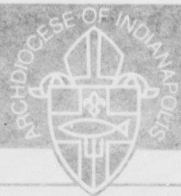


The CRITERION

Vol. XXIV, No. 11, December 21, 1984

Indianapolis, Indiana



HE IS BORN—"The Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist" was painted around 1515 by the Italian artist Correggio. (NC photo from the Art Institute of Chicago)

FROM THE EDITOR

We were singing Christmas carols during Lent

by John F. Fink

It was Christmas in April for me this year. Despite the fact that it was only a week before Good Friday, we were singing Christmas carols.

I was leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Greece and Rome (where we attended Pope John Paul's Holy Thursday Mass), and, of course, Bethlehem is an important stop. I arranged for our group to have Mass in a cave that connects with the cave where Jesus was born. That cave is beneath the sanctuary of a Greek Orthodox and Armenian church. The cave where we had our Mass actually is between the Orthodox church and the Catholic church.

This cave also connects with a cave where St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into what is known as the Vulgate, lived for many years. Another group was having Mass there and the Orthodox were chanting their prayers, so it wasn't exactly a "silent night" (or day, in our case). Still, it is always inspiring to say one of the Masses for Christmas day very near the site where Jesus was born.

We sang Christmas carols during the Communion and after Mass was over. Then we went over to the Orthodox church, descended to the cave below the sanctuary, and said some private prayers at the site where Jesus came into the world. I have to say that I much prefer the beauty of the adjoining Catholic church and its Nativity scene to the gaudiness of the Orthodox shrine with its incense



burners and such. Christ was born in a cave—probably this cave—but you really can't tell it's a cave.

Despite that quibble, a visit to Bethlehem (or anyplace in the Holy Land) can't help but give a person a better understanding of the Scriptures. Before such a visit, one has to use his or her imagination to try to visualize so many passages in the Bible. After a visit there, the Scriptures come alive.

In the Christmas story, for example, we read that Joseph and Mary had to travel from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea. This is not a small journey—and Mary made it twice within nine months because she also went from Nazareth to En-Karem in Judea to visit Elizabeth. It's approximately 75 miles, or more the way the Jews travelled it because Samaria was located between Galilee and Judea and the Jews usually traveled around Samaria. It's very mountainous terrain and must have been extremely difficult to make the journey on foot or donkey. Caravans in those days took about a week to make the journey.

BUT ONE DOES NOT have to go to the Holy Land to marvel at the great mystery that we will be celebrating on Tuesday. Let us forget during all our preparations for Christmas, on Tuesday we will be professing our belief that God, while remaining God, took upon himself a human nature and came to earth as one of us. As St. Paul put it: "Though He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." He could have added that He was even born in a cave.

As Catholics, we believe that Jesus is both fully God

and fully man. In no way did the Son of God cease to be the Son of God when He began to be the Son of Mary. Had Jesus ceased to have the glory of God, it would not have been the Son of God who shared our sorrows and came to our poverty.

St. Augustine said it this way: "Let no one believe that the Son of God was changed or transformed into the Son of man; but rather let us believe that He, remaining the Son of God, was made the Son of man without loss of His divine substance and by a perfect assumption of the human substance."

As we say in the Creed, we believe that the Son of God was "eternally begotten by the Father" and "one in being with the Father."

But if Jesus was fully God, He also was fully human—"a man like us in all things save sin." He had both divine intelligence and human intelligence, both a divine will and a human will. He showed human emotions—crying at the death of Lazarus, becoming angry at the money-changers in the temple, even cursing a fig tree that was not bearing fruit. He enjoyed good food and wine (and was criticized for doing so).

This is the mystery that we celebrate this Christmas—that "God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life," as John said, and that that one person was born with two natures, one divine and one human. As we observe Christ's birth, it is only fitting that we should have a birthday party.

On behalf of the staff of The Criterion, I wish all of our readers a joyous and holy Christmas and all that is good during the coming year of 1985.

St. Vincent de Paul has busiest year ever

by Kevin C. McDowell

The Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society will have provided the needy locally with an estimated \$800,000 worth of household goods and other goods and services this past year, the busiest ever.

Staffed entirely by volunteers who run the warehouse, take calls, coordinate pickups, sort donations and fulfill aid requests, the society in October alone had 987 requests for household goods and clothing and 151 requests for food compared to 303 donations of household goods. Don Herman, the outgoing president of the Indianapolis council, estimated the warehouse alone, excluding parish work, has been serving 80 to 115 families a week.

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Effective January 1, 1985

REV. KEVIN GODFREY, O.F.M. Conv. appointed associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Terre Haute.

The above appointment is from the office of the Most Reverend Edward T. O'Meara, S.T.D., Archbishop of Indianapolis.

The recent "Blanket Sunday" brought in 8,000 items (blankets, sheets, pillows, towels, spreads and quilts), the more difficult items to provide the needy with.

Tom Moran, a member of St. Luke's parish and the new president for the North District, said that the increased requests and donations necessitated the move to the new 25,000 sq. ft. warehouse at 1111 E. 17th St., which has been rescheduled to open on Dec. 29.

The warehouse receives donated goods and money donations, but donations at the parish level generally stay in the respective parishes.

The society is currently trying to recruit new volunteers for its warehouse staffs, which are broken up into eight teams with parishes assigned to provide truck drivers and workers for scheduled Saturdays. Not all the teams are composed strictly of Catholic parishes. Team Seven has, in addition to St. Christopher and St. Malachy parishes, St. Luke United Church of Christ.

The society also needs volunteers to



NEW PRESIDENTS—Sheila Gilbert, newly elected president of the Indianapolis Council of St. Vincent de Paul, looks over the floor plan for the new warehouse with Tom Moran, newly elected president of the North District. (Photo by Kevin C. McDowell)

take calls during the week. A volunteer need not leave his or her home as a call-forwarding service can be used. There is also a need for used automobiles.

Besides the increase in the work this past year, the society also held its first mini-convention, where plaques were presented to Canteen Services Corporation,

which donated the first trucks, enabling the pickup service to begin; the Indianapolis Foundation, whose funding enabled the society to obtain additional trucks; WRTV, Channel 6, which provided facilities and expertise in producing public service announcements that air on local television channels; the Indiana Youth Center, which repairs refrigerators for the society and prints many of their publications; and Sacred Heart parish, which provided its former school as the warehouse for the past five years.

Sheila Gilbert has been elected the new president of the Indianapolis council. A member of Christ the King parish, she begins her three-year term Jan. 1.

Sesquicentennial souvenirs now at reduced prices

Kevin C. McDowell

The main celebration may be over, but sesquicentennial souvenirs linger on, now at reduced prices, according to Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones.

Sister Jones, the souvenir chairperson for the sesquicentennial celebration of the founding of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, said that some souvenirs are still available, but the caps, paperweights and wine decanter sets are sold out.

The souvenirs, which bear the logo of the sesquicentennial celebration and the slogan "On a Journey of Faith," are now priced as follows: buttons (\$.50), coffee mugs (\$.30), beer steins (\$.40), key rings (\$.25), visors (\$.40) and pens (\$.75). A few copies of K.P. Singh's collage depicting historical buildings in the history of the archdiocese are still available, but have not

been reduced from the original price of \$75. All items, except Singh's drawings, can be purchased from Christ the King Grade School, 257-9366, where Sister Jones is principal. Singh's drawing can be purchased from The Catholic Center.

Sister Jones said that 52 coffee mugs are still available, as well as 51 beer steins, 135 key rings, 13 visors and 35 pens. The key rings are made of Spanish silver and are in medallion form. The pens have different-colored shells, but provide blue ink only.

"It has been quite a year," Sister Jones said. "We ordered only the minimum quantities of everything. Sales have gone all right, but not great guns."

When asked what will happen to items not sold, she joked, "I guess they'll be drinking coffee at the chancery out of sesquicentennial mugs for a long time."



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Archbishop O'Meara's Schedule Week of December 23

MONDAY, December 24—Christmas midnight Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis. Service begins at 11:30 p.m. with a special blessing of the crib.

THURSDAY, December 27— Admission to candidacy for the priesthood and prayer service, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, 6 p.m., followed with dinner for the seminarians of the archdiocese.

Religious who signed a pro-choice statement face threat of expulsion

by Liz S. Armstrong

WASHINGTON (NC)—The Vatican has ordered U.S. Religious who signed a statement claiming diverse Catholic views on abortion to either recant the statement or face expulsion from religious life.

The Vatican's decision was confirmed in Rome by Archbishop Jerome Hamer, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, which issued the order, by a spokesman for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, and by some superiors of Religious who signed the statement.

At least 26 nuns, religious priests and brothers signed the "Catholic Statement on Pluralism and Abortion," published as an advertisement in The New York Times Oct. 7. It was prepared by the Catholic Committee on Pluralism and Abortion, an affiliate of Catholics for a Free Choice, a group backing legal abortion.

Archbishop Hamer told National Catholic News Service in Rome Dec. 17 that his Vatican congregation had sent a letter to the superiors of the Religious involved demanding the Religious either retract the statement or face dismissal from religious life. He declined to elaborate.

Russell Shaw, NCCB secretary for public affairs, said the Vatican "cites as the basis for its action the constant authoritative teaching of the church on abortion."

THE STATEMENT on pluralistic views

\$155,000 collected for Ethiopia

Contributions to an archdiocesan fund for victims of the famine in Ethiopia had reached \$155,000 by Monday of this week.

Pat Brown of the archdiocesan Business Office said that donations are still arriving. The money is being forwarded to Catholic Relief Services for use in Ethiopia. Other donations are being sent directly to CRS.

Donations can be made payable to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and sent to the Chancery at 1400 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206; or sent directly to Catholic Relief Services, 1011 First Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. In either case, checks should be marked "Ethiopian relief."

on abortion said that "a diversity of opinions regarding abortion exists among committed Catholics," and that "a large

number of Catholic theologians hold that even direct abortion, though tragic, can sometimes be a moral choice."

It also said that "Catholics—especially priests, Religious, theologians and legislators—who publicly dissent from hierarchical statements and explore areas of moral and legal freedom on the abortion question should not be penalized by their religious superiors, church employers or bishops."

Signed by nearly 100 scholars, Religious and clergy, the statement has been rejected by the NCCB Committee on Doctrine, which said the statement "contradicts the clear and constant

teaching of the church that deliberately chosen abortion is objectively immoral."

In Rome, Brother John Johnson, vicar general of the Brothers of Christian Schools, said that his community had received a letter regarding Christian Brother Ray McManaman, of Lewis University, Romeoville, Ill., who signed the statement. Also in Rome, Sister Mary Margaret Johanning, superior general of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, likewise confirmed that her order had received the congregation's letter, regarding Sisters Margaret Ellen Traxler and Jeannine Gramick, who also had signed the abortion-pluralism statement.

Shaw, at the NCCB, said the Vatican letter referred to canon laws dealing with dismissal of Religious who "give scandal."

"The NCCB was informed of the matter," he said Dec. 17. "The (bishops') conference hopes there will be a happy resolution" of the controversy. Such a resolution will entail "public retraction" of the abortion-pluralism statement by those who signed it, he added.

"We certainly heard from the Religious involved" as well, he said, although, he added, he could not comment on their reactions.

"We can express our hopes of a happy resolution and all the rest, but it's not up to us" since it is a matter between the Religious and their superiors and the Vatican, Shaw said.

He said the issue is not really freedom of expression in the Catholic Church but freedom of conscience and that Catholics, especially Religious, must form their consciences in accordance with church teaching on abortion.



ELECTED—New officers of the archdiocesan Catholic Charities Board are, from left, Mary Ann Hollinden, Tell City Deanery, vice president; Don Fleming, Tell City Deanery, treasurer; Jim Witcheer, Indianapolis North Deanery, president; Providence Sister Gwen O'Malley, Indianapolis East Deanery, recording secretary; and Mike McClain, Indianapolis South Deanery, corresponding secretary. The board oversees Catholic Charities programs throughout the archdiocese. (Photo by Jim Jachimaki)

Religion-politics voted top news story

WASHINGTON (NC)—America's election-year controversy over religion, politics and abortion was the top religious news story of 1984, said Catholic editors answering the annual poll by National Catholic News Service.

The editors ranked Pope John Paul II the year's top personality in religious news, as they have every year since his election in 1978. In second place was Geraldine Ferraro, a Catholic and the first woman vice presidential nominee of a major party.

The first draft of the U.S. bishops' economic pastoral and the debate surrounding that document ranked second among 1984 religious news stories, and the famine threatening the lives of millions in Ethiopia was third.

Forty-nine editors of U.S. Catholic newspapers answered the NC News poll, an annual survey begun in 1972. Editors were asked to rank the top 10 news stories of the year out of a list of 28. They were asked to rank five top newsmakers from a list of 17.

THE RELIGION, politics and abortion fight, which dominated U.S. religious news

for about four months during the presidential campaign, was the clear victor in this year's poll. It took 33 out of 49 first-place votes, was marked second by another 15 editors, and third by one. On the 10-point weighted scale of rankings it had 473 points out of a possible 490.

The draft pastoral on the U.S. economy was just as clearly in second place, with 381 points and 12 first-place votes. It follows in the footsteps of the bishops' 1983 war and peace pastoral, which editors voted the story of the year in both 1982 and 1983.

The famine in Ethiopia and the response of people through aid agencies such as Catholic Relief Services was the only other news story near the top. The editors' votes, including three for first place, added up to 331 points.

News events ranked fourth through 10th, and the point totals they received, were:

4. Vatican's doctrinal congregation backs idea of liberation theology, but not when based on Marxism (164).
5. Vatican orders removal of the "imprimatur" from two U.S. books (137).
6. United States and Vatican establish diplomatic relations, U.S. groups seek court ruling declaring action unconstitutional (133).
- 7-8 (tie). Polish priest, Father Jerzy Popieluszko, is murdered; Pope in Canada urges social justice and faith (105 each).
9. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin keeps "consistent ethic of life" argument in public eye (104).
10. Growing U.S. priest shortage draws

attention to lay ministries, church personnel questions. (95)

AMONG NEWSMAKERS of the year ranked on a scale of five points, Pope John Paul got 20 first-place votes and 148 points of a possible 245.

Second was Ms. Ferraro, whose Catholicism and position on abortion were central factors in the religion and politics issue. She received 11 first-place votes and 121 points.

Archbishop John O'Connor of New York also a prominent figure in the religion and politics debate, was ranked third with six first-place votes and 104 points.

Fourth was President Reagan, who also made religious issues an explicit part of his campaign for re-election, with 67 points including two votes for first place.

Cardinal Bernardin came in fifth among newsmakers with three first-place votes and 55 points.

THE EDITOR OF The Criterion agreed with the other editors regarding the top three news stories but disagreed on numbers four through 10. He included the other editors' numbers 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10 in the top ten, but not in the same order, and he did not believe that numbers 5 and 6 belonged in the top ten. Instead, he included news stories about Central America and South Africa.

His ranking of the top five newsmakers was Pope John Paul, Geraldine Ferraro, Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop O'Connor and Archbishop Weakland.

8th district race will decide number of Catholics in Congress

WASHINGTON (NC)—The final outcome of the race between Richard McIntyre and Francis McCloskey in Indiana's eighth congressional district will determine whether or not a new record is set for the number of Catholics in Congress, according to the biennial survey by Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

If McIntyre, an Episcopalian, is sworn in, the 99th Congress will have 141 Catholics, tying the record set in the preceding 98th Congress. If McCloskey, a Catholic, is sworn in, the number would climb to a record 142.

No paper next week

In accordance with our usual practice, The Criterion is not published the last week in December.

Because of the New Year holidays, notices of events and advertisements to be published in the Jan. 4 issue must be at The Criterion by Friday, Dec. 28.

Denominationally, Catholics outnumber all Protestant groups, according to the survey.

Assuming a McIntyre victory, the list of Catholics in the 99th Congress includes 19 senators and 122 representatives.

The largest Protestant group in the new Congress will be the United Methodists, with 76 members, followed by 68 Episcopalians (if McIntyre wins), 56 Presbyterians, 49 Baptists, 23 Lutherans, 22 Protestants providing no specific denomination, 14 members from the United Church of Christ and nine Unitarian Universalists, as well as others from Bible churches and other smaller sects.

However, Protestants as a group, at 334, outnumber Catholics.

The new Congress also counts 12 Mormons, seven Eastern Orthodox and 38 Jews, according to the survey. Three members claim no religious affiliation.

Catholic members of the 99th Congress from Indiana are Andrew Jacobs Jr., John P. Hiler, and Peter Visclosky.



GIFTS FOR NEEDY—Christmas Gifts for the needy were donated in many parishes throughout the archdiocese last Sunday. Shown above are only some of the more than 1,500 gifts that were in the sanctuary of St. Roch's Church in Indianapolis. At St. Roch's, about 520 families were involved in donating the gifts.

COMMENTARY

A new autumn sport: bishop bashing

by Dick Dowd

Bishop bashing has become the preferred sport in the United States, among both liberal and conservative writers.

Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, chairman of the committee charged with writing the pastoral on the economy, has become the national target of choice. Having studied their catechisms faithfully, the critics get him both (1) for what he has done; and (2) for what he has failed to do.



As the principal author of the draft statement on the economy he is whacked, first, by conservatives for having produced the document at all. "What do the bishops know about money, except how to spend it?" is most often the friendliest question asked.

Never mind that the bishops as church executives are responsible for running a multi-million dollar operation on donations alone.

Never mind that the bishops supervise the second largest educational operation in the United States—Catholic schools.

Never mind that in 15 years the bishops' Campaign for Human Development has raised \$110 million in donations to fight poverty and give support to self-help programs in every state.

A conservative bishop-basher cares not for such facts.

On the other hand, Archbishop Weakland is whacked by liberals for what he did not do.

He did not release the draft pastoral on the economy in time to help Mr. Mondale win the election. This presumes that the document (widely unread) is a faithful reproduction of the Democratic Party program (which it is not) and would have turned around the 58 percent plurality given the president by the voters.

Never mind that the bishops, last year, agreed to hold up the first draft until after the election precisely so as not to influence the election.

Never mind that the bishops, from their first national meeting after World War I, have always met in November after the election precisely so as not to influence the election.

A liberal bishop-basher is not interested in facts either.

A true bishop-basher cares not for facts nor for history. He cares only that the bishop is wrong no matter what he does.

Not that the bishops consider themselves always right. They readily admit that the economy pastoral needs improvement and have asked for it.

All agreed the pastoral's tone should be more "upbeat." Bishop M. Murphy of Erie,



Pa., with an ear to Archbishop Weakland's musical talents, urged the pastoral sound a note of Christian hope. "Let there be less of the draft's doleful Miserere and Dies Irae and more of the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth," he said.

But alas, for the bishop-basher, even such admissions of error are not enough. Forgiveness is not a part of their creed.

I would be tempted to condemn bishop bashers out of hand were it not for the useful service they unknowingly perform for our church. With medieval self-flagellation gone out of style, bishop bashers gracefully offer to the bishops the kind of penitential opportunities that the rest of us have to obtain on our own, from our spouses and our jobs.

Please don't trash the traditional church

by Richard B. Scheiber

I don't know what columnists would do without surveys. They help us keep our fingers on the pulse of things, our ears to the ground, our eyes on the future and our feet on the right path. This, by the way, is a very uncomfortable bodily position.



Surveys can be very restrictive, too. If you believe everything the pollsters tell you and if you are guided by that information to the exclusion of your own knowledge and experience, you are apt to develop a myopic view of how things really are, or really were. Especially as they were, in the case of one study.

For example, the University of Notre Dame recently ran a study of parish life in the U.S. and came up with some conclusions that should really surprise nobody.

Lay people, they said, now occupy more than 80 percent of parish leadership roles and nearly 60 percent of paid positions in Catholic parishes. When you consider all the parish councils in the country and all the lay teachers in Catholic schools along with the fact that there are about 270 lay people for every priest, religious and permanent deacon, that shouldn't be too surprising. Priests and Religious in this country form just under four-tenths of one percent of the Catholic population, so it should come as no great shock to learn that the laity are doing a lot of the work and claiming leadership roles.

Consider this: Whoever wrote the story about the Notre Dame study, or whoever was interviewed regarding it, is quoted as saying, "The picture of a parish where Father O'Brien took care of God, Sister Cerita ran the school and the people met their Mass obligations and said Hail Marys would be a woefully inadequate stereotype of U.S. Catholic parishes in the 1980s."

I agree. It would also be a woefully inadequate stereotype of the U.S. Catholic

parish at any time of the church's history in this hemisphere. If you were to take this pollster's comment at face value, you would be led to believe that before the Second Vatican Council, the laity had a pretty easy life. You'd think all they did was go to Mass on Sunday and the appointed days, shun fish on Friday, say their rosary and drop their buck in the basket on Sunday. Meanwhile, Father and Sister did everything else that was worthwhile.

Well, I've got news for these surveyors. A lot of us lived during those "Dark Ages" before Vatican II, and we can testify it wasn't quite the way the surveyors said it was.

Vatican II brought a deeper, fuller understanding of what it really means to be a Christian in today's world. It brought the laity to realize what their responsibilities really are as active Catholics, and encouraged a wider sharing both of the church's mission and the responsibility for that mission among God's people. No question about it, the church and the world are better for these fundamental changes.

But empty-handed observations such as the one referred to earlier do no service to the church, past or present. What Vatican II brought about was growth, not revolution, and showed us the way to inner renewal, upon which external renewal must be based if it is to have any effect at all.

One does not make real progress by trashing tradition, or by ridiculing one's forebearers, particularly when those forebearers built the solid foundation upon which stand the changes—the welcome changes, by the way—that the Second Vatican Council brought about.

Baby Fae's transplant stirs debate on ethics

by Antoinette Bosco

Little Baby Fae has been put to rest, but the debate that surfaced over her brief life will continue.

Baby Fae was the California infant born with an often-fatal heart defect. Doctors, in an attempt to save her life, transplanted a tiny baboon heart into her chest.

It was an experiment, but one doctors had high hopes for. Baby Fae lived an amazing 21 days.

Discussions on the case reflected several concerns:

Animal rights advocates found an ethical problem with killing baboons for any reason.

Some medical professionals expressed their opinion that the operation was done prematurely, before there was enough assurance that such an operation had even a minute chance of success.

Some people objected to use of an animal heart in a human recipient.

In the same week Baby Fae died, animal rights devotees in England took drastic action to make a point.

They put out word that they had injected some candy bars with poison. They said

their purpose was to protest the feeding of candy bars to animals to research the effects of candy on tooth decay.

Eventually, the animal advocates admitted it was a hoax—they hadn't poisoned the candy. They merely sought attention for their cause.

The contrast between the actions of Baby Fae's doctors and the animal-rights advocates in England was notable.

No question, two matters are at issue and it is up to the experts in ethics to shed light on them.

1. Should an extraordinary and scientifically unproven attempt be made to try to save the life of a baby doomed to die of a congenital defect?

2. Are we within our ethical rights to use animals in this kind of service of human beings?

On the first question, Dr. Leonard Bailey, the surgeon responsible for the historic transplant, said yes. In an interview a week after the operation with Dennis Breo, national affairs editor with the American Medical News, Bailey said he always had wanted to do something for infants born with Baby Fae's condition, which kills one-fourth of its victims within a week of birth.

It was not, he said, experimentation for the sake of experimentation. "I believe science must develop hand in hand with ethics," he stated, adding that he believed

his work had a chance of success, or at least that it might buy time to find a human heart for Baby Fae.

Dr. Donald Hill of Presbyterian Medical Center in San Francisco called the surgery "finding a window" and "a giant step forward" in the science of transplantation.

Hill also addressed the animal-rights issue. Why, he asked, is it difficult for humans to accept the concept of a baboon heart when "we use animals for vaccine testing and we eat them?"

Obviously a long tradition accepts the use of animals in the service of humans.

I recall an interview I did some 18 years ago with Dr. Harvey Cox, the Baptist theologian and author. He called transplants one of the ethical issues of the future, warning that the competition for organs could lead to "a cannibalism of human parts."

Inadvertently, he also was raising a consideration about the importance of cross-species transplants: The more available organs are, the more lives might be saved.

I think Baby Fae's real impact is that she now becomes the living expression of a biblical phrase, "and a little child shall lead them," in the medical quest to give every baby born a fighting chance to survive.

It also might clarify the relationship between animals and humans.



the criterion

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ENTERTAINMENT

VIEWING WITH ARNOLD

'Beverly Hills Cop' is social comedy

by James W. Arnold

It wasn't originally planned that way, but "Beverly Hills Cop" emerges as a bright, amusing social comedy juxtaposing the street smarts of black Detroit and the luxurious but sappy high culture of wealthy Beverly Hills. Or if you prefer, the real and the unreal.

"Cop," which was supposed to star Sylvester Stallone, is basically structured like a Clint Eastwood cop movie. You know, brash independent detective stirs up controversy with his unconventional methods. Gets chewed out by superiors, then takes off "on vacation" to a strange city where he immediately stumbles onto big crimes and gets in trouble with the local gendarmes. (That is in fact the scenario of Eastwood's "Sudden Impact.")

But with Eddie Murphy as detective Axel Foley, the key shifts from melodrama to comedy, and all the situations take on new meaning. With a white Eastern hero, even a blue-collar type like Stallone, the culture conflict jokes are simply about "crazy" or effete California. But Murphy's presence conjures up not only subtle racial tensions but an extreme clash of lifestyles and values loaded with comical and satirical potential.

Thus, Axel's drive through B.H. and posh Rodeo Drive in his "crappy blue Chevy Nova" delights him (and us) in a fresh way that has nothing to do with working-class scorn for the rich and decadent. When he checks into the fanciest hotel in his jeans and sweatshirt, he neatly turns the tables on the expected class and racial snobbery.

