



# Italian Catholic Federation Heritage Newsletter

Special Edition

DECEMBER 2010

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF THE ICF HERITAGE NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON CHILDREN'S BOOKS. IT IS DESIGNED TO HELP PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WITH CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.



### *Joseph and Chico: The Life of Pope Benedict XVI as Told By a Cat*

Ignatius Press

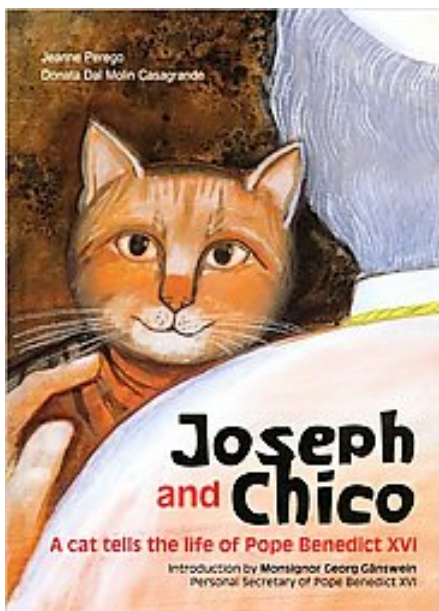
2008

Ages: 9-12

Product Description from Publisher:

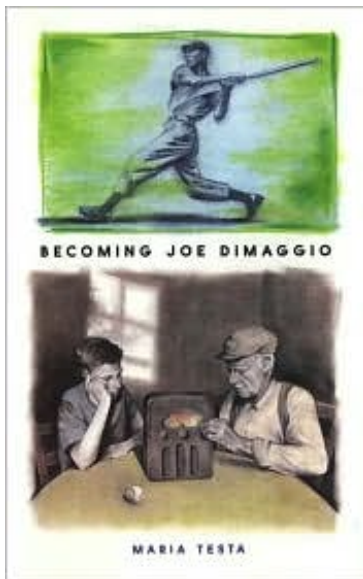
In this beautifully illustrated book for children, Chico the cat describes the life of his "best friend", Pope Benedict, in this authorized biography of the Pope for young people approved by the Vatican.

The Pope is known for his fondness of animals, especially cats, and *Joseph and Chico* is narrated by Chico, a real cat who took up with the Pope in his native Germany long before he became the Pope.



# Becoming Joe DiMaggio

By Maria Testa (Author) and Scott Hunt (Illustrator)



Candlewick

2005

**Christened after the legendary ballplayer, young Joseph Paul learns much at his Italian grandfather's knee.**

Ages: 9-12.

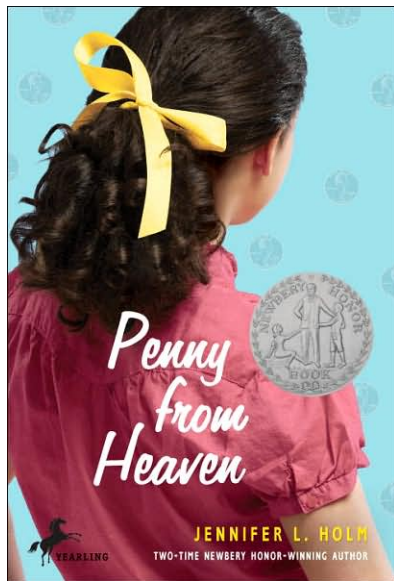
Product Description from Publisher:

It's 1936, and the Yankees have just hired a star center fielder whose name sounds like music. What could be a better time for Papa-Angelo's grandson to be born? Christened after the legendary ballplayer, young Joseph Paul learns much at his Italian grandfather's knee — about holding your breath in front of the radio during a 3-2 count with the bases loaded and having the audacity to dream big dreams. "Each poem is a perfect, gripping chapter," says KIRKUS RIVIEWS in a starred review of this novel in verse, which honors the timeless bond between a grandson and his immigrant grandfather — and the

process of finding one's own place in a brave new world.

