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Inside

This issue includes The Criterion's annual Christmas Supplement. Turn to page 13 for this special section, which includes Christmas memories from readers.



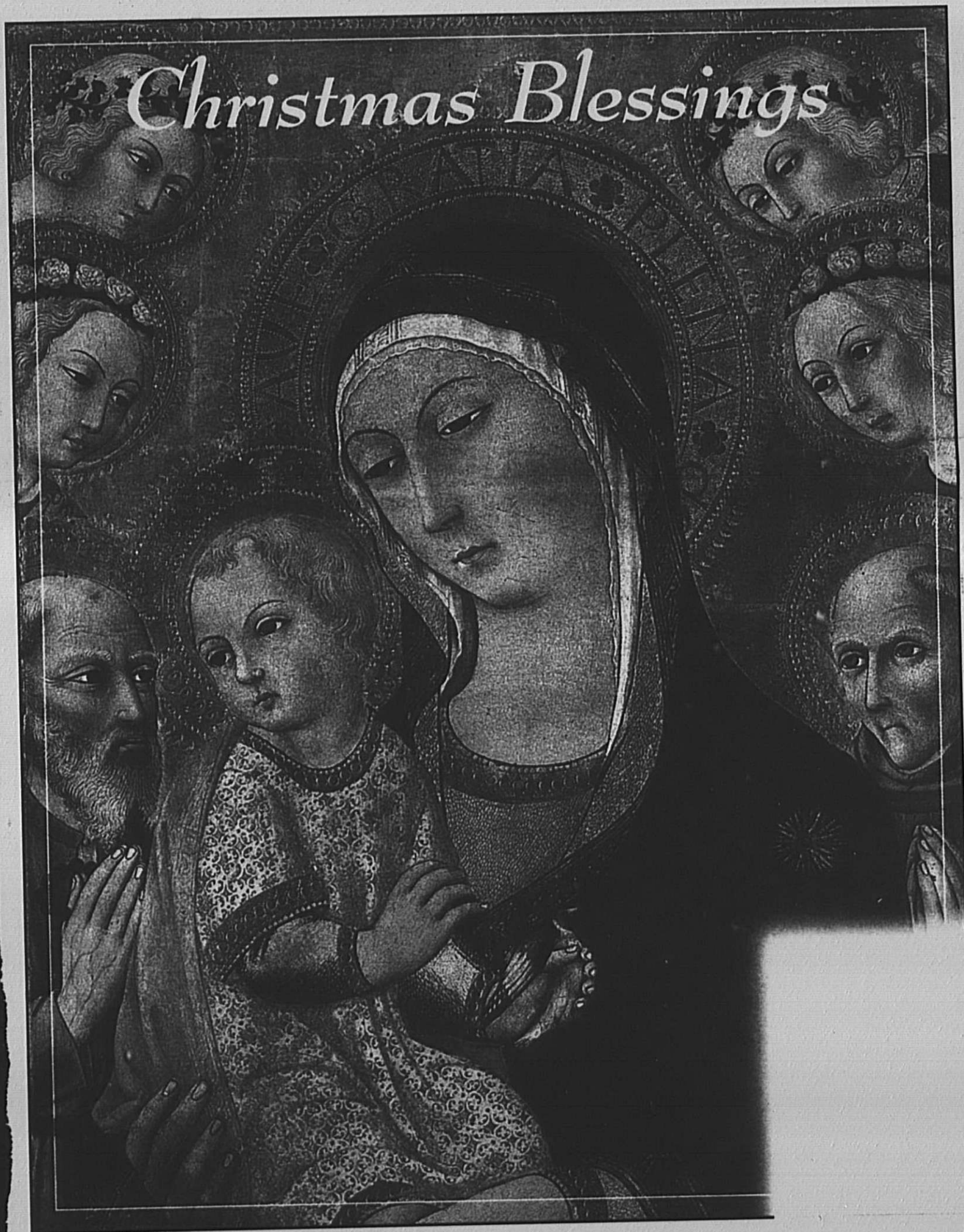
The

Criterion

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December 19, 1997

Christmas Blessings



'Traveling cemetery' provides pro-life message

Members of four Ripley County parishes plant 4,200 crosses to show support for human life

By Barbara Jachimlak
Special to The Criterion

MORRIS—Imagine 4,200 little white crosses in row after row in one small area.

That's what one can see at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Morris until Christmas.

Parishioners of four parishes in Ripley County—St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Milan; its mission, St. Pius; St. Nicholas Parish in Sunman and St. Anthony Parish in Morris—gathered at St. Anthony the morning of Dec. 6 to place the 4,200 crosses in the ground. Each cross represents one of the 4,200 babies aborted each day in the United States.

Despite the 20-degree temperature and the brisk wind, the placement of the crosses began at about 9:30 a.m., and by 11:30 a.m., several rows still were not in place. The workers enjoyed dinner after the last cross was pounded into the snow-covered ground.

Monsignor Bernard Schmitz, pastor of the four parishes, and the associate pastor,

Father Gregory Bramlage, supervised the event. David Record, a parishioner of St. Anthony, made the arrangements for the "traveling cemetery" to come to the southeastern Indiana parish, according to Jerry Driggers, a parishioner of St. Charles. Record also arranged for a living Nativity scene to be displayed at St. Anthony Dec. 13 and 14.

The cemetery, which originated in Fort Wright, Ky., in August 1996, has traveled to Catholic and Protestant churches in Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky since it began. Its appearance at St. Anthony is believed to be the first time it has been displayed in Indiana.

The display of white crosses is intended to "increase awareness of the sheer numbers of abortions performed in this country each day," according to Gaylene Fox, St. Anthony's parish secretary.

Members of the four parishes felt the Christmas season was an appropriate time to bring this awareness to the people in this part of the archdiocese.

"I believe we're the first ones



Members of four Ripley County parishes work Dec. 6 at St. Anthony Church in Morris to place 4,200 crosses in the ground. The crosses are an expression of support for human life.

(parishes) in the archdiocese who are doing this," Father Bramlage said. "Maybe we can inspire others to do it, too."

Father Bramlage said the crosses will

remain in the ground at St. Anthony Church until Dec. 27, when the team from Fort Wright will pick up the display of crosses for a new location. †

St. Christopher's Christmas card project rewards students, staff

Barbara Leek, principal at St. Christopher School in Speedway, credits a school parent with the idea of printing students' art work in the form of Christmas cards.

"We are thrilled with the results," said Leek. School leaders were trying to think of ways to match the Lilly Endowment grant. Andy Ording, a father of one of the students, suggested using Christmas art done by the students for Christmas cards. The idea was approved on Sept. 27 of this year and cards were "off the presses" on Nov. 15.

"It was all the children's faith—really a depth of faith," said Leek. "There was no prompting. They just did it."

Father Michael Welch, pastor at St. Christopher, agrees. "What most impressed me is that we've learned of the deep faith and spirituality of our children."

"We will be sending out at least 10,000 cards, and they each have a deep theology," said Father Welch. He

gave the example of one card that greets Christ's birth with: "He comes, but he doesn't go."

"It has been a very positive endeavor by the school parents, school children and the teachers," he said. Getting it done so quickly was defined as "incredible" by the pastor.

Leek said the staff originally selected and displayed 20 drawings by fifth- and sixth-grade students. Then the children were asked to write verses to go with the art.

The principal said one of the really rewarding things

about it was that many of the artists and verse writers, whose work was selected for the final cards, were students who are "not always in the headlines" for academics or sports.

Leek, too, thinks the project is a good example of students, staff, parents and parishioners collaborating to benefit the school.

"Really, there was a tremendous response from the parish," she said.

The cards are sold for \$5 for a box of 10 cards. †

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christmas!



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This stained glass window is located in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in the St. Thomas Aquinas (School of Theology) Chapel.

Christmas Greetings

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Catholic School Endowment Needs

Providence strives to keep school competitive

By Sue Hetzler

CLARKSVILLE—In an old 1951 black-and-white picture that serves as a file photo for Our Lady of Providence Junior/Senior High School in Clarksville, students are pictured walking down a dirt road lined with the building blocks that would become the alma mater for some 6,200 students during the next 45 years.

Once the building went up, the school opened with 121 freshmen coming from areas of southern Indiana and metropolitan Louisville. The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods owned and operated the school until 1973, when it was purchased by the 18 parishes of the New Albany Deanery.

Little has been done with the structure of the original school since the doors first opened, except for a few cosmetic upgrades and most recently a new three-story addition was completed in 1995 that houses a large activity center, eight classrooms and office space (phase I of the multistage building plan). The biggest change at Providence has been in the number of students it serves.

Today, more than 170 students make up the freshman class and total student enrollment during the past six years has jumped from 450 to 700. While enrollment numbers have continued to climb during recent years, Providence's facilities have become more antiquated and inadequate for handling the growth.

Providence president and alumnus Gerald Wilkinson said the campus was aging and measures had to be taken to keep the school educationally competitive. Just one month after the newly-formed board of directors began its governance in July 1996, it unanimously approved a \$2.2 million capital campaign intended to raise enough funds to update and refurbish the original school building and bring its technology in line with the 21st century.

"Providence 2000: Give in to the Spirit" was designed as a multistage plan that began with a fundraising effort that has surpassed expectations. The goal was to

raise \$2.2 million in pledges that would be paid over the next three to five years. When the last pledge came in on June 30, nearly \$2.5 million had been promised.

"That's not going to get it all done, though," Wilkinson said. "We'll be very dependent on the success of the archdiocese-wide capital campaign to get phase II of the job finished."

While total construction costs and bids are still being determined, the best estimate is that the entire phase II project will cost almost \$3 million. After local campaign pledges have been collected, Providence still will need about \$1 million to complete the proposed upgrades and renovations.

"These renovations will be like moving us from the stone age to the bronze age," said Wilkinson. "But nothing we are talking about is a luxury. All of these upgrades are of vital importance in carrying this school into the next century."

Phase II is now in the initial planning and organizational stages and could take up to two years to complete once renovations begin. Work is expected to begin sometime before June 1998.

The entire phase II proposal is a huge endeavor and will encompass a complete renovation of the original educational facility inside and outside. Also included will be new windows, lights, floorings, ceilings and refinishing of wall surfaces; new electrical, mechanical, heating and air conditioning throughout the building; a new facade and complete technology upgrade; new library/media center and technology center; an addition to the cafeteria; new school chapel, addition to the existing stage area for performing arts, music and band; completing areas of the phase I construction and the Larkin Center that was built in 1988; and an elevator for the phase I addition.

Phase III will include a performing arts center but that is only in the "dreaming" stage at this point, said Wilkinson.

Support for the capital campaign and the renovations it will support has been widespread among parents, community members, school staff and faculty.

This artist's rendering shows the interior of the main lobby of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville. The interior will be finished upon completion of a multi-phase renovation.



Wilkinson said there was a general feeling among school and community members that renovations were long overdue.

Matt Janson, president of Riverside Recycling and coordinator of campaign solicitation among young business leaders in the community, said it wasn't hard to sell people on why renovations were necessary.

"The perception in the community was that Providence needed work if it was to remain competitive both academically and athletically with other schools in southern Indiana," said the 1984 graduate. "Our young business leaders made some impressive contributions, and we achieved our goal."

More than \$70,000 was raised by Providence faculty members, and students are running ongoing fund-raising efforts throughout the year. Campaign Chairman Dale Gettelfinger said both efforts show a

tremendous commitment to the school.

Excitement among the students has been equally high and difficult to contain at times, said Michael Oppelt, director of development for the school. Their fund-raising efforts have helped give them ownership of the campaign and also a unique connection to the school that will live on for years, he said.

"Someday these students will be the alumni of Providence, and they will again be the key to the school's success," said Oppelt. "Exposing them to fund raising and development now will reap good benefits down the road." †

(Hetzler is director of communications for the archdiocese.)

Floyds Knobs parishioners explore use of former school facility

FLOYDS KNOBS—At its Dec. 1 meeting, the pastoral council of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyds Knobs decided to form a Start-Up Committee.

Members aren't sure exactly what they are starting up. They just know they will make recommendations for potential uses for the former Catholic school facility that closed in 1968. From that time until 1996, the building housed a public school.

Parishioners were asked to respond to a survey and the Facility Use Committee studied their recommendations. The committee submitted a report to the council that included four possibilities.

One was to initiate two or three Catholic preschool classes for 3- and 4-year-old children beginning next August. Another option was to initiate a Catholic day care beginning in August of 1998.

A third option was to talk with parents of kindergarten-age children about the possibility of starting a kindergarten class.

A fourth idea was to study the use of the facility as a parish community center for functions such as exercise and sports; tutoring programs; Mothers' Day Out; self-improvement classes; and adult and youth activities.

The pastoral council has already called together the finance committee and the board of education to review the survey report. And the council formed the Start-Up Committee to make feasibility studies.

The parish leaders want to make good use of a building that was originally used for Catholic education. Several factors indicate a favorable response to the idea of starting a school: Educational programs are the way the parish promotes the Catholic faith; parents prefer a positive and safe environment for their children and small children are open to learning religious values at an early age.

Parish-centered activities would enable more people to participate and provide an opportunity for outreach to the community.

Once the committees determine how many participants they will have in the programs, they will be able to find how many paid and volunteer staffers they need. Then numbers for income and expenses can be accurately predicted.

The pastoral council letter said that many parishioners will be needed, not only in the study but also in the implementation of the programs that are selected. †

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Presider: Archbishop Buechlein, O.S.B.



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Editorial

How still we see thee lie?

"O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie."

One wonders if Philip Brooks, the nineteenth century author of the words to this Christmas carol was ever in Bethlehem.

Was it ever as still and peaceful as the hymn says? Actually, yes, but not recently.

Bethlehem has a long history. It was from here that Elimelech and his wife Naomi left for Moab because of a famine in Bethlehem and to which Naomi and her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth returned. It was here that Ruth's great grandson David grew up and was anointed by Samuel. And it was here, according to Luke's Gospel, that David's descendant, Joseph, took his wife Mary to register at the order of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus. It was during this time that there was a time of peace, the *pax Augusta* during Augustus' reign from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14.

Today, though, Bethlehem is one of the towns in the West Bank in which demonstrations against the present Israeli government are frequent. Others are Nablus (the biblical Shechem, where Joshua called together the 12 tribes to renew the covenant and where Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well) and Hebron (where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives are buried). Today all three cities are almost totally Palestinian Arab, except for small areas in Hebron and Bethlehem where Jewish settlements have been built.

It is those settlements that are the cause of the demonstrations. It's not that the Palestinians object to the Jews living among them; they did live among them in peace for generations. What they object to is that the land for the settlements was confiscated from the Palestinians who lived on it for generations.

The majority of both Palestinians and Israelis undoubtedly want peace in Israel and in what are called the Occupied Territories or the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinians quite naturally want their own country and, from the sentiment expressed in *The Jerusalem Post*, most Israelis are willing to give it to them. They don't want to annex the lands

because then they would either have to give the Arabs the right to vote and lose the Jewish character of the state, or keep them as second-class citizens and no longer be a democracy.

But there are extremists on both sides who continue to torpedo peace efforts. On the Palestinian side are members of Hamas and other groups who want nothing less than the complete expulsion of the Jews, something that most Palestinians realize is completely unrealistic. On the Israeli side are super-Orthodox Jews who insist that God gave all of biblical Judea, Samaria and Galilee to the Jews, and they do want to annex the territories (and keep the Arabs as second-class citizens).

The peace process was proceeding very well until Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist. In the election that followed, Benjamin Netanyahu defeated the moderate Shimon Peres, but narrowly. He realizes that he can retain his post only with the support of the religious parties that are completely opposed to relinquishing more territory to the Palestinians. To appease them, he has encouraged the building of more Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and on the West Bank, on land originally confiscated from Palestinians.

The land currently under dispute is a large, formerly wooded, hill in East Jerusalem, just north of Bethlehem, known as Har Homa. Bulldozers have destroyed the trees on the hill to make roads and put in sewers prior to building the settlements. When finished, the residents there will overlook the little town of Bethlehem. The Palestinians who formerly lived nearby have been forced to find homes elsewhere.

Most of the Arab residents of Bethlehem are gentle, peaceful people, but they can be roused to protest injustices, and that's what is happening there today.