Oh, there are no rooms left? Well, he's a Rolling Stone reporter in for an interview with Michael Jackson, and they've ob-

viously messed up his reservation. They start to panic. In the right context, Axel knows black and funky is "in." And he ends up with a suite at the single-room rate (\$235 per).

Murphy cool vs. Beverly Hills frost—obviously the box-office heart of this film—goes on for a while but not long enough. He laughs at the stuff and prices at an art gallery, and has a wonderful dialogue about them with a young man who appears to be an arrogantly artsy Bulgarian. He succeeds in loosening up a likeable pair of straitlaced B.H. detectives. And he cons his way into the dining room of the sacrosanct Harrow Club by pretending to be a homosexual with an intimate health message for one of the guests. (The gag is essentially in the shocked, stuffy maitre d').

Even with the villain, it's a case of Axel putting down another fat cat trying desperately to keep him "in his place." This guy (Steven Berkoff) is a haughty, obnoxious art dealer who is making billions on cocaine, and Axel ticks him off just by not being properly deferential. You know they'll go to the mat—the baddies have killed off Axel's buddy back in Detroit—and eventually they do.

The script clearly makes the most of turning Murphy loose in this strange white fantasyland. But perhaps the freshest aspect is his relationship with the team of white cops (young Judge Reinhold, pudgy veteran John Ashton) who first tail him, then work with him. While the situation takes off on Murphy's love-hate relationship with Nick Nolte in "48 Hours," these fellows are lovable near-incompetents, sort of modified Laurel and Hardy types who keep the gentle comedy rolling, even amid a rather violent final shootout. It's all effortlessly put together by Martin Brest, 32, a very talented young director (last film: "Going to Style").

Murphy doesn't come on as smartass or superspade. While this young alum of "Saturday Night Live" makes his living



A SPLASH—Shelley Long makes a splash with Ryan O'Neal as he is hitchhiking cross-country in the contemporary comedy "Irreconcilable Differences," a Warner Bros. release. The film, which centers on a 10-year-old girl divorcing her parents, is classified A-III by the USCC. (NC photo)

undeniably representing a black stereotype—sassy, irreverent, never intimidated—he is immensely charming and likeable. White (as well as black) audiences love Murphy. While his race is a vital part of his appeal, Murphy has spunk and joie de vivre. That's rare anywhere in Show Biz.

How funny is Murphy? He's probably not as gifted, in pure funny, as Richard Pryor. In "Cop," he's mostly just reacting and behaving in a series of absurd situations. He does witty impersonations—one of the best is of a black B.H. detective who talks like a white man. He has some funny lines, but they're not Neil Simon or Woody Allen lines (e.g., on arriving at the Harrow Club in his beat-up Chevy, he tells the parking attendant, "Put this in a good spot . . . all this stuff happened the last time

I parked here"). Murphy has something to learn about acting, but he makes so-so material fun to watch.

There is a heavy dose of street-talk in "Cop," because that is part of what Axel thinks is an honest, non-phony, non-sentimental approach to life. He's also full of street wisdom that is dubious but seductive: e.g., tell it not as it is but as scenario that works and makes everybody happy—what a psychologist would call "a good lie."

"Beverly Hills Cop" certainly won't make everybody happy, but it ought to win a majority vote and make a lot of money.

(Social satire, slapstick and some violence, plus Murphy charisma; heavy street language and strip-joint scene; satisfactory for adults).

USCC classification: A-III, adults.

Local 'Lifesigns' Catholic radio program wins Gabriel award

BOSTON (NC)—Mother Angelica, founder of the Eternal Word Television Network, received the 1984 Gabriel Personal Achievement Award Dec. 13 during the annual general assembly of Unda-USA, the national association of Catholic broadcasters and allied communicators.

Indianapolis radio station WICR-FM received a Gabriel for the best religious program on local radio for "Teen Pregnancy," from the Lifesigns series. The

program is co-produced by the Catholic Communications Center and the Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and St. Meinrad College.

The Gabriel Awards are presented each year to radio and television stations and individuals who provide programs "of excellence in support of positive human values."

Thirty-three awards were presented this year, chosen from 500 entries from television and radio broadcasters and producers around the country.

Mother Angelica, a Poor Clare sister, founded EWTN three years ago. The religious television network services about 200 cable systems, reaching 26 million homes.

"Mother's contribution has been to build a national network in less time than probably anyone else in American communication's history," said Paulist Father John Geaney, president of Unda-USA. "She began with faith, dedication and the commitment of a small number of her own sisters. That's an outstanding contribution to the industry and the people who watch TV by anybody's definition."

The 19th annual Gabriel Awards presentation also honored television station WBZ of Boston, and KNOM radio of Nome, Alaska, for outstanding achievement.

Winners among nationally distributed television programs were:

- ABC, best entertainment program, for "The Dollmaker."
- CBS News, best informational or educational program, for "Willy Loman Comes to China."
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, best religious program, for "The Last Leaf."
- NBC, best short feature, for "The Tijuana Nun."
- Winners among nationally distributed radio programs were:
- Battle Mountain Broadcasting of Hurst, Texas, best entertainment program, for "Gospel America."
- In the informational or educational category, dual winners were CBS News for "D-Day Plus Forty Years" and NBC Radio Network for "Healing the Wounds: Prisoners of War."
- KGW-Portland, Ore., best religious program, for "Open Door . . . Near Death Experience."
- CBC English Radio Network, best short feature, for "Juluka."

Winners of local television awards in their respective market classifications were:

- For entertainment, Maryland Center for Public Television for "Mr. Magister" and television station CKND of Winnipeg, Manitoba, for "The Prudigal."
- For informational or educational programming, KTTV-Los Angeles for "Tell

Them I'm a Mermaid;" KTVK-Phoenix for "Make a Wish for Christmas;" and Wisconsin Public Television Network for "Special Care."

- WCVB-Boston, best religious program, for "Auschwitz and America."
- For short feature, WBZ-Boston for "Neighbor Four Neighbor" and WKBW, Buffalo, N.Y., for "I Carry a Badge."

The sole winner in the youth-oriented category was the local radio program "Youth on the Air: Shoplifting," by KFRC of San Francisco.

The only other local radio program winner, besides WICR-FM of Indianapolis, was WOR Radio, New York, best short feature, for "Drunk Driving Patrol."

Awards for outstanding achievement in public service announcements went to NBC for "One to Grow On," television station WLVI of Boston for "Kid Tips" and KNOM Radio, Nome, Alaska, for "Your Catholic Neighbors."

Recent USCC Film Classifications

A Passage to India A-II
2010. A-I

Legend: A-I—general patronage; A-II—adults and adolescents; A-III—adults; A-IV—adults, with reservations; O—morally offensive. A high recommendation from the USCC is indicated by the * before the title.



Mother Angelica

Freeze leaders plan strategy for coming months

State coordinator optimistic about future of movement

by Jim Jachimiak

Faced with the re-election of a president who opposes their position, leaders of the nuclear freeze movement are seeking a freeze that is "president-proof."

At the National Conference of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, held in St. Louis Dec. 7-9, freeze leaders from around the country planned legislative strategy and various activities for the coming year.

Holy Cross Brother Bill Mewes, state coordinator of the Indiana Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, attended the conference, the fifth to be held since 1981.

Conference participants laid out a three-part legislative program for 1985 which, Brother Mewes believes, would "make the freeze president-proof." The idea, he said, is that "you can end the arms race even if the president doesn't approve by cutting off funds."

The strategy includes:

► A comprehensive, bilateral, verifiable freeze, through congressional suspension of funds for testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Brother Mewes said this will be the organization's top priority in 1985.

► Bilateral moratoria on the testing of nuclear warheads and the flight-testing of missiles and space weapons, also initiated by congressional suspension of funds.

► Congressional action to prevent funding for the development of the MX missile.

Those goals are possible, Brother Mewes said, despite President Reagan's opposition. While Reagan won a second term, freeze supporters "came out stronger in Congress." And freeze supporters could control a majority of Congress after the 1986 election—at least "that's what the optimists are looking for," according to Brother Mewes.

In addition, he said, "it looks like we have an excellent chance to halt the MX this year." Funds for the MX were temporarily cut off, and will be voted on in 1985.

"But in the meantime," Brother Mewes explained, "(Sen.) Barry Goldwater came out against the MX. I think that really shows how bad it is." Goldwater, an Arizona Republican, recently became chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Brother Mewes feels that Goldwater's opposition, coupled with pressure to cut defense spending, could lead to the defeat of the MX.

Along with the legislative program, leaders of the freeze organization also set out educational and organizational goals.

Educational programs will emphasize verifiability, reducing the risk of accidental nuclear war, security advantages of a nuclear freeze, the economics of the nuclear arms race, U.S.-Soviet relations, first strike weapons and space weapons.

"We had already decided that in this state we would emphasize the educational aspect," Brother Mewes said. The state freeze campaign has launched the Nuclear Weapons Educational Fund for that purpose. The fund is a tax-exempt wing of the Indiana Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. Contributions to the fund will finance speakers and a traveling program which will be developed for use around the state.

He is also examining the possibility of satellite offices, staffed half-time, in Bloomington and South Bend. The state campaign, based in Indianapolis, has 26 affiliates around the state. Mewes is seeking ways to strengthen the groups.

Members of the Indiana organization will participate to some degree in national activities as well. The activities are being planned by religious organizations and endorsed by the nuclear freeze campaign.

April 20-22 will be devoted to action in support of reversing the arms race, ending military intervention, meeting human needs and stopping apartheid.

On Aug. 4, a "peace ribbon" is to be tied around the Pentagon.

A demonstration tentatively scheduled for Aug. 6-9 at a Nevada nuclear weapons testing site will mark the 40th anniversary of the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

By some accounts, the 1984 election was seen as a defeat for the nuclear freeze movement. But conference participants didn't see it that way.

"One of the things people remarked on," Brother Mewes said, "was that they thought people would come dragging in after the election. But they really were upbeat."

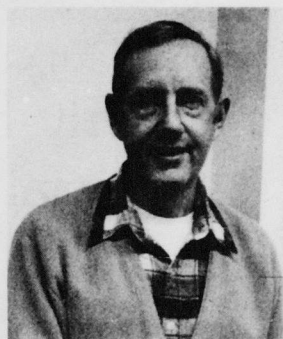
However, "right after the election many freeze supporters were down in the dumps."

Supporters in Indiana fared worse than in some other states. "In Illinois, they had a lot to cheer about even though their presidential candidate lost," Democrat Paul Simon, who supports the freeze, defeated incumbent Sen. Charles Percy, who does not.

"In Indiana," Brother Mewes said, "the greatest thing we had to cheer about was keeping the (supporters) we've got in. And in the case of McCloskey, we still don't know."

He was referring to the 8th Congressional District race between Democrat Frank McCloskey, a freeze supporter, and Republican Rick McIntyre, a freeze opponent. Last Friday, Secretary of State Edwin Simcox certified McIntyre as the winner after several counties completed recounts. But other recounts had not been completed at that time.

While local results might have been



Brother Bill Mewes

discouraging, national results looked better for the freeze campaign. "In a few days (after the election) we realized we were actually better off in Congress than we were before," Brother Mewes said.

"In Indiana, some people are still down," he added. But he sees "some what of a fighting spirit" in the movement. "I think that will buoy people up and give them renewed vigor," he said.

"The nuclear arms race is still the real propulsion behind people's efforts. It's getting worse, more and more dangerous."

In addition, the amount of attention given to starvation in Ethiopia and elsewhere is helping the cause. People are realizing that "a lot could be done to alleviate world hunger by stopping the arms race."

Increasing tensions in Central America are also having an impact. "Most people who are concerned about nuclear arms are also concerned about Central America," Brother Mewes pointed out. They see a potential for nuclear war if there is a major confrontation in Central America. "So many people are concerned that we don't go to war in Central America, any more than we already have."

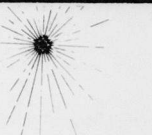
Finally, "more people will be spurred to do more as they realize what effect the nuclear arms race is having on children."

"So," Brother Mewes concluded, "I don't see the movement fading away. I see it growing stronger."

Take
stock
in America.



Block's



Christmas

Anticipation of presents unopened. A solitary fir tree majestically trimmed in precious ornaments and sparkling lights. Excitement glowing on our children's faces. Above all, the serene joy that fills us as we celebrate the Birth of Mary's Newborn Son, our Savior.

This is what we at Block's wish for you today.

the Saints

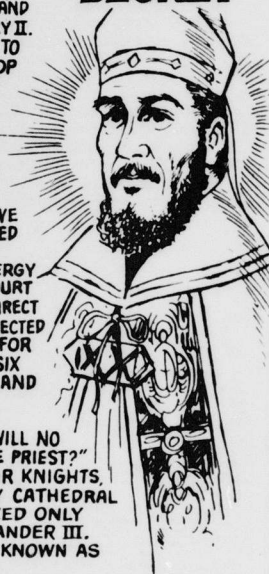
by Luke

ST. THOMAS BECKET

THOMAS WAS BORN IN 1118 IN LONDON WHERE HE STUDIED LAW. HIS CAREER WAS A STORMY ONE. WHILE ARCHDEACON OF CANTERBURY, HE WAS MADE CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND AT AGE 36 BY HIS FRIEND KING HENRY II. WHEN HENRY FELT IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO RAISE HIS CHANCELLOR TO ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, THOMAS INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT NOT ACCEPT ALL OF HENRY'S INTRUSIONS INTO CHURCH AFFAIRS. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS MADE ARCHBISHOP IN 1162.

HENRY INSISTED UPON USURPING CHURCH RIGHTS, AT ONE TIME, SUPPOSING SOME CONCILIATORY MOVE POSSIBLE, THOMAS ALMOST APPROVED THE CONSTITUTIONS OF CLARENDON WHICH WOULD HAVE DENIED THE CLERGY THE RIGHT OF TRIAL BY A CHURCH COURT AND PREVENTED THEM FROM MAKING DIRECT APPEAL TO ROME. BUT THOMAS REJECTED THE CONSTITUTIONS, FLED TO FRANCE FOR SAFETY AND REMAINED IN EXILE FOR SIX YEARS. WHEN HE RETURNED TO ENGLAND HE SUSPECTED IT WOULD MEAN CERTAIN DEATH.

HENRY CRIED OUT IN A RAGE "WILL NO ONE RID ME OF THIS TROUBLE-SOME PRIEST?" TAKING HIS WORDS LITERALLY, FOUR KNIGHTS KILLED THOMAS IN THE CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL ON DEC. 29, 1170. HE WAS CANONIZED ONLY THREE YEARS LATER BY POPE ALEXANDER III. HIS FEAST IS DEC. 29. HE IS ALSO KNOWN AS THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.



CORNUCOPIA

'Twas the night before Christmas

by Cynthia Dewes

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And through the archdiocese,
Many creatures were stirring,
(not all from psoriasis);
The singers were warbling at Midnight
Mass,
While listeners sat
thinking, "This too
shall pass."
The kiddies were
ragged from waiting
agor,
And Santa was tipsy
from too much Yule
grog;
The Christmas tree
molted its needles in
silence,
Protecting the presents, soon prey of
violence;
Mistletoe hung where lovers could kiss,
And everyone tried it, sometimes a near-
miss;
The Sunday School pageant came apart at
the seams
When infant Babe Jesus let out healthy
screams;
The dogs cast as sheep ran off from the
stage
And St. Joseph's beard twice failed to
engage;
The three kings tripped over their gold -
plastic gowns,
Causing dainty white angels to flash the
worst frowns;
The Christmas feast waited on table and
stove,
The festive fare smelling of ginger and
clove;
With sweet sugared hams and turkey and
dressing,
Roast beef so tender it called for a
blessing;
Carrots and turnips, potatoes and yams,
Cookies and fruitcakes and jellies and
jams;
Outdoor lights twinkled and shone like the
star
That once led adorers who came from afar;
TV and radio blared out Yule carols,
As Santas on sidewalks kept warm by their
barrels;
In short, all was ready here on the earth,
To welcome Our Lord at His marvelous
birth.
When what to our wondering eyes should
appear,



But the lovable Baby who drives away
fear;
His power is simple, it needs no machine,
No money, no weapon, no nuke on the
scene;
Instead, here is Wisdom to see ourselves
plain,
To give others love and not inflict pain;
And we hear ourselves call, with surprising
insight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a Good
Night!"

vips...



✓ St. Vincent Hospital and Health Care
Center has announced the appointment of
Jody Bowman as director of alternate
delivery systems. In this position she will
coordinate the development of alternative
models of health care, such as preferred
provider and health maintenance
organizations. Bowman has worked
several years in hospital planning and
marketing and holds master's degrees in
university administration and Spanish. She
was a Fulbright Scholar and was
recognized as a member of "Who's Who in
American Colleges and Universities."



SEMINARIAN AND POPE—Dan Mahan, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis and a first-year theology student at North American College in Rome, is shown with Pope John Paul II during a private audience granted on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the college in Vatican City. (Photo by L'Osservatore Romano)

✓ Tanya Knarr, Sister M. Christa,
Missionaries of Charity, will make her
home visit before final vows next year in
Rome. Daughter of Ron and Jean Knarr,
Sister will welcome friends at an open
house on Saturday, Dec. 29 from 1:30 to 4:30
p.m. in Holy Cross Hall. A Mass of
Thanksgiving will follow in Holy Cross
Church at 5:15 p.m.

check it out...

✓ 200 new, never-used song books,
"Cantos de Gracias Y Alabanza,"
published by Oregon Catholic Press, are for
sale at \$1.25 each. Also, 250 used, plastic-
covered Misal del Dia books originally
priced at \$2.25 are now available for \$1.75
apiece. Contact St. Stephen Parish, 1102 W.
Thomas St., South Bend, Ind. 46625, 219-287-
7681.

✓ A three-day program entitled "The
Triad of Prayer" will be conducted by
Gwen Goss at Beech Grove Benedictine
Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove,
from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays, Jan. 12,
Feb. 23 and March 16. The triad is designed
to help participants uncover and develop
their own styles of prayer. \$15 per session
includes lunch. \$5 non-refundable deposit.
Call 788-7581 for information and
registration.

✓ The Academy of the Immaculate
Conception in Oldenburg will give its
placement test for eighth grade girls on
Saturday, Jan. 19 at 8:15 a.m. Parents will
be offered an information session at 8:30
a.m. A tour of the school buildings will
follow the test at approximately 12:30 p.m.
Fee is \$3.50 collectible that day. Call ICA
812-934-4440 by Jan. 11 if you plan to take
the test.



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Court made abortion on
demand legal. And thousands
of precious unborn babies
continue to be aborted each
and every day.

armband like the one pic-
tured above, in this date
protest, on peaceful.

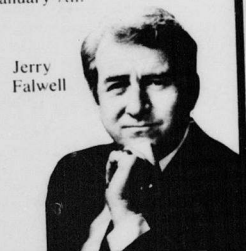
You can help save the lives
of innocent babies by joining
this national crusade against
abortion and wearing your
armband on January 22nd,
1985—thus stimulating public
opinion against our "national
sin" and eventually bringing
about judicial and/or legisla-
tive relief.

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We can no longer passively
and quietly wait for the
Supreme Court to change
their mind or for Congress to
pass a law that would pro-
tect the unborn children of
America.

We will send you five free
armbands to share with your
family and friends. Just fill in
and return the coupon by
January 7th.

That is why we are calling for
a **National Day of Mourning**,
January 22, 1985. On this
date we will launch the
greatest pro-life crusade in
the history of this nation—
and **I am seeking 15 million
Americans** (one person for
each baby that has been
aborted) across this country
who will wear a memorial



Jerry
Falwell

DEADLINE: Mail Coupon By January 7th.

YES, SEND ME MY FREE ARMBANDS. I promise to wear one on Tuesday,
January 22nd, the National Day of Mourning, in personal protest against
abortion.

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Address _____
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Mail to: Jerry Falwell, Lynchburg, VA 24514

Any contribution you can send today to help our fight against abortion will be
tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

QUESTION CORNER

Who prays Doxology?

by Fr. John Dietzen

Q My question concerns the entire church community saying in unison with the priest the final acclamation before the Our Father. "Through him, with him," and so on. Is this a proper procedure?

A As nearly as I can determine, liturgical tradition as far back as we can trace assigns that part of the Mass, called the Great Doxology (prayer of praise), to the presiding priest. The people's acclamation and expression of approval in union with that doxology is the Amen.



This remains the proper procedure for the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy.

While it is still considered more "with it" liturgically in some circles, the practice of saying the entire doxology together betrays an unfortunate ignorance of the majestic significance of the great prayer Amen. This word goes back centuries, even to the Jewish people in the pre-Christian era.

It means: "All this is true, we believe it."

In other words, it is a profound and reverent affirmation of all that was just said and done. As such, it is a magnificent conclusion to the eucharistic prayer by all present who share in the offering of that Eucharist.

In the book of Revelation (3:14), Jesus himself is called "the Amen, the faithful witness" of the Father, the one who reflects

and affirms all the Father wishes to be and to say to humankind.

Considering the halfhearted, timid manner with which most congregations respond with this great Amen at Mass, whether it is sung or recited, it is perhaps understandable that many feel the whole doxology should be said by everyone just to keep that entire solemn moment from falling flat.

But that is not the way it should be.

Q My husband, who was not Catholic, died several years ago and was buried in a non-Catholic cemetery. Can I be buried at his side when I die? Will a priest bless my grave in this cemetery?

I talked to one priest and he said no, but I know this is done in other families.

A Unless for some reason the bishop has a special regulation for your diocese, there is no Catholic regulation that would prevent your being buried with your husband and having a priest officiate at the burial. It's done all the time.

(A free brochure outlining Catholic regulations on marriage and explaining the promises before an interfaith marriage is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father Dietzen, 704 N. Main St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701.)

1984 by NC News Service

FAMILY TALK

Getting adult child to be more independent

by Dr. James and Mary Kenny

Dear Mary: My daughter, at 25, is still trying to get her father's acceptance. He is loving but difficult, and they have a personality conflict.

She has had professional help and medication, which was stopped seven years ago when she became pregnant. She gave the baby up for adoption.

At this point she still seems to need a degree of self-discipline so she can hold down a job. She becomes overly involved on a personal basis and alienates herself from people because they resent her interference.

We have four other children who have developed well and are competent and self-reliant. We somehow have failed her.

She has worked and shared expenses at different times. However, she runs up bills, gasoline and telephone in particular. Can you say at this point, stay with a full-time job and pay your own way or leave home? How do you push without shoving?

She does show a good amount of effort but not continuously. She has spent a good part of these years "giving up her baby." This I think she has behind her. Please give us an answer.

Answer: Clearly you have the wisdom and experience that comes from raising a number of children. The fact that four of your children are doing well on their own indicates that you are not overprotective of your children. At the same time, you recognize that this daughter cannot do



what the others have done. What should you do?

You have identified some reasons you think she has problems, namely conflicts with her father, difficulty in personal relationships and giving up a child for adoption. Be sure to distinguish between problems and excuses.

Each life poses problems. The problems may be very real, as in your daughter's case. However, they are not excuses for failing to get on with the rest of life. You are doing your daughter a disservice if you decide that her problems are an excuse for taking care of her for the rest of her life.

The behavior you mention, running up telephone and gasoline bills, are clearly child behavior. In paying these bills you are treating her like a child. I fail to see how paying for her gasoline will help her deal with her feelings about giving up a child. I can clearly see from her position that it would be very comfortable to use dad and mom's car and let them pay for the gas.

Stop letting her use the car and the telephone until she can pay for their use. Your "kindness" may be depriving her of some strong motivation to do for herself.

She may or not be ready to live on her own. I cannot tell from your letter just what her capabilities are.

You are experienced parents. Talk with your husband to try to be more objective about assessing her strengths and weaknesses and to recognize her good points. If she is getting help from a mental health professional, tell him what you propose to do in regard to your daughter and ask for his evaluation.

Being indulgent is not always kind. Being tough is not always mean. For example, if your daughter had a physical disability, you might still have to be tough and insist she use her existing capabilities to the maximum. The same reasoning applies to her present situation.

Protect her when life and limb are involved. But do not encourage her to remain a child by doing for her, particularly in non-essentials. Trust your wisdom and judgment as a parent, but be tough enough that she is forced to get on with her life.

(Reader questions on family living and child care to be answered in print are invited. Address questions: The Kennys, Box 872, St. Joseph's College, Rensselaer, Ind. 47978.)

1984 by NC News Service

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"Simple, everyday things"

Half a world away from home, Debra Bartelli found how faith can be expressed in those "simple, everyday things"—like responding to a child's basic need for attention and affection.

A lay missionary at St. Vincent's Home for Amerasians in Korea, Debra has come to understand a truth she somehow missed back home in Phoenix: that mission is a commitment every Christian must make, a responsibility all share.

Answer your calling to be a missionary! By expressing Christ's love and living the Gospel every day. And — through your gifts to the Propagation of the Faith — by supporting the work of people like Debra Bartelli throughout the world of the mission Church.

YES! I want to be a missionary through my support for the work of the mission Church.

Enclosed is my gift:

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Please tell me how I can join your monthly donor program.

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Please ask the missionaries to remember these intentions at Mass: _____



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Fr. James D. Barton, Archdiocesan Director

Leadership Drive nears goal

TERRE HAUTE—The Terre Haute Leadership Drive for the Alerding Hall Renovation Project at Gibault School for Boys has surpassed 75 percent of its \$100,000 goal.

Bob Boyer, chairman of Gibault School's Terre Haute Development Council, and John Dinkel, local fund drive chairman, made that announcement at a meeting of the development council last week.

Development council members reported that local businesses and individuals are responding positively and generously to their requests for donations to the project.

