



## **THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#26)**

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings. Many of us probably don’t know that in our Archives here in Rome we have more than 200 black boxes. Some of those treasures have seen the light of day in many publications, but there are still others waiting to be seen...

### **(Christmas’ stories of Fr. E. Funcken, C.R. #26)**

In this special Christmas edition of the newsletter I would like to share with you some of the work written by Fr. Eugene Funcken, C.R. from St. Agatha in 1862:

“At this time we are in the midst of Canadian snow, what in other countries might be considered an inconvenience is a blessing for us. This year, by way of exception, we had no snow until New Years, and consequently no sleigh-runs, therefore the farmers could not take their wheat to market; now all the streets are full of life, one hears nothing but the

sound of the little bells which are hung on the horses...

Since I am telling stories I would like to recount yet a few more edifying pieces which, of and by themselves, are of little importance but are sometimes sweet drops in the chalice of bitterness for a poor missionary...On Christmas we put up a Christmas tree, mainly for the children with the Sisters, but as soon as the news got around, I had a whole house full of children all of whom helped pick the heavenly fruit. After the ceremony I instructed them to go to the church and pray an Ave for me. After a while they returned and said: ‘We have each prayed 4 Our Fathers for you’. A little child from a neighbouring community for which I always took care to bring something when I visited, also prayed for me, and in the following way. Every time the others prayed together the child interrupted the Ave at the words ‘pray for us sinners’, and added: ‘and for Fr. Funcken’. On New Years Day some good little mothers came to see me to wish me heartfelt prosperity in the new year. One said after confession: ‘I pray for you every day, but today I will pray an extra rosary for you and for me.’ Are those not a comfort? The other priests could certainly report many similar stories to you.

On the last day of Christmas celebrations our Poles, who have again increased their number, sang their Polish carols in front of the manger in the church, much to the great astonishment of the Germans and Irish (naturally by arrangement with Fr. Francis our Polish missionary).” (Eugene Funcken, C.R., Letter to Jerome Kajsiewicz, C.R., dated January 20, 1862, ACRR 12876).

I would like to conclude today’s newsletter with the same wishes as Fr. Eugene wrote from St. Agatha on December 12, 1873. “I wish you a very happy and joyous Christmas Season!”

**(Eugene Funcken, C.R., Letter to "Dearest Brother", dated December 24, 1873, ACRR 13064)**

St. Ag. 24.12.73

L.J.C

Dearest Brother!

I wish you a very happy and joyous Christmas Season. Let all gloomy thoughts be put to rest and enjoy yourself! Consider all the bitter sufferings as a source of joy. After Holy Week comes Easter and Christmas in winter. So good cheer! But do not strain yourself too much!

Your faithful  
Brother

Liebster Bruder!

Ich wünsche dir ein glückseliges  
 und fruchtvolles Weisheitsjahr  
 Laß alle heuchlerischen Gedanken  
 weichen und frucht dich! Lab dich  
 alle die bitteren Leiden und  
 Qualen der Fremden. Kurz der  
 Lebensweg kommt herein, und  
 Weisheit im Winter. Alles  
 geht zu. Alles! Aber frucht  
 dich nicht zu sehr an!

Dein Bruder

Reuter.