Prospects for peace in Bethlehem seem slim at the moment, but that could change quickly when, or if, it is God's will. Let us pray that next Christmas we can truly sing about Bethlehem being still and at peace. †

—John F. Fink

Seeking the Face of the Lord

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



God's 'little Christmas way' is a paradox

Think about this: the elaborate and wonderful Christmas we know, with its pomp and decorations, even its very own music, began in a courtyard stable in a tiny, faraway village almost 2,000 years ago! How improbable! God's Christmas miracle is so attractive and so impossibly simple! The charming Christmas story is about the humble way God chose to make his home with us. Mysteriously, God chose "the little way" to tell his love for us.

When we pray before the Christmas crib, we venerate the Son of God as a tiny baby lying in a manger in an animal shelter. There was no room in the inn for poor folks like Mary and Joseph, and so the Son of God was born in a courtyard stable. He shared warmth with barnyard animals! The creator is not too proud to make his first home with creatures of the earth.

The nativity story goes on to tell us that the divine infant born of the Virgin Mary was adored first by unkempt shepherds. Not to kings or presidents, but to shepherds did God's angels sing!

Soon the Son of God with his mom and foster dad would be refugees to Egypt, fleeing their home because Jesus was pursued by a jealous king. Growing up, the young Jesus worked in a local carpenter shop to earn his keep. Even as he launched his public mission, Jesus would announce God's kingdom as a servant-leader. His way of life did not embrace the grandeur or the political tactics of powerful leaders in this world. As if harking back to his humble birth, the Messiah's care would focus on children and the poorest of the poor, especially the sick and those seemingly without hope, those in the world's shadows, so to speak. God's "little way" of making a home with us is remarkable! It is a paradox for us worldly-minded folks.

The Christmas story says something about our true home. When God made his home among us, he sent his Son to tell us that ours is not "a lasting city" on this earth. Jesus became one of us to reveal in human language that our true citizenship is not of this kingdom we call earth. We are on a journey to the kingdom that will have no end. Our earthly life is truly a journey and not our final destination. Because the Son of God died for our sins, ours is a journey of hope. Christ's "little way," begun in a

courtyard stable in Bethlehem, charts our journey to our true home in the kingdom of heaven. What does the divine "little way" of Jesus Christ say to us in the complexity of this late 20th century world of ours? God's home-making with us shows us how to be at home with each other. From the very humble beginnings, the simple life of Jesus modeled poverty of spirit and simplicity and humility as the path to generous love for our sisters and brothers.

God's "little Christmas way" turns earthly life upside down! Jesus' poor parents became the most privileged parents of all human history! The remote courtyard stable became the most famous birthplace of all of history. A carpenter's son became the most famous person in all of known history. God's Christmas story redefines grandeur. The Christmas story redefines greatness: loving service is the stuff of greatness. We are taught that simplicity and humility are the seedbed of generous love. True wealth is measured by love, not money. And in God's "little way," anyone can become wealthy! Once and for all, the reversals in life, the unfairness and the poverty of our humanity open up possibilities for true grandeur and, more important, real peace.

What might we learn this Christmas? Let's allow the charm and the festivity and the peace and goodwill draw us to deeper reflection in more prayerful moments about the meaning of life. How do we measure greatness? What is the goal of our journey in life? Where do we search for true meaning, especially when we suffer as we all do at one time or another? Where do we search for hope that lasts?

Above all, may God's "little Christmas way," which began at a remote animal crib so long ago, bring us to our knees with a humble prayer of thanksgiving. Because of that first humble Christmas, life need never be the same, no matter what our lot may be! God's generous love doesn't have to be bought or earned! Truly, God's "little Christmas way" has made us very rich! And so, when we exchange greetings of "merry Christmas," we speak a wealth of meaning to each other. With fond prayer, I wish a merry Christmas to one and all! †



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Matters Liturgical/Fr. Rick Ginther

I'll be home for Christmas

Are we ready for our guests who are coming to be with us this Christmas season?



You know, the family members, those who stop by often during the year, and the infrequent visitor who comes by at this time of year. Are we ready for our guests?

Now, by "ready" I don't mean: is the place clean, are all the decorations complete, and is everything in order. Though appropriate concerns, they are external to the reality of the season.

By "ready" I mean open to whoever comes through the door, attentive to them as guests, seeing to their needs and gladened that they came. By "ready" I mean personally and spiritually hospitable in our worship space, our church.

How can we prepare for our guests? First, by preparing our hearts to be true to this season of rejoicing that Christ came among us as one like us! If, in the past, we have resented the crush of people, the visitors who cram the pews and the "Chreasters" we so seldom see — then it's our responsibility to prayerfully seek a conversion of heart. Rejoice! The Lord is here! Made manifest, enfleshed, in each person who is coming to be with us.

This change of heart leads us to other steps for preparedness. At our homes, we

overstock for the unknown number of guests and are somewhat extravagant in our welcome; so, too, at church. In our house of worship, we therefore:

- schedule additional ushers and ministers of hospitality/greeters, instructing them in detail about what is needed in their role. (And what is most needed in their openness warmth and understanding as "hosts")
 - schedule additional extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, walking them through (rehearsing!) their stations and the flow of the communion procession
 - prepare worship aids sufficient for an overflow crowd
 - prepare a thoughtful, scripted welcome to be given by the cantor before the liturgy begins; and review with the cantor(s) those gestures and actions on their part that say "welcome"
 - prepare a special take-home flier to be handed to all as they leave. It thanks them for being there and invites them to return (this may include a schedule of the Christmas season and early Ordinary Time liturgies through the end of January, and the basic parish information on the front of the bulletin replaced by some seasonal artwork)
 - post additional signs for restroom facilities, nursery, children's liturgy, etc.
 - post either security or traffic-flow monitors in the parking lots or streets to assist with overflow and best use of the space available.
- "I'll be home for Christmas!"
Wonderful! We are glad! †

A View from the Center/Dan Conway

A stewardship carol for Christmas

We all remember the scene from old movies and TV specials. Two "portly gentlemen," as



Charles Dickens calls them, enter the offices of Scrooge & Marley hoping to raise money "for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time of year."

They make their case, pointing out that "hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts," but Scrooge is not impressed. "Are there no prisons?" the old miser asks. "Aren't the workhouses still in operation?" he snarls.

"Yes," one of the gentlemen replies, "I wish I could say they were not." Undaunted, the two gentlemen continue. "What shall we put you down for?"

"Nothing!" says Scrooge. "You wish to be anonymous?" the gentlemen ask.

"I wish to be left alone!" says Scrooge.

The gentlemen leave with hearts full of sadness. They grieve for the poor and the homeless "who would rather die" than suffer the humiliation of a nineteenth century English workhouse; but they also grieve for old Ebenezer Scrooge whose self-centered misery has blinded him to the simple joys of Christmas.

How many times have we heard similar versions of this same old story? How many times have we found ourselves playing the part of Scrooge — saying to those who ask for our time or our money, "Please don't bother me. I wish to be left alone?"

Although he never uses the word, Charles Dickens' wonderful story, *A Christmas Carol*, is about stewardship. It is about the joy of giving and about learning to care for (and be responsible for) all God's creation. And, as Mr. Dickens makes very clear, *A Christmas Carol* is about much more than just the sentimental (or commercial!) "Christmas spirit" that comes and goes each holiday season.

Scrooge is not a good steward. He hoards what he has been given (time, talent and treasure) and he buries his gifts deep within himself. He cannot give or share, and the result is a twisted, self-absorbed misery. Along with his gifts and talents, Scrooge accumulates and hides all the hurts, resentments and disappointments of a lonely lifetime. In the end, nothing makes him happy. Nothing gives him peace.

There is only one thing that can save this miserable old man from the hell he has made for himself. Giving. Open, generous, unrestricted giving is the only cure for the likes of Ebenezer Scrooge. As long as he holds back — asking "What's in it for me?" — Scrooge is

condemned to live the life that he has fashioned for himself through many years of lonely self-centeredness.

Fortunately, Mr. Dickens believed in a God who is generous and forgiving. Old Scrooge is given one last chance to experience life as it was truly meant to be lived. The spirits who visit Scrooge (including Jacob Marley, a former business partner now condemned to haunt the spirit world in chains of his own making) help Scrooge face painful truths about himself. And by caring enough to confront him with his selfishness, the spirits give Scrooge something far more valuable than all his gold. They give him a glimpse of who he was, who he is now, and who he could become — if only he would let go of his bitter resentment and embrace the joy of giving.

Recall that following his change of heart, as he hurries to join his nephew's family for Christmas dinner, Scrooge encounters one of the two "portly gentlemen" who had asked him for a contribution the day before. After greeting the gentleman so warmly that the man barely recognized the old miser, Scrooge whispers in his ear the amount of his pledge to help the poor and destitute.

"My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?" cries the gentleman as if his breath were taken away. "Not a farthing less," says Scrooge. "A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?" he pleads.

And then the most amazing thing happens. As the astounded solicitor tries to express his gratitude, stammering from both appreciation and disbelief, old Scrooge says it for him.

"Thank you," says Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you 50 times. Bless you!"

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens wants each of us to discover what old Scrooge had to learn the hard way: *The only way to hold onto something is to give it away.* This is the paradox of giving: The one who gives a gift (from substance and without counting the cost) is the one who is most grateful. Besides being a donor, the generous person is also a beneficiary. That's why Scrooge says thank you "50 times" and also why he asks the gentleman, quite sincerely, *to do him a favor by accepting the gift.*

Ever afterwards, Mr. Dickens says, it was said of Scrooge "that he knew how to keep Christmas well." Like any good steward, Scrooge kept it well by giving it away. And so, as Mr. Dickens observes at the conclusion of his story, "May that be truly said of us ... every one!" †

(This seasonal column on "a stewardship carol" has been published in each Christmas issue of *The Criterion* for the last several years. —Editor)

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

The mystery of the Incarnation

"Can a rational human being be expected to believe that a God, or a Son of God, 'came down from heaven,' 'took flesh,' was born of a virgin and, after the dramatic conclusion of his earthly career, 'ascended into heaven' again? Are we not at the heart of myth here? Can we expect people today to regard such mythological assertions as truth?"



That's how Christoph Schonborn starts his book *The Mystery of the Incarnation*. Schonborn is well-known in the Catholic Church as the brilliant archbishop of Vienna, the chief editor of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and occasionally the retreat master for Pope John Paul II. So I thought, in preparation for writing this Christmas column, I couldn't go wrong by rereading his book, originally published in 1983. The rest of this column paraphrases Archbishop Schonborn.

There are similarities between Catholic dogma quoted in the first paragraph and the myths of other religions. The difference is that, in the case of Christianity, the myth is true. When he was a young lecturer at Oxford, C. S. Lewis thought that Christianity was simply a recasting of old myths. One night he heard another committed atheist remark that the evidence for the historicity of the Gospels was surprisingly good. In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis says that that conversation was a decisive step on his path to conversion. He came to realize that myths are not false simply because they are myths and that "the heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact." The Incarnation actually happened, at a particular date, in a particular place.

But how can we accept that the obscure birth of an unknown Galilean is actually the act of the Son of God, the Father's eternal Word, becoming flesh? And then to go on to assert that this child is con-

ceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, Mary: would it not be all much more beautiful and more meaningful if we took it as a metaphor?

If the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit is a concrete miracle, there are only two ways of knowing it: either Mary herself spoke about it or it was communicated to others by some kind of revelation. In this case, only Matthew and Luke speak of it in the Bible; Mark, John and Paul never mention it. However, the second century is full of testimonies to the Virgin Birth, including the oral and written accounts that ended with the *Protoevangelium of James*, the testimony of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and the Apostles' Creed.

The dogma of the Virgin Birth has always been ridiculed by secular society. Why would the church invent something that only gave her Jewish and pagan neighbors an occasion for mockery? As early as the end of the first century, various stories circulated that Jesus' birth resulted from an indiscretion with a Roman soldier on the part of Mary. But no one "invents" something that provokes derision and misunderstanding. The only sensible conclusion is that there was a solid tradition in the primitive church regarding the conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was taught because it was a fact.

Ever since the beginning of Christian theology, the reason given for the Incarnation has always been that "God became man so that man might become God." Because Jesus lowered himself to share our humanity, and ultimately died for us, we humans can share in his divinity. Paul pointed this way for us in his teachings, and St. Gregory of Nyssa formulated this Pauline theme this way: "God takes on the poverty of my flesh so that I may receive the riches of his godhead."

At this Christmas season, it's well for all of us to contemplate the profound mystery of the Incarnation. I wish you a happy and holy Christmas season. †

The Criterion

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Cornucopia / Cynthia Dewes

The joyful promise of Christmas

My uncle died just before Christmas. His passing left us as gloomy as the dead



leaves and snow and darkening skies we encountered when we followed his coffin to the gravesite. It felt like, pardon the expression, we'd reached a dead end.

Carl was 19 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. So, like many a patriotic farm boys looking for romance, he enlisted in the Navy. He went to sea on a "tin can" destroyer and served as a signalman on the U.S.S. *Mullany* until the war ended.

My cousins and I were entranced by handsome Carl in his Navy uniform. We wrote him schoolgirl letters full of the

news from home and hopes for his safe return from the war. We listened to the evening news on the radio and paid close attention to movie newsreels which centered on the Pacific Theater of War, as it was called.

Carl wrote short letters now and then, and came to visit on the rare occasions when he was home on leave. One photo he sent us from a stop in Hawaii showed him embracing a pretty girl in a hula skirt. Later, when I showed Grandma (Carl's mother) my picture album she paused at that photo. "Carl never showed me that one," she said.

We never heard much about the scary parts of Carl's service experience until long after the war. He told us that once a Japanese kamikaze plane crashed into the deck of his ship and the captain feared it would sink, so he told the men to abandon

ship. Everyone dove into the water and swam to another ship nearby.

One sailor, a nonswimmer, grabbed a big carton from the ship's deck and clutched it to keep himself afloat as he dog-paddled his way to safety. The moment he grabbed the other ship's line and let go of the carton, it sank like a stone. It was toilet paper. Next morning the *Mullany* was still afloat, so everyone climbed back aboard.

One reason we were so crazy about Carl was because he was crazy about us. His lap was never empty. And when we cousins visited Grandma and Grandpa's farm every summer it was Carl and other younger aunts and uncles who entertained us.

Carl and Uncle Gordy would sit at the foot of my bed in those long northern twilights, telling me funny stories to make me forget the sticky heat and my homesick-

ness. His blue eyes would twinkle as he told me about "Epaminandas," who "ain't got the brains he was born with," gently teasing me until I laughed myself to sleep.

With his usual unassuming manner, Carl put the war behind him when it ended, and found a job. He married his sweetheart and started a family. As the years passed, his life played out in witness to his good humor, his faith in a caring God, and his affection for family and friends.

To end so rich a life at Christmastime seemed a cruel irony as we gathered to say goodbye. How could this good man be taken at such a joyful time? But then we understood that Jesus comes so that Easter may follow. As spring will replace winter, so eternal life will conquer death.

So Merry Christmas, Carl. We leave you for now in the joyous knowledge that one day we'll meet again.†

Check It Out . . .

The public is invited to tour the **Oldenburg Franciscan Motherhouse** in Oldenburg Dec. 26 and Dec. 28. The tour will feature traditional holiday decorations and multicultural Christmas motifs displayed in several convent rooms. The retired Sisters' Chime Choir will perform. Tours are available between 6 and 8 p.m. (EST) Dec. 26; and 2 to 4 p.m. (EST)

Dec. 28. The motherhouse is located centrally on Main Street in Oldenburg. For more information, call 812-933-6401.

The archdiocesan Office of Worship will present, "Help! How Do I Make a Worship Aid?" The workshop offers information on the what, why, when, and how of creating worship aids. The presen-

tation will be from 9 a.m. to noon Dec. 22 at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. For more information, call 800-382-9836 ext. 1483 or 317-236-1483.

St. Rose of Lima School in Franklin collected \$170 and presented it to the Johnson County Senior Services on

Dec. 9, after learning the organization had been robbed. The children chose this effort as their Advent service project.

