



The

Criterion

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A Christmas greeting from Archbishop Buechlein

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas Day is not just another day. One would have to be pretty hard hearted not to be touched with a little of "the Christmas spirit," no matter what the circumstances. The long and beautiful tradition of the season, enhanced by warm music and beautiful decorations, the custom of sharing gifts and bountiful meals all lend a romantic air to Christmas.

Yet, being hard of heart is not out of the question for any of us. Being without faith and hope is not beyond any one of us. Indeed, Christmas is meaningless if we are without faith and hope. If viewed as a mere secular celebration it can even be a burden.

Christmas time gives us pause to measure the quality of our faith. Are we willing to see that the finest decorates a spiritual meaning of Christmas? Can we trace all that we know as Christmas celebration to the birth of Jesus? Can we genuflect to the Jesus who is born like one of us? Do we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior?

The Christmas season is a timely boost to our faith. Is it a live flame or perhaps merely a spark? Through every liturgical season of the church God offers us special grace, special help to deepen our faith. Our challenge is to look for and to accept the gift God offers us through the ministry of the church.

Surely the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas time is rooted in the fantastic gift God gave the human family when he gave his only Son for our salvation from sin and death. In the spirit of God's gift-giving we are led to give as a sign of our love for each other.

The whole evolution of the tradition of Santa Claus is rooted in a spiritual tradition of giving because of our love for each other. And God's gift of his only Son is our model. The spiritual call of Christmas is to live for God and for each other. The spiritual gift of Christmas is the help we need to do that.

A special Christmas gift awaits each of us. We find it in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. We find it in the celebration of Holy Mass. Wherever we are on Christmas day and throughout this season of special love, however distant we may be from loved ones, I think of our loved ones who have recently gone home to God, or loved ones who may serve the military in Bosnia—however separated we may feel from loved ones, we can truly meet them in church, in our prayers, especially at Mass and Holy Communion. Spiritual reunion is real reunion too.

Know that I shall meet all of you and your loved ones in my Christmas Masses and prayer. If you like, please come and join me in the celebration of Midnight Mass at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul. May the peace and joy of Christ be with you all! And God bless our New Year!



CNS photo from The National Galleries of Art

This depiction of the Nativity titled "The Adoration of the Shepherds" was painted on wood in the 15th century by an anonymous Italian artist. It is part of the Timken Collection at The National Gallery of Art in Washington.

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Day of Peace

In his annual World Day of Peace message, Pope John Paul II says that all children have a right to peace and love.

Seeking the Face of the Lord

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



Think about the meaning of Christmas

Are you frazzled by the hectic pace that has led up to Christmas and the holidays? Maybe it's the family preparations for bonifant meals; maybe it's the last minute scramble to get the shopping done and gifts wrapped; maybe it's the volunteered time to help make Christmas happen for the poor or the elderly or the home-bound who have no one to care for them; maybe it's getting some last minute tasks finished at work before the holidays set in. Maybe you just aren't able to organize.

Are you feeling a little down and you just aren't sure why? Perhaps you know exactly why. Maybe you've lost a loved one, a spouse or child or parent or dear friend, and the Christmas holidays become painful reminders of happy and loving times past; maybe you are spending your first Christmas as a divorcee or as a member of a recently broken family; maybe you have been betrayed by a dear friend; maybe you have just learned that you or a loved one have a grave illness, perhaps even terminal; maybe you are unhappy because of moral and spiritual failures.

Are you facing Christmas and the New Year with a lot of worry on your heart? Maybe you fear that the family financial burdens are going to become impossible; maybe you are afraid because there is so much tension and strife in your family; maybe you fear that a spouse is unfaithful, that there may be a divorce; maybe you fear physical abuse; maybe you fear failure at school or at work; maybe you struggle with moral weakness.

Are you facing Christmas and the New Year with the greatest sense of peace and joy that you can remember? Maybe there is a beautiful new child or grandchild; maybe there is newfound love with your spouse or a friend; maybe you have finally made the decision that sets your life on a peaceful journey; maybe you have said yes to God; maybe your year is finally successful.

Are you facing Christmas and the New Year with a sense that everything is pretty good now and you are counting your blessings? Maybe there is a sense that the family is at peace, work is going fine, school is going well enough, friends are supportive, the children are fine, your

health is okay. Maybe your personal life with God seems secure.

