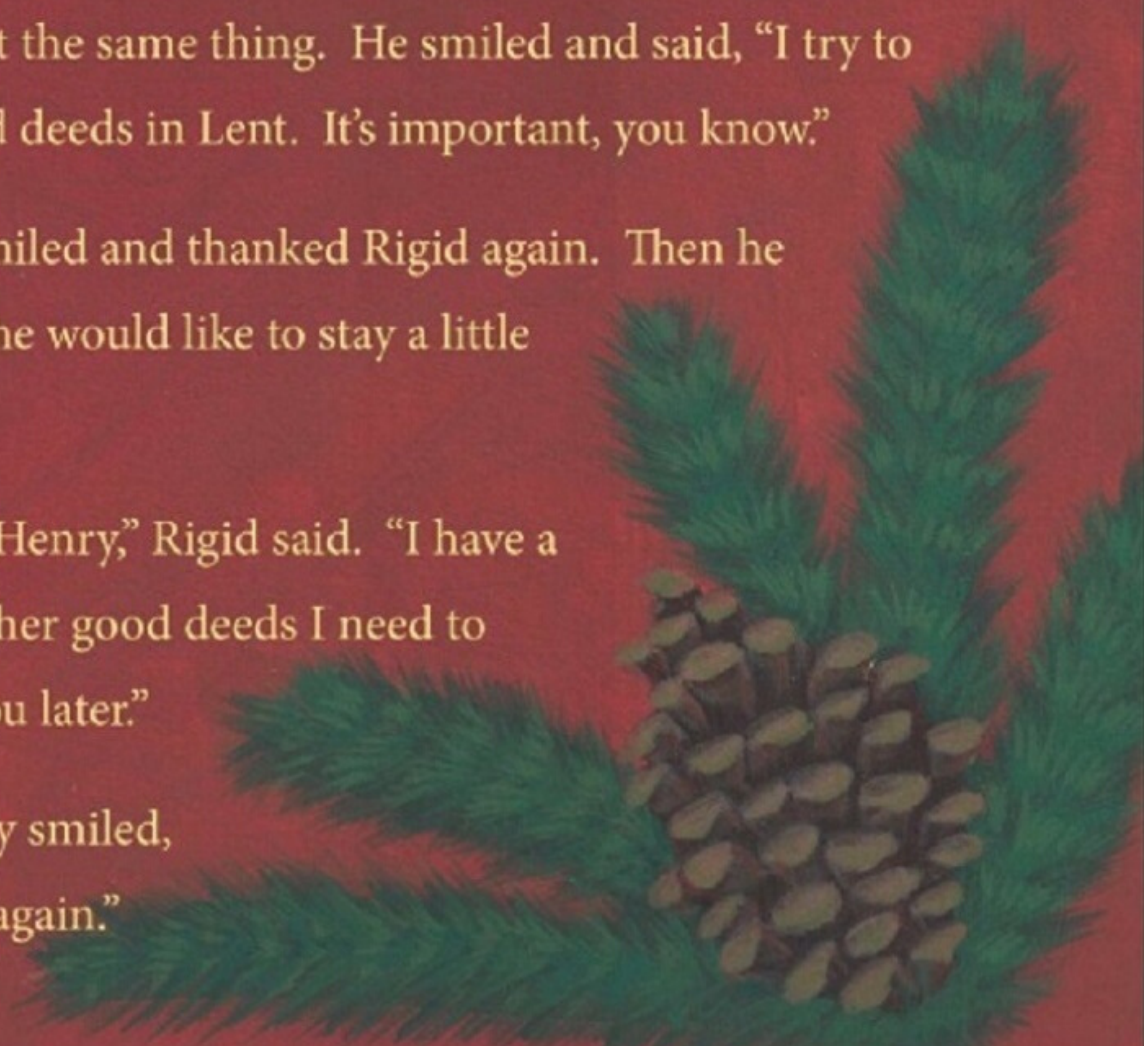
"Thanks, Rigid," said Henry. "That was kind of you."