Gibault Executive Director Daniel McGinley reported that the \$2.4 million renovation is progressing ahead of schedule and should be completed in late winter or early spring.

A fund drive wrap-up meeting has been scheduled for Dec. 19.

When the lion and the lamb are together in peace

by Fr. John Buckel

"John the Baptist will never win the best-dressed-man-of-the-year award," a centurion said to his companion. Clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, John was often the object of ridicule. "He has the voice of a lion crying out in the wilderness—and he smells like one, too," was the standing joke among the Roman officials.

Aurelius and Marcus were two centurions assigned by Herod to "keep an eye" on this rabble rouser. Day after day, they heard John the Baptist preaching: "The Messiah is coming! He will save us from all our problems!" Marcus laughed, "I'll believe that when the lion and the lamb lie down together in peace."

Where John the Baptist came from remained a mystery. One day he appeared in the Jordan River shouting at the top of his voice: "Prepare the way of the Lord! Repent! Reform your lives!" Aurelius thought, "He won't win many friends by calling people sinners."

Marcus began to chat with some of the curiosity-seekers. "John the Baptist is different by anyone's standards. Rumor has it that he eats only grasshoppers and wild honey, that he lives in a cave and that he spends much of the night in silent prayer. In spite of his lean figure and shabby clothes, John's booming voice and fiery eyes make him a powerful figure."

"Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be leveled," John promulgated. It seemed a natural way of saying that all things need to be made equal: the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, heaven and earth. The two

soldiers thought that John the Baptist was mad and would eventually go away.

Hundreds of people were coming to John the Baptist, confessing their sins and being baptized, yet religion often brings out the best and the worst in people," Aurelius said to Marcus. The Jordan River continued to be John's pulpit. "Let the person with two coats give to the one who has none. The person with food should do the same."

Marcus and Aurelius could not believe their eyes: a local tax collector was approaching the wild man in the river. "Take nothing over and above the required amount of tax money," John advised. "Always be honest and fair." Aurelius then blurted out, "Is my mind playing tricks, or is that not a soldier from our company?" John the Baptist addressed the soldier, "Don't take advantage of anyone. Be content with your pay and don't complain."

Now that John was attracting great crowds, some of the Jewish leaders wanted to take advantage of his popularity. They, too, came before John the Baptist. John had no patience with people who pretended to be something they were not. "You brood of vipers! Who told you to flee from the wrath to come?" he scolded the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

There was a new addition to John the Baptist's preaching—he denounced King Herod. "It is not right that a man should marry his brother's wife," Aurelius scowled. "Now he has gone too far. This accusation (though true) will cost him his head. John is either very courageous or very stupid." Many of the Jews were thinking, "Israel has not seen the likes of John the Baptist since the days of the great prophets."

One aspect of John's preaching puzzled Aurelius and Marcus. "One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not worthy to stoop and untie his shoe." Marcus said, "I can't imagine John the Baptist humbling himself before anyone except God."

It happened that Jesus came to the Jordan River to meet John. Jesus and John were alone together in the river. A conversation of silence took place for an undetermined length of time. The interior light of Jesus could be seen and the interior power of John could be heard: lightning and thunder now stood in the river disguised as two human beings. Each of these extraordinary men had the feeling that the other understood him completely.

John broke the silence. "I have been expecting you," Jesus replied, "You have been the voice of God; now I will take over." John continued, "Many people refuse to listen to the voice of God." "Yes," Jesus said. "People often find supposedly good reasons not to live as God commands. 'Only unconditional love will conquer all.'"

"Baptize me, John," Jesus ordered. "We must do this if we would fulfill all of God's commands." As Jesus came out of the water, a voice was heard from heaven. "This is my beloved son." Jesus then whispered to John, "You haven't much time. Be content. You have served God well." John responded, "My work is finished. You are here. Jesus, there is so much I do not understand." Jesus said, "You do not have to understand; you only have to love." As Jesus walked away, John pointed to him and shouted, "Behold the lamb of God."

Aurelius and Marcus looked at one another. They both realized that the lion and the lamb had been together in peace. Without speaking, the two soldiers walked toward the river.



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(1 Peter 1:24-25)

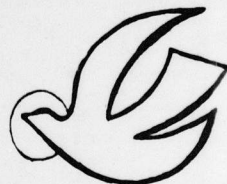
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"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace." (1 Cor. 1:3)

THE SUNDAY READINGS

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 23, 1984

by
Richard
Cain

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Keep your eyes and heart on God, for you cannot begin to imagine how much he has in mind to accomplish through you in Jesus Christ! That is the challenge running through this Sunday's readings.

Take the case of David for example. When David finally sat down on his throne, secure at last in his rule over Israel, he must have looked back. How many years ago it had been since the great prophet Samuel had poured the fragrant oil over the breathless little shepherd boy's head anointing him king over Israel and David felt the wonderful strangeness of it running over his hair and down his neck into his tunic.

Why him?

Somehow he accepted the challenge and believed the promise. But back then he had no idea of how many long years of waiting, fleeing and fighting would pass before he would actually see the fulfillment of that promise and sit in his own palace on old King Saul's throne.

As David's psalms testify, the long wait must have tested his faith to the limit. But his heart now overflowed with humble gratitude to the God who had preserved him through so many trials and raised him to a position of such honor and responsibility among his people.

So David consulted the prophet Nathan. With God's promise now a reality, surely it was time for David to honor in turn so great a God by building him a fitting temple.

How Nathan's second response must have come as a surprise!

It was not important what David could do for God. What mattered was what God was doing through David. David had only seen the beginning of the blessings God intended for him, Nathan said. From David

would issue forth an eternal dynasty, and one of David's heirs would enjoy a uniquely close relationship with God, like father and son. This became the basis of Israel's hope for a Messiah, a savior.

As Christians, Paul reminds us that we have seen the fulfillment of that hope in Jesus Christ. And as Nathan redirected David's attention back toward the God who had only begun to bless him, so too does Paul at the end of his letter to the Romans redirect our attention toward expectant waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise of our rescue, healing and honor in Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

No one has provided a better example of expectant and confident waiting for the Lord than Mary. To her was given the fulfillment of the promise made to David. When the angel spoke those stupendous words many a Jewish girl must secretly have wanted to hear, she, too, must have wondered, "Why me?" Though she did not fully understand how God would make a simple virgin give birth, her simple response was: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

Our faith is strengthened and our waiting made easier when we recall the richness of our God who makes the fulfillment of each promise simply a foretaste of what he has in store.

It was God's strange design to make a young shepherd boy king of Israel, a rabid Jewish elitist apostle to the gentiles and a poor peasant girl mother of the Messiah.

What is God promising to do through you? Are you praying and confidently waiting to find out?

As these readings suggest, we must not underestimate what God wants to accomplish in Jesus Christ through us.

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January & February, 1985 TV Mass Schedule:

Date	Celebrant	Congregation
Jan. 6	Fr. Elmer Burwinkle	Members of St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg
Jan. 13	Fr. Francis Dooley	Members of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis
Jan. 20	Fr. John Beitans	Members of St. Ann Parish, Indianapolis
Jan. 27	Fr. Gerald Kirkhoff	Members of St. Philip Neri Parish, Indianapolis
Feb. 3	Fr. Joseph Kos	Members of St. Thomas Parish, Fortville
Feb. 10	Fr. Clifford Vogelsang	Members of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Indpls.
	Fr. James Barton	
	Fr. Kenny Taylor	
Feb. 17	Fr. Mauro Rodas	Members of St. Mary Parish, Indianapolis
Feb. 24	Fr. Karl Miltz	Students from Roncalli High School, Indpls.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

A Supplement to The Criterion



Startling news story

God the Son is born in Bethlehem cave

by Richard Cain

The following is a news story that might have been written some 1984 years ago:

BETHLEHEM (NC)—In the latest stage of God the Father's plan for rescuing humankind from sin and death, a young peasant woman has successfully given birth to God the Son. The birth took place in a stable in Bethlehem near Jerusalem as there was no room for the mother at the local inn.

"To you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord," God declared in an announcement released through shepherds pasturing their flocks on the hills near Bethlehem. Previous announcements had said the birth would take place in Bethlehem and through a virgin.

Although the birth was preceded by numerous prophetic announcements and an 1800-year education program and accompanied by signs in the heavens, so far it has received little attention. The whole Mediterranean area has been occupied with an empire-wide census which will form the basis for a crack-down on tax collections, according to reliable sources.

Sources close to the family indicate that the child will be named Jesus. His parents are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth in Galilee. Joseph, a descendant of King David, is a carpenter. Jesus is the couple's first child.

God the Son enters human history in a time of political unrest and confusion. Many Jews are unhappy with their religious leaders' policy of accommodation with the Roman authorities. A number of guerrilla forces have been formed, the largest of them taking the name Zealots.

There is a general expectation among the militants that the long-awaited savior

from God will be a political and military leader who will drive off the occupation forces and restore the state of Israel to the former glory it enjoyed under Kings David and Solomon.

The birth itself has also received considerable attention among the gossip columnists. Although Mary and Joseph were married, the customary year of waiting before the couple comes together to live as man and wife had not been completed before Mary was discovered to be pregnant. Under Jewish law, any sexual activity before or outside of marriage is technically punishable by death. The penalty, along with much of the Torah (Jewish religious law), has been widely ignored for many years.

According to sources close to Joseph, he was preparing to divorce Mary quietly when he received word in a dream that Mary had conceived the long-awaited savior from God through extraordinary means.

According to Jewish sacred records, God's rescue plan began approximately 1800 years ago when God directed Abraham, a resident of the Mesopotamian city of Ur, to relocate in what is now Palestine. They include formal agreements between Abraham and God in which God promised to make Abraham a great nation. God also promised that all nations would be blessed through one of Abraham's descendants.

According to the Holy Spirit, God's ultimate goal is to reconcile all people to himself through his Son, giving eternal life in union with God to all who accept the Son. Only time will tell whether people—Jews and non-Jews alike—are ready to respond to this new and unprecedented initiative, he said.



The Christmas peace

by Fr. Clifford Stevens

Excerpted from the book
"A Life of Christ"

They used to come from miles around, from the fields and forests, from the peasant's hut and baron's manor, from the towns and villages, and from the countryside, to crowd into monastery church or great cathedral to take part in the Christmas liturgy. They would come in the middle of the night to celebrate the Midnight Mass of Christmas, remain for the night vigils, and stay also for the Christmas Mass at dawn. They came because they had been touched by the wonder of the feast.

Christmas, which celebrates a key event in the history of the world, the birth of the Son of God, opens up doors of wonder each year as the significance of the great mystery of the Incarnation is unfolded for everyone.

The Christmas liturgy did not come full blown from the hands of some liturgist; it was shaped by the deep Christian sense of wonder in the face of the miracle of God-become-man. The marvel of it was almost too much to bear when the Nativity was celebrated and dramatized and sung. It overflowed into people's lives, giving joy and strength and an immense hope in the face of the stern realities of life.

What that liturgy proclaimed and celebrated in song and art, in poetry and ritual, was the immortality of man, linked to God's wondrous plan for the human race, and embodied in the one central event of human history: the birth of God as man.

Those who believe in this event and understand something of its significance cannot go back to their normal living unchanged or untouched. Normal things—the kitchen window and the backyard fence—open not merely onto the town and village. They open also onto eternity. This touch of

eternity is what we celebrate at Christmas. From this touch of eternity, the Christian draws both strength and hope. The wonder of Christmas is the first reality in the life of Jesus. That wonder must never be allowed to "wear off," if its full significance is to come home to us.

CHRISTMAS presents the greatest challenge to human aspirations. It opens up to the human intellect a hope, an expectation, that shakes it to its very roots. It is unbelievable. It is startling. It wrenches normal human sensibilities. But it is true.

The young child can understand it; the greatest human mind cannot exhaust its meaning. Poets have sung about it; songsmiths have surrounded it with melody; and theologians and mystics have pondered it. Still it remains as fresh and new and full of meaning as it did for the shepherds and the Wise Men.

"A child is born to us, a Son given to us." Christmas has never been an empty belief for those who celebrate it with the full splendor of the Catholic liturgy. It is prepared for by a Season of Expectation, and it is followed by 12 days of mirth and merriment. And the reason for the merriment is clear: God has become a man, human life is redeemed, everything in human life has meaning.

The theme is carried through the whole of the year as the church celebrates the mystery of human redemption. If we forget it, the reason is that we have forgotten what we are celebrating.

Christmas is the great window of the liturgical year, the window that opens onto eternity and gives the human race a glimpse of immortality. Whatever it is that we experience at Christmas, this fact is at the back of it. We may not know how to describe it, and we may sometimes be too choked with feeling to define it to ourselves.

But that is the substance of the Christmas experience.

This is the reason for much of the blatant generosity associated with Christmas. The rich man is reminded that his riches mean nothing in God's eyes; and the poor man, that the lack of them makes no difference to God. Crippled boys are made whole, little blind girls see, and every child hears strange voices and strange footsteps in the Christmas darkness. Stockings are filled with gifts, and the whole world is sparked by the thought of the overwhelming generosity of God.

ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT, in a small cave on a hillside in Palestine, the Creator left the womb of the Virgin Mary and stepped into the environment of planet earth. The Maker of the universe was born as a little child, just as we were. The songs and poetry with which we surround our celebration of this event are beautiful and touching; but we must not let them cloud the solid, shining truth of what happened. What is important is not that it is beautiful and touching, but that it is true. God became man. The Child lying in the bed of straw is the Creator of the universe.

If Christ is God, then the mystery of the Incarnation is the most tremendous thing that has ever happened. Our lives can never be the same once that tiny Babe has become known to us. We either kneel in adoration before our God and follow close in His footsteps, or we live in mediocrity and half-truth.

There was a day when the shining light of the Incarnation gave strength and meaning to a person's life and every event of that life. Anyone who has traveled in Europe can see there the splendor and glory that the belief in this mystery gave to people whose faith was a shining fact. Great cathedrals and silent monasteries dot the countryside—many of them empty for centuries. It was the light of Christ, the light of the Incarnation, that built them. It was faith in God-become-man that was enshrined in them.

Of all the works of God, the mystery of the Incarnation is the most astonishing. Nothing greater can be imagined by us than that the true God and Son of God should become man. In Palestine, in the reign of Caesar Augustus, a homeless couple was driven underground to escape from the cold of the night. There, in silence and wonder, a Child was born. A Child who was truly a human child, yet who was just as truly God.

It was no small thing that happened; and we cannot listen to those who speak of it calmly. We must stir ourselves up to understand the greatness of this mystery, go back in spirit to the ancient city of the East where, on a night long ago, strange men came out of the night and knelt in adoration before the Creator of the universe, a Child wrapped swaddling clothes.

We who know Christ must make it clear that the Babe of Bethlehem is not just a symbol. He is the life and the light of us all; and those who open their eyes and hearts to Him, He makes into children and friends of God. Around the radiant cradle of the Redeemer, all must kneel if they are to find peace and strength and joy. Every single human being must find peace there; for there is nowhere else it can be found.

This sense of wonder or marvel is what the mystery of the Incarnation by its nature communicates to us. It is the wonder of God's becoming man, but also the wonder of man's inheriting an eternal kingdom. The story begins with the simple lines of St. Luke's Gospel: "Blessed are you among women. . . . You shall bear a child, and He shall be named Jesus. . . . The baby to be born to you will be all-holy, the Son of God."

That is the beginning; and it leads "to the city of David which is called Bethlehem," and the Child's birth there. We all know where the story leads; it is this that makes us Christians.

(Excerpted with permission from "A Life of Christ," published by Our Sunday Visitor, 290 Noll Plaza, Huntington, Ind. 46750, \$5.95.)

Unique experiences of Christmas

by Richard Cain

Another Christmas is upon us, bringing with it the joys and aggravations of life lived with a little extra intensity. But before we become too wrapped up in our own holiday experience, it might do well to share a few Christmas anecdotes from around the archdiocese.

As with the vast majority of families in the archdiocese, the Christmas season has provided the Caitos of Holy Rosary parish in Indianapolis with an opportunity to gather together as a family. According to Clara Caito, 87, the family has been gathering each Christmas for more than 50 years.

"Originally we had it in the house," she said. "(But) as the family got bigger and bigger, we had to rent a hall."

With six children (all married), 22 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren, she expects 90-100 people to show up at this year's gathering at St. Patrick's parish hall.

Most of the family lives in Indianapolis. But some come from as far as Michigan.

As one might expect, coping with such a crowd takes a little planning and preparation. According to Mrs. Caito, everything is prepared ahead of time. "My daughters and I cook the raviolis, the meatballs, the sausages and the turkey. They young folks bring the dessert."

The Caitos used to stay up all night before Christmas. But now the festivities usually begin around 11 a.m. Her son, Philip, who was blessed with a suitable profile, plays the role of Santa Claus. "He gives the children the gifts."

The atmosphere is enhanced with taped music. "Sometimes we play bingo." Other times, "the menfolk want to play cards." The gathering usually breaks up around 5 or 6 in the evening.

One of the largest Italian families in Indianapolis, the Caitos have long been involved in the produce business. "In the old days, they called the Caitos the banana kings," she said.

Mrs. Caito also shared one other interesting anecdote.

Born Clara Mercurio, Mrs. Caito was six months old when her parents brought her to the United States from Italy. She met her husband, Joseph, in Columbus, Ohio. "We were neighbors." Following their marriage in 1912, Joseph's brother married Mrs. Caito's sister. Then Mrs. Caito's brother married Joseph's sister. Finally, the wife of another of Joseph's brothers died and he married another of Mrs. Caito's sisters.

In all, four members of her husband's family married four members of her family. How's that for close family ties?

While not of Italian descent, Bishop Joseph Chartrand certainly had a fun-loving spirit. From his days as a

seminarian at St. Meinrad, he was known for his enjoyment of a good prank. "Once he caught a cat which had strayed into the Cathedral and carried it into his confessional," James Divita, professor of history at Marian College recounted in a short biography of the bishop. "Now the bishop never had a curtain separating him from the penitent, only wooden latticework. So imagine the shock when the window slid open and the next sinner was greeted by a cat eyeballing him!"

"Eyewitnesses report that the bishop was not above using a leaky trick water glass on unsuspecting dinner guests—even if they were members of the hierarchy."

Bishop Chartrand's love of excitement did not disappear at Christmastime either. According to Msgr. Raymond Bosler, Bishop Chartrand would give directions that the doors of the Cathedral were not to be unlocked until a short time before midnight Mass on Christmas. Then, sitting up in the choir loft, he would watch the penned-up herd of people scramble over the pews as they sought the best seats for the service.

Evidently the event became so boisterous that the next bishop, Joseph Ritter, outlawed midnight Masses for several years immediately after becoming bishop.

With the then Diocese of Indianapolis already well-established, Bishop Chartrand could afford to indulge a little antic behavior. What Bishop Simon Brute yearned for in 1834, his first Christmas as bishop in Indiana, was a brief moment of dignity and splendor in his bare frontier Cathedral. Here is his account of that day:

"Christmas was well-attended and after a truly edifying and orderly midnight Mass and some Communion, others took place at the second Mass, at eight o'clock, with those of 19 youths making their First Communion for which they had been prepared during Advent.

"The Bishop (he was in the habit of referring to himself in the third person) spoke again in French at the midnight Mass (and) in English at the last High Mass which had nearly as full a church as the first. Some baptisms took place after it, one of a sensible man lately converted to the Catholic faith.

"Solemn vespers with some instruction and at the end the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the day, during which much edification seemed to have been received.

"The full pontifical dignity of our offices could scarcely have been expected to shine forth in all its splendor, either without a sufficient clergy, or in a Cathedral of vast extent, lofty structure, noble form and strongly-built walls, but as yet as naked and bare as if just left by the architect and

his bricklayers although covered some six or eight years ago.

"Still the mitre and the crosier used by the Bishop as he entered the sanctuary, and at his last benediction, have instruction for Catholics wherever they are seen, being viewed as the simple emblems of the authority and office of their first pastors, and of their Apostolic Mission, from the fountains from which all the powers of the ministry incessantly flow through the whole Church of Christ."

And so from the flickering candlelight gleaming off Bishop Brute's gilded crosier has come the vast festive array of Christmas lights shining in the myriad homes and churches that make up the Archdiocese of Indianapolis today.

No doubt, it is a splendor of which we would have been proud.



Joseph and Clara Caito
Wedding photo, Nov. 12, 1912



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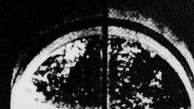
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DICKENS CLASSIC—Aaron Stele-Nicholson as Tiny Tim, David Strathairn as Bob Cratchit, Jarlath Conroy as Ebenezer Scrooge and Pam Bierly as the Ghost of Christmas Present appear in the Ford Theatre production of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Dickens' writings hammered away at the grievous social conditions of his day. He was convinced that human greed was the cause of all misery in society, James Barnett wrote in his book, "The American Christmas." For Dickens, greed blinded individuals to their duty toward others. (NC photo)

Christmas through the eyes of Dickens

by Katharine Bird

When Charles Dickens died in 1870, a young boy reportedly asked: "Is Mr. Dickens dead? And will Father Christmas die too?"

That story, reported by James Barnett in "The American Christmas" (MacMillan Publishers, 1954), reveals how closely the British author is identified with Christmas. A recurring interest of his, Dickens turned to Christmas in several works including "Sketches by Boz" and the oft-retold, "A Christmas Story."

Barnett writes that Dickens had firm theories about Christmas:

► It was a time for forgetting oneself and thinking of others, especially the poor and unfortunate.

► It was the season for festive partying and rejoicing in family ties and friendship.

► It was a time for recognizing and renewing the bonds that link all human beings.

Dickens, whose writings hammered away at the grievous social problems of his day, was convinced that human greed was the cause of all the misery in society, says Barnett. For Dickens, greed blinded individuals to their duty toward others.

To drive the point home, the prolific author created the unpleasant character of Scrooge. The selfish miser's eyes are opened to a different way of life in the course of nocturnal visits to three Christmases—past, present and future.

Part of Dickens' genius, however, was to create characters who were the opposite of Scrooge, such as the delightful Mr. Pickwick. His love for other people, his droll sense of fun and his eagerness to help made him a general favorite among all who came in contact with him. His rollicking adventures are told in "The Pickwick Papers."

In that memorable book, Dickens draws a portrait of Pickwick enjoying Christmas Eve at Dingley Dell:

"When they were all tired of blind man's bluff, there was a great game at snap-dragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that . . . they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper and a mighty bowl of wassail . . . in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible."

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is, indeed, comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Everybody sits down with us on Christmas Eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait till the clock strikes 12, to usher Christmas in and while away the time with forfeits and old stories."

The classic scene draws together many of the elements of a Dickens' Christmas: friends and relatives of all ages enjoying each others' company, lots of fun and games, copious amounts of food and drink—and all the barriers between people lowered for the time. There's no distinction in the household between servants and master, rich and poor at Christmas.

Herbert Wernecke in "Christmas Customs Around the World" (Westminster Press, 1959) comments that Dickens' Christmas scenes vividly portrayed the customs current in Victorian England in the 19th century. Wernecke adds that the works also established those customs more firmly.

I have a hunch, however, that Dickens did more than that. Somehow, whenever people today talk about what Christmas means, it isn't long before Dickens' name or one of his unforgettable characters pops into the conversation.

It strikes me that Dickens set a standard for Christmas that people today still measure their Christmas celebrations against. He had a vision of what Christmas was about and a knack for focusing on the season's universal themes.

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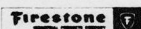
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Joy of Christmas is in giving

by Sr. Vera Gallagher, RGS

A homemaker and mother of four boys, Rita Ungaro Schiavone seldom had much time on her hands. Even so, as a way of putting her Christianity into practice, she began visiting families in need while the boys were youngsters in school.

She still remembers Minnie, an elderly woman bedridden with arthritis. She was dreadfully thin and couldn't walk. The small row house was suffocating. Minnie's bed linens and night clothing were almost worn out. She had lost most of her sight but she didn't complain.

Mrs. Schiavone wanted to fix her something to eat but the refrigerator and cupboards were empty. Minnie's daughter, leaning against a wall, was expressionless. Recently sent home from a psychiatric hospital, she was speechless with depression.

Mrs. Schiavone bought food and gave Minnie and her daughter sandwiches and coffee. But she worried about what they would do for dinner.

That night, at the family dinner, Mrs. Schiavone filled two extra plates. Later she delivered them to Minnie and her daughter.

Mrs. Schiavone also remembers Dorothy. She remembers how the doorbell was answered by a woman, alone in a house without heat, bundled up in sweater and coat. The building was rundown; the plumbing needed fixing and the refrigerator didn't work. Her clothing, torn and dirty, draped about her thin figure in folds. Dorothy accepted the homecooked meals fearfully. Since her father's death, she had lived alone.

Mrs. Schiavone bought clean clothing, new sheets for the bed, a bedspread and blankets. The water was turned on and the plumbing repaired. Dorothy's father had left her money. It came monthly, but others always got to her mailbox first.

The homemaker told her friends about the two women she was helping and the extra plates of food dished out at night.

Then members of her parish, St. Jerome's, joined in her work. Staff and parishioners began searching for people in need, making dinners and delivering them.

Then Mrs. Schiavone spoke about the work at a meeting of a local ministers' ecumenical association. The ministers told members of their congregations and they too joined in the enterprise.

Mrs. Schiavone was invited to speak in churches. Somebody wrote a news story. There was a radio report about it too. People began to send money.

For 10 years now, thousands of volunteers have cooperated in the program which is called "Aid for Friends." Mrs. Schiavone is the program's unsalaried executive director.

Most dinners come from families. In the context of a family dinner, parents teach children to serve the poor and handicapped first.