It is overwhelming to think of it, but our human family experiences all of this and more. As a human family we are affected by all of these feelings as we approach Christmas, 1995 and New Year 1996. The wonder of the birthday of Christ is the simple fact that it is a gift for every one of us, no matter how we feel right now. However, we have to remember that in order to discover this gift for ourselves, we have to get below the surface meaning of the mystery of Christmas. Wouldn't it be a shame if Christmas and the beginning of a New Year passed us by and the meaning of it all escaped us? I urge each of us to find a quiet place, a chair in a corner at home or a favorite spot in church, to sit down for a while and to think about the meaning of Christmas.

I doubt that the worry and anguish some of us feel could surpass what Mary and Joseph experienced as they, absolutely poor and expectant with child, approached that first Christmas in the City of David. It doesn't take a lot of thought to realize that because Mary and Joseph were people like us, that first Christmas Eve was not romantic, not like we tend to picture it. Mary and Joseph, now, in their Son's Kingdom for which we wait, are our friends in the communion of saints. They inspire us; they are with us in spirit; they are our friends who can console us when we are in trouble. It is heart-warming to think of that in prayer.

And there is the defenseless child who cannot speak and yet because he is the Eternal Word of the God our Father he is hope for everyone. Somebody once said the manger is a "chair of learning." Jesus is born poor and helpless. He teaches us that true happiness is not found in having lots of things. He teaches us that human power and control and domination over people do not bring happiness. The teacher in the manger tells us that happiness is born of humility. Whether we are poor without choice and forced to be detached, or whether we are able to choose not to be owned by the things that are ours, detachment and humility are the seeds of peace and happiness.

Editorial Commentary/John F. Fink, Editor, The Criterion

Selecting the top 10 news stories of the year

Editors don't always agree, obviously, or newspapers would all be much the same. Perhaps that's why we vote on the top stories of the year, to see how our choices stack up with those of our peers.

This year I voted with 28 other Catholic editors on what I thought were the top 10 religious news stories of the year. I had a few disagreements with the consensus.

I thought the top religious news story of 1995 was women and the church. According to the ballot sent out by Catholic News Service, that included the Vatican's declaration that the ban on women priests is infallible, the pope's letter apologizing for past sexism in the church, the various calls for the ordination of women, the Canon Law Society's report backing deaconesses, and the naming of a woman to head the Vatican delegation to the World Conference on Women in Beijing. I thought that was enough to put it number one.

The other editors, though, placed it in the number two slot and named the pope's trip to the United States and the United Nations number one. I thought that was an important story because I put it number two on my list, but I thought it was a bigger story for the dioceses on the east coast that he visited, and I thought the story on women and the church had more significance in the long run.

I put the issue of abortion in third place, but it didn't even make the top 10 list for the consensus, although one editor put it first on his list. The abortion story in 1995 included, among other things, the pope's encyclical "Evangelium Vitae," the U.S. bishops' new statement "Faithful for Life," and Congress' passage of a bill banning partial-birth abortions. Surely that belongs in the top 10.

The other editors put Bosnia in third place. I thought that was a very important story but not one of the top 10 religious news stories.

I did agree with the other editors on the next two top stories—the Conference on Women in Beijing and race in America. That latter story included the deep racial polarity expressed by the results of the O. J.

Simpson trial, the Million Man March, and Catholic initiatives to improve racial and ethnic understanding.

In sixth place on my list I put religion and public policy, but it came in ninth on the other editors' list. That story included the U.S. bishops' positions on policy issues, the forming of the Catholic Alliance, and the first national convention of the Catholic Campaign for America. The other editors put the federal government's shutdown over budget disagreements there.

I put in seventh place the U.S. bishops' three-year strategy to boost vocations to the priesthood and religious life. I think this is a very important story for the church but, when I chose it, I knew that it probably wouldn't make the top 10 list of the other editors. It didn't.

Both I and the other editors chose the welfare reform issue in eighth place. But my ninth and 10th place choices didn't make the other editors' list—the Middle East (the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and other acts of violence, and progress in the home rule process for Palestinians), ninth; and the revisions the U.S. bishops approved in the liturgy, 10th. The other editors placed health care in 10th place (I already mentioned that they had religion and public policy in ninth place).