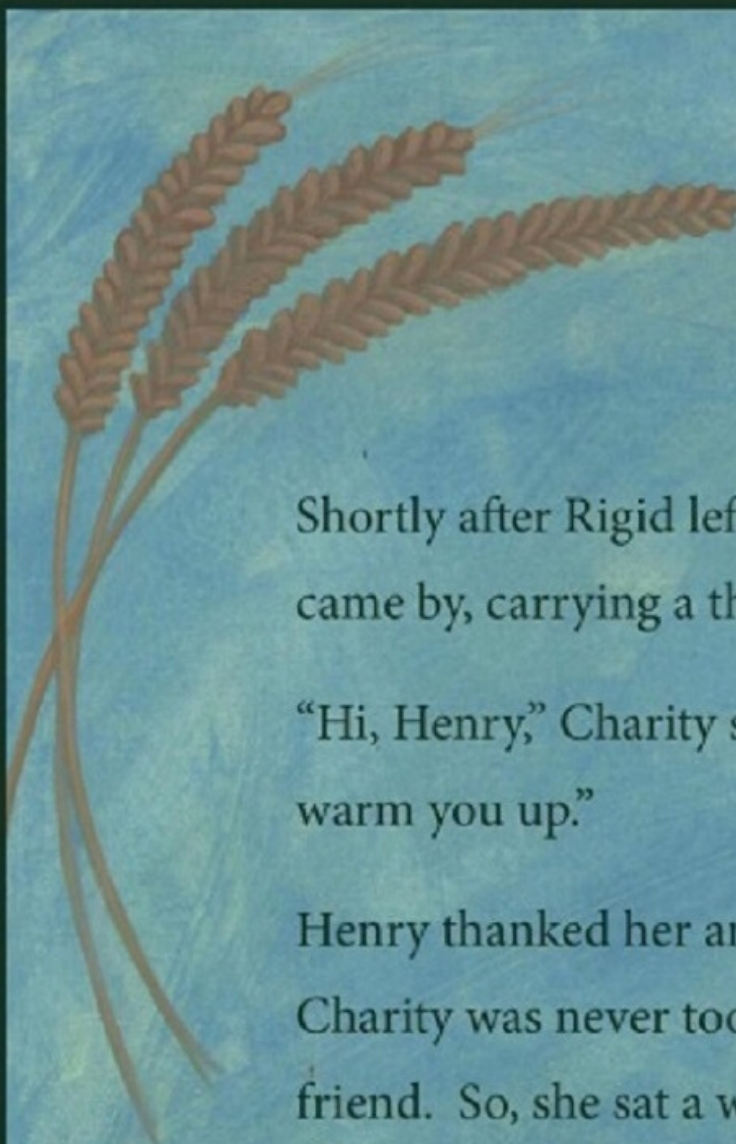
Rigid thought the same thing. He smiled and said, "I try to do extra good deeds in Lent. It's important, you know."

Henry just smiled and thanked Rigid again. Then he asked him if he would like to stay a little while.

"No, thanks, Henry," Rigid said. "I have a long list of other good deeds I need to do. I'll see you later."

"Okay," Henry smiled,  
"And thanks again."



Three stalks of wheat are positioned in the upper left corner of the page. They are rendered in a golden-brown color with a textured, slightly grainy appearance. The stalks curve downwards and to the right. The background is a light blue with a subtle, painterly texture.

Shortly after Rigid left, Charity the Church Mouse came by, carrying a thermos of soup.

“Hi, Henry,” Charity said. “I thought this might help warm you up.”

Henry thanked her and asked her to sit down.

Charity was never too busy to spend time with a friend. So, she sat a while with Henry. Right away, she noticed that he didn’t have a coat or a blanket.

He was too poor.







The next day, the mailman arrived at the door with a warm, new coat and a woolen blanket. There was no note and no name on the package, but Henry was pretty sure who sent them. As he put them on, he thought of Charity's threadbare coat. "God bless Charity," he said, with tears in his eyes.