Volunteers collect frozen dinners from cooks and carry them to central freezers in 65 locations. Some cooks bring frozen dinners to their church or synagogue as part of their offering.

Volunteer visitors pick up a week's supply of frozen dinners and visit the person they deliver them to for at least an hour, once a week.

Salt-free and kosher meals are stocked in freezers too. At Hanukkah and Christmas, gifts pour in: blankets, sweaters, night clothing, afghans, poinsettias, toaster ovens.

Today volunteers carry 700 meals a day to elderly, handicapped and isolated men and women throughout the four counties of the greater metropolitan Philadelphia area.

It's all in the spirit of Christmas—and it lasts all year.



REAL GIFTS—"I love presents, too," Marianne Strawn writes. But the real gifts are not the ones under the tree but "the presents that are tucked into the nooks and crannies of everyday life. (NC photo by Jim Wright)"

Nativity scenes: Shouldn't Christ have rights, too?

by Alice Dailey

Once again it's raging, the annual controversy over displaying nativity scenes in public places. And the nitpicking gets worse each year.

Even James J. Kilpatrick hopped on the bandwagon by maintaining that the idea of a nativity scene "as part of the government's tax-funded observance of Christmas... is a poor idea and ought to be quietly dropped."

What is Christmas anyway? Is it just candy-striped poles, elves, Prancer, Dancer, teddy bears and even jolly old Santa?

Maybe the nitpickers haven't fully realized that the original Santa Claus was St. Nicholas. When the light dawns will Santa, too, get the old heave-ho, ho, ho?

Is it just a matter of time until public celebrations of St. Patrick's Day will be outlawed? After all, Patrick was (horrors) a Christian. What about Discovery Day? Columbus wasn't exactly an atheist. When will Gideon Bibles be thrown out of hotel and motel rooms?

Every Tom, Dick and Harriet in this country can freely exercise his/her own rights and causes, all on public, tax-supported property. We have movements and parades for civil rights, equal rights, migrant worker rights, even gay, neo-Nazi and Klan rights, but no rights for Jesus Christ who preached nothing more sinister than love for others.

Why does the grand old American spirit of fair play for everyone fly out the window on this particular issue?

Are we Christians allowing our freedom to be chiseled away, chip by chip?

Aren't we letting ourselves be intimidated by the more vocal minority until we become a second Russia? Paul, Peter and the other apostles consistently preached in public, tax-supported places. Time and again they were harassed, threatened and even imprisoned, but to the death they were not to be quieted. Maybe we should pray that some of their courage will rub off on us.

As for those who are persecuting Jesus Christ at the season of his birth, let's hope that they will be received more kindly when at last they come face to face with him.

A different sort of gift list for Christmas: forgiveness, listening, sharing and wisdom

by Marianne Strawn

Outside, the morning is as cold and still as the frozen icicle glued to the tree.

Our house is chaotic and warm. An explosion of laughter and excited words tumbles children from their bunks. "The presents," they say. When they went to bed, we only had three children but this morning I am sure there are 20.

"The presents," they repeat, pulling at the blankets on the wide, warm bed. I am inclined to stay in bed but there is no chance.

The presents are really a year-round focus that only reaches a peak on Dec. 25. In mid-July a sweating child can muse about which Barbie she wants in her stocking this year. Moments after devastating the contents under the Christmas tree, my son will build a fantasy about next year.

The mounting excitement includes not just presents for getting, but presents for giving. The next best thing to getting the perfect present yourself is giving the perfect present.

"Open mine! Open mine!" pleads my youngest, jumping up and down on the end of the couch. The children have all expressed their love, or at least their tolerance, with tiny pieces of paper made into cards and treasures purchased with carefully hoarded quarters.

"Look, look," my nine-year-old insists, "Look at all the wonderful things I got."

I LOVE presents, too. And although my new plastic soap holder is wondrous, and my sweaters and earrings are delights, the things I have opened are not the real gifts. Someday my children will know this too.

The real gifts are the presents that are tucked into the nooks and crannies of everyday life. If I were to name these, it would be a very different sort of gift list.

Forgiveness. It wasn't a major crime. I had forgotten to do the laundry. The blond-headed child stood in the middle of the

room, tears running down her cheeks because there were no clean socks. I am not drawn and quartered. I am forgiven. My child does remind me that she had to wear "yuck" socks to school.

Listening. Even at 7:15 in the morning, when what I have to say is utter nonsense, there is a friend who listens. I can complain about the injustice of the third-grade report or the burdens of owning an automobile or the weather.

Sharing. "Mom, you know the cupcakes you said you would make for the patrols. Well, tomorrow is the picnic," says my son. I have a friend who has a recipe for quick, no-fail cupcakes. She also blessed me with a recipe for a casserole that every member of the family will eat. She shares cooking utensils, child care, magazines, cups of flour and glasses of wine.

Perspective. I resented my son's baseball team. They practiced at the other end of the county and I hated fighting rush-hour traffic to get him there. In a casual conversation, a woman mentioned that a long Saturday morning drive with her daughter was a real opportunity to talk. I tried to look at the long drive to the baseball field from a different point of view. It was still rotten, but my son and I talked, occasionally.

Wisdom. Not mine. My husband is wise beyond his years—although his years seem to be catching up fast. When I stand in the kitchen slamming pots and pans, retreating into my icy silence over some slight, he is a man smart enough to keep his mouth shut. He does not remind me of my own shortcomings. He does not mention that the knight in shining armor that I expected on my wedding day is not coming.

There are other gifts—a child who lets me hold her hand although she is too old to need it. A son who actually walked into the kitchen and said, "Can I do anything to help?"

All of these gifts—and a plastic soap holder too.

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The birth of the Christmas story

Father Raymond Brown is a meticulous man. He can take apart a scriptural passage and reassemble it as slowly and methodically as a watchmaker takes apart and reassembles the works of a watch.

Like the watchmaker, Brown knows he is performing a service. Catholics, he says, are woefully ignorant of even the most routine biblical scholarship. Even priests are shocked by statements that have been accepted by orthodox Scripture scholars for years.

Here, he takes apart the pieces of the first Christmas story and fits them back together again. It's still the same story. But if you've been listening to the watchmaker, you'll understand why the story has stood the test of time.

For many people in America today, Christmas is the liturgical and emotional high point of the religious year. Is this something that should be built upon? Or should it be destroyed so that Easter is more important than Christmas?

Every Pentecost I get up and tell people Pentecost is the most important feast for the church, knowing that people will never emotionally accept that. Yet I think it's important theologically to say it.

But you are perfectly right. Emotionally, psychologically, socially, economically, Christmas is the most important feast. Now you can wail against it, you can try to downgrade it, but you're not going to get anywhere. Therefore, why not use the Christmas story to preach the Gospel?

How?

The infancy narratives are so dramatic that people remember them while they forget the rest of the Gospel story. So why not make Christmas the occasion to stress the connection between the infancy narratives and the essentials of the Gospel?

Matthew's narrative is a rather simple story: Before they have lived together Joseph is told that Mary is pregnant and he is going to divorce her. The angel says, "No, this child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and he's going to save his people. This is predicted by Isaiah." Then the Magi come from afar to see the newborn king and they have to ask Herod where the child's birthplace is—even though they have the star to guide them. Herod, using the same information, tries to kill the child but the child is taken off to Egypt.



A SON IS GIVEN—"The Virgin Adoring Her Child" by Botticelli is part of the Kress Collection. (NC photo courtesy of the National Gallery of Art)

It's a very simple story but has good dramatic interest: a wicked king, a persecution, a hair-breadth escape.

If you look behind the story, you see some of the essential

motifs of the Gospel. First of all, the hero in the whole thing is Joseph, who silently but patiently does what God tells him. He is the instrument of saving Jesus; thus he enables Jesus ultimately to save his people. Joseph represents the Jew who is obedient to the law and yet finds in Jesus God's fulfillment of the law.

The story also has the revelation that this is God's Son, the Savior. Then there are the reactions of people: The Magi, whom Matthew describes as Gentiles, since they come from the East and they don't know the Scriptures. The strange thing is that in Matthew the Gentiles, who don't know Scriptures, somehow are more open to God's plan. Yet, Jew that he is, Matthew says the Magi cannot really find Jesus without the Scriptures. So they have to consult those who have the Scriptures: Herod and the scribes. The tragedy is that Herod and the others who have the Scriptures reject Jesus and try to kill him.

In other words, Matthew's infancy narrative is a passion narrative: The scribes are there and Herod is there and they are plotting against Jesus. And in the end, God takes Jesus away and then later brings him back to foil his enemies.

You can read the same things in the Gospel story but the infancy narrative is in succinct form. It anticipates the Gospel story. I think this is the key to the narrative. Matthew says what we say about every great figure: Look, the traits which make him significant were there even in childhood.

But won't it be baby Jesus every Christmas?

If I can get people to see the mystery of the cross in the attempt to kill Jesus as a child and to see the mystery of the resurrection in God protecting that child and bringing him back to accomplish his purpose, then that's not so bad, is it?

I really have no objection if the priest turns to the crib set and says, "Notice how this symbol brings up the same things as the rest of the Gospel." By putting the shepherds from Luke's Gospel, who are Jews, with the Gentile Magi from Matthew's Gospel, the crib scene catches the truth that this is a Gospel for Jew and Gentile alike.

Is that why Matthew and Luke wrote infancy narratives?

I think so. In other words, how do you evaluate Jesus? It's not enough to begin evaluating him with the baptism. Already God's plan was at work before the baptism. It was at work at the time he was conceived. But the narratives are also a bridge with the Old Testament.

How?

The writers of Matthew and Luke have a sense that you don't start the story of Jesus without knowing the story of Israel. Both infancy narratives are capsules of the Old Testament.

For Luke's narrative, read the story of Abraham and Sarah where the angel says Sarah is going to have a child. (See THE CHRISTMAS STORY on page 24)

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A message for the holidays:

Do we deserve a guilt trip?

by Fr. Eugene Hemrick

I usually look unfavorably at anyone who tries to motivate me by laying a guilt trip on me. Guilt trips are a form of covert force which go against the grain of freedom we all try to preserve.

But within the last few weeks I have experienced a guilt trip which will undoubtedly heighten during the holidays.

Advertisements are urging people to fulfill every creature comfort imaginable this Christmas.

For example, brochures arriving in the mail list exotic foods to send as gifts. We are offered discount enticements to purchase the foods by the dozens.

I must admit it's easy to get into the shopping spirit and to secretly wish for all the enjoyment the goodies promise.

Would that I could wrap myself up in the festivities and fully enjoy them!

What stops me dead are the newspaper



accounts which report there are a potential 150 million Africans who will probably die of starvation during the holidays or after.

A leaflet published by Catholic Relief Services estimated that 60 or 70 percent of

Perspective

Perspective

Christmas lights illuminate a season set to celebrate the Christ Child's holy birth, and joyful carols serenade as busy shoppers promenade through stores filled with a dearth of proper gifts and drinks and foods to complement the many moods of yearly Yuletide mirth.

Yet, midst this zeal at each year end, there's a blessed, growing trend to find some quiet, special ways to solemnize the Holidays: to keep perspective true and clear, to know . . . to feel . . . to see . . . to hear the message of God's only Son, the Sacred Crucifix of Christendom.

—Shirley Vogler Meister

the developing world's population lacks access to pure water.

In these same countries, 80 percent of sickness can be traced to inadequate sanitation and lack of clean water. These countries also are threatened by the gradual loss of arable land to desert and deforestation.

Many of us have seen the pictures of children whose ribs are barely held in by their emaciated skin. And it's difficult for us to comprehend the horrors of refugee camps where a bare existence is all one can hope for now.

How easy it is to forget those in less fortunate countries as we turn on the faucet and drink purified water or look at neighborhoods beautified by trees.

We enjoy huge amounts of the richest soil in the world. Most of all, we have nothing that resembles the horrors of a refugee camp.

There obviously is a disproportion between wealthy countries and Third World countries. But does this mean we have to blame ourselves if others are starving while we are enjoying the festivities?

Doesn't blame presume culpability and a conscious effort to break the law?

Are we to be held responsible for something we didn't cause?

Following the letter of the law, no, we aren't to blame. Yes, we have a right to enjoy festivities. No, we are not guilty of breaking a law.

But if we haven't gone beyond the letter of the law to its spirit then maybe we deserve a big guilt trip during the holidays.

If we feel the problems of the Third World are not ours—that we have enough of our own problems—then what does Christian unity mean?

If we do nothing to educate our children to be aware of starvation and to be grateful for the horn of plenty, then what is real education all about?

If we don't do something—write a congressional representative or our newspaper—then what is Catholic action all about?

If we haven't made an effort to share our financial blessings or to better inform ourselves on how to help starving people, then what values are motivating us?

Oh, how sticky questions raise guilt feelings!

But if we find ourselves on a guilt trip because of such embarrassing questions, then I think the very freedom guilt trips threaten will be enhanced. We may find ourselves moved to take some positive action.

Isn't a gift given and a meal denied for the love and compassion of another at the very heart of true freedom?

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Holiday homecomings have ups and downs

by Cindy Liebhart

For young adults and college students eagerly boarding buses and trains and planes to "go home," and for their families who wait with open arms to receive them, Christmas can be the best of times and the worst of times.

There is the warmth of spirited conversation at the dinner table as family members catch up on things, the camaraderie of doing family things like trimming the tree or baking cookies, the security that comes from being with people who know you intimately—faults and all—and still love you.

But there also can be family disagreements and bruised feelings which quickly overshadow the memories of a happy reunion. Why does this happen?

IN AN INTERVIEW, Mercy Sister Faith Mauro said it is not uncommon for anxiety and tension to surface in families when college-age and young adult children come home for the holidays.

Sister Mauro, youth ministry representative for the U.S. Catholic Conference, attributes some of the stress to new roles and changing relationships within the family itself.

College students returning home, perhaps for the first time since school started in the fall, "possess an enthusiasm not only about what they're learning in classes but also what they're learning about themselves," she said.

It is similar for young adults, whose careers may take them hundreds of miles away from their families. The new responsibilities of a professional career and the establishment of their own routines give young adults a sense of independence and satisfaction.

In both cases, when they come home for Christmas the grown children are eager to "share the new person they've become" with their families.

Families, too, look forward to the return of their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. But when the grown children have changed, "it's hard for the people back home to see them in a new light," Sister Mauro said.

Unrealistic expectations about what it will be like when the family gets together again can become a source of holiday stress, Sister Mauro said.

When the entire family is going to be together for just a short time, parents and children may feel pressured to make everything perfect, "just the way they remember it," instead of relaxing and enjoying one another's presence.

The young adult may wonder how other family members expect him or her to behave, and try to live up to imagined expectations. Parents may go to such lengths to please their returning children that they end up feeling exhausted and unappreciated.

SISTER MAURO said it is important for both parents and grown children to realize that some tension is normal when they first come together again. This doesn't mean they don't love or respect each other any longer, or that some necessary ingredient in a good family relationship is lacking.

Instead, it points to the reality that occasional friction occurs when people who live apart and who have developed their own ways of doing things get back under the same roof.

One way for family members to alleviate some of the strain, Sister Mauro said, is to "put yourself in the other's shoes."

It is important for parents "to be patient with the space the (grown) child needs to take" because he or she is probably exploring new ways of behaving in the parents' home. Parents should let their children know they were missed and encourage grown children to tell them about their new experiences.



HOME FOR HOLIDAYS—Heading for home at Christmas can be the best of times and the worst of times for young adults and college students, says Sister Faith Mauro, youth ministry representative for the U.S. Catholic Conference. (NC photo by Ed Carlin)

Likewise, young adults and college students need to remember that their parents probably are trying to find how to relate to them in a new way, Sister Mauro said. "It takes time for parents to adjust and come to know who you are as an adult."

Thus, even with busy preparations for Christmas and the excitement of seeing old friends, young people could plan an oc-

casional to go out just with their parents, or an evening to spend quietly at home together.

Sister Mauro feels it is important for parents and grown children to create time for each other during the holidays and to communicate honestly and clearly about feelings and expectations when they're home together again.

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The many faces of Christmas in U.S. missions

by Pam Bauer

Yes, Virginia, there really is a North Pole—North Pole, Alaska, that is.

This small community just south of Fairbanks receives tons of mail from Santa. It also is one of more than 10,000 Catholic missions across the nation which have received help from the Catholic Church Extension Society. On Christmas Eve, almost 150 North Pole families will fill St. Nicholas Church, a rustic wood-framed church built with Extension's help in 1981.

In many home mission areas, Santa Claus doesn't come to town. Jolly elves, endless hours of shopping and commercial holiday music have made few inroads in these poor but culturally-rich communities which include black, Caribbean, Mexican and Native Americans. Each culture has its own unique celebration which varies in all but the most basic elements of Mass, music and feasting with family and friends.

The Flathead Indians of Montana, for instance, travel miles for midnight Mass. Because many live far from the mission church, they bring teepee poles and set up housing for their families near the mission all Christmas Week. At Mass, the people pray and sing Christmas hymns in Salish, their native language.

After Mass, everyone exchanges handshakes and a few men shoot their rifles into the mountain skies in a traditional holiday salute. Then it's time for visiting friends. The rest of the week people open their homes to friends for dancing and feasting, but no gifts are exchanged.

Instead, foods fit for the Three Kings are prepared: elk, geese, wild bird, deer, huckleberries, Indian potatoes and bittersweet (Greens so bitter the uninitiated must eat honey with it).

In a small fishing village 60 miles from Juneau, the Tlingit Indians all come

together after Mass to their community hall where they share a large Christmas tree, singing and a supper of salmon, clams and crabmeat. No one goes away unfed or without a little gift. Spiritual music is central. With a Christian heritage inherited from the Russian Orthodox, the men's deep chanting sometimes shakes the windows. The Tlingits are best known as the tribe that carves totem poles.

Christmas carolers go door-to-door. At each stop it is a tradition for the singers to receive a little treat and a drink of vodka. At this time, the priest will bless the houses and families if invited.

MEXICAN-AMERICANS dramatize the Christmas story in two pageants that are handed down by oral tradition year after year. One, the "Posada," is repeated every night beginning nine days before Christmas. A procession of people goes door-to-door singing and asking admittance but is turned away every night until Christmas Eve.

On the Eve, celebrations begin with tamales and hot chocolate while blindfolded children hit the pinata with a stick. Breaking open the paper-mache pinata is a Christmas custom originally created by Spanish missionaries to show how sin (the pinata was shaped like a devil) can blind us; but we can destroy it with truth (the stick) and receive all the blessings (the candies inside).

Another Mexican-American Christmas drama sometimes staged in backyards is the "Pastorela," a Christmas pageant three hours long which begins with the angel appearing to the shepherds and ends with the birth of Jesus. Those who perform this play wear rags or worn clothing to symbolize how Jesus uses what the rest of the world throws away. Again, this is an oral tradition.

Christmas for black Catholics in the South is filled with music but not with the traditional themes of the triumph of Jesus. Instead their spirituals are filled with haunting lyrics that tell of Christ's poverty and the human condition: "Mary, she rock Him in a weary land," "Poor little sweet Jesus boy," and "Hurry on my weary soul, I heard from heaven today. A baby born in Bethlehem, I heard from heaven today." These songs are repeated at church and wherever people gather to celebrate.

The extended family is strong in black culture and people will spend Christmas Day visiting as many as 20 different homes. The hosts prepare cakes, sweet potato pies and cornbread. Children stop for a nut or apple treat at house after house as though it were Halloween. The main meal may include chicken, ham, greens or turkey with stuffing. Although there may be no new clothes the rest of the year, Christmas is a time to dress up in one's best.

In Puerto Rico, the Christmas season runs from Dec. 10 to Jan. 8. Strolling musicians play instruments made from hollow gourds and vegetables, traveling the streets and caroling each evening. They are welcomed in for dancing and meals at homes decorated with trinitarias, a colorful flowering vine, and saint statues strung with lights.

On Christmas Day, some families roast a pig stuffed with rice and homemade sausage on an outside spit. This is really a barbecue since it is usually on a hot day and the countryside is green and lush. All ages dance into the early hours.

The children in Puerto Rico receive their gifts Jan. 6, the Feast of the Three Kings. The Three Kings Feast Day is just as important in the island as Christmas and New Year's Day is in the rest of the United States.

For 80 years, the Extension Society has distributed donations sent by Catholics across the country to help missions in isolated and impoverished dioceses from Alaska to Puerto Rico pass on their most treasured heritage: the Catholic faith.

Extension's support includes salary subsidies to ensure that a priest will be there to offer Christmas Mass. It also helps with the costs of a chapel or catechetical center in which the people can teach their children the true meaning of the holiday season.

The home missions embody many other cultures helped by Extension, including Haitian and Vietnamese boat people, Appalachians and Eskimos to name but a few. But whether Christmas comes to a Mississippi shack or a Montana longhouse, the joy of the 2,000-year-old mystery continues and is shared.





Faith Today

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The inn on West Sheridan

By Father David Monahan
NC News Service

My checkbook reminds me that I wrote five checks on Christmas Eve, 1983. The last one has the simple description "Jesus House."

Walking back along the trail of my memory I recall that day.

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It is a typical day before Christmas for me — presents to be purchased, homilies not yet packaged, no gifts wrapped. Too little time for too many things.

Along the way I will deliver the check to Jesus House.

In mid-afternoon I park along Sheridan Avenue on the south side of Jesus House. It is bitter cold in Oklahoma City — below zero on the thermometer with a fierce numbing wind knifing through one's clothes. The wind chill factor tonight will be 47 below zero.

At the door I pass through a curtain woven of the odors of unwashed bodies and the cacophony of jabbering tongues into a kingdom unfamiliar to a middle-class priest.

It is not a place of famine. Baskets of food are being toted. The oversized kitchen is bubbling with the evening meal.

By midnight 1,000 baskets of food will be given away. Several hundred more people will share in the energizing warmth of the spread right here.

I edge my way down the central hall. There is a white-bearded oldster slumped on a bench with the vacant eyes of a man pursuing dreams of Christmases past.

There is a young couple, stark as the Arkansas hills from which

they came, holding a baby with the sniffls. There is an American Indian man, face roughly chiseled by hard times, staring at the opposite wall.

This place is the reverse of the original event. Here there is room in the inn.

□ □ □

Later this day there will be a unique Christmas party. The guest list includes an honor roll of street people — youngsters who threw away the good money when there was work to be had in the oil fields; a family newly arrived from Michigan; a waitress who shakes too much to continue in her occupation; a grizzled man who cannot recall his own name; and some 300 more battered sons and daughters of God.

There will be seasonal hymns sung. Prayers will be said and presents given — scarves, gloves, T-shirts, socks, toothpaste, maybe even swaddling clothes.

I ask the whereabouts of Sister Ruth and Sister Betty. I am referred to a door down the hall.

There sitting at a long table with other staff members are the two holy founders and managers of Jesus House. Sister Ruth sports bib overalls over a flannel shirt. Sister Betty, a splinter of quiet strength, is dressed in blue jeans and a plaid flannel shirt. Both heads are covered by bandanas.

Which religious community? As a matter of fact, none. Neither are Catholic, but they just may be saints.

Ruth Wynn and Betty Adams are alcoholics who have been walking on the sober side of the street for a long, long time.

A decade ago they began Jesus House as a chemical-abuse center for teen-agers. Jesus House has had a winding history through the unexpected. Always, though, it remained "an experiment in faith," says Sister Ruth. She further defines it as "a voluntary

therapeutic community."

The two put divine providence to the test. Life at Jesus House depends on voluntary contributions. Utility bills mount and food gets scarce, but they trust God will provide. He does, and has through a remarkable series of hairbreadth escapes from cold and hunger.

Jesus House has a considerable staff but no one receives a salary.

None can remember Sister Ruth or Sister Betty taking a day off. They share a room in the midst of their community. They are calm, prayerful people who promote frequent group worship.

I exchange greetings with the two sisters and hand them my check. It seemed large when I wrote it. Now, in the center of so much need and in the presence of such huge hearts, the check has shrunk to almost nothing. But God and the two sisters do wonders with piddling things.

I walk out the door into the cold, warmed by what I have seen and heard — that Jesus has found an inn on West Sheridan.

(Father Monahan is the editor of *The Sooner Catholic*, Oklahoma City.)



On a chilling Christmas Eve, Father David Monahan found that the welcome mat was out at a shelter for the battered and bruised of Oklahoma City society. This time, he writes, there is room at the inn.

"My young friend made what is proving the biggest decision so far in his life. He decided to take care of her and her baby."



Bethlehem revisited: this time a vacant room

By Father David K. O'Rourke, OP
NC News Service

This Christmas story is about the power of an unborn child to renew and transform.

But the story is colored by the change and instability that are both the hallmark and the curse of modern living.

A young man named Paul came to see me. He had sent me a brief letter, hoping I remembered him. I remembered well.

I knew him when he was just a kid. Paul was never at the head of the pack. But he was conscientious, kind and gentle, the sort you would just expect someday to be a solid citizen, a good husband and father.

He works now in his father's electrical-supply business. Construction cutbacks meant things had been tight.

But that is not why he came to see me. He wanted help for a friend.

Since school days Paul had known a girl, now a young woman. She had married, one of those marriages that probably should not have taken place, for both were young and immature.

She had no family to guide her; her husband's family was happy to see him out of the house. The priest counseled delay. But they got married.

Then she became pregnant. And what it would mean to be a father and to provide for a child finally dawned on the young man. It was more than he could take. One day he was there. The next day he was gone — simply disappeared with the car, his clothes, the little in the checking account and the stereo.

The young woman found

herself pregnant, with no money, no husband and no family to turn to. With rent coming due and no prospect of paying it she faced being put out on the street. She was beside herself with anxiety.