About the Author

Maria Testa received a Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Work-in-Progress Grant for BECOMING JOE DIMAGGIO, a poetic novel inspired by family stories. She has written three picture books for children and a collection of short stories for young adults. She is also the author of another novel about baseball, SOME KIND OF PRIDE, which was awarded the Marguerite De Angeli Prize for a first middle-grade novel. Maria Testa grew up in Rhode Island and now lives on the coast of Maine with her family.



Ages: 9-12

#### Product Description from Publisher:

It's 1953 and 11-year-old Penny dreams of a summer of butter pecan ice cream, swimming, and baseball. But nothing's that easy in Penny's family. For starters, she can't go swimming because her mother's afraid she'll catch polio at the pool. To make matters worse, her favorite uncle is living in a car. Her Nonny cries every time her father's name is mentioned. And the two sides of her family aren't speaking to each other!

Inspired by Newbery Honor winner Jennifer Holm's own Italian American family, *Penny from Heaven* is a shining story about the everyday and the extraordinary, about a time in America's history, not all that long ago, when being Italian meant that you were the enemy. But most of all, it's a story about families—about the things that tear them apart and bring them together. And Holm tells it with all the richness and the layers, the love and the laughter of a Sunday dinner at Nonny's. So pull up a chair and enjoy the feast! Buon appetito!

This extraordinary tale is a Newberry Honor book.

# *Penny from Heaven*

By Jennifer L. Holm

Yearling Publishers

2007

Inspired by Newbery Honor winner Jennifer Holm's own Italian American family, *Penny from Heaven* is a shining story about the everyday and the extraordinary.



*Italian for Children*  
McGraw Hill  
2003

Ages: 3-9

Product Description from Publisher:

Already a proven home-study program, the Language for Children series is making noise with this updated, integrated book-plus-audio edition. Along with its charming visuals and lively activities, the series now provides in CD format the stimulating sounds of language to entice preschoolers through primary graders into learning a second language. Cute, catchy songs and the humorous, serial adventures of SuperCat are sure to captivate the imagination and foster language acquisition. Each set in the series contains an 80-page full-color activity book coordinated with two 60-minute CDs as well as a Parent/Instructor CD packed with helpful tips. Together children and parents can master basic language skills, including making introductions, counting from 1 to 20, and describing objects. The perfect package for parents and teachers who want to familiarize three- to nine-year olds with foreign languages and cultures.

*Filastrocche Italiane - Italian Nursery Rhymes*  
Claudia Cerulli (Author), Ellen Locatelli (Illustrator)  
Long Bridge Publishing, 2009

Ages: 0-8

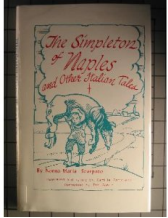
Product Description from Publisher:

Collection of 20 very popular Italian nursery rhymes with color illustrations, text in Italian with English translation. Use as an introduction to Italian language and traditions, as playtime or bedtime reading, school activity and language practice. Included in the book are five pages of language puzzles. Large print suitable for young readers. Bilingual.

# ICF Members' Recommendations

## ***The Simpleton of Naples and Other Italian Folktales***

Nonna Maria Scarpato and Camille Fattoross  
Capricorn Books



The Simpleton of Naples is a wonderful book of Italian folktales; it is great for telling to small children or to give to an older child who can read. It also happens to be written by my great aunt, my grandfather's sister, who was from Sorrento. I hope some members will have the opportunity to read this book!  
(Jean Bridges)

## ***The Golden Christmas Treasury 25 stories and poems and Carols***

Rick Bunsen  
Golden Craft

These are stories, poems, and carols for the Christmas season, with illustrations by eight different artists. I had it for my grandchildren when they were young. (Louise Vento)