Lent continued. Rigid kept following all the rules. He even did more than the rules said. He did more prostrations, ate less, and drank less than all the other animals. He got more and more tired, but he didn't stop. He wanted this to be his best Lent ever.

Capers kept doing what he always did. He ate what he liked and did whatever he wanted whenever he wanted.

Henry was sick for the rest of Lent. His doctor told him he needed milk and oil and other foods to help make him well. And he was too sick to do much for anybody. But he was thankful.





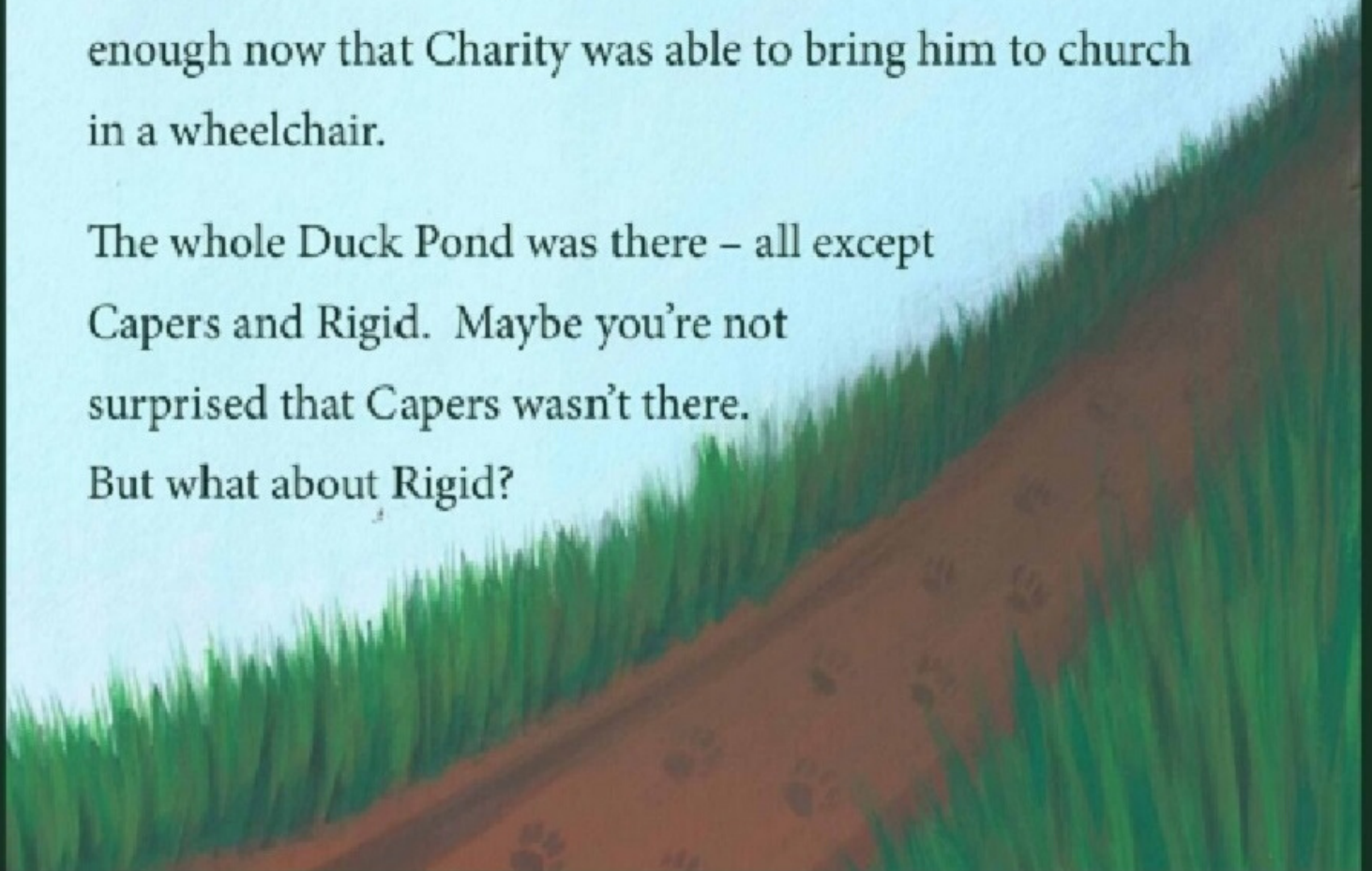
Charity visited Henry every day. She always brought him a thermos of soup. And whenever he needed something, it always showed up on his doorstep.