This is where Paul came on the scene. He had kept contact with the couple during their marriage. He felt sorry for her now, but didn't know what to do. Only recently had he and his sister moved away from home, renting an apartment. They had a small, extra room. But the young woman's needs seemed larger than Paul was ready to handle.

He suggested she contact local authorities. But they kept talking about her "problem pregnancy." The young woman found the sim-

ple, final solution proposed to her unacceptable. She wanted to keep her baby.

Then my young friend made what is proving the biggest decision so far in his life. He decided to take care of her and her baby. He doesn't know how — but somehow. He offered her the small, extra room in the apartment he and his sister rent. He is providing food and medical care.

Perhaps most important, he removed fear and uncertainty from the life of the young woman and her unborn baby.

One day Paul brought her to my office so we could begin to plan the baby's baptism. Paul and his sister would serve as godparents. He recognizes that, with no father and provider around, being a god-

father might well go beyond a ceremonial role.

I saw Paul and the young woman to the elevator after our discussion. Watching his generous attention, I was reminded of the Christmas story.

A young woman ready to give birth is so dependent on others for survival — as is her child. That dependency is not a fault or a problem. To the contrary, it is humanizing. It touches us and brings out the best in us.

We and our world need the good it brings if we are to make it.

(Father O'Rourke is on the staff of the Family Life Office in the Diocese of Oakland, Calif.)

The day that celebrates hum

By Father John Castelot
NC News Service

In boiling an egg, you keep one eye on the little hour glass. When the bottom half is full of sand, you know it is time to get cracking.

The "fullness of time" has come.

This idea is behind St. Paul's statement in Galatians 4:4: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his son born of a woman."

By sending his son on his saving mission, God brought to a decisive turning point the plan he had for humanity's happiness.

"God chose us in him before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love; he likewise predestined us

through Christ Jesus to be his adopted children" (Ephesians 1:4-6).

God had created humans in his image.

To be in God's image is to be given a share in God's creative love. It means that to be authentically human, to fulfill God's intention in creating us, we must love — selflessly, creatively. Not to love is to become subhuman. As Paul put it in his famous hymn to love: If I "have not love, I am nothing."

Sadly, men and women chose self-love over creative love. This choice destroyed them. To regain their human dignity, they would need to be shown the way.

To this end, God "sent forth his son," who was perfectly in God's

image. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creatures" (Col. 1:15).

People could see in Jesus what it was like to be really, gloriously human. For they had as a model not some mythical, unreal ideal, but a flesh-and-blood man.

Jesus shared all their weakness, their ordinariness, their uncertainty and fear and pain. He could and did rise above these obstacles. And he did this in a strangely paradoxical way, by denying himself, by setting on its ear all that society prescribes as the secret of happiness.

A nobody from nowhere, born and raised in humble circumstances, Jesus changed the course of human history, pointing humanity toward its original dignity. Jesus did this by loving

Custom altering

Dolores Leckey
Jews Service

As families often do, mine adds its own customs to Christmas. For the years, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day assumed certain "tics. Small details changed. In all, children do grow up.

I think all of us felt that the rhythms of these days were never fixed.

When some major changes occurred in our family. Two grandfathers died. A family we shared Christmas Eves with — the Times — moved to another state. My husband and I celebrated the birth of our first grandchild, then noted his family would be far from this Christmas.

As I ponder Christmas 1984, I pray for the grace to let go and cling to what was. I know that shifting events can be viewed as an invitation from God. But what kind of invitation?

On Christmas Eves past, we traditionally joined the Timpanes and the Wholeys for a festive dinner. Our numbers grew over the years as children acquired special friends or got married. Visiting grandparents were always included.

Indeed, in a vivid memory my mother-in-law, Mollie, presides at the after-dinner Irish-coffee ritual, a prelude to entertainment prepared for the adults by younger family members.

We sang carols and exchanged humorous Kris Kringle gifts until the magic hour of 11. Then everyone past the age of 10 prepared for midnight Mass.

Christmas breakfast was an especially important tradition. With our Christmas tree in the dining room and a Christmas wreath in the spot occupied these recent weeks by Advent candles, we gathered to open gifts and pray Christmas Lauds, the church's morning prayer.

"You came into the world heralding the new age foretold by the prophets; give your holy people the gift of renewal in every generation."

This is our time to linger and talk. Dinner will be scheduled for late afternoon or early evening. Usually, there are dinner guests: foreign students, friends or colleagues alone for the holiday.

Somehow, I believed these rituals were immutable.

The Wholeys and the Leckys still gather for Christmas Eve. But now we settle for tea, eggnog and visiting.

When our first grandson was born this autumn, I quickly envisioned a Dickens-like Christmas future. But the vision needed adjusting. For Samuel and his parents will be across the continent this Christmas, settling into a new home.

The changes are greater than I anticipated.

How can I interpret this whitening away of my traditional Christmas customs and people?

Perhaps I should regard the changes as an invitation from God to allow new possibilities to enter my life. The Christ child brings new life, after all.

I see more clearly now that we have little control over the future. If I keep this in mind, it may cause me to focus better on the present — on the gift of Christmas now!

My husband and I now have the opportunity for a quiet, contemplative Christmas, one when we participate as fully as possible in the church's liturgy — something I used to long for when my household was overflowing.

I think we could serve a Christmas meal in a local house of hospitality. Of course, we love music. So there are Bach chorales to listen to, as well as Christmas poems to read, friends to visit, strangers to welcome.

As I ponder the matter at hand, more possibilities surely will arise. For Christmas now, as in the past, is full of creative opportunities and not a few surprises.

(Mrs. Leckey is director of the U.S. bishops' Committee on the Laity.)

Father Castelot teaches at St. Ignace's Seminary, Plymouth, Mich.)

FOOD...

...for thought

Can you put your creative instincts to work on Christmas?

It seems that this holiday, more than others, is infused by us with expectations. People hope they can make Christmas a great day for each other.

But if that is to happen, are there special steps to take — and pitfalls to avoid? Here is a list of suggestions on planning Christmas Day. Add your own suggestions to the list — your own ways of sprinkling fresh spirit into this holiday celebration.

—Try to plan a good day. But don't try to plan "the perfect day." Don't set yourself up for disappointment.

—Take whatever action you can to free Dec. 24 from shopping expeditions. Otherwise, you may find yourself too fatigued to enjoy Christmas Day.

—Don't plan out every moment of Christmas Day in advance. Allow some time for visiting and for the unexpected.

—Introduce an activity into your Christmas celebration that is new or different for you. Perhaps you'll want to wrap up some fun games and put them under the tree. Then set up a card table and spend time with family or friends playing games

on Christmas afternoon.

—Go for a walk alone or with others on Christmas Day. Lack of fresh air and exercise can sap the spirit as this great day wears on.

—Plan ways to introduce your faith into Christmas observances at home. A measure of frustration can result for many people if Christmas at home is celebrated almost as though it were not a holy day. You may want to plan a special prayer to begin your Christmas dinner, or a special reading from a favorite book or from Scripture to precede the opening of gifts.

—Consider aspects of past Christmas Days that you found disappointing. Is cooking all day the last thing you want to do on Christmas? Could you simplify Christmas dinner? Are all the gifts opened up in five minutes, leaving you feeling that all the gift preparation was much ado about nothing? Could you consider a way of opening gifts in turns, allowing time to savor each other's gifts?

—Finally, ponder some good things in your life. The birth of Jesus as one of us indicates that the world is meant to be filled up with goodness. The goodness around us is cause for celebration.

...for discussion

SECOND HELPINGS

"The Story of the Other Wise Man" by Henry Van Dyke. Originally published in 1895, this imaginative account tells of Artaban the Median. He sells all his possessions to buy three jewels as gifts for a new king about to be born. On his way to join three wise men seeking the king, Artaban comes across a sick man lying on the road. If he stops, the wise men will leave without him. But Artaban can't ignore the sick man. For 33 years Artaban searches for the new king, pausing whenever he finds a person in great need. Artaban's pilgrimage ends when Jesus is crucified. Then this fourth wise man meets the king he was seeking. Artaban's story resembles the journey each person makes in life. A search for the king of kings while involved with the needs of people met along the way. (Harper and Row, 10 East 53rd, New York, N.Y. 10022. Hardback, \$7.95.)

1. Does anything need to be changed in your customary observance of Christmas?

2. Do you think people sometimes try to make Christmas Day a perfect day and therefore set themselves up for disappointment? What would you do differently if instead of trying to create a perfect day, you just tried to plan for a good day?

3. How and at what points might faith enter into your celebration of Christmas at home?

4. Why do people exchange gifts at Christmas? Can you find any special Christian reasons for gift giving?

5. Do you have an old Christmas custom that you still treasure? What is it?

anity

creatively and selflessly.

Even Jesus' love-inspired death was creative. It empowered those who became one with him in faith and love to share in his glory.

And he did this as one of us. It is the whole point of the incarnation — of Christmas when word became flesh.

Christmas is a celebration of humanity. Christmas is a ringing declaration that human life is sacred, destined for glory.

Christmas says once more that the secret of human fulfillment and happiness is love, human love, the love of flesh-and-blood men and women created to share the creative love of their maker.

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

The light of the world

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

The Christmas tree was colorful and warm. Red lights blinked off and on, reflected in the silver ornaments.

The Christmas crib rested quietly under the green branches of the tall tree. A tree light, the only white one, was the star over the stable where Mary and Joseph knelt beside the sleeping Christ child.

"That was a delicious meal," Mr. O'Neal complimented his wife. "And eating it with the whole family together again made it taste even better."

This was a special evening. Not only was it Christmas but it was Peter's seventh birthday. His older sister, June, was home from college. And his grandmother was visiting.

A storm was beginning to blow outside. But no one seemed to notice. It was so warm and bright in the living room.

Soon peals of thunder began to roll through the sky, making the windowpanes shake. Flashes of

lightning caused the lights to flicker.

"When can I open my birthday presents?" Peter asked.

Before his parents could answer, there was the terrifying cracking sound of lightning striking very close.

The living room was suddenly black. The tree lights no longer blinked. There was no light in the whole house. No light came in through the windows. The whole neighborhood was dark.

"I can't see anything," Peter said. "I'm afraid."

"I'll find a flashlight or a candle," his father said. On the way he bumped into the dining room table.

"This is the worst storm we've had for a long time," Peter's mother said. Peter could hear the fear in his mother's voice.

It seemed forever before his dad came back. The storm was getting even worse. They could hear fire sirens whining outside. The red flashing lights of the fire trucks passing by on the street added to the eerie feeling of danger.

Finally Peter's dad opened the

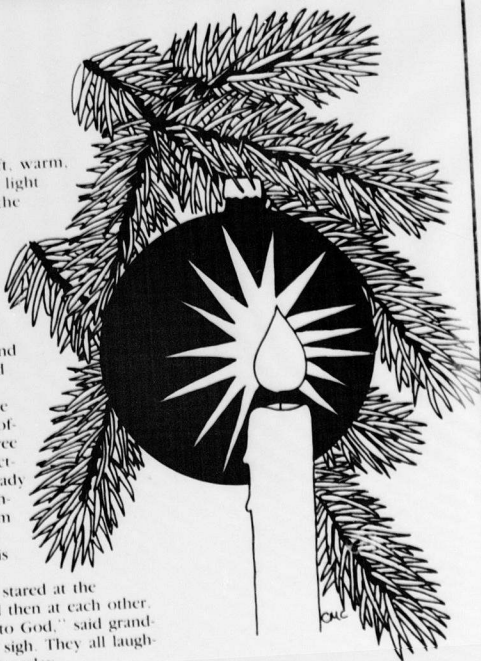
kitchen door. Soft, warm, flickering rays of light danced through the darkness.

Peter saw his dad's smiling face glowing in the light of the candle he held out in front of him. The light and the smile quieted Peter inside.

His dad set the candle on the coffee table. The tree ornaments reflected the small steady flame of the candle. Peter's mom came over and hugged him. His dad held June close. They all stared at the candlelight and then at each other.

"Thanks be to God," said grandmother with a sigh. They all laughed and began to relax.

"Now I think I know for the first time," Peter's mother said. "why a burning candle is a symbol of Jesus Christ in our lives."



(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)

Missing Vowels

Fill in the vowels in the phrases below. All of the phrases are contained in this week's children's story.

1. st _ r _ v _ r th _ st _ bl _
2. _ d _ l _ c _ _ s m _ l _
3. P _ t _ r ' s _ v _ n th b _ r th d _ y
4. h _ m _ fr _ m c _ ll _ g _
5. th _ w _ r st st _ r m
6. r _ d fl _ sh _ ng l _ ghts
7. l _ ght _ f th _ c _ ndl _
7. th _ nks _ b _ t _ G _ d

Answers: 1. star over the stable, 2. a delicious meal, 3. Peter's seventh birthday, 4. home from college, 5. the worst storm, 6. red flashing lights, 7. light of the candle, 8. thanks be to God.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Did the lights ever go out in your home the way they did in Peter's house during the storm? How did you feel when it got dark? How did you feel when the lights came on again?

Children's Reading Corner

"The Story of the Three Wise Kings," is a story delightfully retold and exquisitely illustrated. It is by Tomi De Paola. In the story, a new star appeared in the sky. Three kings, wise men who studied the stars each night, discovered it. Then, after consulting their books, they found out that the star was the sign that a great king was about to be born. Each king set out alone with a gift, intending to follow the star and find the child-king. But the kings met along the way and continued the journey together. The star led to Bethlehem. (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016, 1983. Paperback \$4.95.)



Warmth

Using split logs in a wood-burning stove to protect against the rigors of a bitter winter, Sister Conseline Flynn brings the warmth of the Gospel message to children from the ranches of the high country surrounding St. John the Apostle Mission in Paisley, Oregon.

Sister Flynn helps children with the basics of Christianity in her religion classes in Paisley and adjacent missions that receive Extension Society aid. She is one member of a team of home missionaries who, in partnership with Extension, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in

the United States. But that team is too small to do the job without help. It needs new members. It needs you.

Join us. Become a member of the Extension team. Although you won't be present in the home missions personally, your impact will be felt in this holy effort. Together we will bring Christ to those living in the home missions.

Write today for a free subscription to Extension magazine and discover the difference you can make. Together, and with God's grace, we can achieve His missionary goals here in our own beloved country.



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Christmas 'quirky' time for runaways, Fr. Ritter says

by Tracy Early

NEW YORK (NC)—Christmas is a "quirky" and "messed-up" time for the youngsters. Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter serves at Covenant House.

"Being children, they are caught up in the commercial hype and the expectations," he said in an interview. "But a lot of them are also caught by memories of

Christmas in their early years when they were cared for.

"We try to build on what good memories the kids have," he said. "We celebrate with all the appropriate activities—parties, a Christmas tree the kids decorate and so on."

Father Ritter was speaking of his "kids," youngsters under the age of 21 who have run away from home or been thrown out or through other circumstances would up with no place to go.

When they go to Covenant House they are taken in without question and given food, shelter, clothing and then assistance in whatever special requirements they may have for medical care, legal aid, counseling or other professional help. "We never turn a kid away," Father Ritter declared.

But when Christmas comes and the young people try to recapture some feeling of happiness they nostalgically recall from the past, he said, they get themselves into a "quirky" and "messed-up" set of emotions. "The effort to recapture the happiness of the past," he said, "reminds them that now they have no parents, no neighborhood, no school and no future."

At least, no future visible to them, for in a sense, he said, many of them do not even have themselves. In many cases, they have sold themselves on the street so many times they no longer feel they possess their own bodies and emotions, Father Ritter said.

He said Covenant House tries to demonstrate what it means by love through the care it shows for the kids. And he gets a lot of help from his friends. On Christmas

Eve there will be gifts donated for every one of the hundreds of kids who will be sheltered that night.

Covenant House gets runaways from all over, but most are from the local area, and at Christmas some of them make a literal effort to go home again, Father Ritter said. But they may get a greeting like, "Merry Christmas—you're not going to stay, are you?"

FATHER RITTER thinks of his young people in religious terms. When he takes in a pregnant young woman, he thinks of the night Mary needed a place in Bethlehem where she could rest and have her baby. At Christmas, he looks on all the youngsters at Covenant House—those whom much of society has already written off as failures before their lives have more than barely begun—as gifts from God.

But the young men and women have no background for thinking in such terms, and religious concepts cannot just be "plastered" onto them from outside, Father Ritter said. Besides, people exploiting them on the street have already used the language of love so much that it hardly carries any real meaning for them now.

If there is anything that really drives Father Ritter to fury, it is the sexual exploitation of children. He left a college teaching job and began his ministry to New York street people in 1968, and began focusing on the under-21 group in February 1969 when he suddenly had 10 of them camped in his apartment with nowhere to go.

Since then, the number of young people coming for help has steadily increased, and Father Ritter correlates that with the growth of sex-related businesses in New York. In this business, the young are the prized objects, he said, and there is consequently a pervasive campaign in areas of society such as advertising as well as in pornography to "eroticize" children.

On Christmas Day, Father Ritter said, some of the most important people in the community—"advisers to presidents"—will come to Covenant House to help out. Father Ritter said they are also helping out by putting pressure on the Reagan administration to do more about the child pornography problem.

A Christmas dinner "with everything from soup to nuts" is prepared each year by parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scarsdale, and brought down in station wagons to feed the 300 or so young people at the Times Square center.

Father Ritter will stay until the middle of the day, and then go to visit his 95-year-old mother in Trenton, N.J.

COVENANT HOUSE has been continually growing and has branches in Toronto, Houston and Guatemala and is planning branches in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; New Orleans and Panama.

Father Ritter's time is now largely spent traveling, telling people about his work and appealing for support. "I'll sleep in four different beds in five nights," he said. "I've really learned in these last few years what it really means to be a mendicant (begging) friar."



Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter

Christmas should be more than a birthday party

by Sr. Mary Collins, OSB

To my mind, one of the oddest liturgical innovations today is the practice of celebrating Midnight Mass as a birthday party for the Baby Jesus.

Of course, the impulse to popularize the church's liturgy isn't surprising: Liturgical historians could tell story after story of what Catholics in other times and places have done to make the liturgy congenial and familiar. Sometimes popular impulses contain genuine insights that enrich the church's faith.

Tradition is no straitjacket. Understood with insight, the liturgical tradition can free the church to celebrate its faith.

The only way to tell a good idea from a bad one is to have something to test it against. That way the living tradition of worship grows authentically.

And, compared with the rich tradition of Christmas liturgy, "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus" is an impoverishment of the church based on too limited religious imagination and too superficial doctrinal understanding.

THE ANCIENT Roman liturgy, in imperial Roman style, regularly noted in a solemn way on Dec. 24 that the next day was the birth anniversary of Jesus. That meant a solemn public proclamation in a manner worthy of a person whose life had universal historical significance.

For centuries the proclamation was chanted in Latin at the morning Liturgy of the Hours called Prime. Since Vatican II, Prime is no longer said, so every vestige and memory of the ancient proclamation is in danger of being forgotten.

Fortunately, the Austrian pastor-liturgist, Father Pius Parsch, a leader of the liturgical movement before Vatican II, preserved the text of the ancient proclamation of Jesus' birth. It's in his commentary on the liturgy, "The Church's Year of Grace."

The birth anniversary proclamation began with what was then the best available, if now quaint, chronology of world history:

"In the 5,199 years since the creation of the world, when God made heaven and earth . . . In the year 2759 since the flood . . ."

The text next related the birth event to Israel's history:

"In the year 1510 since the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt under the guidance of Moses . . . In the year 1032 since David was anointed king . . ."

Then the proclamation moved to Roman history:

"In the year 732 after the building of Rome, in the 42nd year of the reign of Octavian Augustus when there was peace in the whole world . . ."

Finally it spotlighted the event of worldwide significance:

"Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the Eternal Father desired to sanctify the whole world by his gracious coming. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and now after nine months he is born as human in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah from the Virgin Mary. . . . Since the event nothing has been the same."

NOW LET ME suggest a way of updating that lovely proclamation, perhaps along the following lines:

"And now we celebrate this mystery of our redemption in the flesh on this Christmas Eve 1984:

"In this sixth year of the reign of John Paul II as bishop of Rome and head of the universal church;

"In this 25th year since Pope John summoned the Second Vatican Council;

"In this 16th year after the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King;

"In this 39th year after nuclear weapons destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki;

"In this 67th year since the Russian revolution;

"In this 486th year since Christopher Columbus set foot in this hemisphere."

Such a proclamation of Christ's birth could climax with resounding exclamations, using sections from the Christmas Liturgy of the Hours:

"Christian people, because you believe, lift up your heads; behold your redemption is at hand;

"Tomorrow the iniquity of the earth shall be abolished; and the Savior of the world shall reign over us;

"The Lord shall come; run to meet him,

saying: 'It is the great beginning and of his reign there shall be no end.'"

Children have wonderfully rich imaginations. They are ready to hear from adult believers about an uncommon infant who is God, the Prince of Peace.

They are open to hearing the good news about the reign of God and how "the wickedness of the earth will be abolished."

Furthermore, children who live in a world of nuclear weapons might have the simple innocence to ask the hard question of the adult church: "How will this come to be?"

The faith of the church celebrated in every Christ's Mass provides the answer. If the hundreds of thousands gathered in churches everywhere for Midnight Mass were really ready to become more like Jesus, the healing of our earth could begin. And contemporary threats to the whole solar system could be reduced.

The church has solid food and nourishing drink as its own birthright at Christ's Mass on Christmas Eve.

How to handle the spirits at your holiday season party

by Bill Brooks
Koala Center

Now that the holiday season is upon us, there's good news and bad news.

The good news is the exchange of love and good will among men and women amid the joyful Christmas spirit. The bad news is that some folks simply can't handle Christmas spirits known as alcoholic drinks.

Want to be a good host/hostess at your Christmas parties? Here are some ideas:

First of all, push food instead of liquor. Serving rich, starchy snacks will help slow down the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream. If you're pouring the drinks, use a jigger. Overloading a guest's glass isn't doing him/her any favor. Guests have to drive home after a party.

Push dancing or games. Long conversations just sitting around are usually conducive to fill-it-up urgings.

About an hour before you want the party to end, put away the alcohol and serve hot coffee and a rich dessert. Neither will sober anybody up, but both are good substitutes for "one for the road."

Tactfully arrange that a tipsy guest will not become a drunk driver. See if another guest or a taxi can get him home. Or let him sleep it off in your home. If worse comes to worst, take his car keys away. Better an irritated guest than a drunk driver.

Remember: It takes one hour for the effects of one drink to leave the body, seven hours for five drinks.

Sober alcoholics, always subject to pressure to "have just one" at Christmas time, can say to the host: "I'd like a soft drink" or "I'm not drinking today" or "My doctor says no" or simply "No thanks." Hosts, don't loudly announce, "Joe can't drink so he's having coffee!" Let Joe decide what he wants.

Need some ideas for nonalcoholic drinks? Try one of these:

Pineapple Smoothie

1 large can of unsweetened crushed pineapple
1/2 cup skim milk powder
1/2 cup ice water
6 ice cubes

Combine ingredients in blender (approved for ice cubes). Blend until mixture

is smooth and ice is finely broken up. Serve in medium-size glasses. Serves four.

Lemon Cola

1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) cola
2 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 strip lemon peel
Fill tall glass with ice cubes. Add cola and lemon juice. Twist lemon peel over the drink. Drop it in and stir gently. Serves one.

Koala Center urges the alcoholic—or anyone worried about his or her drinking—to stay close to Alcoholics Anonymous during the holidays, doubling up on meetings if the urge to drink arises.

Parents worried about teens should: (1) know where they are; (2) not offer alcohol to anyone under 21 or allow guests in their home to use drugs; (3) notify parents of any teen who arrives at their home drunk; (4) not let anyone drive under the influence; and (5) set a good example themselves.

You can have the holiday spirit without spirits.

Have a happy holiday season.
(Questions on alcohol, drug abuse? Call Koala Center at the 24-hour, statewide Helpline at 800-622-4711.)

The birth of the Christmas story

(Continued from page 16)

Sarah says, "How can this be?" And God says, "Nothing is impossible for God." It's roughly what Luke says.

Or take the Old Testament story of baby Moses and the stories about Jesus. The Old Testament story is simple: The Pharaoh wants to control the Jewish population so he says, "Let's kill all the Jewish male children." But the mother and sisters hide this one baby.

In Jesus' time this story had been built up. Moses' father, Amram, has a dream in which an angel says to him, "Your wife is going to have a child and that child is going to save his people." Then the Pharaoh is advised by his wise men, "There is a marvelous child going to be born to the Jews who will save them and you had better kill him." Because he wants to kill the child, not because of the Jewish population, the Pharaoh says, "Let's kill all the children up to two years of age." So Amram says, "We had better not have this child because because he'll be killed." Then Moses' sister, Miriam (which is the same name as Mary), has a dream and says, "No, Amram, because this child is going to be spared."

This Moses story was being told in Jesus' time and it is the background for the kind of story Matthew now tells about Jesus.

Then what you are saying is that Jesus' birth didn't happen exactly the way it was written?

Well, it wasn't that simple. The narratives are, after all, a popular way of describing basic truth. What they try to say is that right from Our Lord's birth there were already signs of his greatness and of his identity as God's Son and Savior.

Then is it a good idea to have crib sets in the home?

Of course. Crib sets are a continuation of what the evangelists began. They began to popularize the story of Jesus' birth in a way that caught people's imagination. We've continued in that manner with our crib sets, with

Amahl and the Night Visitors, and all those elaborations. They all dramatize the meaning of Christmas. To my mind, perhaps our greatest wealth is not sheer history but some of our ways of representing history.

There are animals in crib sets. Were they present when Jesus was born?