The Mount St. Francis Retreat Center in southern Indiana will hold a **Christian Awakening Follow-up** Jan. 2 through Jan. 4. For more information, call 812-923-8817.†

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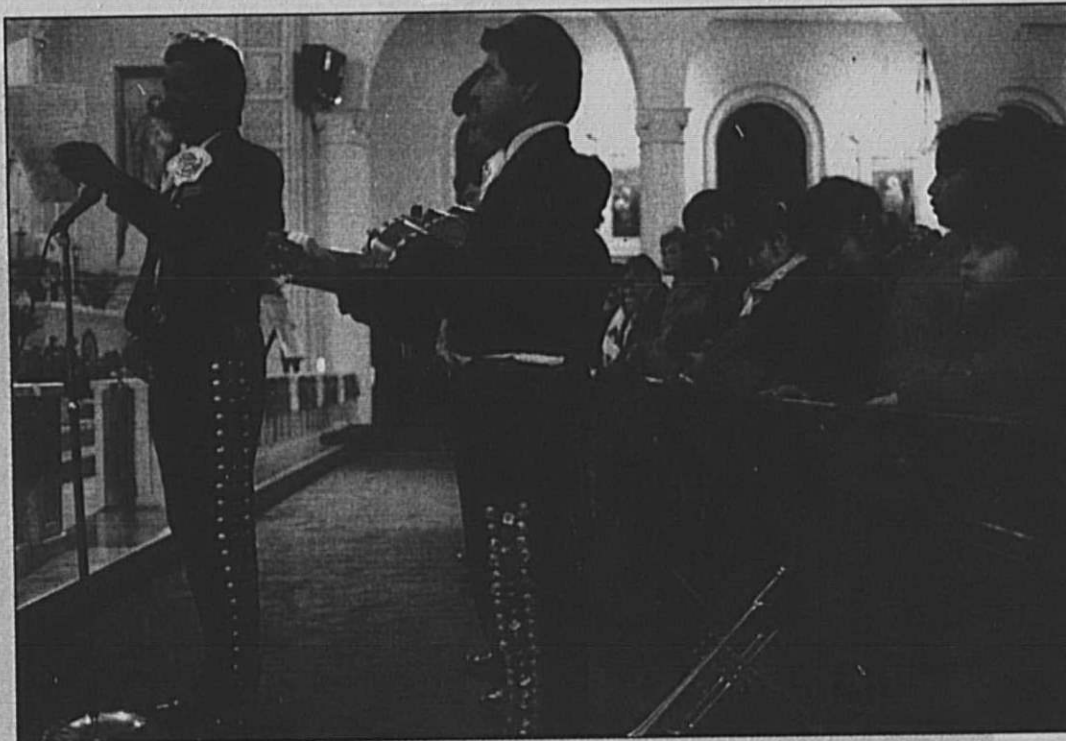
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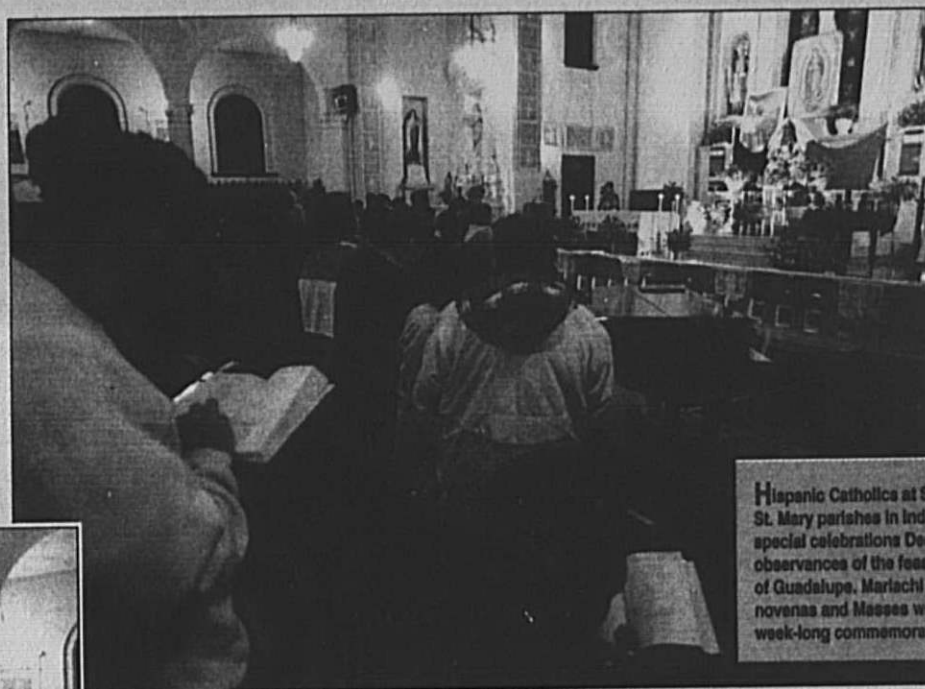
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Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

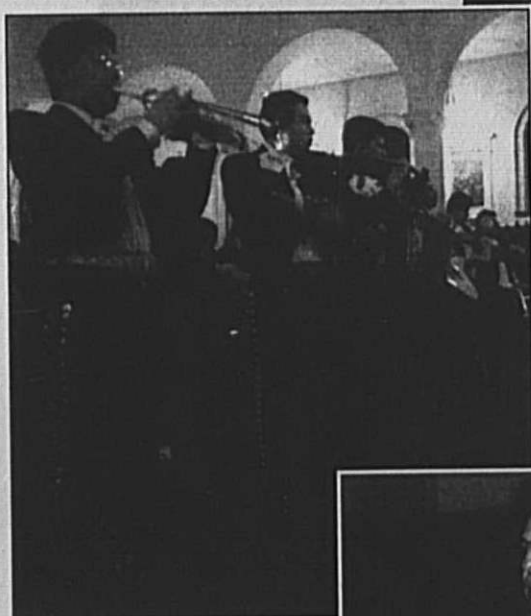
Indianapolis parishes mark Dec. 12 feast day for the patroness of the Americas



Photos by John Stash and Margaret Nelson



Hispanic Catholics at St. Patrick and St. Mary parishes in Indianapolis held special celebrations Dec. 12 as part of their observances of the feast day for Our Lady of Guadalupe. Mariachi music, Marian novenas and Masses were part of a week-long commemoration.



Christmas Mass and "Journey of Faith"

with
Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein



A one-hour video documentary of the 1996 archdiocesan pilgrimage to the shrines of southern Europe.

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Christmas Mass
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. "Journey of Faith"

Broadcast on WNDY-TV 23

WNDY-TV 23



Journey of Hope 2001

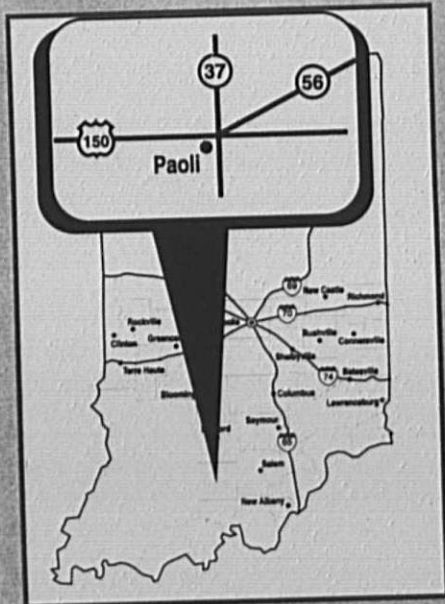
Bloomington Deanery

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Paoli

Photos and story by Susan Etter

Fast Fact:

Upon its establishment in 1948, the Paoli parish was known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The name changed to Our Lord Jesus Christ the King in 1952.



Journey of Hope 2001

Stewardship leads Christ the King into 50th year

PAOLI—Stewardship is what keeps the 64-household Paoli parish of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Parish going. It marks its 50th anniversary next year.

Since its establishment in 1948, the parish has benefited from a history of its parishioners giving fully of their time, talent and treasure.

Father John M. Hall, Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church pastor, said parishioners put their time and talent toward two craft bazaars each year; one in the spring and another in the fall. The parish usually earns about \$1,000 from each bazaar.

Christ the King parishioner Peggy Toby said the parish has been hosting the bazaars annually for at least 35 years. Volunteers from the parish make all the food and crafts for the event.

"We get a lot of compliments on our food—the same people come back year after year," Toby said.

People who work in Paoli come to the bazaars for lunch during the day and shop for crafts. Father Hall believes the benefit of the bazaars is two-fold.

"We are serving the community and at the same time the community is helping us," he said.

Christ the King Parish offers the small town of Paoli yet another social avenue—bingo. The parish hosts a bingo every Wednesday evening. About 50 people from the area come each week. The money raised from the bingo subsidizes the weekend collections.

Along with offering the community opportunities to socialize, Christ the King offers its parish hall for non-parish functions, including wedding receptions, meetings and other gatherings.

The money raised from the parish hall rental just covers the water and electric bills for the day of the



Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church

function. The parish has also donated the use of its hall to organizations such as the Special Olympics.

"This is a donation to the community using our resources to help them," Father Hall said.

Only a couple of facilities in the town can be used for larger functions.

Father Hall said that because he is also the pastor at

Our Lady of the Springs in French Lick and does not live in Paoli, the parish pastoral council takes charge of all the parish's fund-raising and community activities, as well as other parish operations.

"They take the bull by the horns and run with it," Father Hall said.

The seven-member pastoral council is led by council chair Larry Terrell. Father Hall describes the



Father John M. Hall, pastor at Christ the King Parish in Paoli, talks with a parishioner during the fall craft bazaar held last month in the parish hall.

council members as "very faithful." He says they "use their expertise" to contribute to parish life.

Father Hall refers to his relationship with the council as a system of "checks and balances." He said the parishioners do a lot of things on their own and keep him informed of things that are happening.

Christ the King Parish and Father Hall, pastor there for eight years, share more than social functions and facilities with the greater community. They also share their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Father Hall has served on various committees for the Paoli School Corporation. He has served on two additional committees to establish a curriculum for AIDS awareness and sexuality.

"They wanted to make sure that what was in their curriculum went hand-in-hand with our stance on these issues," Father Hall said.

He added that even though there are only about 25 students from Christ the King in the Paoli public school corporation, there is still a sensitivity to Catholic values.

"In a way we are having an influence on what the community is trying to teach in the schools and that the school system is being respectful for what the church is saying," Father Hall said. †



Christ the King parishioners Tracy Meadows and her daughter, Julia Meadows, shop during the fall craft bazaar at the parish hall.

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King (1948)

Address: Hwy. 150 East, Paoli, IN
 Attended from Our Lady of the Springs
 8796 West State Road 56, French Lick, IN 47432
 Phone: 812-936-4568
 Church Capacity: 120
 Number of Households: 64
 Pastor: Rev. John M. Hall
 Administrator of Religious Education: Susan Byerley
 Music Director: Mary Meadows
 Parish Council Chair: Larry Terrell
 Masses:
 Sunday — 9:00 a.m.

Advent penance services scheduled

The following is a list of the remaining Advent Penance Services scheduled in the archdiocese as reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. for St. John Enochsburg
for St. John, Enochsburg/St. Ann, Hamburg/St. Maurice, St. Maurice

Bloomington Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Martin, Martinsville

Connersville Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
Dec. 20, 12 p.m. at St. Mary, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes

Indianapolis North Deanery
Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. at St. Andrew
Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. at St. Pius X
Dec. 22, 7:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence

Indianapolis South Deanery
Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. at St. Barnabas

Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at St. Jude

Indianapolis West Deanery
Dec. 21, 2 p.m. at St. Anthony

New Albany Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony, Clarksville

Seymour Deanery
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for St. Bartholomew, Columbus and St. Columba at St. Columba

Tell City Deanery
Dec. 21, 4 p.m. at St. Paul

Terre Haute Deanery
Dec. 20, 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. at St. Leonard, West Terre Haute
Dec. 20, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Village Church, St. Mary-of-the-Woods
Dec. 20, following 5:30 p.m. Liturgy at Holy Rosary, Seelyville
Dec. 21, following 9 a.m. Liturgy at Holy Rosary, Seelyville
Dec. 22, 7:30 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary †

Christmas season schedule set for Saint Meinrad Archabbey

SAINT MEINRAD—The 1997 Christmas season schedule has been set for Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The public is invited to celebrate with the monks in the Archabbey Church.

Wednesday, Dec. 24
5 p.m. Solemn Announcement of the Nativity of Christ
First Vespers
8 p.m. Vigils

Midnight Midnight Mass

Thursday, Dec. 25
8:30 a.m. Lauds
11:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass
5 p.m. Second Vespers

Friday, Dec. 26 (Follows Sunday Schedule)
7:15 a.m. Lauds
9:30 a.m. Mass

Noon 5 p.m. Midday Prayer Vespers

Saturday, Dec. 27
6 a.m. Lauds
8 a.m. Mass
Noon Midday Prayer
5 p.m. Vespers

Sunday, Dec. 28
7:15 a.m. Lauds

9:30 a.m. Mass
Noon Midday Prayer
5 p.m. Vespers

Thursday, Jan. 1 (Follows Sunday schedule)
7:15 a.m. Lauds
9:30 a.m. Mass
Noon Midday Prayer
5 p.m. Vespers

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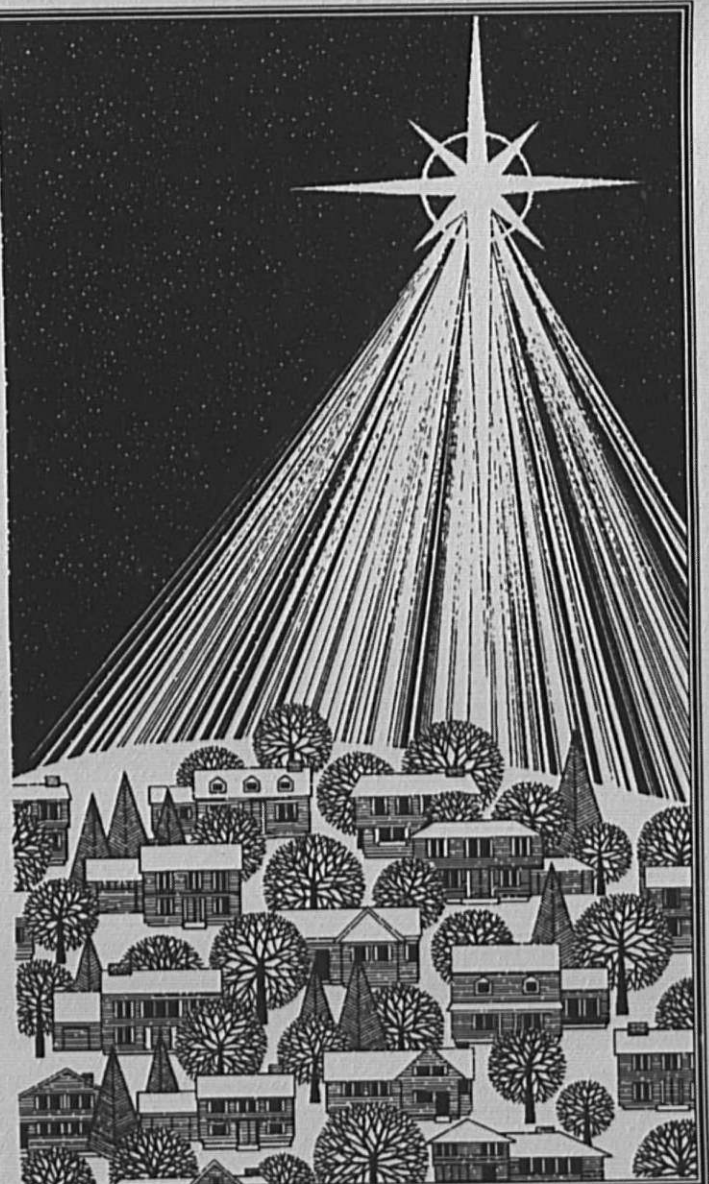
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New St. Jude Church shows parishioners' generosity

By Mary Ann Wyand

"Home for Christmas" is the theme of the Mass of Dedication for the new St. Jude Church located at 5353 McFarland Road in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein will dedicate the new church at 2 p.m. next Sunday, Dec. 21, during a liturgy that includes 25 concelebrating priests and 60 lay ministry participants.

"It will be a wonderful homecoming right before Christmas," Father Gerald Kirkhoff, pastor, explained to visitors as he examined construction work in progress in the spacious new church.

Since the start of school in late August, the site of St. Jude's "temporary" church—for 38 years—has functioned as a remodeled cafeteria for students. Parish liturgy committee members have helped Father Kirkhoff prepare for Masses held in the new cafeteria and the basement of the Parish Activity Center as well as at St. Mark Church and Roncalli High School.