Charity didn't think she was doing a good deed, though. She admired Henry and was grateful to have him as a friend.



Finally, Pascha came. All the animals waited outside the church. Fearless the Fire Duck was ready to help any animals that set their hair on fire with their candles. Polly the Paramedic Parrot was present. Charity and Henry were there, too. Henry was still sick, but he was well enough now that Charity was able to bring him to church in a wheelchair.

The whole Duck Pond was there – all except Capers and Rigid. Maybe you're not surprised that Capers wasn't there. But what about Rigid?











Charity noticed that Capers and Rigid were missing. So, she asked Fearless to stay with Henry and got Polly to come with her.

First, they went to Rigid's house. He had passed out from not eating or drinking enough. Polly took him to the hospital, where he had to stay for several days till he was better.

While Polly took Rigid to the hospital, Charity went looking for Capers. He was sitting in his house, looking a little lonesome.


“Why don’t you come to church, Capers?” asked Charity.

If anyone else had asked that, Capers would just have laughed. But he loved Charity. So, he said, “Well, I don’t really like going to church, but I’ll come because you asked.”

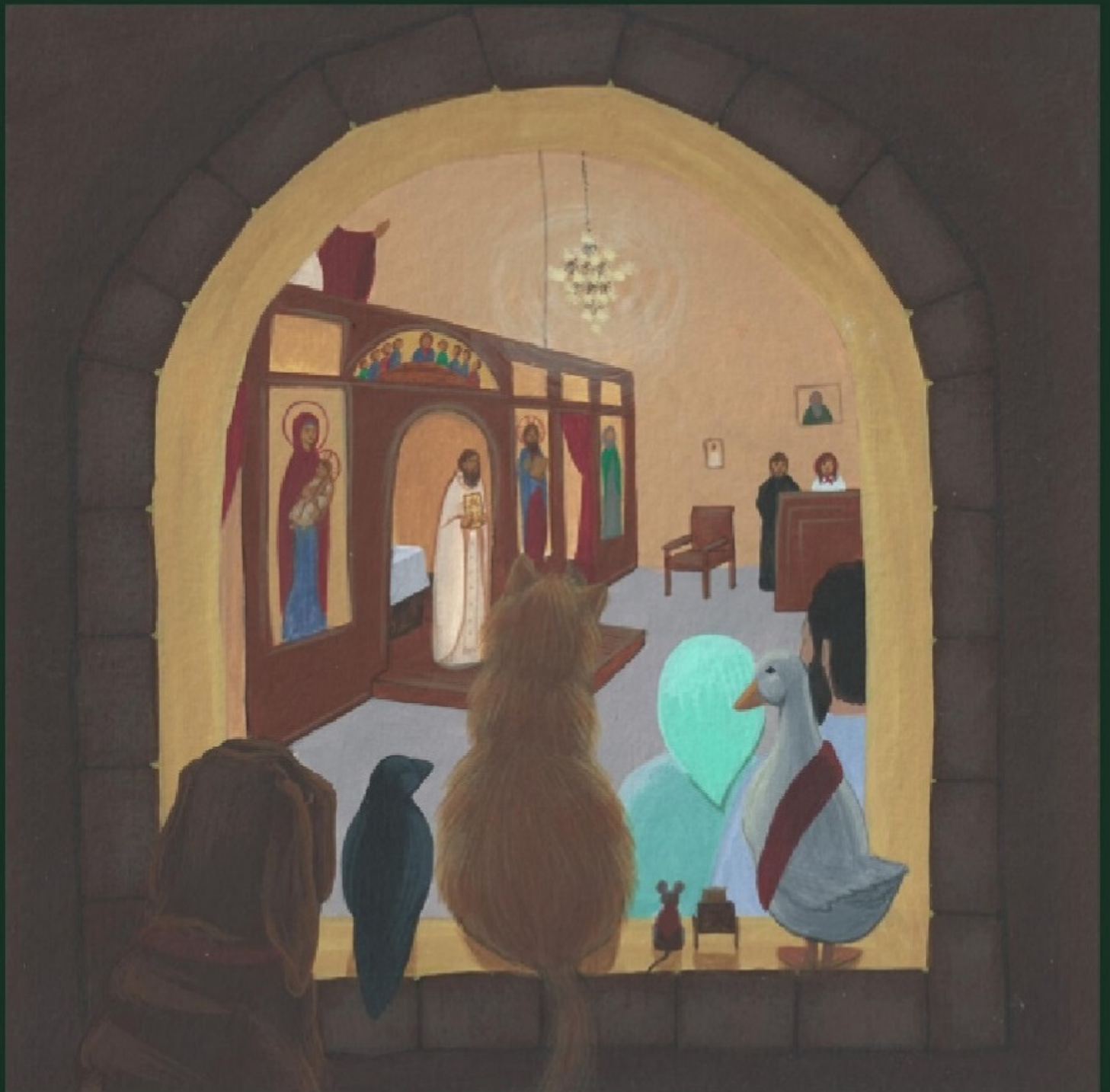






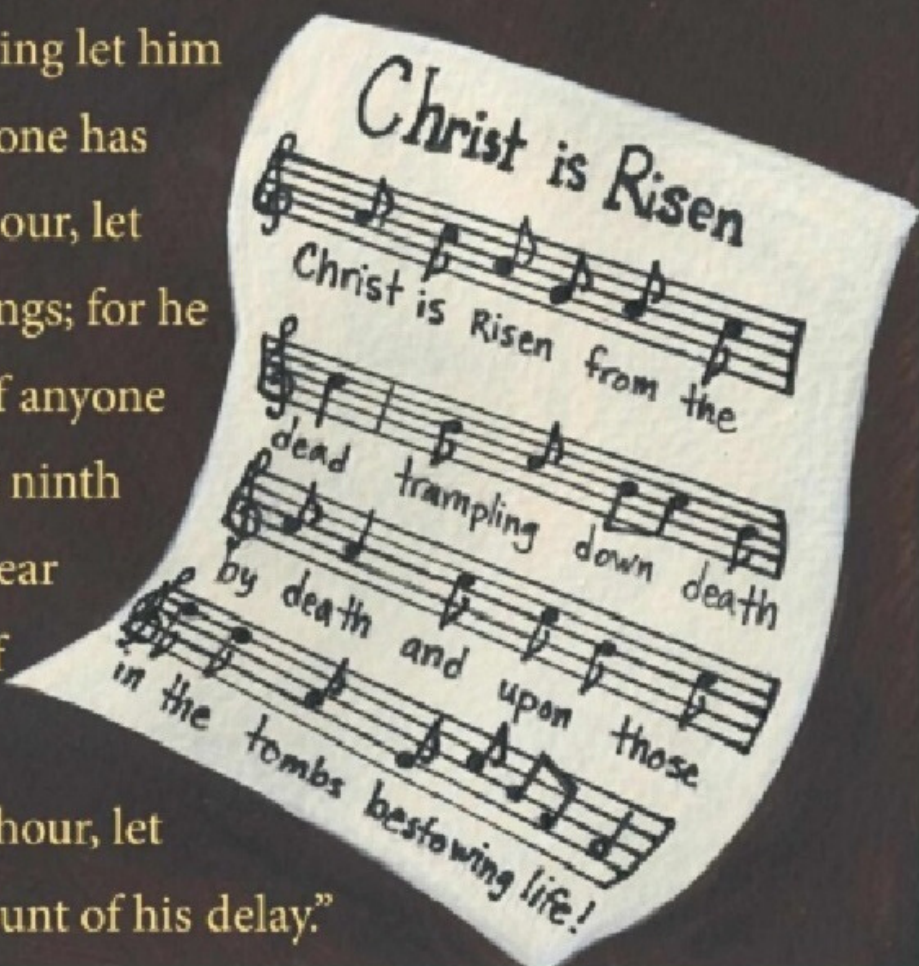