They come from Christian imagination filling in the blank spaces. For example, in Luke, the angel says, "You'll find the child in the manger." That is the real sign—that the child is in the manger. And people have neglected that sign, even though it is mentioned in Luke three specific times. It probably reflects the Isaiah passage which laments that even a jackass knows where to get food—in the manger—but Israel doesn't know where to find its Lord. I think the sign in Luke is: now you know where the manger is. The history has been reversed. God's people now know that they may find their Lord in the manger.

Actually, by putting the donkeys in the crib scene (there are no animals mentioned in the Gospel), our ancestors were playing on that Isaiah passage with the little donkey who knows where to find the manger of his Lord.

That's Christian imagination but it continues the biblical background. There are no camels mentioned in the Magi story, but you have a passage in the Old Testament, "People will come from the East with camels, dromedaries, bringing gold and frankincense." So the presence of camels is an exegesis; it's an interpretation of the Scriptures in a visual way. And it's perfectly valid.

Would the miracle of God becoming human be any less if he had two human parents instead of just one? Or should anyone even raise that question?

I think it's very important that people understand that in Catholic faith Jesus was God's son from all eternity. In a certain sense, he is God's son no matter how he was conceived.

On the other hand, I don't underestimate the fact that the virginal conception has been a marvelous tool to get people to see that Jesus was God's Son from the beginning.

I also believe from a combination of church teaching with the evidence of the New Testament that factually Jesus really did not have a human father. He was virginally conceived. The significance of that fact is precisely that Jesus is God's Son.

Is it possible historically that Jesus had brothers and sisters?

This goes beyond the question of whether Jesus was born of a virgin. It involves the question: did Mary remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus? It is not stated in the Scriptures that she did remain a virgin; nor, on the other hand, is it clear from the Scriptures that those who are called the "brothers" and "sisters" of Jesus were children of Mary. It is from church tradition that we learn of Mary's continued virginity, and thus the church has clarified something that was not clear from the Scriptures.

Now that doesn't mean that Matthew or Mark knew that these were not biological brothers and sisters of Jesus. Matthew, after all, was writing perhaps 50 years after Jesus' time. He may never have encountered any of Jesus' family or have had precise knowledge of the family relationships. He may have assumed that these were biological brothers and sisters of Jesus, instead of more distant relatives, as we know from church teaching.

What difference does it make if Jesus had brothers and sisters?

It's not a New Testament issue; it's a later issue. The New Testament does not present Mary as a model for celibate life. She had obviously chosen to be married. The virginal conception has to do with Jesus; it doesn't really have to do with Mary's choice of life. It's later on in church tradition that Mary as a model of virginal choice comes in. That model appears most clearly in the fourth century, because then celibacy becomes a formal pattern of Christian life.

In the fourth century you get the monastic movement in which men and women choose to give up their lives in the world. It becomes their chief form of sanctity. Then Mary the virgin-ever-virgin becomes the chief model for women.

What does this do to our image of Mary?

I maintain that in modern Scripture study not only is Mary not downgraded, but if anything her real value in the Christian picture is strongly emphasized, particularly by Luke. She is really the first Christian. She is the first one who heard the Word of God regarding Jesus and said, "Be it done unto me according to your word."

So she is the first one to belong to the family of God's kingdom not because she is Jesus' physical mother, but because she is a disciple.

What about Joseph? He is always pictured as an old man.

Matthew probably knew very little about him, just his name. In the infancy story he has the same features as the patriarch Joseph who dreamed dreams and interpreted them and then went down to Egypt and was spared. The role of the New Testament Joseph is similar to that of the Old Testament Joseph.

The picture of Joseph as an old man comes from the second century, when people began facing the problem of these "brothers of Jesus." The early solution was that they were children of Joseph by an earlier marriage. And by describing Joseph as an old man—some writings very clearly do that—it is quite clear that the authors are beginning to think that he didn't have marital relations with Mary.

If Joseph isn't really Jesus' father, why did Matthew go through the genealogy and end up with Joseph?

The identity of the mother of a child is more obvious than who is the father. In Jewish law, if the father takes the child and puts him in his lap and says, "This is my son," then that's his son. It's acknowledgment of the child that makes a person the father. That is the whole point of the story following the genealogy. It says very carefully that Joseph took the child and named him Jesus. That is what constitutes Joseph the father.

I think many people would find it easier to identify with the Holy Family if Jesus had a human father.

I don't think either of the evangelists was presenting Mary and Joseph as a model for family life. I think that is a modern usage. I can't really deal with that from the viewpoint of the evangelists.

One evangelist, Matthew, tells you all about Joseph and nothing about Mary, other than that she gave birth to the child. The other evangelist, Luke, tells you all about Mary and nothing about Joseph. It would be extraordinary if either one intended to present the family as a model of ordinary life between husband and wife.

In the same way, any suggestion from the doctrine of virginal conception that Mary would have been defiled if she had natural union with her husband is bad doctrine and cannot be used. It was never the purpose of either evangelist to say that a natural conception was unworthy. Their message was one of total surprise at this creative action of God in the virginal conception which was a unique experience.

(See CHRISTMAS STORY on page 25)

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A story for Christmas

The box of nothing

by Joe Michael Feist

Paul sat alone on the front porch of his white frame house. He could hear little tinny sounds—laughter, he thought—drumming down the street. And when the wind blew just right, the strains of familiar carols floated by.

It was an icy, blustery day, too cold really for a nine-year-old to be perched outside. But Paul's front porch was one of his favorite places. He spent a lot of time there, watching birds build nests in the live oak tree that shaded the porch in summer, or smelling the dirt after it rained. And Paul would sit on the front porch when he needed to think, like he did now.

It was Christmas Eve, and all the carols in the world couldn't help Paul feel better. All he could think of was the new bicycle he now knew he would never have.

Paul had hoped for a bicycle for a long time and had asked his parents to buy him one for Christmas. But his presents were now all placed underneath the tree and there wasn't a bicycle there, that was for sure. In fact, one of the boxes felt like there was nothing in it at all.

Paul sat silently, staring at the sidewalk. No bicycle and a box full of nothing. This is going to be a terrible Christmas, he thought.

HE GLANCED up when he heard the clatter of an old pickup truck rounding the corner onto his street. The truck was battered and bruised and seemed to lean into the wind a little as it lumbered down the road.

Christmas story

(Continued from page 24)

Did Jesus know he was God from the moment of his birth? Or did he gradually come to realize he was God?

I never say that Jesus gradually came to understand he was divine, and yet people think that is what scholars are saying.

Jesus was a Galilean Jew of the first third of the first century for whom the term "God" referred to the father in heaven. Jesus' coming changed the meaning of God. We now know that God can be both up in heaven and on earth at the same time, that God can be both Father and Son.

There is an example in Mark's Gospel where somebody comes up to Jesus and says, "Good Master." And Jesus says, "Why do you call me good? Nobody is good but God alone." Now does that mean that he's saying he isn't God? It all depends on what you mean by God. Jesus is obviously not the Father in heaven.

There was no vocabulary in Judaism to say a human being on earth is God. Every term that existed—Messiah, Son of God, even God—had to be changed in order to meet the reality of Jesus. And I think that really is what happened in the New Testament.

But even as a child in the temple, did Jesus know he was God?

I think that the temple story is the same kind of story as the infancy narratives. The whole Gospel is only understood if you move backwards. The early Christians knew Jesus was God's Son through the resurrection. Then they began to ask, was he God's Son during the ministry? Yes, because at the baptism God said, "This is my Son."

Then you move from the baptism to the temple story, which is the first time Jesus speaks. You say, "Well, now, was Jesus adopted? Did he become the Son of God?" The temple story was originally told to inform people that even from the first time he spoke, Jesus is already God's Son. Did he become God's Son then? No. He was conceived as God's Son. Did he become God's Son then? No. He preexisted as God's Son. Each answer is a deeper grasp of truth.

There has been a lot of press attention to two recent books debunking Jesus—a British book, "The Myth of God Incarnate," and the book by the German editor of Der Spiegel, "Rudolph Augstein's 'Jesus Son of Man.'" How does your book, "The Birth of the Messiah," compare to these?

My book is meant to be a scholarly rejection of this debunking tendency. My whole career has had the goal of showing people that it is possible to be scholarly and orthodox at the same time.

On the question of Jesus as God incarnate, there are three general approaches. On the ultra-conservative side, there is orthodox theology combined with a deplorable lack of modern biblical scholarship. Fundamentalists claim correctly that Jesus is God incarnate but defend this by wrongly finding the doctrine on almost every page of the New Testament, as if there were no growth in Christian understanding. Liberals often have the scholarship to recognize a growth, knowing that only slowly did Christians come to understand pre-existence and incarnation. But then they dismiss such an understanding of Jesus as the creation of the church.

Most of us stand somewhere in between. I believe that Jesus truly was the incarnate Son of God, even if it took some Christians 50 years to recognize that. When the insight came, it was not a creation, but a discovery of truth.

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Paul watched as the pickup stopped at a house a few doors down. The driver opened the door and got out, then reached back in, picked up a small box and began to walk toward the house.

Just then the other door opened and out jumped Robert, one of Paul's friends from school. Robert ran down the sidewalk and up to Paul's front porch.

"What are you doing, Robert?" Paul asked. "Is that your father?"

"Yeah," Robert said. "We're delivering my mother's homemade cookies. A lot of people really like them, especially around Christmas. We made more this year than ever before—dozens and dozens."

"It must be a lot of work to make all those cookies," Paul said.

"It is," said Robert as he moved close to the house and out of the wind. "But my father says we have to do it, you know, for the money. He says that we have so many bills. And now my grandmother is coming to live with us. She doesn't have anywhere else to go."

Robert looked down and shook his head slowly. "And do you know what my father says about our old truck? He says we're going to have to put it out of its misery pretty soon. He laughs when he says that, but he's worried about it."

Paul felt worse than ever. He hadn't heard so much bad news from one person for a long time, maybe ever. The curious thing was, Robert didn't look sad, didn't look sad at all.

Still, Paul decided to change the subject.

"At least it's Christmas and you'll get some presents."

"I don't know," Robert said. "Maybe yes, maybe no."

Paul didn't get a chance to ask Robert what he meant. The rusty old truck pulled up in front of the porch and Robert's father motioned for him to get in.

As he watched his friend drive away, Paul felt the same way he did in school sometimes when he knew he'd just learned something important, only he couldn't quite put his finger on what it was he'd learned.

But he did know that the bicycle, the one he wouldn't get, wasn't that important anymore.



The next morning, very early, Paul and his two sisters and his mother and father gathered in their living room to open presents, just as they always did on Christmas morning. Paul didn't feel anything like the way he did the day before. He felt comfortable, fortunate. He felt warm as he watched the exchange of gifts and listened to happy, delighted sounds.

Finally, Paul only had one box left to open—the box of nothing. He slowly unwrapped the paper, lifted the lid and peered inside. He was right, he thought. There was nothing in the box except a crumpled part of a page torn out of a catalog.

Just as he was about to put the box down, he caught a glimpse of the torn page. There was a bicycle on it, red and bright and exciting.

Paul's parents were both smiling and his father pointed to the front porch. Paul didn't understand, and then he did. He ran and opened the door, and it was there.

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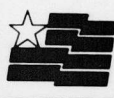
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An exclusive Christmas special: interview with St. Joseph

by James Breig

Getting together with St. Joseph for an interview about Christmas is not an easy assignment for a reporter. Sending messages to his workshop was fruitless because he seems to spend more time outside his workplace than in it. That's one of the advantages of heaven—no need to get a paycheck. Letters to his home also produced no results. I was beginning to wonder if he was avoiding me when he finally sent a messenger to let me know I could have a few minutes with him—"earth minutes," the angel emphasized, "because 'heaven minutes' tend to be a little long."

We met in his workshop, a small cubicle made of mud bricks. The floor was littered with shavings, sawdust and splinters. He was bent over his workbench, pounding a peg into what looked like a window frame. He's not what I pictured—an old man with a gray beard. He greeted me quietly and motioned for me to sit on a chair which he had obviously built and stained himself. He swept the materials off his bench and hopped up on it. I decided to begin by admitting my own prejudices about his looks.

Thank you for granting this interview, but I must come clean about something. I expected to see an aged man, someone so arthritic he couldn't do the fine work you have displayed all around this shop.

Thank you for the compliment. About my work and my appearance. I don't know why people imagine me as a Methuselah—who's a very intelligent man, by the way. I've spoken to him often. Once I encountered a theologian up here—not that they're rare in heaven—who speculated that the early church was the culprit for making me an old geezer. They wanted to stress my wife's virginity and did it by implying that I was too old to care about her anyway. It's a little insulting, but I don't mind all that much.

Just how old are you?

Well, I was 28 when I married Miriam. I call her Miriam, of course, because that's how we pronounced her name back then. She called me Yussf. I died before our son began his public life, so—

So you were 50 at most when you passed away.

I suppose. Age never meant much to people then. We didn't worry about clocks and calendars and schedules when I was alive on earth. It was difficult enough getting through each day without being concerned about next year.

You're so friendly now that we're together, but—pardon my bluntness—you seemed to be avoiding me when I first contacted you.

I'm a little embarrassed about that. And I apologize if I made it difficult for you. One problem was that you wrote. I never read very well. I was good with figures. Had to be to measure everything I built. But I was a little slow in reading and never got the hang of writing. Miriam never learned either one, so I couldn't ask her help. Besides, I sort of avoid publicity.

You always have. There's very little about you in the Gospels. In fact, you're not even quoted directly.

That's easy to explain. Let me put it this way—are you quoted in "War and Peace"?

Why would I be? It's not about me.

Exactly. Nor are the Gospels about me. That's why I try to stay in the background. So the light can shine where it belongs.

But you do have some things to teach us, some example to give, some insights to share. About Christmas especially. You know, many people have creches in their homes with statues of the Holy Family. But I noticed something: very often, they place the mother and child close together and put you off to the side. Why is that?

They are recognizing my rightful place. As I said, the light should shine elsewhere.

But you were the father of Jesus.

But I wasn't. That was a very difficult thing to say to him when he was old enough to understand. "I am not your

father," I said. He insisted I was. He never treated me as anything but a father. On my deathbed, he whispered to me, "You are my father."

I didn't mean to stir up such memories, and I'll give you a moment to collect yourself. It's obvious you loved your son. Could you share with me some reflections of his birth?

What a mixture of emotions I felt then! Anticipation over my upcoming marriage... excitement about the future... then disbelief at Miriam's pregnancy... doubt over our relationship... resolve to end our engagement quietly... amazement at the dreams which instructed me... upset at having to travel to Bethlehem when she was so near her delivery time... anger at being shut out of the inn... indescribable joy at the birth. All of those flooded my mind and heart in the space of a few months.

I would like to concentrate on a few of those if you don't mind. For example, most people can identify with your sense of betrayal when you found out your wife-to-be was pregnant.

Let me interrupt. I never felt betrayed. You just did what most people do—they start the story in the middle because that's where Luke began his story. But that neglects the time I had known Miriam before her pregnancy. I was marrying her out of love and not just out of obligation because our families had arranged the marriage. She was 13 when we became engaged, but I had known her for years. After all, we grew up together in a town of about 100 people. I was older and a boy, but we knew each other as children, danced at festivals, wept at funerals, and so on. There was a long friendship which turned into love. So when she came to me with her story, I knew some things for certain: she was not lying, and she was no adulteress.

But the story she told you—

—was hard to understand. I believed it because I loved her. Still, I needed understanding.

I don't understand the difference.

Why not? You just gave an example yourself. You believed my words about how I felt, but you could not understand how I felt that way. See what I mean? You trust me to tell the truth; but you still need to comprehend what I mean, or else you will walk away shaking your head.

Is that what you did?

Yes. I believed Miriam but I didn't understand her. So I decided I had better simply end our engagement and let her live her life without the scandal of a big scene.

That was a generous stand to take. One of the worst sins of your day was infidelity, and it must have been tempting to play the role of jilted husband.

Not really. I loved her. Respected her. So I didn't want any harm to come to her.

Before you could carry out the break-up, you dreamed. Dreams played a big part in your life.

Yes, but people shouldn't think that those dreams were big zap-flashes which explained everything to me. Because of the extraordinary circumstances of our son's coming into the world, I needed divine guidance and support. It came in a number of ways. Dreams were one method. My wife's love was another. Without the dream, I couldn't understand her. But without her, the dream would have meant nothing.

Could you talk about Bethlehem and Jesus' birth?

I had been there before to visit relatives. I had even worked on the synagogue there, replacing some pillars which had rotted out. There's an expression used nowadays—"nowhere town." That describes Bethlehem. It made Nazareth seem like a metropolis. But this time it was crowded, filled with people coming back to register. You could barely pass through the streets. People had set up their tents everywhere. Miriam rode the donkey all the way through town because she kept being jostled and bumped by the crowds. I was afraid she would be pushed to the ground.

You mentioned before that you felt anger at being closed out of the inn.

Yes, but not at the innkeeper. There was nothing he could do, and he proved helpful by giving us the cave where his animals were.

That was a help?

Certainly. To have cover over our heads and a dry place—that was enough. And the animals helped keep us warm. We knew people in Nazareth who lived in caves; so it was nothing for us to be in such a place, although we had gotten used to rooms like this one—whitewashed bricks of dried mud. Anyway, we settled down in the cave and ate supper. Before we ate, I prayed that heaven would favor us with a healthy child and that we would be happy. A short while after dinner, when she was putting away the scraps and wiping off the plates, Miriam told me it was time.

What was it like to be there?

Pardon me. I don't mean to laugh at you. But there's no way I was going to stay in that cave while she gave birth. (See ST. JOSEPH TALKS on page 27)

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St. Joseph talks about his life

(Continued from page 26)

That was not a man's chore. I went to the inn and fetched a servant-girl who had midwifery experience. She was with Miriam when Jesus arrived. I was outside, whittling.

Whittling?

A very nice little flute which our son played until he broke it when he was about six.

This is a little astonishing. I've always pictured you as staying there.

That's because you picture me as a man of your century. I wasn't. I wasn't the old man the first century wanted, and I wasn't the liberated male which your century might like, I stayed outside—it was cold, too—until I heard him squeal. Then I went in. The girl cleaned up the cloths and promised to have them laundered. She had cut the cord and salted the baby before wrapping him in the tight clothing.

Swaddling clothes. What was the salt for?

It protected his skin and kept him free of illness. When she left, I knelt beside my family. Jesus was nursing. Now and then, he would lose the nipple and yelp a little. But Miriam would guide him back to her breast and he'd suck away contentedly.

How did you feel?

I'm sorry to repeat myself, but I had all kinds of emotions. I felt proud and fulfilled, as any man does when he starts a family. I felt the weight of responsibility come on me; I now had two people to care for; I would have to work harder and longer each day. I felt wonder at heaven's choice of Miriam and complete confusion over its choice of me. Neither of us knew totally who our son would become or what he would do. We had only inklings and notions and hints and clues. So I was puzzled. I also felt a warmth throughout my body. Not a physical warmth so much as an inner glow. The love among the three of us was very much alive that night in the cave.

What happened then?

When he finished nursing, Miriam was very tired. From the journey, the search for a place to stay, the birth. As he

sucked, she was sleepy. I smiled as her eyelids drooped and then popped open again. She was fighting exhaustion, but, each time, her lids fell farther and stayed down longer. Finally, he was done and she fell fast asleep. So I took him in my arms and welcomed him to the world. His answer was a sleepy, sucking motion with his mouth.

You sound so happy when you tell it.

You have to remember the context. We were not simply a couple having a child. That's wonderful enough. But we were having this special boy. The child conceived by the Spirit. The child who would be the king of an everlasting kingdom. We couldn't understand, in this case, but we believed. We were Jews, longing for a Messiah. Heaven seemed to have been silent for so long. No prophets had come to us. We were a captive nation. So there was a feeling on that level as well as on the family level.

I notice you keep saying "heaven" instead of "God." Why?

Just habit. It was the custom. We never spoke God's name. So we used euphemisms. That was how much we revered the Almighty. I held in my arms a helpless baby, dependent on me for food. But I also held the son of the Most High. My heart was filled with awe that night. I knew heaven's love, a wife's love, a son's love.

Those emotions—love, awe, reverence, wonder—are what we try to recapture every time we celebrate your son's birth. I hope I don't embarrass you.

How?

By saying that, despite your desire to stay in the background, you are an example to us of how much those emotions mean and how humble we should be in the face of God's love for the world.

A love so deep that he sent his only son.

Exactly. Thank you for giving me your time.

You're welcome. If you don't mind, before you leave, would you hand me that mallet? I've got work to do.

(Reprinted with permission from U.S. Catholic, published by Claretian Publications, 221 W. Madison, Chicago, Ill. 60606.)



HOLY NIGHT—"The Nativity" by Lorenzo Lotto was painted in 1523 in Bergamo, Italy, and is now part of the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art. (NC photo)

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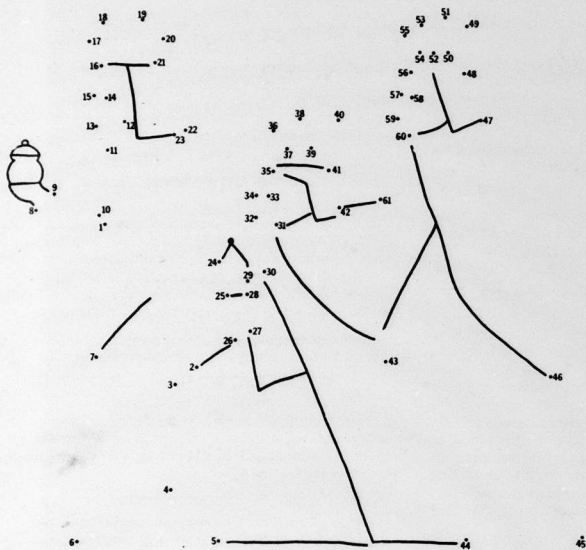
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Test your knowledge of the Christmas story

Based on the Biblical account of Christ's birth

by Theodore Hengesbach

The story of Jesus' birth is well known. Many Christians probably can recite it by heart.

But just for fun, check your knowledge of the details of the Christmas story by taking the following test. There may be one or two facts you have forgotten. If so, this is the appropriate season to reread the biblical account of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke. So you really can't lose.

- Who sent out the decree that a census of the whole world should be taken?
 - King Herod
 - Pontius Pilate
 - Caesar Augustus
 - Quirinius of Persia
- In which direction did Joseph and Mary go as they traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem?
 - North
 - South
 - East
 - West
- How many angels first appeared to the shepherds to tell them about the birth of Jesus?
 - A multitude
 - A host
 - One
 - Two
- When they heard the news of Jesus' birth the shepherds were filled with
 - Joy
 - Fear
 - Surprise
 - Disbelief
- Under what name was Mary's child announced to the shepherds?
 - Jesus
 - Son of God
 - Son of David
 - Messiah and Lord
- After the shepherds were told of Jesus' birth, what did they do?
 - Joined in a prayer of thanks to God
 - Went quickly to find Mary, Joseph and the child
 - Discussed among themselves whether this could be true
 - Went to sleep
- What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus?
 - Pondered these marvelous things in their hearts
 - Made known to others what they had been told and seen
 - Visited the temple
 - Presented Jesus with gifts
- Who gave Jesus his name?
 - Mary
 - Joseph

- God the Father
- The angel

9. When was Mary's child first called Jesus?

- On the day of his circumcision
- When the shepherds visited Mary and Joseph
- When the Magi visited Mary and Joseph
- Only after he began his public life

- The name Jesus means
 - Son of the most high God
 - Savior
 - Conceived of the Holy Spirit
 - Son of David
- The name Emmanuel means
 - Conceived of a virgin
 - Savior
 - Son of Joseph
 - God with us

- The Magi traveled in which direction to find Jesus?
 - North
 - South
 - East
 - West
- The reason why the Magi came to see Jesus was to
 - Worship him
 - Present him with gifts
 - Find out for themselves if Jesus was really the son of God
 - Fulfill a vow that they had made to God

- The Magi found Jesus
 - With Mary in a house
 - Lying in a manger
 - In a house with Mary and Joseph
 - In a stable
- The Magi were warned not to return to Herod by
 - Mary
 - Joseph
 - A dream
 - An angel

Answers:

1-c (Luke 2:9); 2-b (Check a map); 3-1-c (Luke 2:1-2); 4-b (Matthew 2:1-12); 5-a (Matthew 2:1-12); 6-b (Matthew 2:1-12); 7-a (Luke 2:1-12); 8-b (Luke 2:1-12); 9-a (Luke 2:1-12); 10-b (Matthew 1:21); 11-a (Matthew 1:23); 12-d (Matthew 2:1-12); 13-a (Matthew 2:1-12); 14-b (Luke 2:1-12); 15-c (Matthew 2:1-12).

11-15 correct: You know your facts. Reread Luke 2:1-21 and Matthew 1:18-2:12 in prayerful meditation.

6-10 correct: Not bad. Read Luke and Matthew again with care.

0-5 correct: Refresh your memory by reading Luke and Matthew out loud to yourself.

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In Cuba, Christmas does not officially exist

by Barb Frazee

WASHINGTON (NC)—"There is no more Christmas in Cuba—officially," said a Cuban minister who spent the last 21 Christmases in prison.

Seventh-day Adventist Elder Humberto Noble Alexander, one of 26 Cuban political prisoners freed in June when the Rev. Jesse Jackson traveled to Cuba, said that in 1961, after Cuban President Fidel Castro had been in power, "Christmas was completely changed."

The only big feast now is July 26, the anniversary of the beginning of the Cuban revolution in 1953, he said Nov. 29 in Washington, where he described religious conditions in and out of prison.