I still like my selections. What stories would you choose?

Questions about marriage and divorce?

The Criterion and the Metropolitan Tribunal are planning a series of articles about marriage, divorce and remarriage. We invite readers to submit questions or concerns which they would like to see addressed in these articles. Please submit them by mail or fax. Submissions need not be signed.

The address is The Tribunal, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206. The fax number is (317) 236-1401.

Fr. Robert F. Borchertmeyer dies in automobile accident Dec. 14

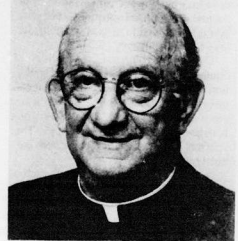
Father Robert F. Borchertmeyer, 63, pastor of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Parish in Indianapolis, died after an automobile accident on Thursday, Dec. 14. His funeral was at his parish church on Tuesday, Dec. 19. He was buried in the priests' circle at Calvary Cemetery.

Father Borchertmeyer was returning home from an Advent communal penance service at St. Thomas Church in Fortville. Driving on Masters Rd. he did not stop at the intersection of 96th St. The stop sign at that intersection had been knocked down earlier in the week and was propped up against a utility pole in such a way that the word "stop" would not have been visible to Father Borchertmeyer. His car was hit on the driver's side by a pickup truck driven by Denver H. Lee. Lee was not injured but a female passenger in the truck was injured slightly.

The priest's pet dog was with him in the car and kept rescue workers away from him until the dog could be calmed.

Father Borchertmeyer was a popular priest in his parish and in the Indianapolis community. For 14 years he was a panelist on the ecumenical "Focus on Faith" television program.

Father Borchertmeyer studied for the priesthood at St. Meinrad Seminary. He was ordained in 1958 and served first as assistant pastor at St. Mary's Parish in Indianapolis and then as assistant at St. Therese. In 1968 he was assigned to Our



Father Robert F. Borchertmeyer

Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. From 1969 to 1985 he served at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington where he was named co-pastor in 1973 and pastor in 1975. He had been at St. Therese since 1985.

Father Borchertmeyer was dean of the Indianapolis East Deanery from 1985 to 1992.

He is survived by a brother, John F. "Jack" Borchertmeyer.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Therese Church for the Father Robert Borchertmeyer Tuition Assistance Endowment Fund.

No issue next week

In accordance with our usual practice, The Criterion will not be published next week, Dec. 29. The next issue will be dated Jan. 5, 1996.

All offices in the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed after Christmas until Jan. 2, 1996.

Christmas supplement

The Criterion's annual Christmas supplement is included in this week's issue. The 12-page section includes nine pages of Christmas memories submitted by our readers.

The Criterion

12/22/95

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Indiana Catholic Conference board sets priorities

Issues include use of the state's surplus, welfare reform, Medicaid, support for children in non-public schools

By Coleen Williams

On Dec. 16, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) board of directors approved priority issues for the 1996 legislative session of the Indiana General Assembly.

Among the issues the board approved is a resolution on the use of the state surplus. Indiana has an estimated \$1.3 billion surplus which has prompted legislators to suggest either returning part of the surplus

to Hoosier taxpayers or keeping it in reserve for future needs.

The directors expressed concern that block grant proposals and other efforts at the federal level to balance the federal budget may limit Indiana's ability to provide for low-income and poor Hoosier families. This concern led them to approve a resolution that cautions against the use of the state surplus and urges the legislature to keep it in reserve to supplement the anticipated reductions in assistance programs.

The board decided that because of the short length of the 1996 session, it would continue to give a high priority to issues it approved for the previous session which are likely to resurface in January. Those issues include welfare reform, Medicaid, support for children in non-public schools, and prevention of child abuse.

The ICC will again watch the debate on welfare reform. It expects block granting of federal assistance programs, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Indiana's Medicaid program may also face cuts as a result of federal legislation.

The ICC will continue to support legislation which would establish school

choice voucher programs in pilot counties and funds for additional caseworkers to work with abused and neglected children.

In addition to those issues, the ICC will follow legislation to be introduced in the area of family law, such as counseling prior to marriage, court-ordered marriage counseling prior to divorce, and child support.

The ICC is the public policy arm of the Roman Catholic Church in Indiana. The board includes the active bishops of the state and a lay member from each diocese. Representatives from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein and James Loughery.