"We've waited a long time for this new church," charter member Katherine Boehle of Indianapolis said. "We're very happy about our beautiful new church."

Founded 38 years ago, St. Jude Parish is a thriving faith community with more than 1,560 households and 4,750 parishioners. More than 520 students attend St. Jude School, which was renovated and expanded as part of the project.

"We've needed a bigger church for a long time," Father Kirkhoff said. "The church cost \$2.3 million. The total project cost of \$3.5 million included renovation of the school and the addition of five classrooms and a gymnasium/multipur-

pose center."

St. Jude parishioners were "very, very generous," the pastor said. "We had to ask for help more than once, and they came to the plate each time. We are very fortunate, very blessed."

There's a lot of love in this parish. The parishioners are really ready for this church. Anticipation is high right now, particularly because of the time of year. We'll be home in time for Christmas."

The dedication of many parishioners, including 37-year member Bill Sanders, helped make the new church a reality, Father Kirkhoff said. Sanders served as the parish liaison with C.R. Stafford & Associates, the project architect, and the Brandt Construction Company.

The 20,736-square-foot church is contemporary in design with special features from the "temporary" church to encompass parish tradition and history.



St. Jude parishioners Bill Sanders, Dale Boehle and Katherine Boehle talk with Father Gerald Kirkhoff about the new sanctuary.

The original altar made of St. Meinrad sandstone has been reconfigured as a 12-sided pedestal for the original Blessed Sacrament tabernacle and relocated in the

place of reservation at the right side of the sanctuary. Sanders contributed his skills as a stonemason to redesign the altar.

St. Jude's organ, purchased years ago with green and yellow fund-raising stamps, also has been moved to the new church.

The entire project reflects the parish commitment to stewardship and wise use of resources, the pastor said. Stained-glass windows were not budgeted in the project, and will be added through memorial gifts to the parish. Stained-glass windows are already installed in the

place of reservation, and the large rose

window above the original crucifix is scheduled for installation in late January.

After years of worshiping in a crowded space, parishioners seem particularly excited about the spaciousness of the new church, Father Kirkhoff said, and they like the high vaulted ceiling.

"One of the things we're happy about is the large narthex," he said. "It's a good-sized gathering space for social time after Mass. That's something we've needed."

A large baptismal pool located just inside the nave is made of St. Meinrad sandstone reused from the Blessed Sacrament wall in the "temporary" church.

"The nave is 152 feet and the depth from the rear sanctuary wall to the entrance at the baptismal pool is 100 feet," Father Kirkhoff said. "The ceiling rises 60 feet above the nave floor and features structural wood arches and wood decking."

Matching wood pews will seat 670 people and space for 130 chairs will allow seating for 800 people, he said. "There is room at the rear of the nave for additional seating if necessary."

The place of reservation, located on the right side of the sanctuary, will accommodate 25 people for Communion services and private prayer, he said. A movable altar and pulpit enables more flexible use of the worship space so the church can be used for concerts and parish programs. †

Great Gift for Christmas



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— Drawing January 13, 1998 —

To be published in the February 6, 1998, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding or have had your wedding between January 30 and July 31, 1998, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form to the right.

Photographs

You may send us a photo of the bride-to-be, a picture of the couple or a photo of the bride and groom. Please do not cut the photograph. The photo must be wallet-size and will be used as space permits. Black & white photos are preferred; we cannot guarantee the reproduction quality of a color photo. Please put name(s) and return address on the back. Photos will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

Deadline

All announcements with photos must be received by Tuesday, January 13, 1998, 10 a.m. (No photos can be accepted after this date). All announcements without photos must be received by the same date.

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Below is an example of how your listing will appear in The Criterion.



Bride — McGonigle
Elizabeth Anne McGonigle and Thomas George McGonigle will be married August 18 at St. James Church in Ellettsburg, Ky. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert James McGonigle. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard McGonigle of Ellettsburg, Ky.



Groom — McGonigle
Thomas George McGonigle and Elizabeth Anne McGonigle will be married August 18 at St. James Church in Ellettsburg, Ky. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert James McGonigle. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard McGonigle of Ellettsburg, Ky.

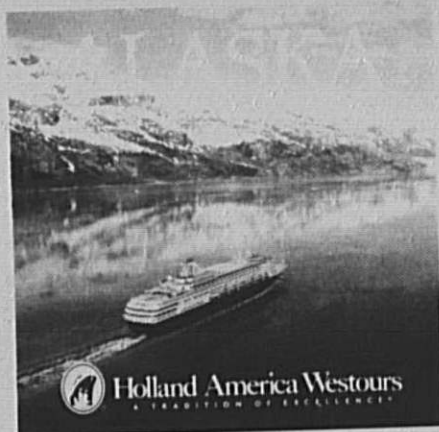


Bride — Stewart
Heather Noel Stewart and Robert Thomas Stewart will be married October 18 at St. Louis Roman Catholic Church. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen W. Stewart Jr. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Stewart.



Groom — Stewart
Robert Thomas Stewart and Heather Noel Stewart will be married October 18 at St. Louis Roman Catholic Church. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen W. Stewart Jr. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Stewart.

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Mary and Child

Mary and the Christ child are represented in an icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, patroness of an archdiocesan parish in New Albany. Here the Christ child sees the instruments of his future passion and death.

Bethlehem: As it was and is now

By John F. Fink

When Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem to be registered in the census ordered by Caesar Augustus, they took the only road that went from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. That road still exists today. It runs right past the place where I spent three months early this year—the Ecumenical Institute of Tantor (the word means *hilltop*), founded at the request of Pope Paul VI. Of course, today the road has cars, taxis and buses on it, rather than the donkey Mary was riding.

The *Protoevangelium of James*, an apocryphal Gospel that purports to report events that happened before the canonical Gospels, gives details about Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem. It says, "The small group of travelers had passed Jerusalem and was half-way on the road to Bethlehem." It goes on to say that Mary asked Joseph to take her down from the donkey so she could rest awhile.

Benedictine Father Bargil Pixner, in his book *With Jesus in Jerusalem*, quotes that passage from the *Protoevangelium of James*. Then he says: "Shortly after that, as Mary and Joseph reached the point where the Church of Mar Elias now stands, the view of Bethlehem with its pastures and hills suddenly opened up before them." The Greek Orthodox Church of Mar Elias is across the road from Tantor, so Mary and Joseph had the same view of Bethlehem that I had every day for three months. Those hills and pastures stretch to the east as far as the mountains of Moab (now Jordan), and, on clear days, you can even see the Dead Sea. You can also trace the route that Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, took when they returned to Bethlehem from Moab, as recorded in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament.

Mary and Joseph continued their journey into Bethlehem. They had to pass Rachel's Tomb, revered by the Jews as the place where the patriarch Jacob buried his second wife, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Genesis says: "Thus Rachel died; and she was buried on the road to Ephrath [that is, Bethlehem]. Jacob set up a memorial stone on her grave, and the same monument marks Rachel's grave to this day" (Gen. 35:19, 20). Today, Jews continue to honor Rachel here in a simple shrine with separate entrances for men and women. The women's side is larger because Jewish women traditionally pray

to Rachel for a safe childbirth since she died giving birth to Benjamin.

Today, Rachel's Tomb is protected by Israeli soldiers and is surrounded by concrete to keep it from being damaged by Arab extremists since it is the only thing Jewish in Bethlehem and, therefore, it is here that the Palestinians have demonstrations. I visited Rachel's Tomb the first time I walked into Bethlehem from Tantor. When there were demonstrations around Rachel's Tomb we simply walked a block out of our way to avoid them.

Mary and Joseph could not have had time to stop at Rachel's Tomb, though, because they urgently needed to find shelter. The inn (or caravansary, the place where people who were part of caravans usually stayed) was too crowded for the privacy that Joseph wanted for Mary, so he took her to a stable-cave at the eastern edge of the town. The whole area around Bethlehem is hilly and full of natural caves. It was common for people to use

the caves for their animals, as some of them continue to do today.

It was here that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was born as a baby.

When Jesus was born, the residents of Bethlehem were Jewish. Today the inhabitants of Bethlehem are almost entirely Palestinian Arabs, either Christians or Muslims. When Jesus was born, Bethlehem was occupied by the Romans. Today it is occupied by the Israelis. Both today and 2,000 years ago, those who tried to make a living in Bethlehem had to put up with soldiers.

Near Bethlehem is the Herodium, Herod the Great's summer palace (his winter palace was in Jericho). Today, it is the highest point in the area, from which the visitor can get a magnificent view. At the time of Jesus' birth, it was a fortified palace like Masada by the Dead Sea. The round fortress was reinforced by three semi-circular towers and a round one that is much taller than the other two. It was

built on a hill that had had the top cut off. After it was built, the earth was piled up against the walls to make a steep slope, making it easy to defend.

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Jews had every reason to fear the Roman soldiers. Matthew's Gospel tells us that, after the visit of the Magi to see Jesus, Herod ordered the soldiers to kill all the male babies of Bethlehem up to two years old and, to escape death, the Holy Family fled to Egypt. Today there aren't any mass massacres in what is now Israel (although there were 50 years ago), but Bethlehem's residents still live in fear of the soldiers. They are frequently forbidden to go into Jerusalem or even to travel from one place to another within Bethlehem. If or when young people protest with demonstrations, the soldiers sometimes retaliate against their families by demolishing their homes.

There are other ways that Bethlehem today is not much different from the

Continued on next page



Joseph leads Mary and the Baby Jesus away from Bethlehem and the wrath of King Herod in this reproduction of "The Flight into Egypt" by the 15th-century Venetian painter Giovanni Bellini.

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Bethlehem of Jesus' day. Farmers still plow in the valleys of the hills with donkey-drawn plows.

The life of shepherds has not changed much either. There are still many sheep and shepherds around Bethlehem, although perhaps not as many as when David was shepherding his sheep there or when the shepherds were the first persons to visit the Holy Family after Jesus was born.

On trips into the Judean wilderness, we became accustomed to seeing Beduin shepherds leading their sheep and goats. But early during my stay at Tantar, as I was taking my daily exercise walk around the property, I turned a corner and ran into about 100 sheep and goats coming toward me. They were being tended by an old shepherd and a young boy. I did a quick about-face. From then on I expected to find herds of sheep and goats on Tantar's property.

The shepherds today are still at the bottom of the social scale, just as they were at the time of Jesus' birth.

Close to the top of the social scale are those who are good stone masons. The whole area around Bethlehem is extremely stony and the Palestinians who live there have always been known as good stone masons, at the time of Jesus' birth as well as today. Jesus and Joseph were apparently good stone masons. They are called carpenters in English translations of the Bible, but the original Greek used the word *teuton*, which means a master builder, somebody who worked on the various materials needed for construction work, including timber and iron, but mainly stone.

Ironically, the stones manufactured by the Palestinians today in Bethlehem's factories are used to build Jewish settlements on land confiscated from the Palestinians. Yasser Arafat has observed that the Jewish settlements wouldn't be there if it weren't

for the Palestinians who manufactured the stone with which they were built.

Bethlehem means *house of bread* in Hebrew and *house of meat* in Arabic. Today it has a population of about 30,000. Twenty years ago, it was about 80 percent Christian but, because of the exodus of so many Christians trying to find a better life elsewhere, today it is only about 20 percent Christian—and the percentage continues to drop. The Israelis continue to confiscate land from the Christian Arabs, forcing them to move so that new Jewish settlements can be built. This is the principal issue of contention between the Israeli government and the Palestinians.

Not everything about Bethlehem is as it was at the time of Jesus' birth.

Until recently, tourism was the most important industry in Bethlehem and a good number of its residents made religious objects for pilgrims, mainly from olive wood and mother of pearl. Naturally, this wasn't true at the time of Jesus' birth. Unfortunately, this year has been a disaster for the tourist business in Bethlehem. Pilgrims no longer flock to Bethlehem as they once did because of the demonstrations, and the Palestinian shopkeepers are the ones who are hurt the most. Religious goods shops in Bethlehem, once filled with pilgrims, are now almost empty.

Still, for Christians, Bethlehem remains one of the holiest places in the world because it was here that Jesus was born on that first Christmas. This year as always, the Latin Patriarch (now Michel Sabbah) will be celebrating Midnight Mass for Christmas in St. Catherine of Alexandria Church, next to the Greek Orthodox Church of the Nativity where Jesus was born.

The strife that still exists in Bethlehem this year reminds us that much the same conditions were prevalent when Joseph and Mary made their trip to the City of David 20 centuries ago. †

(See related editorial on page 4.)



Adoration of the Magi

The visit of the Magi to the infant Christ is depicted in this 16th-century painting titled "Adoration of the Magi" by Nicola da Urbino. It is a holding of the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

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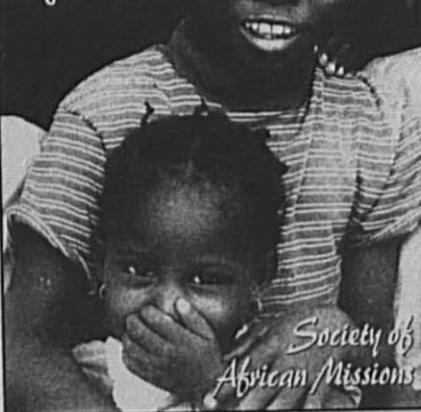
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Nativity scenes owe popularity to St. Francis

Assisi's famous son said he wanted to depict how Christ suffered for lack of necessities of a newly born child

HARTFORD, Conn. (CNS)—Setting up a crèche, or Nativity scene, is a popular Christmas custom around the world.

It is an ancient custom, but St. Francis of Assisi is often credited with being the one who made it so popular.

According to one account, St. Francis visited Pope Honorius III in 1223 seeking approval for a Nativity scene. After the pope agreed, St. Francis went to a place south of Assisi named Greccio on Christmas Eve, where he grouped together images of Mary, Joseph, shepherds and animals around a crib for Jesus.

According to another account retold in *The Christmas Crib* by Nesta de Robeck, St. Francis called on a friend to make the necessary preparations in Greccio so the saint could carry out his desire "to represent the birth of that Child of Bethlehem."

St. Francis said he wanted to show the Nativity "in such a way that with our bodily eyes we may see what he suffered for lack of necessities of a newborn babe and how he lay in a manger between the ox and ass."

De Robeck writes that during Christmas midnight Mass, in which he participated as a deacon, St. Francis

sang the Gospel words "they laid him in a manger," and knelt to meditate about the Incarnation.

Several people attending the Mass then reported seeing a child, surrounded by a bright light, in St. Francis' arms.

According to de Robeck, St. Bonaventure related that "many brothers and good people came (to the Mass) at Francis' bidding and during the night the weather was beautiful. Many lights were kindled, songs and hymns were sung with great solemnity so that the whole wood echoed with the sound, and the man of God stood by the manger, filled with the utmost joy and shedding tears of devotion and compassion."

The manger St. Francis envisioned had been arranged for the Mass and he "preached to the people on the Nativity of Christ our King, and whenever he pronounced his name, with infinite tenderness, he called him the little Babe of Bethlehem," said St. Bonaventure.

Thomas of Celano, a biographer of St. Francis, wrote that "Greccio was transformed into a second Bethlehem and that wonderful night seemed like fullest day to both man and beast for the joy they felt at the renewing of the mystery."

As a result, followers of St. Francis promoted the custom of setting up a crèche and the tradition spread through Europe in the 14th century.

By the Baroque period, 200 years later, Nativity scenes had become elaborately styled and included a number of secular figures in addition to the Holy family, shepherds and wise men.

Making crèches became a popular folk art all over Europe. The hand-carved Nativity scenes of Oberammergau in Germany are still famous around the world.

In the 17th century, according to the Marian Library at the University of Dayton, Nativity scenes were promoted by the Capuchin, Jesuit and Franciscan orders. Household crèches had caught on among Catholics in Europe and missionaries to the Western Hemisphere brought the custom with them.

By the 18th century, three centers of crèche culture had emerged: in Naples, Italy; Provence, France; and southern Germany and Austria. Each region featured different styles, although Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus remained at the core of each Nativity scene.

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* notes that St. Jerome thought the manger that held the baby Jesus was made of clay, but many believe it was actually carved into the rock of the Bethlehem cave where he was born.

The Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome is home to five boards said to have been a part of Christ's crib. †

Craftsman makes crèche figures of Mother Teresa, Diana, Versace

ROME (CNS)—A Neapolitan craftsman this year is making terra-cotta figurines of Mother Teresa, Princess Diana and Gianni Versace for Christmas crèches.

The hand-painted likenesses, selling for about \$175 each, are meant to join the Nativity scenes that are customarily made in Naples and other Italian cities and found in homes worldwide.

Giuseppe Ferrigno, 62, told the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo* that he planned to make the foot-high figures to order and according to seventh-century style, with finely detailed faces and hand-sewn clothing. He said he would produce only 50 statuettes of Mother Teresa, who died in

September, and would donate the proceeds to a local branch of her order, the Missionaries of Charity.

But profits from the sale of figures of the late British princess and the slain Italian fashion designer were intended to help Ferrigno recover from a 30 percent slump in sales this year.

Ferrigno is custodian of a renowned business in the historic center of Naples. The business has been in his family for five generations.

He showed a reporter a prototype of a Nativity display he was creating for the government of Seville, Spain, which included the three newcomers to the crèche tradition. He

said he designed their faces partly from memory and partly from photographs.

Also among Ferrigno's inventory this year are statues of past and present Italian political leaders, among them the current prime minister and the heads of the main parties in the corruption scandals of the early 1990s. †

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Saying it with flowers: a Christmas reflection

by Shirley Vogler Meister



A few years ago, playwright Madge Dishman sent a holiday card showing a colorful Christmas wreath illustrated by artist Judith Hand and published by the Washington National Cathedral in D.C. Instead of the usual greenery, this wreath featured spring and summer plants having special significance.

The card is significant, too, since its floral motif echoes some elements of my friend Madge's work; for she has written an ensemble of short plays under the collective title of *Wild Flowers and Untamed Women*.

From a Christian perspective, the wreath with its religious symbolism seems a sharp contrast to the realistic, human themes in Madge's dramas. Because of a Christian perspective, however, when looking deeper, it is evident they have more in common than meets the eye. First, let's examine the wreath and what it stands for, according to the back of the Christmas card:

Daisies—the innocence of the Holy Child
Holly—Christ's Crown of Thorns
Roses—the Nativity
Lilies—Purity of the Virgin
Grapes—Emblem of the Savior, who is the "True Vine"
Ivy—eternal life
Pomegranates—symbol of the Church and rejuvenation
Lilies of the Valley—Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Wheat—Bread of Life, the Holy Eucharist
Clover—The Holy Trinity
Narcissus—the Triumph of Divine Love
Poppies—the Passion of Christ.

Looking at the plays in Madge's *Wild Flowers* ensemble, we find these themes:

Red Poppies—While touring Spain, an American couple struggle with her denial and his anger, finally coming to terms with the truth that their only daughter is a drug addict with AIDS.

Yellow Violets—A recent widow fights to maintain her independence in spite of her meddling, but well-meaning children who want to sell her home and move her to a retirement place.

Wild Sweet William—The wife and daughter of a retired factory worker face the reality of his Alzheimer's disease.

The Whin—A young divorcee, working in a gay bar and living with her daughter in an apartment above the bar, is confronted by her disapproving mother.

Myrtle and Marigold—A longtime resident of a nursing home helps another resident face her loneliness, depression, and alcohol abuse.

Rosemary and Rue—At Christmas time, a mother endeavors to reconcile the differences between her dying husband and their daughter, who has an out-of-wedlock child.

Ragged Robin—A young woman confronts her grandmother who has become an embarrassment by dressing wildly and hanging out in a park.

The greeting card's wreath represents the suffering, the joy, and the beauty associated with the birth of Christ and his life and death in biblical days.

Madge's plays depict similar factors found in contemporary situations. Midst the struggles and the sacrifices in both, the binding factors are faith, hope, love, resolution, and redemption—all a part of the holiday spirit.

Reflecting on the language of flowers helps harmonize spiritual and worldly concerns in our personal relationships,

and it adds grace and fresh perspectives to our existence.

(Indianapolis writer Shirley Vogler Meister and playwright Madge Dishman of Muncie, formerly of Indianapolis, are members of the National League of American Pen Women, which celebrates its 100th anniversary of promoting art, letters, and music in the U.S. and abroad.) †

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Readers share favorite Christmas memories

Grandmother teaches her family how to find joy in a simple celebration of Christmas

By Joan Gutzwiller

My grandmother, Margaret A. Pope, lived to be 101 years old. She was 93 the last time she had her family over for Christmas at her home.

After that, we visited her at St. Augustine's Home for the Aged in Indianapolis.

All of her 11 grandchildren called her Mommo or Nana. The holidays are a special time of year to remember the wonderful moments we had at Mommo's house on Christmas Day.

Mommo lived a very simple life. She had little money or material things, but she was always happy and never asked for anything.

As all 11 of her grandchildren and three of her own children and their spouses would arrive at her house on Christmas Day, she would be thrilled to see everyone.

She would have a little Christmas tree on the table in her living room, and she would have the dining room table set up with food.

Her specialty was applesauce cake with caramel icing. To this day, none of us have been able to duplicate her recipe. There would also be baked ham, potato salad and, of course, ribbon candy.

How we all managed to have a good time and not drive each other crazy is a mystery to me since she lived in a one-bedroom half-double. But there was a magic about being at Mommo's house, and family members just wanted to stay and visit forever.

She always gave each grandchild a coin. These gifts would be coins that she

had been saving, or she would walk to the bank and buy some. The coins ranged from silver dollars to Kennedy half dollars. She would always put these in Christmas gift cards as conscientiously as someone else would have put in a \$20 bill.

We would be so touched by her gift, knowing that she couldn't afford much, if anything. Just knowing that she thought of us out of love seemed to be enough.

Mommo gave all of us the gift of herself. She was the grandmother who taught me how to embroider, cook and hang clothes on a line. She also taught me how to be happy by giving myself up to God.

God indeed watched over her while she walked many blocks to St. Philip Neri Church for Mass, or transferred bus lines on Monument Circle to come to our house or go to Holy Cross Cemetery to leave flowers at her husband's or son's graves.

At Christmas, I try to remember some of the lessons I learned from my grandmother.

She taught me that it is what you give from your heart, not from your pocket-book, that matters. From her example, I learned that it is the simple things in life that are the most rewarding, not the fanciest or most expensive. And I learned that it is in giving ourselves up to God that is what our life here on earth is all about.

Mommo was a living example of everything that is good, and I feel blessed that I was able to know and love her for 43 years of my life.

(Joan Gutzwiller is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Christmas preparations

Pope John XXIII students watch as kindergartner Dakota Jones, from Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, lights a candle on the Advent wreath with help from teacher Pam Devery.

Altar servers learn about Christmas from a 'stern' pastor they helped on Christmas Eve

By Fr. Gerald Kirkhoff

In 1956, I was an eighth-grader at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis. Another classmate and I had been asked to serve not one, but three Masses on Christmas Eve at the Convent Chapel of St. Philip Neri. The pastor was Msgr. Albert H. Busald.

Most of the year, kids at St. Philip's were a little in "awe" of Monsignor. But this Christmas Eve, we saw him in a different light. After the Masses, sung by the

sisters, we walked into the sacristy.

Msgr. said, "Now you boys put out the candles, hang up those cassocks and have some breakfast," as he pointed to some cocoa and doughnuts. "And also have a Merry Christmas," he added, as he handed each of us the vast sum of \$5.

Even "stern" pastors get the Christmas spirit. I hope this Christmas I remember that with my 1997 altar servers!

(Father Gerald Kirkhoff is pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †



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(Bonnie Born is a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute.) †

Tree saga teaches woman about the magic of Christmas

By Mary C. Vinci

One of my most memorable Christmases seemed like a disaster at the time, but I learned from the following experience, reinforcing my belief that there is magic in Christmas.

Each holiday season I spend hours driving from one Christmas tree lot to another to find a Christmas tree to my liking.

On this particular holiday season, after much searching, I finally found the perfect Christmas tree—a beautiful 6-foot blue spruce.

There are many happy memories of my childhood days. I was raised on a farm near Loogootee. Many of our city relatives used to love to spend time with us during the summer months. We had a coal mine on our farm, and when the ponies were not used in the mine we got to ride them, so that was the biggest attraction.

My mother was the organist at St. Martin's Church, so when anything was going on at church, we were there. We always attended Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

I remember my dad pointing out a certain star and telling me that was the Christmas Star. After we got home from church we stayed up quite a while, eating goodies and some special treats that we only got at Christmas time.

Midnight Mass has always been a big part of Christmas to me. If at all possible, I attend that liturgy each year because it is very special to me.

(Marcella Smith is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.) †

But this year, as I sat and knelt in church, my eyes kept straying from the nativity scene to the large cross with the ascending Christ that hangs in the church.

I kept thinking about how we are remembering the birth of Christ that took place many centuries ago, and that is all we are doing. Christ has risen. I realized that my cousin's husband was now in heaven with the risen Christ. I think that is what God wanted me to know that night in church.



During the holiday, family members struggled with the loss of our loved one. We were sad and angry about his senseless death. We battled all these feelings as we tried to feel the joy of God's gift of his Son to the world.

Then I thought about what a special Christmas this was for Dan. While we sang *Joy to the World* at Mass, Dan was in heaven celebrating his first Christmas with Christ. I knew he was happy.

(Mary Rubeck Benson is a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Siblings brave a Wisconsin winter to find a perfect tree

By Margaret Kelly

One unforgettable Christmas stands out in my memory like an iceberg in a choppy sea. It was the year my brother, Frankie, and I went to find a Christmas tree.

We lived in the country in northern Wisconsin, where the frigid winter temperatures and heavy snowfalls rivaled those of Alaska. The white landscape grew boring, with drift piled on top of drift, until we were tucked in a blanket of isolation.

At our house, the week before Christmas had been a worrisome one because Dad had neglected to get our tree.

"What are we going to do?" I asked Frankie.

"Guess I'll have to go and get it," he said, then added, "I'll go tomorrow if it doesn't snow."

"I'm going with you," I told him. He looked doubtful, but didn't contradict me.

Armed with hatchets, stocking caps pulled down over our ears, and snug woolen mittens on our hands, we started out the next day in search of a Christmas tree.

As we crunched along the snow-packed tracks left by a sleigh, we passed white fields and pastures until we reached a fenced-in wooded area. We could make out the dark silhouettes of fir trees. Like a pair of mountain climbers, we tried to scale the fence, which was nearly buried in snowdrifts. The icy crust gave way, and we tumbled over the fence and sank waist-deep in snow.

Frankie laughed and said, "Well, you wanted to come!"

We looked around at the spruce and hemlocks growing among the leafless oaks and maples. Then we spotted it! We knew right away that it was our tree. It was perfect, just the

right size and shape, and the branches were fat with needles. We leaped and tumbled to our prize.

The chopping was slow and ineffectual; the hatchets were dull and our hands numb. But we gritted our teeth and kept hacking until the tree crashed with a wrenching screech. I felt sad for a moment because it had stood so proudly and now lay at our feet.

Somehow we managed to grasp the tree, pull and shove it over the fence, and drag it home. At home, we huddled close to the stove to thaw out. Mother was baking cookies, and the room was fragrant with the aroma of vanilla and spice. As she pressed down on the cookie forms, she left a trail of Santas, horses and stars.

After dinner, the tree was set up in a corner of the living room. Mother brought out the tree ornaments and we exclaimed excitedly over the delicate beauty of each globe as we carefully, almost reverently, fastened the ornaments to the branches. Wax candles were placed in their holders and lighted to add to its beauty.

As the family was gathered around the tree, my mother's lovely contralto broke the silence with the words of the ageless Christmas song: "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright..." And her voice rose in triumph as she sang, "Christ the Savior is born!"

Even going to Christmas Eve Mass that year turned into an expedition. Dressed in our warmest clothes, we huddled together in the sleigh drawn by two of our fastest horses. For eight miles they slipped and slithered their way along the icy and otherwise impassable roads.

At church, we were soon warmed by the bright Christmas scene. The figure of the Infant Jesus lay in his crib, the flickering candles highlighted the radiant poinsettias on the altar, and the choir sang hymns of praise and exultation.

(Margaret Kelly is a member of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Aunt Sadie saves Christmas at the end of a difficult year

By Cheryl Woelfel

I will always remember the year I learned the true meaning of Christmas.

I was about 9 or 10 years old and, like every other kid, I was anxiously awaiting Santa and his magic sleigh.

Christmas had always been a wonderful, magical time in our house. My dad believed that Christmas was for kids, and he did his best—despite limited funds—to make Christmas our special time.

This particular year, however, Dad was a little down. He was laid off from work, and my mom had been hospitalized shortly after Thanksgiving. Mom was back home, but Dad's limited funds were even more limited now.

A few days before Christmas, my dad's Aunt Sadie called and asked if she could spend Christmas with us.

When Aunt Sadie arrived, she asked us to help her unload a few things. The "few things" turned out to be a carload of food and gifts.

To this day I can't remember one material gift I received that Christmas, because the gift that I remember most is the gift of love and caring Aunt Sadie gave to all of us—the same gift Christ gave to the world on that first Christmas.

Aunt Sadie is gone now, but every year I try to make someone's Christmas just a little brighter in memory of a wonderful woman who taught me the true meaning of Christmas.

(Cheryl Woelfel is a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville.) †

Bus delivers best surprise present ever

By Barb Roettger

Every year my brothers, sister and I would hope my Uncle Bernard would pick out our Christmas gifts.

Not that we didn't like Aunt Jennie, but her presents were always something practical, like knee socks that matched our school uniforms or pajamas or gloves.

But with Uncle Bernard, it was always gifts of toys, such as a space station that shot rockets from spring-loaded launchers to protect the space missile from intruders.

One year, a week before Christmas, Uncle Bernard called and said he hadn't had much time for shopping but our present from Aunt Jennie and him was on its way.

We could pick it up at the bus station, he told us, but it wasn't wrapped because he wasn't a good present wrapper.

However, he said, we would know it was ours because our names were on it.

Most important, he said, we had to share the gift with no fighting—as if he wasn't asking the impossible!

We told him we didn't mind that our gift wasn't wrapped, and we promised him we would share it.

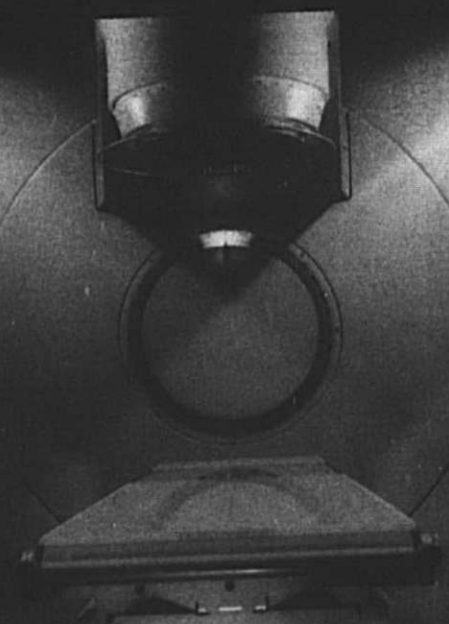
The night we went down to the bus station to pick up our gift couldn't come soon enough. Then we spotted it!

It wasn't wrapped, but it definitely was a sharing toy. It was a 5-foot sled with plenty of room for four kids!

None of us remembers the other gifts we got that year—only the sled that came unwrapped and on the bus. We got many good years out of it, and when I pass a sled display, I always think back to that Christmas.

(Barb Roettger is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Handmade nativity

St. Pius X School first-graders Sarah Hugus and Patrick Gorrell of Indianapolis arrange sheep in the pasture area of a nativity scene at the Indianapolis North Deanery grade school. Students in all eight grades helped make the stable, figures and animals and another scene representing Epiphany.

Family celebrates Christmas by sharing Scripture readings and hymns around tree

By Elaine Korba Avila

Christmas time for our family was a time of love and tradition. Although part of our preparations for Christmas Day involved the hustle and bustle of shopping, cooking and decorating, our family—thanks to our parents—placed the emphasis on Christ's birth and on sharing his love with others.

A couple of weeks before Christmas, Dad would set up the empty stable in our living room. The stable was one his father had helped him build.