Capers and Charity got back to the church just in time to see the people come out. All the animals followed the procession, carrying their candles. Charity couldn't hold one because she needed both hands to push Henry's wheelchair. And Henry was still too weak. But it didn't matter – their faces were brighter than candles.



After the people went back into the church, the animals crowded around the windows so that they could hear what was happening. This is what they heard:

“If anyone has labored from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay.”



Capers brushed away a tear. He looked at the bright faces of his friends. They were so bright that he couldn't look at them very long. He turned to Charity and said, "I don't deserve to be here, but thank you for inviting me." And then, though he didn't know it, his face became as bright as theirs.









After church, Capers, Henry, and Charity went to see Rigid. Rigid had been thinking.

“Hi, Rigid,” Charity said. “I hope you’re doing better. I’m sorry you missed Pascha. You’ve never missed it before.”

Rigid looked at the bright faces of Capers, Henry, and Charity, and his eyes watered up.

“No, I think I have always missed Pascha,” Rigid replied. “But maybe you can teach me how not to miss it next year.”

They all smiled. Rigid hadn’t missed Pascha after all.



# GLOSSARY

- Charity**      The highest kind of love: kindness, giving to the poor
- Delay**        Not doing something right away
- Fasting**      To stop doing something (usually eating certain foods) as a way to get closer to God
- Hesitation**    Delaying because you are unsure what to do
- Just**          Deserved
- Labor**         To work hard
- Lent**          The time of fasting before Easter. It is often called Great Lent.
- Misgiving**    A feeling that something bad is going to happen

- **Pascha** The usual Orthodox name for Easter. It refers both to the Hebrew word *Pesach* (Passover - when God saved the Israelites from Egypt) and to the Greek word *paschein* (to suffer) because Christ saved us by suffering on the Cross and rising from the dead.
- Pneumonia** A disease of the lungs that makes it hard to breathe
- Procession** A group of people walking together for a special reason
- Prostration** Bowing to the ground
- Rigid** Hard to bend; hard to change
- Sheen** A soft shine on the surface of something
- Thermos** A special bottle that keeps hot things hot and cold things cold
- Threadbare** Thin and worn out. Usually refers to clothes
- Vaporizer** A device you use when you have trouble breathing

# The Paschal Greeting

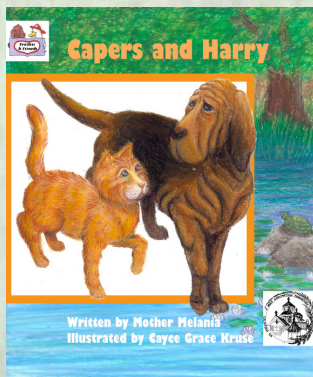
in languages from around the world, ancient and modern