Archdiocesan Social Justice Task Force has its second meeting

Discusses ways to educate parishioners on social justice issues; advocacy

In its Dec. 7 meeting, the archdiocesan Social Justice Task Force discussed ways it could educate parishioners on social justice issues and advocacy.

To do so, the group decided to take a census of all parishes to learn who is interested in working actively on social justice issues. Then the task force will hold a workshop for those people based on the U.S. bishops' "Salt and Light" document.

The census will determine if the parishes have peace and justice committees, and whether they educate parishioners about related issues. It will ask what action the committees have been involved in during the past three years. And, if there is no committee, the questions will determine what group does similar outreach ministry.

The group hopes to sponsor a peace and justice workshop for priests. And it will try to work with those attending the Feb. 1 welfare reform talk by Jesuit Father Fred Kammer, the president of Catholic Charities USA, sponsored by the Indiana Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities.

St. Meinrad endowment to honor late Archabbot Gabriel Verkamp

An endowment has been established at St. Meinrad to honor the late Archabbot Gabriel Verkamp.

Benedictine Archabbot Lambert Reilly announced the establishment of the endowment for the provision and enrichment of infirmary care at St. Meinrad. It was initially funded by gifts the new archabbot received for his solemn blessing in June.

At the time of his election, Archabbot Lambert said that the spiritual and temporal welfare of the monks would be his primary concern.

Cited by Archabbot Lambert as having a great influence on his life, Archabbot Gabriel was known as a gentle "father" during his 1966-78 tenure. He was one of the first monks to live in the current monastery infirmary.

After ordination in Rome in 1929, Archabbot Gabriel taught for 10 years at St. Meinrad. He was pastor of St.

Benedict, Evansville for 20 years, becoming prior at St. Meinrad in 1963, until his election as abbot. After he resigned his abbatial office, he returned to St. Benedict as associate until his health declined.

Those wishing to make donations to the endowment may contact Dan Schipp, St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN 47577, or call 1-812-357-6501.



Archabbot Gabriel Verkamp, OSB

Mass schedule corrections

Several mistakes in the holiday Mass schedules published last week have been called to our attention. In case there were other errors, readers should check with their parishes before making plans to attend a particular Mass.

In Columbus, Christmas Masses at St. Bartholomew Oratory are scheduled for 5 and 11:30 p.m. Dec. 24 and at 9 a.m. Dec. 25, and at St. Columba Oratory at 5 p.m. Dec. 24 and 8:30 and 10 a.m. Dec. 25.

At St. Patrick's in Terre Haute, there is no 5:30 Mass on Sunday, Dec. 31.

At Our Lady of the Springs in French Lick, in addition to the Masses listed, there will be a 6 p.m. Mass on Sunday, Dec. 31.



Photo by Margaret Nelson

Indiana bishops gather for the June 16 meeting of the Indiana Catholic Conference board of directors (from left): Bishop John D'Arcy, Fort Wayne-South Bend; Bishop William Hiji, Lafayette; Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, Indianapolis; Bishop Dale Melczek, Gary; and Bishop Gerald Gettelinger, Evansville.

Christmas Blessings

May this season of Christmas fill you with the Peace and Joy of the Christ Child!



When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among us all,
To make music in the heart.

Remember the poor — especially the children — this Christmas time.

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From the Editor/John F. Fink

Trying to understand just who Jesus was



Since I've written a Christmas meditation in this week's Christmas supplement, I thought I'd devote this column to writing about what came after Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. It was the long period of time when the early Christians were trying to understand just who Jesus was.

When I first learned about the early heretics back in my grade-school days, I thought they were evil men. I now know better. They were very religious men who had a firm desire to understand religious truths. What they understood in their minds just didn't mesh with what the Catholic Church decided.

The church itself taught that Jesus was both God and man, but how is that possible? Was Jesus truly God who simply adopted human nature? Was he truly man, with all our human imperfections? It was these questions that were the basis of most of the early heresies about Jesus. Eventually the church decided that we humans cannot understand who Jesus was, that it is a mystery. How Jesus can be fully human yet fully divine cannot be understood by our finite human minds.