Every evening prior to our bedtime, we would find out who earned the honor of carrying one of the cherished glass figurines to the stable that night. The "runners-up" would get to bring straw for the stable's floor. We walked slowly, singing a Christmas hymn or carol on most nights as we brought our treasure downstairs for the nativity.

When Christmas Eve finally arrived, Mom would make her special Christmas chili. After supper we went to the living room, where Dad had the Christmas tree lights glowing amidst the darkness. Dad would read the Christmas story from the Bible and lead us in several hymns. After we sang, all of the children went forward to place the Baby Jesus in the manger.

On Christmas morning, we went to early Mass. Upon returning home, we ran into the living room to open gifts. Mom would have a nice Christmas breakfast. As the dishes were washed, we all squirmed in anticipation for the moment to arrive when the family would pile into the car and head for a farm outside of Kokomo.

We celebrated the rest of the Lord's birthday by sharing a meal provided by Grandpa from the farm and cooked by

Grandma and Aunt Helen.

The Korba children—Elaine, Vicki, Greg and Mary—are so thankful to God for the gift of Dad and Mom, who provided for the richness of our faith and shared their family values with us. These gifts will last forever.

(Elaine Korba Avila is a member of Little Flower Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Girl's last gift to her mother was unique

By Margaret Royce Lawley

I was a freshman at St. Agnes Academy. On this December day in 1923, I waited at the corner of 14th and Pennsylvania streets for the streetcar.

My destination was L.S. Ayres, the largest department store in Indianapolis. As sixth floor was dedicated to artwork and crafts, I had been embroidering a spread for my mother there and decided to make a new shade for our floor lamp.

The shade was 3 feet across and created a problem on the crowded streetcar.

We gave our presents on Christmas Eve then, and I ran upstairs and brought down "The Shade." I stood in front of my mother and laid the large shade on her lap.

Did I mention that it was black and orange? It must have been hideous, more like a Halloween decoration than a living room ornament. My mother said it was beautiful, and she placed it on the lamp.

My dear mother had been ill most of her life. She went to the hospital the day after Christmas, and died on Jan. 14, 1924. The shade was the last present I gave her.

(Margaret Royce Lawley is a member of Little Flower Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Christmas memories through the years continue to be lasting and priceless gifts

By George Zimmer

To paraphrase the Bob Hope theme song, *Thanks for the Memories*, these recollections are of long-ago Christmases, happy and sad, with family and friends.

December 1934—"Mama and Papa, thank you for the new tricycle. I'm sorry I bent the front wheel when I tried to ride it down the steps."

January 1943—"Brother Henry, thank you for the Camp Stewart T-shirt. Is it hot there in New Guinea?"

Dec. 21, 1950—"Friends and neighbors, I had no idea you held me in such esteem. I

report for Army duty in January."

Dec. 1, 1952—"Papa, thank you for driving me to the train that began my journey to Korea. You didn't feel well that morning. I had never seen you cry before."

December 1953—"My Guardian Angel, thank you for guarding me and guiding me safely home, and for the many times you asked the Dark Angel to look elsewhere."

December 1996—"Tish, the love of my life, thank you for 41 years of sharing Christmas Mass, for our daughters and our grandchildren, but mostly just for you."

(George Zimmer is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Electricians restore light to New Alsace on Christmas Eve

By Michael and Maxine Klump

It was Christmas Eve in 1996 and the little village of New Alsace in southeastern Indiana was aglow with Christmas lights reflecting in the snow.

Families and friends were preparing to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with Midnight Mass in St. Paul's Church.

Suddenly, early in the evening, everything went black as a power outage darkened all the lights. Public Service Indiana was called, and supervisor Pat Pointer assigned the repair job to crew members Steve Stier, Doug Tuley and Doug Osborne, who had to leave their families on Christmas Eve and go out on a cold, snowy night to restore our electric power.

These dedicated men soon found the problem, a burned-

out transformer, across the street from the church. To install a new transformer, they had to climb the pole, remove the damaged transformer, and hoist a new transformer up the pole in its place.

We wondered if they would be able to make the necessary repairs in time for Midnight Mass. Working with spotlights, the men were cheered on by families arriving at the church for the liturgy.

The combined choir of St. Paul and St. Martin churches had practiced for weeks, and had a surprise gift for the parish. They were planning to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" by Handel.

The manger scene in church was surrounded by pine trees. The church was filled to capacity. The only light, from the glow of the candles, illuminated a beautiful scene, probably reminiscent of much earlier years before the blessings of electricity.

Due to the power outage, there was no heat and no organ! Choir members began singing at 11:30 p.m. using flash-

lights to see their music sheets as an impromptu *a capella* choir.

Father William Turner and the altar servers prepared for the blessing of the crib and the liturgy of the Holy Mass. The electricians working on the pole outside were still making the delicate wire connections on the transformer.

Suddenly the church was filled with light! The crib scene glowed with tiny lights like stars in the trees above. The miracle of electricity was once again accomplished, and soon the three crew members found an empty pew and joined the parishioners in the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Many prayers had been offered for the safety of the men, and now more were offered in thanksgiving for their work on a cold and snowy Christmas Eve.

The "Hallelujah Chorus" rang out as planned—a gift from the choir and three brave heroes who restored light to our Christmas Eve liturgy.

(Michael and Maxine Klump are members of St. Paul Parish in New Alsace.) †



Gingerbread house

Pope John XXIII School sixth-grader Trayce Lawson of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison constructs a gingerbread house during art class. The students' houses are on display as part of a holiday tour of area homes.

Joys of Christmas brighten life, bring hope in wartime

By Mary Jo McHugh Keegan

In 1943, against a backdrop of rationing books that regulated our access to sugar, shoes and soap, we bought defense stamps in dime and quarter denominations with the certainty that we were helping the war effort.

And with that same assurance, we believed that the pennies and nickels we collected to ransom pagan babies would safeguard children throughout the world.

The joys of Christmas were indeed needed this year. The war was so present to us! In a front window, we proudly displayed a red and white banner with blue stars to correspond with the number of family members serving in the Armed Forces. Mothers had taken jobs away from home to work in defense plants and support the war effort.

I had a great idea that our family needed a bigger and better Christmas tree that year, and that I could select it. With extra indulgence, my mother gave me \$10 to find and claim this tree.

Encouraged by her trustfulness, my buying spree took me past the usual front yards displaying trees for sale to Blue Point, where I knew there were rows of trees on display.

And there it stood—more beautiful than I had hoped. About 10 blocks separated us from home, but I was sure

that would be no problem.

Wrapped in this tree, I carried it several blocks before I realized another strategy was imminent. Undaunted, I lifted the trunk bottom, put it under my arm and, using both hands, began to drag it down McCarty Street.

When Gramma saw me with the tree, she wondered aloud where we were going to put it. In our living room was a stove big enough to heat the three front rooms of our humble house.

I knew Mother would make everything just right when she got home, just as she always did. She showed no shock when she saw that now-pitiful looking Christmas tree. Instead, she said it would be perfect in the bedroom we shared. And the bare side, she assured me, would fit nicely against the wall and leave plenty of space for walking.

Mother's younger sister bought three new strands of blue lights, our first experience with those magic ones that stay lit even if one bulb fails.

Each morning during the holidays, Gram made certain I awakened to a lighted tree whose glow was surpassed for me only by the love that I saw in her eyes.

I don't remember what Santa brought in 1943, but the gift of my mother's gentle love that year keeps on giving even now in her absence. Guided and nurtured by a woman whose husband died months before her only child was born, I have been able to grow far away from life on Meikle Street in every way but in my memories.

(Mary Jo McHugh Keegan is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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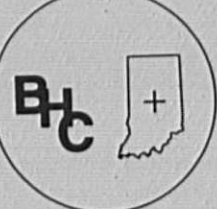
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Unique nativity set evolves with special gifts from family members and friends who see it

By Julie Niec

As a young child, I begged for a miniature doll toaster for Christmas. The toaster was priced at \$1, which in 1950 was big money.

That year the toaster appeared under the tree on Christmas morning—the gift I had been waiting for!

For some reason which remains unknown to me even now, I took the toaster over to our nativity scene and gave it to Baby Jesus. That toaster remained with the figures as a part of our nativity set.

When I was in college, my mother sent me an inexpensive crib set for my dorm room and included the toaster.

As a young mother, I again pulled out that crib set for our oldest daughter. I was so accustomed to seeing the toaster as part of the scene that I didn't even notice it, but our daughter did and asked about it. I told her the story.

That evening we noticed her most prized possession, a blue rubber hippopotamus, holding an honored spot near Mary and Joseph in the nativity scene.

When we asked Jenny about the hippo, she told us that it was her gift to Jesus.

From that time on, Jenny and then our younger daughters, Heather and Sarah, each brought a gift to Jesus sometime during the Christmas season.

Our crèche is probably the only one anywhere which includes a blue hippo, a rabbit's foot, a shell, a guitar pick (contributed by an adult friend who liked the idea), a homemade crewel gift, a bouquet of plastic flowers, a penny, and a toaster . . . all precious gifts from children who knew that their treasured possessions would please Baby Jesus.

The "toaster story" is one of our family traditions now in its second generation. This is not just a story for our family; it is part of the oral tradition, the storytelling that goes on in every family. This is how we hand on our beliefs, our values, and our traditions. The memories that we share with each other and with our children remind all of us of another time and connect that time and that place with today.

(Julie Niec is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.) †



Popular nativity

The Hentrup family's lifesize nativity scene on display at their barn on Highway 111 near Elizabeth attracts a large number of visitors each December. The St. Mary, New Albany parishioners created the nativity eight years ago and have added to the display each year.

Santa passes up chimney for the convenience of family's summer kitchen behind farmhouse

By Meg Donohue Spitznogle

I've always loved the Advent and Christmas seasons—probably because I grew up in a large, Catholic farm family.

My mother's love for her six children and the church seemed to come together in an extraordinary way from the beginning of Advent until the Christmas tree was burned on Jan. 6.

Our home had a den in the front of the house with large windows on the three walls facing the road. A live pine tree was centered and lit in the darkened room for passers-by and the family to enjoy.

An electric trio of candles was carefully placed in one of the windows. Mother told us that that decoration kept alive the Irish tradition of putting a candle in the window as a sign of welcome to strangers, and if a lost traveler appeared we were to open our hearts to that person with the same joy we would welcome Jesus into our home.

The best part of that warm, memorable room was the beautiful dime-store nativity

scene. Each piece was separate, and my siblings and I would move the camels, angels, shepherds and Mary and Joseph up and down the hills and valleys of the quilt covering the tree stand.

Since our vacation from the local, rural public school lasted for a blessedly long time, we were freed from homework and early bedtimes; therefore, our mother allowed each of us a once-a-year, individual Christmas treat. We could choose one night to sleep downstairs alone by the tree in the den!

While the rest of the family slept, I would lie by the tree, gently moving Jesus and Mary and the empty manger around, and privately take part in the trials and joys of the Holy Family. I would fall asleep with the Baby Jesus sharing my pillow and my Indian blanket. What sweet dreams I had on those nights . . . and what precious memories I hold 50 years later!

(Meg Spitznogle is a member of St. Alphonsus Parish in Zionsville of the Lafayette Diocese.) †

By Shirley Kiefer

Christmas is special for me because, as the oldest of five children, I tried to get my siblings ready for Santa's arrival.

Living on a farm, there was always a ritual that our dad went through on Christmas Eve. After doing our chores and milking the cows by hand, we would rush to the house to clean up for supper.

Dad would finish feeding the cows, but for some reason on Christmas Eve he was always so slow! We could never understand why. After he arrived in the house, we would all sit down for the delicious supper Mom had fixed. Then we would anxiously await Santa's arrival.

For some reason, Santa could not fit down our chimney, so each year he left our gifts in the summer kitchen behind the house. We could not wait to go look. But, of course, now Dad had to shave first, which added to our frustration. Finally, the moment arrived!

"I heard something on the roof," he said. "Did you kids go out and look?"

We were all scared to death. Our

curiosity was killing us, but we were afraid we would run into Santa while he was leaving our gifts. And we wanted to allow him enough time to eat the cookies and drink the milk we left for him and to feed the hay to his reindeer.

Because I was the oldest, I tried to get the younger ones to go first. How brave of me! After much anticipation, we slowly followed each other and made our way out the back door to the summer kitchen.

Slowly pushing the door open, inch by inch, we were surprised and relieved to find that Santa had been there and left gifts for us! Talk about happy! We all shoved our way into the room to carry our presents into the house.

Our grandparents arrived just in time to see the great turmoil of unwrapping our gifts. It amazed me that they always knew just when to arrive each year!

After enjoying our evening together, we would get ready for Mass. To this day, it remains our family tradition to attend Christmas Eve Mass together.

(Shirley Kiefer is a member of St. Anne Parish in Hamburg.) †

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Faith Alive!

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Jesus' name is central to the Christmas story

By Fr. Eugene LaVerdiere, S.S.S.

Both Matthew and Luke emphasized the naming of Jesus in their accounts of his birth. Since then, Jesus' name has been a big part of the Christmas story.

What's in a name? Why is it so important to know a person's name?

When God commissioned Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses asked for God's name.

In Matthew, the angel of the Lord told Joseph that Mary had conceived through the Holy Spirit and would bear a son. The angel then told Joseph, "And you are to name him Jesus" (Matthew 1:20-21).

In Luke, the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive in her womb and bear a son. Immediately, the angel told her, "And you shall name him Jesus" (Luke 1:31).

Later, Luke tells us that the child "was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

There is something both mysterious and wonderful about a name.

The revelation of the name of God, "I AM," that is, "I AM with you," shows that God is not an abstract notion and is involved personally in our lives.

Many other people in New Testament times were named Jesus. Giving the son of God the same name showed that Jesus was human like all of us. It is by that name that the people of Nazareth knew him growing up at home, in the marketplace, and at the synagogue.

But away from Nazareth—away from one's home—it was sometimes necessary to specify a Jew's hometown. Hence the reference "Jesus of Nazareth"

or "Jesus the Nazarene."

The name of God, I AM, expressed God's relationship to the people of God. God is the one who is with us, giving us life, supporting us and guiding us.

The name of Jesus expressed Jesus' mission in the world. Joseph was told to name him Jesus "because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

In Hebrew, Jesus' name means "Yahweh helps." Applied to Jesus, it means "Yahweh saves."

Unlike Matthew, Luke did not dwell on the Hebrew etymology of Jesus' name, but he still connected Jesus' name to his mission as savior (Acts of the Apostles 4:12).

What is special about Jesus' name? The New Testament invites us to reflect on Jesus' name, especially at Christmas when his name is at the very heart of the story.

First, Jesus' name identifies him and distinguishes him from other people. Doing that, the name Jesus points to a particular person and acts like an identification tag. For example, it distinguishes Jesus from John the Baptist.

More important, Jesus' name communicates Jesus' identity and expresses the uniqueness of Jesus' person. Someone's identification is not the same as someone's identity. Anyone can make an identification of a particular person. But to know a person's identity you have to know someone personally.

Expressing Jesus' very identity, Jesus' name acts as a symbol for his person. That is why we speak Jesus' name with respect. Spitting it out would indicate hatred and contempt toward Jesus.

That is also why to understand Jesus' name we have to know Jesus, the person who bears it. For that, we must have a personal relationship to Jesus.

That is how it was with the early Christians. Knowing Jesus, they also wanted to express his relationship to God, his role in history and his mission in the world. For that, they gave him titles like "Son of God," "Son of Man," "Christ," "Messiah" and "Lord."

The titles "Christ" and "Messiah" are actually the same, meaning "the anointed one." The title "Christ" comes from the Greek, while "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew. Today we use both terms as though they were distinct.

Regarding the title "Christ," we know that in the New Testament this title related Jesus to the passion, the climax



There is something both mysterious and wonderful about a name. The name of Jesus expressed Jesus' mission in the world. Joseph was told to name him Jesus "because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

of his historical life. Soon the title became a second name for Jesus, giving him the name Jesus Christ. Around the year 70, Mark used that double name in the title of his Gospel "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (the Son of God)" (Mark 1:1). In English, the title "Christ" eventually gave us our name for the feast of the Nativity, Christmas.

The title "Lord" was related to Jesus' resurrection, and that is why the early Christians referred to Jesus as the Lord Jesus.

There was no separating the passion and the Resurrection, and there was no separat-

ing the titles of "Christ" and "Lord." That is why the New Testament often refers to Jesus as Jesus Christ our Lord.