## ***Stega Nonna***

Tomie DePaola  
Simon and Schuster

Product Description from Author: Strega Nona -- "Grandma Witch" -- is the source for potions, cures, magic, and comfort in her Calabrian town. Her magical ever-full pasta pot is especially intriguing to hungry Big Anthony. In this retelling of an old tale, author-illustrator Tomie dePaola combines humor in the writing and warmth in the paintings as he builds the story to its hilarious climax. (Anne Interrante)

## ***Tell Me A Story: Timeless Folktales from Around the World***

Amy Freidman and Jillian Gillilian  
Friedman & Danziger

Product Description: Folktales, fairytales, myths and legends from the popular newspaper feature Tell Me a Story by Amy Friedman, with illustrations by Jillian Gilliland, originally published in newspapers around the world by Universal Press Syndicate.

This volume contains the 21 stories that appear on the first three CD Audiobooks in the Tell Me a Story series. (LeLani Mariano)

# International Children's Digital Library

Want a great place to find children's books for free? The International Children's Digital library provides the reader with numerous children's books online. The site is easy to navigate and the books can easily be read on any computer. Books come in a variety of languages and cover a variety of topics, appealing to various age groups.

As its website notes, "The International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) is a research project funded primarily by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and Microsoft Research to create a digital library of outstanding children's

books from all over the world. The project was introduced at an international celebration at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. in November 2002. The collection's focus is on identifying materials that help children to understand the world around them and the global society in which they live. The materials in the collection, all presented in the original languages in which they were published, reflect similarities and differences in cultures, societies, interests, and lifestyles of peoples around the world. At the end of the initial research period, it is anticipated that the ICDL collection will include

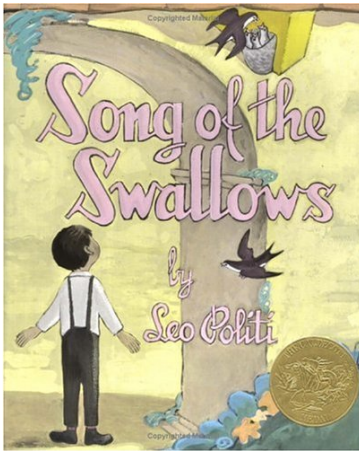
approximately 10,000 materials in at least 100 languages."

The ICDL collection has two primary audiences. The first audience is children ages 3-13, as well as librarians, teachers, parents, and caregivers who work with children of these ages. The second audience is international scholars and researchers in the area of children's literature.

Visit ICDL at

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>





## **Song of the Swallows**

Leo Politi

J. Paul Getty Museum Publishers  
2009

Ages: 4-8

*Song of the Swallows*, which won the Caldecott Medal was first published in 1948.

It tells the famous story of the yearly return of the swallows to the Mission San Juan Capistrano through the eyes of a small child, Julian, the bell ringer of the Mission, tells Juan, a young boy who also lives at the Mission, the story of the swallows and how—without anyone really knowing why or how—they return each year from their winter home in South America to San Juan Capistrano in California. Thrilled by the story, Juan makes his own small garden in the hope that at least one

family of swallows will nest there when they return.

This delightful book also includes the music and lyrics for "La Golondrina," a song about the swallows that Politi composed himself, and Spanish phrases are sprinkled throughout the story. This book provides a delightful introduction for young children to California's centuries-old Latino heritage and Mission culture.

**This book review originally appeared in the ICF monthly publication *The Bollettino*. To learn more about the ICF, visit [www.icf.org](http://www.icf.org).**

### **ICF Heritage Committee**

Vince Piro, Chair ([vfp@aol.com](mailto:vfp@aol.com))

Nina Malone

Nello Rossi

Al Teglia

Louise and Russ Vento

Jean Bridges

Jim Freibel



### **Where do you find these books?**

Most of these titles can be found at popular online bookstores, such as Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, and Borders. Or you can visit your local bookstore, which may have them in stock or can easily order them for you.

### **Italian Catholic Federation**

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