It took the church all of about 750 years to come to terms with these fundamental mysteries and doctrines. They were debated fiercely in the early ecumenical councils, from the First Council of Nicaea in 325, which condemned Arianism, to the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which condemned Adoptionism. Arianism, which claimed more followers than Catholicism during a lengthy period of time in the fourth century, denied that Jesus was truly God, while Adoptionism taught that the human Jesus was the Son of God by adoption but the divine Jesus was the Son of God naturally.

The early church, as well as the Roman emperors, took these debates seriously. St. Athanasius, who championed the divinity of Jesus against Arianism, was exiled five different times and sometimes was forced to hide and flee from place to place to escape Arian enemies.

Next came arguments about the number of natures Jesus had. The Catholic Church taught, and still teaches, that Jesus had two natures in one person. But how is that possible? Nestorius of Constantinople, for one, couldn't understand it. He taught that there were two distinct persons in Christ, the divine and the human. Furthermore, he said, Mary was the mother only of the

human person, not of the divine person. He was so convinced he was the one who was teaching orthodox Catholicism that he asked the pope to intervene on his side and to censure Cyril of Alexandria, who proclaimed that Jesus was only one person.

This heresy was decided at one of the most tumultuous councils in history, the Council of Ephesus in 431. After it was convened by Emperor Theodosius II, Cyril was the first to arrive in Ephesus. Not waiting for Nestorius and his followers to arrive, he convened the council and the bishops present quickly found Nestorius guilty of blasphemy. They proclaimed Mary the God-bearer, *Theotokos* in Greek, the mother of the one person who was truly God and truly man.

When Bishop John of Antioch arrived at the council, he was angry for the way Cyril ramrodded Nestorius' condemnation. He managed to take control, deposed Cyril and had him imprisoned for three months. Nestorius, muttering, "I cannot term him God who was 2 or 3 months old," left the council.

As usual after councils, there were some people who could not accept the decision of the Council of Ephesus. One of these was Eutyches, a monk who lived in Constantinople. He thought that Christ's divine nature absorbed his human nature, that his human body was different from normal human bodies. This heresy was known as Monophysitism.

So what do we do about this? Why, call another council, of course, in 449. This time, though, Emperor Theodosius invited only supporters of Eutyches, and this did not include the pope at the time, Leo I, who was to go down in history as Pope Leo the Great. This council accepted the teachings of Eutyches.

Pope Leo, though, refused to recognize the council, calling it the "robber synod," and insisted that another council be held. Theodosius ignored him but the next emperor, Marcian, called the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Pope Leo's representatives read Leo's *Tome* that asserted that "he who became man in the form of a servant is he who in the form of God created man." He asserted that the divine and human natures were united in Christ.

Later councils condemned other heresies that sprang up, such as Monothelism, which held that Christ had only one will, the divine—condemned in 681. It was all part of the way the church determined its teachings about just who Jesus was.

Everyday Faith/Lou Jacquet

My holiday card ritual: contact from an actual human being

It's time for my annual holiday ritual. No, not putting up the tree or the lights or decorating the house. That's not my wife's domain. Not buying Christmas gifts. It's not Dec. 23 yet. I'm talking about the most demanding thing I do every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas: write out 150 Christmas cards.

It has been a good 25 years now that I have been subjecting myself to this holiday ritual. The self-imposed rules: 1) everybody gets a hand-written note; and 2) no Xeroxed news-

letter gets mailed from this address.

As the years pass, and my address cards appear evermore tattered, the Christmas card process becomes an enlightening ritual. Many of the cards contain scribbled birth dates for the children of friends; the little whippersnappers are often of college age or beyond now.

In any case, I have the whole procedure down to a science. I address all the envelopes the weekend after Thanksgiving to give me something to do while the rest of the world is immersed in the seasonal shopping frenzy at the mall. Then I put stamps on each envelope and settle in to begin the long process of writing about 10 cards per day until I mail them all on the same date in mid-December.

I think I have noted before in this space that, as I write out each card, I pray for the person, couple, or family I am sending it to. I ask God to lighten their burdens, maximize their joys, and especially to bring back those of their children who have strayed from the faith they were blessed to be nurtured in. Inside each card, the message is nothing profound—just a couple of paragraphs updating life at our house, and a few lines asking about life at theirs. But there is something about writing a personal note that makes me feel good and seems to buoy the recipient as well.