Both titles, "Christ" (Messiah) and "Lord" are part of the good news the angel announced to the shepherds: "For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah (Christ) and Lord."

On Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the mission for which he was born.

(Blessed Sacrament Father Eugene LaVerdiere is a Scripture scholar and senior editor of Emmanuel magazine.) †

The real Christmas gifts are life and love

By David Gibson

We may think we're searching for God, but the truth is that God is searching for us—and the Incarnation proves this, Pope John Paul II says. This is the meaning of Christmas.

God has divine ways to become present in our Christmas through homecomings, friendships, rituals and prayer. If at some point this Christmas you notice that the real gift being given is the gift of life and love, trust that God has found you.

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †

Discussion Point

Make time to reflect on Jesus

This Week's Question

What is the place of Jesus in your celebration of Christmas?

"As a single parent, I struggle with letting go of my children to visit their father, and I meditate on the true presence of the baby Jesus in my life at that time. What I've learned to do is to identify with Jesus at the vulnerable and special time in his life and how he is always with us even at our most vulnerable times."

(Laura Aduato, El Paso, Texas)

"He's the top of the totem pole." (Sister Austin Babin, M.S.C., New Orleans, La.)

"It should be first, but sometimes it seems to be second or third, after shopping and gifts. It takes a little

while to remember what all the hoopla is about. I think as Christians we want to make Christ the center, but it's easy to get distracted." (Ken Scott, Portland, Ore.)

"In our family, it's always been our tradition to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas by going to Midnight Mass and to keep Jesus, not gift-giving, as the main focus of the holiday." (Lourdes Hinojo, Las Cruces, N.M.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What is your approach or attitude toward someone who considers himself/herself a nonbeliever?

To respond for possible publication, write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



status. He will lead as David has led. David has a special place in Jewish religious tradition. He was not just a shepherd who was successful in rising to the top of his society. And he was more than a king.

David was God's specially chosen representative. He was God's instrument in governing and guiding the people. His task ultimately was to establish among the people the law of God. From this came order, peace and prosperity. Israel was secure. So, David was God's great gift.

Mary, Elizabeth and the fetal John know that redemption is near.

Reflection

The day of Christmas recalls the momentous birth of Christ. But, in God's eternal mercy, every day can be Christmas for us if we admit God into our hearts. And, if we admit God into our souls and lives, then we, too, will be brilliant with that joy of which Mary and Elizabeth sang. †

through an angel to Mary (Matthew 1:21).

The name in other forms, Joshua in particular, has a long history in Hebrew culture. Two particular facts seem to stand out in Christian tradition, however, as it applies to our Lord.

First, Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, a name which in Hebrew means "God (Yahweh) helps," or more popularly "God saves."

same period.

The same remains true today in some places. One may recall the story about the child, obviously a baseball fan, who asked, "If Jesus was a Jew, why does he have a Puerto Rican name?"

The implication is that Jesus received a very common name, one that did not immediately separate him from the human family, but helped to identify him with it. †

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 22
1 Samuel 1:24-28
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8
Luke 1:46-56

Tuesday, Dec. 23
John of Kanty, presbyter
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 14
Luke 1:57-66

Wednesday, Dec. 24
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Luke 1:67-79
Vigil of Christmas
Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 89:4-5, 16-27, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-27, 22-25
Matthew 1:1-25 or
Matthew 1:18-25

Thursday, Dec. 25
Christmas—Midnight
Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14
Christmas—Dawn
Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20

Christmas—Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18 or
John 1:1-5, 9-14

Friday, Dec. 26
Stephen, first martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Psalm 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21
Matthew 10:17-22

Saturday, Dec. 27
John, apostle and evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:2-8

Sunday, Dec. 28
The Holy Family
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalm 128:1-5
Colossians 3:12-17 or
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:41-52

Monday, Dec. 29
Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr
1 John 2:3-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 5-6
Luke 2:22-35

Tuesday, Dec. 30
1 John 2:12-17

Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Wednesday, Dec. 31
Sylvester I, pope
1 John 2:18-21
Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13
John 1:1-18

Thursday, Jan. 1
Mary, Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Friday, Jan. 2
Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the church
Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and doctor of the church
1 John 2:22-28
Psalm 98:1-4
John 1:19-28

Saturday, Jan. 3
1 John 2:29 - 3:6
Psalm 98:1-3, 6
John 1:29-34

Sunday, Jan. 4
The Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

Monday, Jan. 5
John Neumann, bishop, religious, missionary and educator
1 John 3:22 - 4:6
Psalm 2:7-8, 10-11
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, Jan. 6
Blessed André Bessette, religious
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8
Mark 5:34-44

Wednesday, Jan. 7
Raymond of Penyafort, presbyter and religious
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday, Jan. 8
1 John 4:19 - 5:4
Psalm 72:1-2, 14-15, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday, Jan. 9
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday, Jan. 10
1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6, 9
John 3:22-30

Pope offers blessing to world's children

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II offered a blessing to children throughout the world, and especially to those in the Americas, as they counted down the days until Christmas.

"Christmas is the feast of a child. It is, therefore, your feast," he told children who brought their nativity scene statuettes of the Baby Jesus to St. Peter's Square Dec. 14 for a papal blessing.

"You await the feast with impatience and prepare for it with joy, counting the days to go until Dec. 25," he told the children.

"I bless you and children in every part of the world, especially those on the American continent, to whom the thoughts of the synodal fathers often went," he said two days after the close of the Synod of Bishops for America.

"May the Baby Jesus fill each child with his joy, especially those who are tried by physical suffering or a lack of affection," the pope said.

"Jesus, the source of our peace, is coming," he told the crowds gathered around the just-decorated Vatican

Christmas tree. A life-sized nativity scene was under construction next to the tree, but was hidden behind a wall until its completion.

At the end of his midday *Angelus* address, the pope greeted dairy farmers who drove two tractors to the edge of St. Peter's Square and brought along a cow named Carolina.

While he offered a special blessing "to the well-deserving people of the Italian agricultural world," he did not get into the merits of their protests against European Community fines for excessive milk production.

Earlier in the day, Pope John Paul celebrated Mass at the parish of St. Maria Domenica Mazzarella, on the eastern edge of Rome. In his homily, he said the third Sunday of Advent, called "Gaudete" Sunday, is "an insistent call to joy."

"The strong period of Advent—a time of watching, of prayer and of solidarity—gives rise in our souls to feelings of joy and peace, increased by the now close encounter with the Lord," he said.

The joy of the season, he said, should

be even stronger when tied to the joyful anticipation of the jubilee year 2000.

The pope asked the 14,000-member parish to ensure their new church and their community is a warm and welcoming place for all.

"Here, those who feel alone can find a family that opens its arms to them," he said. "Here it is possible to encounter Christ and experience the joy of brotherhood among those who believe in him."

The pope also asked parishioners to support with their witness and prayers the "citizen's mission" he started a year ago to strengthen the Christian identity of Rome through door-to-door campaigns.

"In the heart of every human being there is an innate need for God, and the

task of the baptized is to offer everyone the possibility of meeting him through their proclamation and their witness," he said.

The Vatican published Dec. 13 a copy of the pope's letter to Romans, which will be distributed along with a copy of the Acts of the Apostles to households throughout the city in 1998.

In the letter, the pope said volunteer missionaries will visit families "to reflect with you on the Word of God, to discuss the great themes of faith and of life and to rediscover the joy of knowing the Lord."

"Read this book with love and you will discover in the events it narrates the newness and strength of hope which faith in the risen Christ brings," he said. †

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The Criterion welcomes announcements for "The Active List" of parish and church-related activities open to the public. Please keep them brief, listing event, sponsor, date, time and location. No announcements can be taken by telephone. No pictures, please. Notices must be in our offices by 10 a.m. on Monday of the week of publication. Hand deliver or mail to: The Criterion, "The Active List," 1400 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, Ind., 46206.

December 19-21

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove, will hold "Advent Silent Retreat," 7 p.m. Cost: \$100. For information, call 317-788-7581.

December 21

Holy Name Parish, Beech Grove, 89 N. 17th Ave., will present Christmas concert XXXVI, performances at 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$5. For information, call 317-784-5454.

Sacred Heart Parish, Indianapolis, 1530 Union St., will present a Christmas performance of "The Gifts of Christmas," by Lani Smith, 4 p.m. For information, call 317-638-5551.

Mary's Rexville Schoenstatt, will hold Holy Hour followed by Mass, 2:30 p.m. Directions: .8 mile East of 421 on 925 South, 10 miles South of Versailles.

Little Sisters of the Poor and St. Augustine's Home for the Aged

will hold Holy Hour to pray for vocations, 4:15 p.m. in the chapel of St. Augustine's Home, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis.

December 22

St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, will hold Communal Penance Service, 7 p.m.

December 24

Sacred Heart Parish, Indianapolis, 1530 Union St., will celebrate family Mass and youth choir, 5:30 p.m., midnight Mass with choir to perform at 11:30 a.m. For information, call 317-638-5551.

Mary's Rexville Schoenstatt will hold a Christmas Eve Mass, 4:30 p.m. Directions: .8 miles East of 421 on 925 South, 10 miles South of Versailles.

St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis 950 Prospect St., will have Christmas carols followed by a Latin High Mass (Tridentine), carols to begin at 6:40 p.m., Mass, 7 p.m.

December 25

Sacred Heart Parish, Indianapolis, 1530 Union St., will hold one Christmas Mass, 10 a.m.

December 28

Mary's Rexville Schoenstatt will present "Blank Check Spirituality" Mass, 3:30 p.m. Directions: .8 miles East of 421 on 925 South, 10 miles East of Versailles.

December 31

St. Joseph Parish, Sellersburg, 2605 St. Joseph Rd. West, will hold New Years Eve Mass, with Eucharistic Adoration to follow until 12:30 a.m. For information, call 812-944-5304.

January 2-4

Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, will hold Benedictine Life Weekend for single Catholic women, ages 20-40, who would like to explore monastic life, begins 7:00 p.m. For information, call 1-800-738-9999.

January 4

St. Christopher's Singles & Friends, Indianapolis, 5301 W. 16th St., will hold Mass and a luncheon at noon. For information, call 317-271-9674.

January 5

St. Lawrence Parish, Lawrenceburg, 542 Walnut St., will hold a healing Mass with Father Al Lauer, 7 p.m. For information, call 812-537-1664.

Recurring

Daily

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Art Gallery, Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods, will present an exhibition of Jan Tenenbaum's primitive print-making techniques entitled "Sources." For information, call 812-535-5212.

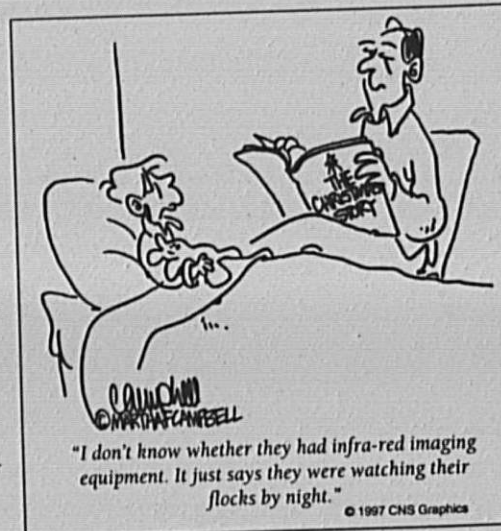
St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, will hold a Tridentine Low Mass (Latin), 8:00 a.m.

Weekly

Sundays

St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, will hold a Tridentine High Mass (Latin), 1:30 p.m.

St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington, will host the series "St. John of the Cross: An Introduction to His Thoughts and Writings," presented by Father Dan Donohoo, 7-9 p.m. For information, call 812-339-6006.



Holy Rosary Parish, Indianapolis, 520 Stevens St., will host the series "Rosary as a Walk with Jesus and Mary," presented by Providence Sr. Mary Slattery, 4 p.m.

St. Anthony Parish, Clarksville, will present, "Mary, Life and the Sacraments," 6 p.m. For information, call Bob or Phyllis Burkholder at 812-246-2252.

Mondays

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, Beech Grove, 1402 Southern Ave., will hold yoga class, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Cost: \$36 advanced; \$8 per session. For information, call 317-788-7581.

Tuesdays

Our Lady of the Greenwood Marian Prayer group will meet, 7-8 p.m. in the chapel to pray the rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

St. Luke Parish, Indianapolis, Single Adults Group will meet in the Parish reception room, 7:30-8:30 p.m. For information call, 317-299-9545

St. Joseph Parish, Sellersburg, 2605 St. Joe Rd. West, Shepherds of Christ Associates will pray for priests and religious, the rosary, the litanies to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Chaplet of Divine Mercy

—See ACTIVE LIST, page 29

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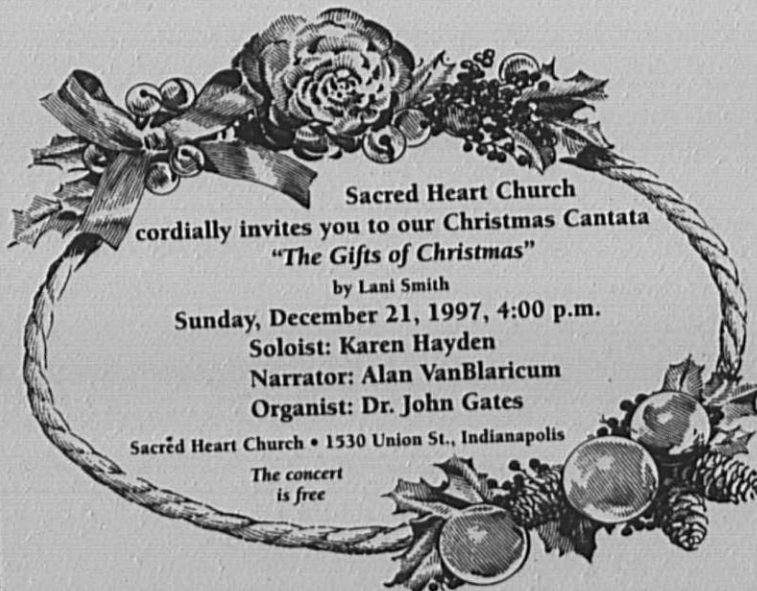
Awesome God	He Grew The Tree
Ascribe To The Lord	More Precious Than Silver
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Narrator: Alan VanBlaricum

Organist: Dr. John Gates

Sacred Heart Church • 1530 Union St., Indianapolis

The concert
is free

The Active List, continued from page 28

following 7 p.m. Mass.

St. John Church, Indianapolis, will present "Advent Tidings," hosted by Fr. Thomas Murphy, 12:45-1:30 p.m. For information, call 317-635-2021.

Wednesdays

"Wednesdays at the Woods" for prospective students at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. For information, call 812-535-5106 or 800-926-SMWC.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, Beech Grove, 1402 Southern Ave., will offer a follow-up to

"Centering Prayer," 7-9 p.m. Cost: \$75. For information, call 317-788-7581.

Catholic Social Services, Indianapolis, 1400 N. Meridian St., will offer "Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse" group to meet every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. For information, call Linda Clarke at 317-236-1500.

St. Francis Hospital & Health Care Centers, Greenwood, 438 S. Emerson Ave., will offer a bereavement support group to meet every Wednesday beginning Jan. 14 through Feb. 18, afternoon and evening sessions

available, must register prior to meetings. For information, call 317-865-2092.

Thursdays

St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, will have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mass.

St. Mary Parish, New Albany. Shepherds of Christ Associates will gather, 7 p.m. to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life and lives centered in consecration to Jesus and Mary.

Fridays

St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield, 1210 E. Main, will hold adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, will have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel every Friday, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mass. Benediction before Mass.

A pro-life rosary will be prayed every Friday, 10 a.m. in front of Affiliated Women's Services, Inc., 2215 Distributors Dr., Indianapolis.

Saturdays

A pro-life rosary will be prayed every Saturday, 9:30 a.m. in front of the Clinic for Women, E. 38th St. and Parker Ave., Indianapolis.

Monthly**First Sundays**

St. Paul Parish, Sellersburg.

prayer group will meet in the church, 7-8:15 p.m. For information call 812-246-4555 or 812-246-9735.

First Tuesdays

Divine Mercy Chapel, Indianapolis, next to Cardinal Ritter High School, will hold Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30 p.m. Confession is at 6:45 p.m.