A traditional Cuban Christmas includes a food feast as big as those held at Thanksgiving in the United States, he said. Many families continue to try scraping together enough food to hold traditional Christmas dinners in their homes, even though food is scarce. If a house was raided during a Christmas feast, government officials would charge the people with buying contraband food, said the elder.

HE SAID THAT in prison, his Christmas meal was soup.

But he said he wasn't sure that it was soup because it was "the same color as the plate."

Mr. Noble said this year he probably will spend a quiet Christmas in Massachusetts with his mother and sister, a setting different from the nine prisons where he spent his sentence. He was arrested in 1962 and charged with being a counterrevolutionary after preaching at a revival in Matanzas, Cuba.

He said that in Cuba religion is considered the "opium of the people."

"And every pastor is (considered) potentially a member of the CIA," he said.

He said prisoners could spend 21 days in the dungeon for making a small Christmas tree. Hymns, copied on the back of Cuban cigarette paper, also were cause for three weeks in the dungeon.

Mr. Noble, who was 28 when he was arrested, said faith in God kept him going through his prison term, which included 17 years of solitary confinement and three years of forced labor. Since 1967, the prisoners were dressed only in their underwear, and many of his prison years he slept on the floor in cells with no beds. Prisoners often were in cells with no light and drank water from the toilet.

The Cuban and foreign sets of prisoners often passed each other in lines at meal times and took the opportunity to smuggle letters and pass books to other prisoners.

Mr. Noble said when he was not in isolation, he tried to minister to other prisoners. Priests and ministers were not allowed to visit the prisons, but in some prisons—such as the forced labor area—prisoners were kept in large divisions, providing some opportunities for group ministry.

When preaching in prison, Mr. Noble said, he preached Christianity, not doctrine, since prisoners were of various religious backgrounds.

While conducting a baptism class at a homemade pulpit, Mr. Noble said, he was shot at and injured by guards. One of the men attending the class questioned whether he should be baptized, asking where was God when such a thing occurred.

Mr. Noble said his reply was: "Where was God when Christ was hanging on the cross?" The man returned three days later for baptism.

He said he knew of about 75 prisons and concentration camps in Cuba, an island nearly as large as Pennsylvania, with 9.8 million people. He said in one building in

one prison, there were 4,000 men—and that facility had three other buildings.

"You don't have to go to Russia to see what is happening," he said; just go "90 miles from your coast."

Mr. Noble is a Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Salem, Mass., and two nearby towns.

Finding Jesus Christ in the Christmas crowds

by Hilda Young

I confess I don't usually look for Jesus in shopping malls or department stores, but I did today when I went Christmas shopping. I thought maybe it would help me keep my cool when people step on my ankles in the elevator and store clerks make the phrase "May I help you?" sound like a threat.

Well, Jesus fooled me. He took my corny approach to self-control and made it what I think is called "an authentic prayer experience." And he showed up in the crowds.

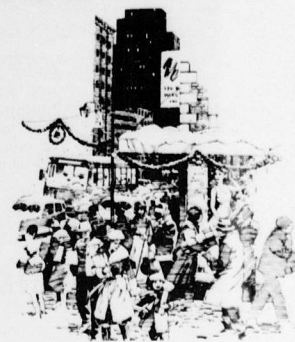
I found him in the guise of a very old woman ringing the bell at the Salvation Army donation stand, despite the cold and wet.

He became 16 and opened the store door for me with a big smile when my arms were full of packages.

I saw him in a tattered old man sitting on the pavement outside Sears playing his harmonica and nodding at passersby.

And then Jesus turned into a young woman who, instead of dropping a quarter into the man's upturned hat, sat down next to him to visit a while and share a smile and a laugh and a hug.

Jesus turned up in a Woolworth's clerk who made up the difference from his own pocket when a 10-year-old was 50 cents



short of being able to pay for a little vase for his mother for Christmas.

Jesus was all over.

He was carrying a sleeping four-year-old on his shoulders; making the sign of the cross in front of a store window nativity scene; laughing and kidding as he helped a group of blind students through Penney's.

Jesus kept saying "Merry Christmas" to me in the most wonderful ways all day.

Merry Christmas to you too, Jesus.

1984 by NC News Service

Nativity scene joins federal display despite some protests

WASHINGTON (NC)—A 20-piece nativity scene was set up Dec. 11 amid the annual federally sponsored Christmas display on the Washington Ellipse, for the first time in 12 years.

The slightly less-than-life-size figures were set up between the reindeer pens and the pit for the Yule log fire, which also are part of the Christmas Pageant of Peace next to the White House.

A nativity scene had not been part of the Pageant of Peace since 1973, when a federal appeals court said it violated the

separation of church and state. But a Supreme Court ruling in March which approved a city-sponsored creche in Pawtucket, R.I., and pressure from fundamentalist groups prompted the National Park Service to reinstate the nativity scene.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee and other religious groups have opposed the nativity scene's inclusion in the Christmas display.

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REMEMBER LEAST FORTUNATE—Religious leaders who urged society to remember its least fortunate are, from left, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Rev. William Sloane Coffin, senior minister of New York's Riverside Church; Episcopal Bishop John Walker of Washington; and Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame. They are shown admiring the Medal of Freedom that Father Hesburgh wears on his lapel. The nation's highest civilian honor, it was presented to him by President Johnson. (NC photo from UPI)

Religious leaders urge society to remember its poor

by Liz S. Armstrong

WASHINGTON (NC)—Like a ghost of Christmas future rising to torment the poor, the specter of federal budget cuts loomed over a pre-Christmas news conference as religious leaders urged society to remember its least fortunate.

Criticizing proposed Reagan administration budget cuts, one of the religious leaders, Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, said America's religious believers should embody "the spirit of Christmas" by providing a voice to the voiceless poor.

He was joined at a Capitol Hill forum Dec. 13 by Auxiliary Bishop Emerson J. Moore of New York, Episcopal Bishop John T. Walker of Washington—who said his own church's efforts at feeding the hungry have been unable to reach all of the capital's poor children—and other Christian and Jewish leaders.

They urged a united religious front against what they regard as further devastating budget cuts aimed at the poor and—while acknowledging the serious problems posed by a soaring federal deficit—suggested that budget-cutters

should aim for defense spending as well as social spending.

"SPECIAL ATTENTION must be paid to the poor and the effects of our federal budget upon the poor," said Bishop Moore, who was arrested a week earlier as part of the continuing South African apartheid protest.

"I think we have to begin to focus in on the military budget," Bishop Moore said. "I believe significant savings can be achieved in the defense budget without compromising our national security."

Father Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, recommended whittling down the deficit by "going at the fat, not by going after the poorest of the poor among us."

Religious leaders traditionally have demonstrated that "they are not afraid to be prophetic," he added. "They are not afraid to face the powerful and question the use of that power."

"We're asking for justice," he added. "I'm saying: God help us if—the richest nation on earth—we're not compassionate to the poor among us. The poor do have a lobby. We are it."

ACCORDING to an analysis by the churches-supported Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Reagan administration draft budget proposals being considered at the time of the news conference would:

► Drop over 500,000 low-income pregnant women and young children from the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program slated for a 17 percent cut;

► Freeze food stamp benefit levels for 20 million poor people while food costs rise;

► Eliminate a cost-of-living adjustment in special Supplemental Security Income for two million poor Social Security recipients;

► Abolish such programs for the disadvantaged as Legal Services, Job Corps, rural housing projects, community development block grants, and other assistance.

► Cut back other programs often used

by the poor but not directly related to fighting poverty, such as aid for urban mass transit, a prime means for poor people to find and commute to jobs;

► Produce \$63 billion in reductions for fiscal years 1986-88 in human services programs, atop almost \$56 billion in cuts from fiscal 1982-84;

► Make nearly one-fifth, or some \$31 billion, of all budget cuts planned for the forthcoming three years in programs aimed at the poor.

At the same time, according to the center's analysis, the Pentagon would be the only federal agency enjoying a genuine after-inflation funding increase. In fact, the center reported, defense spending would increase by about \$23 billion in the upcoming fiscal year.

Moreover, according to the analysis, an Office of Management and Budget-recommended \$8 billion slash in defense spending would be in the amount of growth of defense spending—not in its budget itself. Or, in other words, the Defense Department would still get an increase in its allowance—it would just be a smaller increase than the department might wish.

The draft budget proposals are, however, only in their initial stage. Further clarification of administration goals should come in President Reagan's 1985 State of the Union and budget messages; then Congress will get its turn at setting budget priorities as well.

THE RELIGIOUS leaders indicated they intend to make sure the plight of the poor is not overlooked.

"In the name of a God of justice and of peace, we urge the president and the members of Congress to think harder about these matters," Bishop Walker, Father Hesburgh, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin of Riverside Church, New York, and Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said in a joint position statement.

Rabbi Schindler added: "We simply cannot countenance the further tightening of this nation's belt around the necks of the poor. They've suffered enough."

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Parish life study finds more lay leadership

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (NC)—The stereotype of parish life, with the priest alone leading a flock of docile lay people, does not exist today, according to a report released Dec. 10 by the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life.

The Catholic Church in the United States 20 years after the Second Vatican Council has become more participatory, not only in religious ritual, but also in lay responsibility for ministries, the report said.

In fact, in 10 percent of U.S. Catholic parishes "it is fair to say that a non-priest—a married deacon or laypersons themselves—are the central figures," according to the report. It said "unpaid laypersons conduct many of the important ministries of the parish."

"The picture of a parish where Father O'Brien took care of God, Sister Cerita ran the school and the people met their Mass obligations and said 'Hail Marys' would be

a woefully inadequate stereotype of U.S. Catholic parishes in the 1980s."

It was released by Msgr. Joseph Gremillion, director of Notre Dame's Institute for Pastoral and Social Ministry, and David C. Leege, director of the Center for the Study of Contemporary Society.

Based on the analysis of 1,100 Catholic parishes throughout the United States, the report was the first of a series to be released bimonthly by the institute and center. The study was begun in 1981 and will continue through 1988. According to its authors, it is the most thorough inventory ever taken of the sociological, historical, pastoral and liturgical composition of American Catholic parishes.

The first report found that parishes are large and getting larger. Twenty percent of the parishes serve more than 5,000 members and another 20 percent serve between 2,500 and 5,000 people.

While more than 85 percent of Catholics polled "feel their parish meets their spiritual needs well," 75 percent said they "would not feel very upset about the prospect of leaving their parish" for another.

Also, the large majority of U.S. Catholics do not shop around for parishes but attend the parish in the area in which they live, according to the report.

It found that parish governing patterns, such as parish councils, are still in the experimental stage.

Direct opposition to liturgical change is not great, the study found, but "a touch of uneasiness" is registered in some areas: 20 percent felt uneasy about women Communion ministers and 17 percent about lay Communion ministers in general. Fifteen percent said they do not like the Communion cup.

While the report found that the political viewpoints of Catholics vary greatly, it said there are "signs of awakening to larger community issues of social service, justice and peace."

Those polled wanted better church understanding and staff capabilities in areas such as divorce and remarriage, alcoholism and family finances, and worried about inadequate religious education for both teen-agers and adults.

Future reports will examine parish membership, participation and activities; leadership; liturgy and spirituality; the parish as community; the relationship between the parish and the outside community; religious education, formation and beliefs; and parish budgets and finances.

An examination of key findings is planned at a conference scheduled for next May 29-30 in Chicago.

Fr. Cardenal says conscience kept him at his post

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (NC)—Father Fernando Cardenal said his conscience prevented him from stepping down as Nicaragua's education minister, although the decision resulted in his expulsion from the Jesuits.

"Sincerely, I consider before God that I would commit a grave sin if I abandoned, in the present circumstances, my priestly option for the poor," he said in a 19-page statement.

Father Cardenal said that option "takes its concrete form in Nicaragua in my work in the Popular Sandinista Revolution."

"I can't conceive of a God that would ask me to give up my commitment to the people," he said.

Father Cardenal also equated the Vatican's approach to Nicaragua with the policies of the Reagan administration.

The Vatican seeks "to delegitimize the revolutionary process with our resignation" from office, he said, in an apparent reference to three other priests serving in high government posts. He also said the Nicaraguan bishops "wanted us to abandon this revolution."

Father Cardenal said the Vatican was pressuring him to resign for political reasons.

He also said that the Vatican was "imprisoned by traumas produced by the conflicts in Eastern Europe that have nothing to do with the history of the People of God in Latin America and much less to do with the Nicaraguan revolutionary process."

Jesuit headquarters in Rome announced the expulsion of Father Cardenal Dec. 10, five months after Jesuit officials said his



Father Fernando Cardenal

post in the Marxist-influenced government was "incompatible with his status as a Jesuit."

The other three priests do not come under Jesuit jurisdiction. They are Maryknoll Father Miguel D'Escoto, foreign minister; Father Edgar Parrales, ambassador to the Organization of American States, a diocesan priest; and Father Ernesto Cardenal, minister of culture, a diocesan priest and brother of Fernando.

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Trial to begin; Polish police force crowd to disperse

GDANSK, Poland (NC)—Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse more than 2,000 people, including Lech Walesa, founder of the outlawed trade union Solidarity, who gathered Dec. 16 to mark the 1970 Gdansk food riots.

The police action was the latest example of tensions between the Communist government and supporters of the outlawed trade union.

Following a commemorative Mass at St. Brigida's Church, Walesa and the crowd attempted to walk to a memorial at the gates of the Lenin shipyard, where Solidarity began.

Walesa locked arms with other Solidarity leaders and moved through two lines of police before being stopped by a blockade of trucks. He laid a wreath intended for the memorial at the feet of officers at the trucks.

Police allowed Walesa's small group to pass, but closed in behind, cutting off the main crowd, witnesses said. The police attacked after the marchers refused to disperse.

At least 15 people were arrested, including two union leaders.

The Mass and march marked the 14th

anniversary of the 1970 shooting of shipyard workers protesting the announcement of a food price increase before Christmas. Official reports said 27 workers died while unofficial reports listed the death toll around 40.

The march went without incident last year when Walesa's wife Danuta was allowed to lay a wreath at the memorial.

In the memorial Mass before the march, Father Henryk Jankowski, Walesa's religious adviser, delivered a toned-down homily saying "violence, terror and power are alien to us."

"Our strength is in pure hearts and unfrightened souls," he added.

While marchers in Gdansk were tussling with police, another confrontation was ending. Students protesting the removal of crucifixes from a northern Poland school ended their two-week sit-in following talks with Polish bishops, said the Polish news agency PAP.

Also on Dec. 16, PAP announced that four Interior Ministry police officers would go to trial Dec. 27 for the murder in October of pro-Solidarity priest Father Jerzy Popieluszko.

Last in a five-part series

Economic pastoral: Catholic ethics

by Jerry Fileau

WASHINGTON (NC)—As soon as the first draft of the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on the U.S. economy came out, conservative columnists hopped all over it. William F. Buckley Jr. caustically labeled the drafters "the Humphrey-Hawkins bishops," referring to the original sponsors of a liberal full employment bill that has made little progress in Congress.

Is the draft document nothing more than the standard—and, many conservative commentators would say, now discredited—liberal Democratic political agenda of the past two decades?

Or is it, as Archbishop James Hickey of Washington said, a "strong, sophisticated statement . . . a faithful reflection of 100 years of Catholic social teaching" which "challenges all ideologies" of both right and left?

A five-bishop committee, headed by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, released the draft Nov. 11. Two rounds of redrafting are anticipated before the bishops vote on it next November.

The answer to what the pastoral draft is—moral teaching or an unwarranted episcopal intrusion into politics under a pseudo-religious veneer—has to lie ultimately with the moral principles it enunciates and how effectively it argues the transitions that it makes from those principles to practical judgments.

Like the controversial war and peace pastoral the nation's bishops issued in 1983, the proposed economic pastoral discusses public policy issues but from a specifically moral dimension.

The draft document has four chapters on specific policy issues—employment, poverty, economic participation and foreign economic policies. A fifth issue chapter, on food and agriculture, will not

appear until draft two comes out next spring.

But preceding those chapters are two on principles. They spell out the content of Scripture, of Christian tradition and of recent papal teachings which contribute to and form the Catholic viewpoint on socio-economic morality.

A first principle is that creation belongs ultimately to God and is his gift to all humanity. The right to private property, from this biblical perspective, is neither absolute nor unconditional. Rather, with it come duties to God of responsible stewardship and to fellow human beings of sharing when they are in need.

Other biblical themes—covenant, community, justice, warnings against the idolatry of wealth, God's special care for the poor—reinforce and add further dimensions to the Christian conviction that "communal solidarity and mutual responsibility must characterize an economy that truly respects persons."

The pastoral draft pays particular attention to the Gospel of St. Luke as "a synthesis of the biblical concern with wealth. Wealth is evil when it so dominates a person's life that it becomes an idol claiming allegiance and giving security apart from God, or when it blinds a person to the suffering and needy neighbor."

It calls the message of this Gospel "a prophetic warning to . . . members of the most prosperous and wealthy nation in the world."

The draft also stresses the growing articulation in recent years of the church's "preferential option for the poor." That option is not just a part of the letter's approach, but an essential criterion for all of it.

"Our fundamental norm in judging economic policies has been this: What will this approach or policy do to the poor and

deprived members of the human community?" the draft says.

"Everyone has a legitimate claim on economic benefits to at least the minimum level necessary for the social protection of human dignity," it comments. "No one can be legitimately excluded or abandoned by the larger community in its activity. The economic minimum owed to every person by society is made explicit in the human rights standards affirmed in church teaching."

Listing these economic rights, which were analyzed systematically in Pope John XXIII's encyclical, "Pacem in Terris" ("Peace on Earth"), the draft calls for a "new American experiment" that would imbue economic rights in U.S. culture as fully and pervasively as those civil and political freedoms enunciated in the Bill of Rights.

The document takes pains to praise America's "encouraging record" and "impressive strides" in providing "material necessities, employment, health care, education and social services for its people."

At the same time it says that there are "failures, some of them massive and ugly."

And the real point of the pastoral can be seen only in light of its insistence, from biblical perspectives and papal teachings, on rectifying those failures and establishing justice.

If adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care and other essentials for living in dignity are fundamental rights, then the existence in a wealthy society of 35 million people living below the poverty line constitutes a denial of human rights, it argues.

The pastoral draft judges that "the level of inequality in income and wealth in our society and even more the inequality on the

world scale today must be judged morally unacceptable."

It does not radically reject all inequality of wealth as such, however.

"A certain inequality in distribution of income and services can sometimes be justified," it says. "Persons with greater needs, the disabled, for example, are entitled to a greater amount of social support. Similarly, persons who expend greater effort or run greater risks deserve higher rewards."

But such inequality is subject to "stringent constraints" when there are "persons whose basic human needs are unmet," the draft declares.

It focuses on work as a fundamental right and basic way of participating in and contributing to society, and it calls for full employment, with a living family wage for all who work, as a top priority on the socio-economic agenda.

For those who cannot work for reasons such as age or disability, however, it calls for a moral obligation of society to see that their economic necessities are met so that they can live in dignity.

Following papal teaching, the pastoral draft rejects "a statist approach to economic policy" or "excessive concentration of power in the hands of government," but at the same time it declares that government "has a moral function: that of enabling citizens to coordinate their actions to protect basic rights and ensure economic justice for all members of the commonwealth."

Conservative critics have argued that in the practical solutions it offers for such problems as high unemployment and poverty, the draft comes down on the side of excessive government power.

The draft argues that there are many economic actors which it seeks to involve actively in resolving such problems, and it does not place all the weight of the solutions on the government.

But it says that the problems "cannot be addressed adequately without governmental involvement on a variety of local and national levels. We urgently need a new political will to pursue these objectives as a society."

Father Bruce Ritter

NO ROOM AT THE INN



The Innkeeper said, No. I can't help you, he said. Go away, he said.

It was late at night. The inn was very crowded. The young couple was poor. The husband, frantic with

anxiety, insisted and pleaded and argued desperately. Look, my wife is going to have a baby any minute. Please, you've got to let us in. Clearly, there were no large tips forthcoming to inspire the Innkeeper's compassion and understanding. You can't take responsibility for every pilgrim and traveller and wanderer who knocks on your door, even if the girl is young and tired and about to have a baby!

After he turned them away, I wonder if the Innkeeper ever gave the young mother and her husband a second thought? Listen, I know exactly how that innkeeper felt. Maybe he'd had a bad day. He wasn't such a bad guy. You just can't assume he was an unfeeling heartless wretch and sweep him out of your mind like so much dirt. He must have had his reasons. And besides, it turned out okay. The young couple found a cave on a hillside where some shepherds stabled their animals. The 14-year-old girl had her baby there. It turned out all right.

Many years ago, two kids knocked on my door one night! It was late and I had had a bad day. I didn't want to wake up. I didn't want to answer the door. I was tired and had gone to bed angry. There were a bunch of kids bedded down on the living room floor and the six bunk beds were filled. I had been mugged earlier that day and one of my kids stole the grocery money—and I didn't like any of my kids very much. They just didn't appreciate me and weren't very grateful. Playing the role of noble martyr to the hilt, I opened the door.

Two kids stood there, uncertainly, obviously reading the look on my face. One of the kids said, Are you Bruce, and I said, Yes. And he said, do you take kids in? And I said, Yes. Can we stay with you? he said. And I said, No, because we have no room. The kid began to cry. Where can I go? What

can I do? he said. And I said, you can go back out into the street, and you can look sad.

The kid stopped crying, and he looked at me. I can do that, he said. So he did, or they did, they both went back out into the street. One boy was 15, the other was 14. I never saw them again.

"Jesus was, like my kids, a wanderer and nomad, with no place to lay His head."

I can still see their faces, just about as clearly today as I could that night so many years ago. I can still see the tears on the boy's face. I can see how the other kid stood, and the way he looked at me.

I wonder if the Innkeeper kept remembering, too.

Jesus has to love my kids. I'm sure of that, in all their pain and sadness—for Jesus was, like them, a wanderer and nomad, with no place to lay His head. Like most of my kids He was born in poverty and welcomed by outcasts. He was no stranger to the hunger and fatigue and misunderstanding and rejection of their lives either. Perhaps more than any one else, they have the right to be called the least of His brethren, and the right too, to His special love and mercy for the wandering lost sheep that He cares about so much.

Look, Christmas is not the time for sad letters about my kids—letters that could perhaps diminish your own happiness. Christmas is a time for joyful thoughts about the Son of God who loved us with such an immeasurable, longing love. We celebrate His birth and childhood and innocence with the giving of gifts and speaking of our own love. We try to make our own love visible.

Let our celebration be simple and unsophisticated. He was just a child in a stable. Let our joy be unhurried and unhurried. The angel wished us peace and good will. Let us give gifts, also, to Him as the wise men did, and in giving gifts to others let us give in His name and in love, for we are all nomads and pilgrims together.

Thank you for giving that gift of love to my kids. Your kids now. Because of you, thousands of children and young people are helped every day. Because of your love, thousands are saved from lives of degradation and

humiliation. Because you haven't stopped caring and helping, we at Covenant House are able to touch these kids with your hands, to love them with your love, to share the blessings God has given you to share with them.

Maybe my kids won't know that for a while. Maybe only when Jesus draws us all to be with Him and the Father will we all know each other and experience that special shock of recognition that must be one of the great joys of heaven. You're going to meet a lot of beautiful kids who will know your name and know your face and reach out to you with joy. And, I hope, you'll meet a couple of innkeepers, who made a tragic mistake and said No when they should have said Yes.

I wish you all His peace and His joy, and the certain knowledge of His love. Thanks, again, for loving my own homeless nomads who, because of you, do have a place to lay their heads. Always pray for us, please, as we never stop praying for you and thanking God for you.

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Send To: The Active List, 1400 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206

December 21

Kevin Barry Division #3, Ancient Order of Hibernians will hold its annual Irish Christmas Cocktail Party at 8 p.m. at the Indianapolis Athletic Club. Call 255-5933 or 359-9123 after 5 p.m. for information.

December 21-22-23

A Christmas Family Retreat will be held at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center. For information and registration call 812-923-8817.

December 23

The Church of the Holy Name of Jesus, 17th and Albany, Beech Grove, will present Christmas Concert XXIII conducted by Jerry Craney at 3 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. in the church. Men and Boys Choir, Girl's Choir, Folk Group, combined chorus and orchestra will perform. Call 784-0459 for tickets.

St. John's Festival of Arts will sponsor the St. John Choir in concert at 4:30 p.m. preceding 5:30 p.m. Mass in the church, 126 W. Georgia St. Free will offering taken.

A Sign Mass for the Deaf is celebrated at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday in St. Joan of Arc Church, 42nd and Central.

The Secular Franciscans will meet for Mass at Sacred Heart Church, 1530 Union St. at 2 p.m. Election of officers and Christmas party will follow in the school hall.

December 24

Archbishop O'Meara will celebrate midnight Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Meridian and 14th St. Additional Christmas Mass at 5 p.m. and Crib Blessing Service at 11:30 p.m.

December 25

A Christmas Mass will be celebrated in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Meridian at 14th St., at 11 a.m.

December 28-29-30

A retreat for Young Single Adults (ages 18 and older) will be held at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center. For more information call 812-923-8817.

December 30

A Sign Mass for the Deaf is celebrated at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday in St. Joan of Arc Church, 42nd and Central.

A Youth Mass and Christmas Celebration sponsored by New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministry will be held at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center.

The K. of C. will sponsor a Parish Family Breakfast in Kasper Hall of St. Lawrence Church, Lawrenceburg, from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. Adults \$2, children under 12 \$1, preschoolers free. All are welcome.

December 31

The Catholic Widowed Organization (CWO) will hold its third annual "Ring in the New Year" social at Bob Beckerich's home at 8 p.m. BYOB; food, soft drinks, coffee provided. Pay \$4 at Dec. 19 meeting or call 784-4207 or 253-8771 (leave message) before Dec. 20.