Xeroxed newsletter? I tried that for a couple of Christmases. It was effective, heaven knows. But I felt like a machine sending out hollow, antisepic greetings. My newsletter always began, "I'm sorry that I don't have the time to write out cards this year." What an indictment of my life that was. If I didn't have enough time to spare a few minutes to nurture friendships that have often spanned 20 years and more, what did that say about my priorities?

So, in this age of computerization, mass productions, and holiday frenzy, I still write out my Christmas cards one card at a time. The process calms me amid the holiday crush, and reminds me annually that you cannot mass-produce caring. True, the letters I have let another 12 months go by without seeing or contacting this one or that friend. But they also help me recall that there are family members and friends scattered across this country who deserve a few minutes of my uninterrupted time to be contacted from the heart of an actual human being during this holy season.

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.

Ever afterwards, 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 Dickens observes at the conclusion of his story, "May that be truly said of us . . . every one!"

A View from the Center/Dan Conway

'A Christmas Carol' is a story of stewardship

We all remember the scene from old movies and TV specials. Two "portly gentlemen," as Charles Dickens calls them, enter the offices of Scrooge and 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 older miser asks. "Aren't the workhouses still in operation?"

"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.

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?"

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is about stewardship. It is about learning to care for (and be responsible for) all of God's creation. And, as Dickens makes very clear, "A Christmas Carol" is about more than just the sentimental (or commercial) "Christmas spirit" which 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. Nothing makes him happy. Nothing gives him peace.

There is only one thing that can save this miserable 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 years of lonely self-centeredness.

Fortunately, 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 help him to 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 this 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 recognizes 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.

"Not a farthing less," says Scrooge. "A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you."

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



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The Criterion



Point of View/ Cynthia Dewes

Is the gold of silence tarnished?

Simon and Garfunkel correctly began their '60s musical comment on the "Hollers" of silence with "Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again."

The popular recording duo understood that silence is not welcome in a society devoted to neon lights, with "people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening."

Is silence now anathema? I believe we have come to equate it with loneliness, unpopularity, and lack of productivity.

If silence is golden, why don't we value it more? We are a noisy culture. Loud music assaults our ears in the most solitary situations: while riding alone in an elevator, shopping, visiting a public restroom, or even being placed "on hold" on the telephone.

Would all this noise prevail if most of us really objected? Children today are astonished and incredulous when told by their elders that there was no television in the old days and, not only that, there was much less organized activity. Aside from work,

church or school, most people had to amuse themselves quietly. Homemade music, listening to the radio, or going out to the movies were among the few ways available to break the silence.

The fear of silence is so prevalent now that we hasten to eliminate it by creating 100-plus cable TV channels to surf through all hours of the day or night and 24-hour-a-day radio stations to blast non-stop, just in case.

From the moment we awaken to raucous comment and music on the clock-radio to the time we switch off "Nightline," we're enveloped by noise.

The car radio yaks on the way to work, and the computers hum and click and bong when we get there. No longer constrained by what used to be considered polite behavior in public, people shout to each other across streets and talk loudly in buses and restaurants.

It is interesting to note that "talk" shows have become so popular and numerous. They actually threaten the commanding hold of soaps on daytime television. Both these kinds of respectable voyeurism satisfy a mildly prurient fascination with the unknown and the unacceptable. But despite extravagant claims,

modes of Christ's presence transform us with the whole church leading us to glory.

When the "Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come" raises his spectral finger to point out Scrooge's tombstone, Scrooge falls to his knees. Clutching at the ghost, Scrooge pathetically utters his last-chance plea, a promise to live the conversion that the night of three apparitions has assigned.

Scrooge cries out: "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the past, present and future. The spirit of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone."

The prayer to reverse his fate is heard. The phantom's hood and dress dwindle into a bedpost. The bedpost is Scrooge's, the room his own; and "best and happiest of all, the time before him (is) his own, to make amends in!"

And Scrooge repeats: "I will live in the past, present and future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. . . Heaven and Christmastime be praised for this!" Every time we gather to partake of the eucharistic bread and wine, we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes in glory. Like the church year, we spiral forward one day at a time, one year at a time on our pilgrim march to the heavenly banquet.

The church year reminds us that we are fellow travelers. Along the way, sometimes we have to pick up people, and sometimes they pick us up. But we never have to wait until the next big feast to do that.