First Fridays

Holy Guardian Angels Parish, Cedar Grove, 405 U. S. 52, will have eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. Mass until 5 p.m.

St. Roch Parish, Indianapolis, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., will hold First Friday vigil adoration, 7-8 p.m.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Indianapolis, 5333 E. Washington St., will hold a Sacred Heart devotion, 7-8 p.m.

St. Thomas Parish, Fortville, will celebrate Mass and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 6:30 p.m., followed by discussion of the Eucharist.

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

—See ACTIVE LIST, page 34

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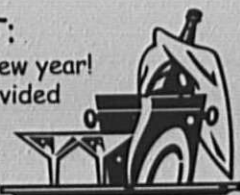
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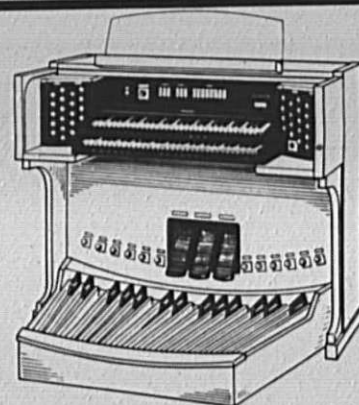
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Campus/Young Adult News

Regional customs add seasonal joy in France

By Dominique Schott
Special to The Criterion

"Noël à la française! Venez Divin Messie! Come Divine Messiah!"

France, too, awaits the birth of Jesus during the season of Advent.

When asked what they do to celebrate this season, several French people responded by distinguishing the traditions according to their origins.

Monsieur Perez, a parishioner of St. Dennis Parish in Montpellier, France, clarified this by saying, "There are several countries which make up France. Therefore, there are several ways of celebrating [the season]."

Although France does not escape the international commercialism of the holiday, its regional particularities distinguish Christmas as a holy day and season.

Father Jean Viala, a diocesan priest living in Montpellier, said there is a general plan for celebrating the holidays in France.

For the entire nation, Father Viala said, "Advent is a time of penitential celebration. Reconciliation is encouraged and made more available."

Mary is an important person during Advent and is therefore emphasized and honored, the priest said. Like Monsieur Perez, Father Viala differentiates holiday traditions by region.

What are these "several countries" of France and what makes them so unique

once Advent begins?

Alsace-Lorraine, in the east, receives recognition for two traditions: its celebration of the feast of St. Nicholas on Dec. 6 and for the *sapin* (Christmas tree).

Instead of offering presents to one another, St. Nicholas brings them to the people on the morning of Dec. 6. Children and parents offer St. Nicholas, in return for his visit, a glass of schnapps and a carrot for his reindeer.

And although the majority of people in France now decorate their homes with *sapins*, small fir trees, the French attribute this tradition to Alsace-Lorraine as well.

Farther south, the city of Lyon distinguishes itself on Dec. 8 by observing the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The city glows with candlelight as residents place lighted candles in windows and throughout the streets.

Although the entire Catholic Church honors Mary on this day, those from Lyon include a special thanksgiving. They attribute their protection from the bombardment of World War II to Mary and choose Dec. 8 as the day to honor her for their safety.

Continuing south, Provence is known as home of the *santons*. The nativity scene is a widespread tradition in France, but Provence is the birthplace of this particular type of nativity scene. *Santons* are colored clay figures that complement the traditional Christmas crib.



St. Roch parishioner Dominique Schott of Indianapolis (right) enjoys 1996 Christmas dinner with the Delacour family in their apartment in Paris.

The figurines represent country couples dressed according to their profession. Around Joseph, Mary, Jesus and the animals, the fisherman and his wife look upon the scene with fish and net in hand. A baker and his wife come with dough and baguettes. A cobbler and wife bring shoes, while another couple offers freshly churned butter.

These figurines coming from the heart of the old country can be found in stores and homes throughout France. Yet, they are nearly always labeled according to their region of origin and are known as "*Santons of Provence*."

The Delacour family of Paris celebrates a typical French Christmas. They welcome their children home as well as aunts, uncles and cousins from nearby towns. They sit down to a traditional Christmas dinner of turkey, chestnuts, and *foie gras* (goose liver—an expensive delicacy). Their holiday

dinner is complemented by dusting off and serving a treasured wine from the cellar. For dessert, they enjoy *la bûche de Noël*—the Christmas log. This cake is rolled and decorated in the shape of a log.

Like most French families, the Delacours also exchange gifts and attend Mass together. The people of France also participate in the widespread traditions of writing letters to Santa Claus and waiting to open presents on Christmas morning.

Whether it be setting out the glass of schnapps for St. Nicholas or adding figures of the butcher and his wife to the family *santon* collection in front of the manger scene, the people living in each corner of France seem to offer a special tradition as the whole country awaits the arrival of the "*Divin Messie*!"

(Dominique Schott is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis.)

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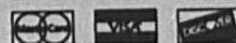
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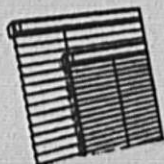
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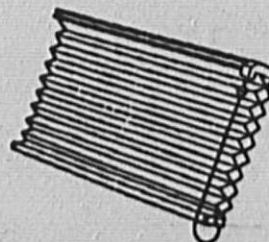
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Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Mon. the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests and religious sisters serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it.

BILEK, Sr., Robert L., 52, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 26. Fiancé of Doris Garrett. Father of Robert L. Jr., Christopher, Errin Bilek. Stepson of Josie Bilek. Brother of John, Larry Bilek, Rose Saenz, Bernadette Gilman.

BROWN, Norbert J., 74, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 9. Husband of Maxine Brown. Father of Mark J., Richard Brown, Nancy Cobler, Sue Thompson, Debbie Meadows. Brother of Arthur L. Brown, Luella Brockman. Grandfather of 15. Great-grandfather of 17.

CLEMMER, Carl C., 76, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Father of Michael R. Clemmer. Son of Cord Clemmer. Brother of Anne Emerich. Grandfather of two.

DAVIS, James H., 78, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Dec. 5. Husband of Ruth A. (Watson) Davis. Father of Carolyn Monaghan, Barbara Bowers, Mary R. Haller, Susan, James E., John Davis. Brother of Ina Ledbetter, Betty Stringer, Bernie Davis. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of two.

DYER, Patricia L. (Gootee), 68, St. Joseph, Covington, Nov. 28. Wife of Thomas E. Dyer Sr. Mother of Thomas E. Jr., David M., Stephen T. Dyer, Virginia M. Dyer-Flynn, Cheryl K. Richey, Theresa L. Dobbins, Sharon S. Daniels. Sister of Robert, Berdean, Bernard Gootee, Providence Sister Ann Jettette Gootee. Grandmother of 23. Great-grandmother of eight.

FIRSICH, Felicia A. (Ferkinhoff), 89, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 7. Mother of James Firsich, Glorian Koors, Iris Huneke. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 22.

HAEFLING, Dorothy E., 77, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 14. Sister of Ruth M. Manning. Aunt of Judy Kendrick, Sheila, John Manning.

HALL, William Roy, 89, St. Mary, Navilleton, Dec. 2. Father of Mary Farmer, Susie Forman, Regina Kercheval, Grace Mayfield, Daniel, John, Marvin Hall. Brother of Frank, Albert Hall, Nettie Brown. Grandfather of 46. Great-grandfather of 64. Great-great-grandfather of 11.

HIPSKIND, Irene Brusnigan, 93, St. Matthew, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of J. Norman, Timothy F., Dr. Jeannette Hipkind, Suzanne Southern. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 18.

HOOVLER, Elsie M., 83, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Wife of Cecil Hoovler. Mother of Roberta Hilton, Barbara Williams, Terese Davis, Janette Johnson, Beth Hillenmeyer, Charles, Eddie, Mike Hoovler. Sister of Helen Kress. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of 12.

KANE, Thomas R., 88, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Dec. 4. Husband of Julia E. (Speer) Kane. Father of Mary E. Begley, Rhodie Faust, Martha A. Foster, Nancy Ellis, Leo A., Henry S. Kane.

William Meyer was Father John's dad

William J. Meyer, 78, died on December 7. He was the father of Father John Meyer, pastor of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison.

A funeral Mass was celebrated at Prince of Peace Church in Madison on Dec. 11. Burial was in Riverview Cemetery in Aurora.

William Meyer is survived by his wife, Ruth M. Kaiser Meyer. Besides Father John, he leaves another son, James, and three daughters, Carla Stillwell, Paula Ryan and Kathryn Ryan. He had 12 grandchildren.

Grandfather of 15. Great-Grandfather of eight.

KAPPS, Louis J., 80, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Father of Sandra Herman, Linda Quinett, Pamela Hotseller, Lisa Bockman, Julie Coffey, John Kapps. Brother of Helen Mallory, Norma Scharf, Irma Dietrich. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of seven.

KASPER, Noah Daniel, Infant, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 8. Son of Bernard F. and Amy K. (Cheatham) Kasper. Grandson of Daniel and Joyce (Cloud) Cheatham.

KRESS, Michael Timothy, 51, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Brother of Joe, Jerry Kress, Rosemary Avila.

KRUM, Agnes C., 95, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 6.

LUSHECK, Martha M., 93, St. Martin, Guilford, Dec. 10. Mother of Kenneth Lusheck. Grandmother of eight.

MERKEL, Louise C., 72, Holy Family Church, Oldenburg, Dec. 10. Wife of Thomas W. Merkel. Mother of Gary Merkel, Lois

Regina Schoettelkotte was mother of Father John

Regina Schoettelkotte, 90, died in Batesville on Dec. 13. A funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Louis Church in Batesville on Dec. 16.

Mrs. Schoettelkotte is survived by three sons, including Father John B. Schoettelkotte, Maurice and Paul Schoettelkotte. Three daughters survive, Mary Bossert, Viola Fullekamp and Dorothy Schoettelkotte, as well as 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Johannigman. Sister of Emil, Leo, Allan Gehring, Alvina Wenning, Emma Biltz. Grandmother of seven.

MORRIS, James A., 66, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Husband of Leone (Mackowski) Morris. Father of James E., Carol Morris, Katherine Faulk. Brother of Patricia Muentzer. Grandfather of three.

POTTS, Rose Mary, 64, Holy Trinity, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Wife of Richard Potts. Mother of Alvin, William, Karen Potts, Duane Barrow, Dana Barrow, Wendy Beers, Shirley Mercer. Sister of Opal, Annabell Rees, Anna Price. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of four.

RECKARD, William Allen, 77, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 29. Father of William A. Gray, Dennis Reckard. Grandfather

of three. Great-grandfather of three.

SCHORR, Germaine B., 90, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 13. Sister of Altarose Voegelé.

SHUCK, George M., 81, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 4. Husband of Audra Shuck. Father of Janice Tucker, Nancy Potts, Deborah Shuck. Brother of Elizabeth Snyder. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of four.

SLATTON, Eutoka, 99, Holy Trinity, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 12. Great-great-grandmother of seven.

VOLK, Clarence G., 91, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 5. Father of Carolyn Hall. Grandfather of one. Great-grandfather of three.

WEINTRAUT, Mary Louise, 84, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 9.

The Active List, continued from page 29

Council and Court #191 of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver will sponsor the First Friday rosary, 5:15 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

Holy Angels Parish, Indianapolis, 740 W. 28th St., will hold exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m. to noon.

St. Joseph Parish, St. Joseph Hill, Sellersburg, 2605 St. Joe Rd. West, will hold First Friday eucharistic adoration following 8 a.m. Mass until noon.

Sacred Heart Parish, Indianapolis, 1530 Union St., will hold exposition of Blessed Sacrament following 8 a.m. Mass in the chapel, closing with Benediction at 5:15 p.m.

First Saturdays

St. Nicholas, Sunman, will have 8 a.m. Mass, praise and worship music followed by the Fatima Rosary. Monthly SACRED Gathering will follow in the parish school.

Apostolate of Fatima will hold holy hour, 2 p.m. in Little Flower Chapel, 13th & Bosart, Indianapolis.

Third Saturdays

The archdiocesan Pro-Life Office and St. Andrew Parish, Indianapolis, 3922 E. 38th St., will have a Mass for Life, 8:30 a.m., followed by a prayerful walk to the abortion clinic at 2951 E. 38th St. to pray the rosary, returning to St. Andrew for the Benediction.

Fourth Sundays

The Sacred Heart Fraternity of Secular Franciscans will gather in the Sacred Heart Parish chapel, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis, 3 p.m. Benediction and Franciscan service followed by business meeting and social. For information, call 317-547-6651.

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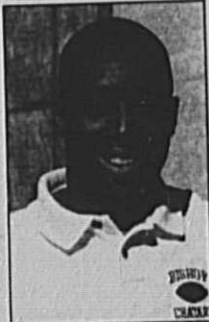
Chatard's Daniels is Indiana's 'Mr. Football'

By Mary Ann Wyand

Bishop Chatard High School senior DuJuan Daniels of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis was named the top high school football player in the state Dec. 15 by *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Indianapolis News*.

His selection marks the first time a Bishop Chatard student has earned the state football title.

DuJuan was honored with the No. 1 jersey and a trophy annually presented to Indiana's "Mr. Football" during a 2:45 p.m. ceremony Dec. 16 at the Indianapolis North Deanery interparochial high school.



DuJuan Daniels

The senior tailback and cornerback was the top rusher and scorer in the state this year.

His individual honor follows Bishop Chatard's state championship title in the Indiana High School Athletic Association's Class 3A football competition against Andrean High School Nov. 29 at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis.

During Chatard's 14-1 season this year, DuJuan achieved school single-season records in rushing yards and average yards per carry.

Averaging 8.04 yards, he totaled 2,509 yards during 15 games this fall. In the process, he earned state and national recognition.

"Mr. Football" winners are selected in statewide voting by head coaches of IHSAA teams and members of the media.

At 5'10" and 175 pounds, Daniels excels in football, basketball and track. He told *The Criterion* earlier in December that he is considering a number of offers to play [college] football but hasn't decided on a school yet. Bishop Chatard officials said DuJuan is being heavily recruited by several universities, including Indiana, Michigan and Notre Dame.

DuJuan said the considerable media attention this year was a new experience for him.

"Throughout my years at Chatard, I had never seen this type of exposure to the media and so much involvement from the students and alumni," he said.

"That's what really made this year so special, to see how Chatard came together during this football season."

Last summer and throughout the fall, DuJuan said, "We worked really hard, lifting weights and running and getting in condition for the season because we knew we had a lot of seniors coming back this year—a strong nucleus—and we felt we could contend for state. We had won sectionals two years in a row before this season, then this year we got over the regional and semi-state and made it to state. That was a great experience because the Chatard family really got behind us."

Four years ago, Chatard's freshman team only won two games all season, he said, but team members pledged to bring home a state title for their school as seniors.

The Chatard Trojans also were recognized by the city of Indianapolis and the City-County Council with keys to the city during a Dec. 15 presentation at the City-County Building.

The football team officially presented the state championship trophy and the proclamation from the city of Indianapolis to the school during the Dec. 16 convocation when DuJuan was honored for his offensive performance all year.

DuJuan's honors include setting school records for most yards rushed per game, with 325 yards, as well as a 3,900-yard career rushing record and 61 career touchdowns. He also holds school records for longest touchdown catch (89 yards); most rushing attempts for the season (3,211); most yards rushing for the season (1,721 yards); most touchdown receptions in a game (three); and most rushing touchdowns in a game (five).

He also was recognized by *USA Today* and was selected as a Prep Star Pre-Season All-American. He received All-City honors in 1995 as a second-team wide receiver and in 1996 as a first-team running back, and was an All-State wide receiver in 1996.

In addition to his football accomplishments, DuJuan has been a member of Bishop Chatard's basketball and track teams for four years.

Off the field, DuJuan maintains a 3.4 grade point average, making him an honor roll four-year student.

His class rank of 45 out of 147 students puts him in the top third of the senior class, and he is a 21st Century Scholar candidate.

During his high school years, DuJuan has also found time to serve as a peer mentor for the archdiocesan "A Promise to Keep" chastity program, and enjoyed talking with junior high school students about the importance of practicing abstinence until marriage.

He is a former student council member and has helped at St. Joan of Arc as an altar server.

DuJuan also coaches and volunteers in the concession stand for the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church's athletic programs for center-city youth.

He describes the Chatard football team's accomplishments as gifts from God, made possible by "knowing that the Lord is with us, and through him we can do whatever we want." †

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