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

Albanian	Krishti u ngjall! Vërtet u ngjall!
Aleut	Kristusaq ungewektaq! Pichinuq ungewektaq!
Anglo-Saxon	Crist aras! Crist sodhlice aras!
Arabic	ماي اروح! مای حى مسال! (al-Masīah qām! Haqqan qām!)
Basque	Cristo Berbistua! Benatan Berbistua!
Bulgarian	Христос възкресе! Воистина възкресе! (Khristos vozkrese! Voistina vozkrese!)
Czech	Kristus vstal z mrtvých! Vpravdě vstal z mrtvých!
Danish	Kristus er opstanden! Sandelig Han er Opstanden!
Finnish	Kristus nousi kuolleista! Totisesti nousi!
French	Le Christ est ressuscité! Vraiment il est ressuscité!
Gaelic (Scots)	Tha Crìosd air èiridh! Gu dearbh, tha e air èiridh!
Georgian	ქრისტე აღსდგა! ჭეშმარიტად აღსდგა! (Kriste agsdga! Cheshmaritad agsdga!)
German	Christus ist auferstanden! Wahrhaftig ist er auferstanden!
Greek	Χριστός ανέστη! Ἀληθῶς ανέστη! (Khristós anésti! Alithós anésti!)
Hungarian	Krisztus feltámadt! Valóban feltámadt!

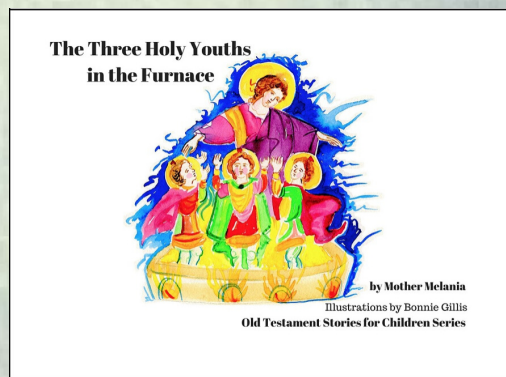
Icelandic	Kristur er upprisinn! Hann er sannarlega upprisinn!
Italian	Cristo è risorto! È veramente risorto!
Japanese	ハリストス復活! 実に復活! (Harisutosu fukkatsu! Jitsu ni fukkatsu!)
Latin	Christus resurrexit! Vere resurrexit!
Mandarin	基督復活了 他確實復活了 (Jīdū fùhuó le! Tā quèshí fùhuó le!)
Norwegian	Kristus er oppstanden! Han er sannelig oppstanden!
Polish	Chrystus zmartwychwsta! Prawdziwie zmartwychwsta!
Portuguese	Cristo ressuscitou! Em verdade ressuscitou!
Romanian	Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!
Russian	Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!)
Serbian	Христос васкрсе! Ванстину васкрсе! (Khristos vaskrse! Vaistinu vaskrse!)
Slavonic	Христосъ воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!)
Spanish	¡Cristo ha resucitado! ¡En verdad ha resucitado!
Swahili	Kristo Amefufukka! Kweli Amefufukka!
Tlingit	Xristos Kuxwoo-digoot! Xegaa-kux Kuxwoo-digoot!
Ukrainian	Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Khrystos voskres! Voistynu voskres!)
Yupik	Xristusaq Unguixtuq! Iluumun Unguixtuq!

Please check out some of  
Mother Melania's other books.



***Capers and  
Harry***  
from

**the Fearless &  
Friends series**



***The Three Holy Youths  
in the Furnace***  
from

**Old Testament  
Stories for Children**



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



Mother Melania is the abbess of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, California. She has enjoyed working with children all of her life. She has written several series of children's books, focusing on Scriptural stories and Great Feasts of the Church Feasts, and celebrating virtue.



Cayce-Marie Halsell is a freelance artist and iconographer. She draws inspiration from the beauty of everyday things and the traditions and teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church. She prefers to work with egg tempera and acrylic paints, with occasional dips into watercolor. You can find her work at [cmhicons.weebly.com](http://cmhicons.weebly.com)

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A stylized illustration of a tree with a thick, brown trunk that curves to the right. A small, grey squirrel is perched on the trunk. The tree has green leaves and small red flowers. The background is a light blue sky, and the bottom of the image shows a green grassy field.

**Join the animals at the  
Duckpond as they journey  
through Great Lent towards  
Pascha (Easter). Along with them,  
we learn that Lent is not about  
the rules, but about allowing  
God to change our hearts  
through love and repentance.**