A New Year's Eve Dance for persons age 21 or over will be held

on the third level of Holy Angels School from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$12.50 per person in advance; \$15 per person at the door; senior citizens \$10 at the door. Buffet, favors, champagne, live entertainment.

The Board of Education of Little Flower Parish will sponsor a New Year's Eve Party, Breakfast and Drawing for ticketholders. Donation \$50 per couple; only 350 tickets will be sold. Call 357-8552 or 353-2282.

Msgr. Downey Council #3660, Knights of Columbus, will hold a New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. Steak dinner, "Indy 5" music. \$40 per member couple; \$45 for non-member couples with a member. For reservations call 786-9525.

St. Bernadette Parish will enjoy a New Year's Eve Dance from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$15 couple, \$8 single. Hot and cold snacks, party favors, champagne at midnight. BYOB. Call 357-3541, 357-5295 or 638-0876 for tickets.

A New Year's Eve Alternative will be offered at St. Luke parish, 7575 Holliday Drive East. Schedule includes community caroling at 7:30 p.m., a liturgy with Father Dave Douglas at 8 p.m., and a non-alcoholic reception for adults and holiday movies for children at 9 p.m. The event is sponsored by the parish Cursillo.

January 3-6

A Christian Awakening Retreat for public high school seniors will be held at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center. For more information call the Center



at 812-923-8817 or the Youth Ministry Office at 812-945-0354. Benediction at 5 p.m. in St. Joan of Arc Church, 4200 N. Central Ave.

January 5

The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima will hold its First Saturday Holy Hour at 2:30 p.m. in St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Rd.

January 6

A Directed Retreat which will last until Jan. 13 begins today at Kordes Enrichment Center, Ferdinand. Cost: \$25 per day. Contact the Center at Rt. 3, Box 200, Ferdinand, Ind. 47532.

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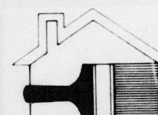
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Youth ministers at conference

"To be a prophet in today's world is not an easy thing to do. It means saying no to anything which is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That doesn't make you a popular person." This was the message given to 800 Catholic youth ministers and youth workers by Father Richard Rohr in his keynote address at the 20th National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry.

Five youth ministry coordinators from the In-

dianapolis Archdiocese attended the conference, held in Phoenix, Ariz., from Nov. 28-Dec. 1. Those attending were Paula Sasso and Eileen Raftery of Terre Haute, Mary McGoff from Indianapolis and Tony Cooper and Jerry Finn from New Albany.

The theme of the conference was "Youth Minister: As Prophet Hearing A Call, Responding to the Word." McGoff, youth minister at Immaculate Heart Parish in Indianapolis,

said the speakers made her aware that she should be less judgmental and try to see Christ more in others. "As prophet, (I've) got to have a real good grasp of forgiveness and repentance, and before (I) can ask the church or the world to change I have to be willing to change myself."

The main addresses were given by: Father Richard Rohr, founder of the New Jerusalem Community in Cincinnati; Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Walsh of San Francisco; Jim and Kathy McGinnis of St. Louis, who spoke on peace and justice; and Maria Harris of Newton, Mass., who spoke on the theme "Prophets Go Forth." In addition to these general sessions, the youth ministers could choose from more than 30 workshops on everything from youth outreach to the occult and spirituality in sports.

New Albany Deanery Youth Ministry Coordinator

Jerry Finn said he was impressed by the intensity of the message, especially in Father Rohr's talk. "A lot of times, I don't see what I do as being prophetic, but it is. The fact that we're called to challenge young people beyond the normal life, and that's something we ourselves have to live, is in a sense being a prophet."

Finn, McGoff and Cooper chose to drive to Phoenix in a van, since plane fare was not in their budgets. Cooper said that although 40 hours of driving was tiring, there were some benefits. "When you're together for that long with no distractions, it really (is) a unique opportunity to talk in depth about our lives and our ministries. Especially on the way home, we had plenty of time to process what we had learned with each other."

The conference was sponsored by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

ON THE ROAD—This trio of youth ministers made an 80-hour round trip by van to the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry in Phoenix, Ariz., Nov. 28-Dec. 1. Pictured are Jerry Finn, New Albany Deanery youth minister; Mary McGoff, youth minister at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish, Indianapolis; and Tony Cooper, youth minister at St. Mary parish, New Albany.

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A LITTLE TOWN—A little town of Bethlehem was constructed out of 65 tons of sand by teen-agers in Guadalupe, Ariz. The town is on display at El Tianguis Mall through December. The teens built most of the village in one weekend, under the direction of Michael Stewart of California. (NC photo by Henry Unger)

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Tired children of war plead for peace

Children of war speak in 36 U.S. cities

by NC News Service

"I want peace right now," Seng Ty told a Milwaukee high school audience, "and I would like all of you to stand up and do something."

Ty, 16, described growing up in war-torn Cambodia for a group of high school students as part of the Children of War tour, sponsored by the Religious Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival. The program sent children to speak in 36 U.S. cities Nov. 10-22.

The young people, from 14 different countries, told of their experiences and feelings to raise the consciousness of American teenagers and mobilize them to work for peace.

Ty said 14 weeks after the Communist Khmer Rouge took over Cambodia in 1975, soldiers started killing doctors, teachers and

lawyers. Eventually his parents and some of his brothers and sisters died of starvation; others were murdered by soldiers. Seng Ty worked 12-14 hours a day in a labor camp and survived by eating snakes and insects. He now lives with a foster family in Massachusetts. "I'm very tired of war. I'm very tired of killing. I'm very, very tired," he said.

MARIA ELENA Chacon of El Salvador said 80 percent of the children in her country suffer from malnutrition and never have a peaceful moment. "The children of El Salvador want peace," the 15-year-old girl said. "We believe we are the future and have a right to live in peace." She added that the violence is intensified by U.S. military aid to El Salvador.

Marwan Najjar described life in Lebanon. "Many are killed by bombs

that fall on the streets. Many are killed or injured by snipers; you can be taking a bath and may be shot by a sniper," he said.

Marty Zimmerman, who led a group of children visiting the northeast United States, said the tour should help heighten people's awareness. "There were many people who said 'we didn't know what was going on,' as if that meant we didn't have responsibility," she said.

"So, part of the reason that the Children of War are traveling around the country is to make sure that no one can say 'we didn't know what was happening in Palestine or in Israel—we didn't know what was happening in Northern Ireland.'"

Issam Arghaberi, an 18-year-old Palestinian from Galilee, told students at St. Mary's Academy in Bay Bridge, R.I., that his village



CHILDREN OF WAR—These are some of the children from 14 different war-torn countries who recently toured 36 U.S. cities in an effort to raise the consciousness of American youths and mobilize them to work for peace. They are part of the Children of War tour, sponsored by the Religious Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival. (NC photo by Jack Spratt)

is plagued by terrorism, but argued that violence is not the answer. "We as Palestinians believe that war is not the solution, because we are suffering," he said. "We don't want to suffer more."

Yossi Mankevetsky, a 17-year-old Jewish boy, pointed out that although he and Arghaberi are friends in the United States, "in Israel I'm supposed to hate him; I'm supposed to kill him; he is my enemy."

"But we are here together to tell you that there is another way. We are friends. . . . We have arguments, but we solve them by talking to each other—by negotiating."

SOME OF the children's experiences hit closer to home, depicting American conflict.

"In East Harlem, there isn't war physically, but there is war between us to let people know that we exist in

the U.S.," said Nancy Vientos of New York. "We have to suffer every day just to survive. In my community drugs, crime, unemployment, poor education are all day-to-day things."

Noting that 65 gangs live in her neighborhood, Jackie Jimbez of Chicago said discrimination and lack of education affect her community. "As minorities, we are treated as incapable," said the 16-year-old Puerto Rican.

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Roncalli team wins girls' city basketball championship

by Richard Cain

Roncalli became the first Catholic high school in Indianapolis to win the city girls' basketball championship, defeating Manual High School Saturday, Dec. 15, by a score of 59-43.

"Our girls' reserve team had won it (the city championship reserve level) last year, but no one had won it on the varsity level before," said Janet Claycombe, girls' sports director at Roncalli.

So far this season, the team has an unbeaten 10-0

record. They bested Arlington 57-51 in the semifinals and Cathedral 51-41 in the quarterfinal before facing Manual. Fourteen teams entered the tournament.

Several team members set tournament records during the championship game. Susan Hoereth had five assists, the most ever in a tournament final. Hoereth and Lisa Minardo both had four steals (second highest ever) while Susan's sister Diane had 12 rebounds (third highest ever).

The team was ranked 26th

in a pre-season poll, but has been otherwise unranked, according to Claycombe. "We play Brebeuf this Saturday and North Central in January. They will tell us where we stand." Roncalli plays Brebeuf at Roncalli beginning at 5 p.m. The North Central game is Jan. 16 also at Roncalli.

The girls' basketball season continues through January and will be followed by the state tournament in February. The team is coached by Bob Kirkhoff.

Should the girl ask the boy out?

by Tom Lennon

Question: I would like you to talk about how aggressive a girl can be on a date. I have the impression that guys would like the girl to ask him out but how do you know he won't really be offended?

Answer: Every so often in this column we turn to the dictionary to find out exactly what we're talking about. Let's do that with the word "aggressive."

The Random House Dictionary presents several meanings. The main one deals with hostile behavior such as an unprovoked, offensive attack or invasion. That's surely not how you're using the word.

A second meaning is "vigorously energetic," and a third one is "boldly assertive."

A more popular phrase might be "coming on strong."

But I suspect your use of the word "aggressive" doesn't really correspond to any of these phrases.

You seem to be asking simply when a girl may "take the initiative" in regard to a date. To put it another way, when can you call up a guy and ask him to go out, instead of waiting for him to call you?

As you no doubt realize, dating customs have been changing for some time now. Maybe you've seen the commercial in which a young woman asks a man out to dinner to break in her brand new credit card.

At a younger age level, girls are inviting guys to dances, movies and rock concerts. So far I've heard of no young men objecting to this, although a few express surprise.

If you're uncertain about how a certain young man would react to an invitation from you, why not first engage him in a conversation about the changing dating scene.

Ask him what he thinks of girls asking guys out. If he objects to girls doing this, ask why. Then, at a cool emotional level, present your views and try to continue the

discussion without ever getting hotly argumentative.

Then, if the time and the mood seem right and perhaps with a touch of light humor in your voice, ask him out. If he turns you down, you may be dealing for the moment with a lost cause.

As for more aggressive behavior, better watch out. "Coming on too strong" can be highly annoying whether in a girl or a guy. Then you run the risk of losing friends.

Some of my 21-year-old informants who go to singles bars report highly aggressive behavior on the part of young women. The guys say they enjoy this for a time. But they don't express admiration or even real liking for such women.

And many a woman has expressed her dislike for highly aggressive men.

In building a friendship, a gentle, loving approach is one more likely to lead to lasting and happy results.

(Send comments and questions to Tom Lennon, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.)

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(The Criterion welcomes death notices from parishes and/or individuals. Please submit them in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Monday the week of publication.)

† **ANDRES, John S.**, 93, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 7. Father of Cletus, and Viola Sprigler; grandfather of nine; great-grandfather of 18.

† **BAUER, Hugh G.**, 67, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Husband of Florence; father of Michael; brother of Kathryn Blanford and Raymond M.

† **CHRISTIAN, Anna L.**, 96, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Aunt of Helen E. and John T. Kiesel.

† **CLARK, Mabel**, 87, St. Michael, Cannelton, Dec. 11. Mother of Hazel Litterland, Jean Taylor, Lee Krutinger, Nellie Montgomery, and Edward and Charles May.

† **COY, Mary Catherine**, 72, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 11. Sister of Jack E.

† **DOLL, Joseph F.**, 71, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Father of Joanna Parks, Karen Burns,

Joseph F. Jr., Daniel R. and John A.

† **FOGARTY, Mary Ruth**, 89, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 10. Mother of John R., Raymond F., Dorothy M. Cain, Virginia A. Treitz and Mary R. Rullally; grandmother of 19; great-grandmother of 36.

Sister Weitlauf buried Dec. 13

OLDENBURG—Franciscan Sister John LaSalle Weitlauf received the Mass of Christian Burial here Dec. 13 in the Sisters of St. Francis' motherhouse chapel. She died Dec. 11 in a Batesville hospital at the age of 77.

Sister Weitlauf was a native of Cincinnati. She entered the congregation in 1925 and professed final vows in 1931. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees and was an elementary school and high school business teacher during her 35 years of teaching.

Indianapolis archdiocese teaching assignments for Sister Weitlauf included the former St.

† **FURST, Margaret**, 93, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Dec. 6. Mother of Ann Patton; grandmother of five; great-grandmother of one.

† **HESS, Margaret Mary**, 91, St. Joseph Hill, Sellersburg, Dec. 3. Mother of Carl, Martha Neidiffer, Rita Neufus, Lucille Riall, Mary Loftus, Dorothy Tatton,

Mary Academy in Indianapolis, and Immaculate Conception Academy in Oldenburg. Sister also spent 13 years at Marian College supervising distribution of mail before retiring to the motherhouse in 1975.

Sister Weitlauf is survived by one sister, Franciscan Sister Eva Catherine Weitlauf, also of the Oldenburg community.

Elizabeth Hutchinson and Ruth Deutsch.

† **HOFF, John Edwin**, 63, St. Michael, Brookville, Dec. 1. Husband of Thelma; brother of Carl, Thomas, David, Mildred Lang, Rosemary Audritsch and Marjorie Morin.

† **HUNDLEY, John "Burt"**, 65, Little Flower, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Husband of Joann; father of Peggy Pemberton, Mrs. Robert Quiett, Gregory, Russell and Mark; brother of Bessie Griffin.

† **JOHNSON, Arthur**, 74, St. Bridget, Indianapolis, Dec. 12. Father of Beverly and Arthur Webster.

† **MARONEY, Anna M. Kamer**, 77, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 29. Sister of Lucille M. Davis and Dorothy K. Miller.

† **MASTALERZ, Joseph A.**, 63, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Dec. 6. Husband of Evelyn C.; father of Mary Ann Larson, Judith Lynn Guillian, Susan Jo Nichols, Linda

Lou Washburn, Donna Lee Fox, Paul Anthony and Edward Allen; grandfather of nine; brother of Alois Masters.

† **McDANIEL, Richard A. Sr.**, 77, St. Anthony, Clarksville, Dec. 9. Husband of Hilda Jacobi; father of David M. and Richard A. Jr.; brother of Ethel, and Mary A. Volpert; grandfather of five.

† **OWEN, Burnadette E.**, 83, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 6. Sister of John Alexander and Lucille Ott.

† **PURSELL, Jerry R.**, 63, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Brother of Anna K. Messenger.

† **RAKE, Gary W.**, 43, St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd Knobs, Dec. 3. Husband of Doris; father of Gary and Joseph; son of Beulah; brother of Jim, Dan, Delbert, Margaret Shuppert, Carolyn Agers, Marcella Adamo and Christina Ricketts.

† **SHANAHAN, William A.**, 69, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 7. Father

of Philip, Nancy Ratekin and Rosemarie Houze; brother of Rev. James, Gerald and Peter; grandfather of seven.

U.S. church is more alive

AACHEN, West Germany (NC)—The U.S. Catholic Church has become more vigorous in the past 10 years and has brought a moral vision and value system to U.S. public policy, Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago said in an interview with a German family magazine.

The Chicago cardinal pointed out that the U.S. church has given recent attention to such issues as nuclear weapons, genetics, abortion and euthanasia.

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Book reviews

'Gambits' takes look at arms control

DEADLY GAMBITS, by Strobe Talbott. Knopf (New York, 1984). 380 pp., \$17.95.

Reviewed by
Anne Bingham
NC News Service

In the second of the presidential debates, Democratic candidate Walter Mondale referred twice to "Deadly Gambits," at one point calling it a "classic" work on arms control.

One can quarrel with conferring classic status on a book published just six days earlier, but not with the book's command of its subject: the breakdown of arms control talks during the Reagan administration.

Talbott characterizes the current situation—the Soviets

broke off talks a year ago—as "the most serious and protracted to date," yet indicates that breakdowns "have been as much a part of the history of arms control as the breakthroughs." So what's special about this one?

The difference, Talbott says, is that this one was deliberately created by the Reagan administration in order to give the Americans an excuse to suspend the rules. Other breakdowns were not orchestrated, at least not by us.

With talks broken off, the United States could build what weapons it wanted until a perceived Soviet weapons superiority was equaled or surpassed. Then negotiations could be resumed, from a

position of American superiority.

Trouble is, nobody bothered to get a guarantee from the Soviets that they would resume talks from a No. 2 position. And nobody took into account the likelihood that Western Europe would take a dim view of such a move, or that the American Congress, sensing a similar mood among its constituents, would likewise press for a resumption of talks.

Talbott's main thrust is chronological: Who did what when to achieve the stalemate, and why a sudden reversal in the strategy occurred in 1984. He logs the emergence of clashes within the administration between hard-liners and men who

served during the Kissinger era, charts the misreadings of signals from NATO allies, and does it with just enough attention to behind-the-scenes detail to lighten the narrative without descending into "Time-ese" (Talbott, author of "Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II," and translator-editor of two works on the late Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, has been a "Time" magazine

staffer for more than a dozen years.)

In spite of the Mondale promotion of the book (the author's agent and publisher must have felt they'd been to the mountain after the debate), the book does not pull any punches regarding the Carter administration's arms record, either. The bungling of the neutron bomb issue on every conceivable front, and the uproar over the

deployment of cruise missiles in Europe are asserted early in the book.

If you're involved in a grassroots peace movement, you're not going to get any encouragement for your cause from reading "Deadly Gambits," but it certainly will broaden your understanding of what you're up against. A familiarity with chess lingo also will help; the book's title derives from a chess term for an opening move.

(Ms. Bingham is managing editor for the Allied Industrial Workers' International Union, based in Milwaukee.)

End minority problems by overcoming poverty

MINORITY REPORT: What Has Happened to Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and Other Minorities in the '80s, edited by Leslie W. Dunbar. Pantheon Books (New York, 1984). 236 pp., \$8.95.

Reviewed by
Fr. Rollins E. Lambert
NC News Service

"There is no real chance, in politics or in economic policy, of settling at last our minorities problems, of establishing justice for them, except by ending poverty for all."

"Seven or eight percent unemployment is natural, we are instructed; in times of inflationary pressures (as in the early 1980s) it must, in fact, deliberately be made even larger in order to hold down prices for the rest of us. It is hard to decide whether such doctrine represents a betrayal of democracy... or is simply immoral. Perhaps both."

Those words from a chapter by Leslie W. Dunbar point to the main themes which run throughout the eight essays in this

provocative, informative book.

The authors approach various problems faced by members of minority groups in the United States: access to, and participation in, the political process; access to economic opportunity; affirmative action; the development of an urban underclass; the role of the justice system; land and natural resources; and, finally, the role of government in "promoting the common good."

Their approach is clearly that of persons who not only know the relevant data about minorities but have personally experienced and observed the disabilities inflicted on blacks, Hispanics and native Americans.

They recognize progress where progress has been made in achieving the American ideal of "liberty and justice for all," but they point accusing fingers at the large debilitating defects which not only remain but are festering, dangerous weaknesses in our society.

Some contributors to this volume are particularly critical of the Reagan ad-

ministration's approach to minority problems such as unemployment, equal opportunity, education and services to the poor. Their condemnation of these policies was borne out by the response of minority groups to Reagan's campaign for reelection: less than one black American in 10 voted for him.

One glaring omission is the failure of any of the contributors to recognize or comment on the role of the churches in the struggle of the minority groups. Ignored is their interdenominational mobilization in the 1960s to support the civil rights acts and voting rights legislation.

No mention is given to the less spectacular but quietly effective continued church efforts to make educational, political and economic equality a reality. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. is cited and quoted with approbation and the Rev. Jesse Jackson is mentioned once. Small tribute to a major force, particularly in the black and Hispanic communities.

(Father Lambert is an adviser on African affairs for the U.S. Catholic Conference.)

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Share your Christmas table and traditions with the sick and lonely

CINCINNATI (NC)—Sickness and fear, death and sorrow are the dark side of the "season to be jolly," author Carol Leubering realized after a friend's illness and death during the holidays.

In an article for the December St. Anthony Messenger, published in Cincinnati by the Franciscan Fathers, Ms. Leubering offered suggestions on how to lessen the pain of grief for those separated from a loved one at Christmas time.

"Be aware of the needs around you," she advised. Although the first Christmas after a death or divorce is the hardest for most people, it isn't necessarily the only difficult one. "Years of sharing Christmas with someone dear is a hard habit to break; some widowed people will never quite get used to a holiday season without their spouse," Ms. Leubering wrote.

Sickness, both serious illness and lesser maladies, also casts a shadow over the season, she said. Hospital visits only add to the seasonal rush, and caring for a recuperating patient or an invalid drains a family's physical and emotional energy.

"Be sensitive to the particularly hard moments," such as birthdays and anniversaries of surgery and death which bring up a flood of memories, Ms. Leubering urged.

She also advised sharing special Christmas traditions with someone grieving during the holidays. For example, invite the lonely neighbor to Christmas dinner or share some seasonal goodies with the family whose father is in the hospital.

"You can share the feel of your own Christmas; you can let your own uniqueness brighten the holidays for someone else," Ms. Leubering said.

"And be prepared for a surprise," she added. "The rewards outweigh the effort."

She recalled the story of a mother of several teen-agers who invited a young widow and her pre-schoolers to Christmas breakfast. The woman thought she was doing a great favor, but found that the youngsters actually brightened up the day. "What I'd forgotten is what fun it is to have little folks around on Christmas. We all had a wonderful time!"

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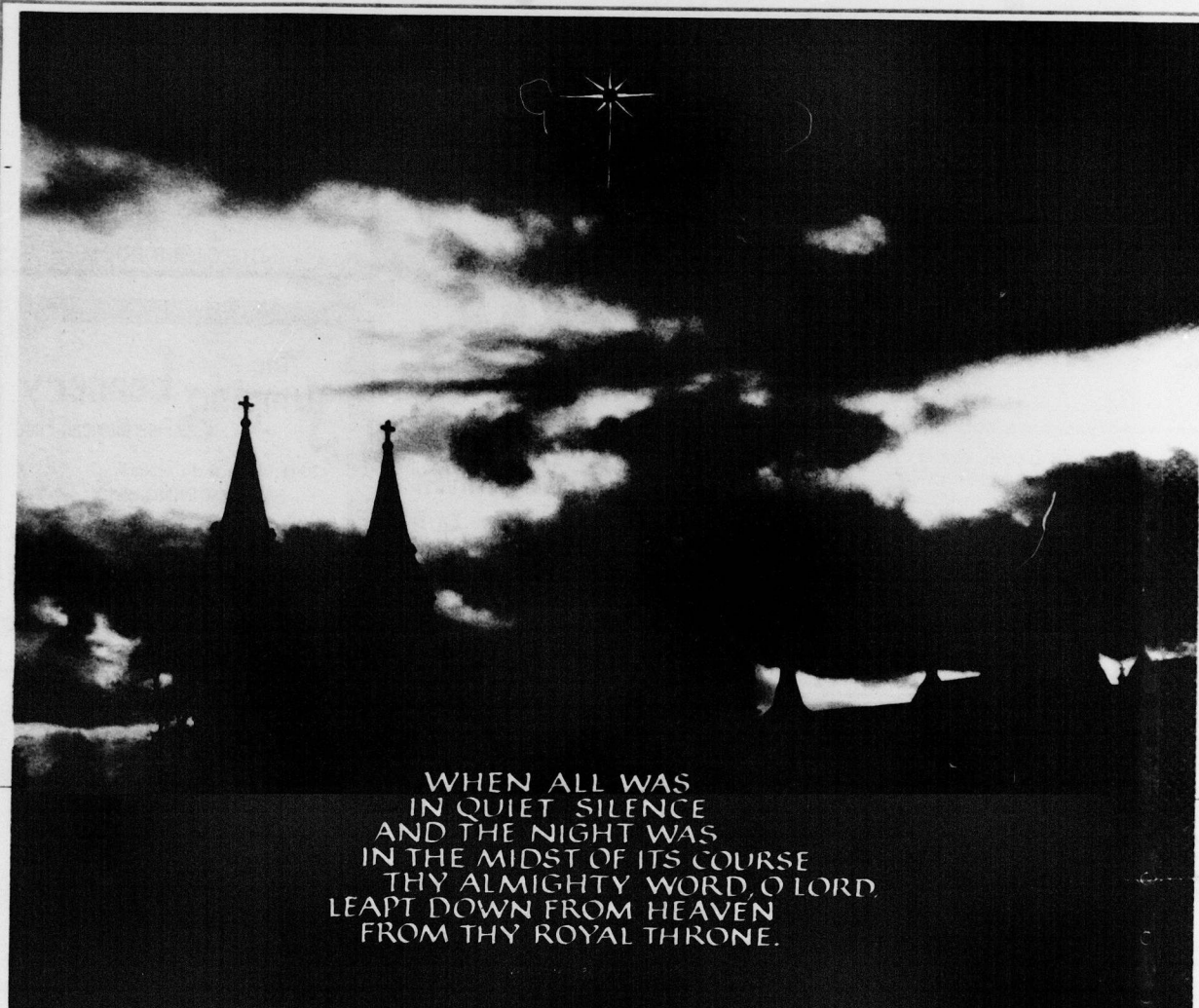
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THY ALMIGHTY WORD, O LORD,
LEAPT DOWN FROM HEAVEN
FROM THY ROYAL THRONE.

Photo by Mary Christa

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