Every traveler—that is what Scrooge learned: that we are fellow travelers to the grave and beyond. Early in Dickens' novel, when Jacob Marley appears, his deceased mentor is the result of indignation: "There's more gravity than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

By the end of the novel, the converted Scrooge knows there was more of grave to his visions than of grace. Through visions of past, present and future, Scrooge learned community. That is the lesson the church year teaches us.

One day the church year will burst into a blaze of glory. No more time for lessons, then, because time will be no more. Word, minister, assembly and food will give way to a totally new presence of God. When the church year becomes eternity, God will indeed—in beautiful ways unimaginable—"bless us, everyone!"

(Critchlow is a member of SS. Peter & Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis.)

neither the talk shows nor the soaps provides much instruction, joy or inspiration.

As a social critic remarked, there's more talk and less conversation going on than ever before. Talk is only noise, but conversation is an opportunity to share information, ideas and insights with others, with ourselves, and most particularly with God.

In conversation we talk, but we also listen.

Silence is the wellspring of all conversation, interior or otherwise. We need it to sort out our thoughts and experiences, and to reflect on what we hear from many voices.

When we don't make time for silence in our lives, we feel stressed, frazzled, out of joint. Our work and our health

may suffer. Our relationships may go sour, and we may find ourselves in irritable conflict with our spouses, children and co-workers.

Even when we recognize the need for it, we may find silence hard to come by in a strident society.

But just like little children, we all need "quiet time" daily. Silence was the norm in a less technological society, easier to find. In fact, it was hard to escape.

Silence still is normal, essential to spiritual and physical well-being. But today we must work to create silence.

Silence is golden. But it's our job to keep it untarnished.

(Cynthia Dewes is a columnist for The Criterion and a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle.)

Why the rush to get over Christmas?

By Alice Bailley

During these last days of preparation, decoration and anticipation, it seems almost

unbelievable that the day after Christmas all symbols of rejoicing will be removed and shunted off by some people with a "thank heaven that's over" philosophy.

How would it be over when it just began? Christmas is not a one-day fad like Sadie Hawkins Day, or Be Kind to Your Dog Day, but is a hallowed season for celebrating the event that changed the world forever. So what's the rush?

It could be that those who jumped the gun weeks before (as in the place where outdoor lights have been winking and blinking day and night since before Thanksgiving) have been chafing at the bit to get it all out of sight and out of mind. What a dismal view! Certainly everyone is free to hate or remove adornments as they wish, but rushing them away is almost like gulping down a heavenly treat without savoring it.

A TV commercial bids us to "seize the

moment." The days following Christmas, when the feverish pace has cooled, are perfect for seizing the moment, for allowing the essence of Christmas to become more fully appreciated.

If the spirit is willing we can find moments for such contemplation. If not, the time will be gone; the magic faded. It may take a bit of waiting, but such inness will come, moments when, free of family needs, of kids waiting and jobs waiting, we can switch on crib and tree lights, flip off all others and settle down.

Thoughts will come, some of them profound. We may begin to see in twinkling lights reflections of the light of the world who gave us the faith and all that we have.

We may also find, there in that treasured oasis, simple solutions to what had been vexing problems. We may become more alert to threats to our faith by forces whose ultimate aim is not only merely to remove any vestige of Christianity in public places, but to destroy it. Under the guise of enlightenment or progress, beliefs or practices get whittled away, bit by bit, often so subtly we may not recognize the danger.

In this Christmas afterglow we can pray for wisdom to recognize threats, and for the courage to speak out against false statements wherever we find them. Seize the moment.

Light One Candle/ Fr. John Catoir, Director, The Christophers

If you feel sad this Christmas

It's normal to feel sad at times, especially at Christmas. Some people find

the Christmas season depressing for reasons that are difficult to explain. Some experience a nostalgia for happier days when the family was all together. Others feel worthless because they are not needed as they once were.

It's always important to remember that feelings are not facts. The fact is that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem to bring us light, happiness and eternal peace. He brought us baptism, that indelible character which binds us to him forever in a union of love. One may not feel the warmth of God's love, but he is loving us nevertheless.

The sacrament of confirmation assures us of the gift of God's strength on our journey through life. Our first Holy Communion and all the Communions of our lives were experiences when Christ nourished and consoled us with infinite tenderness. Jesus brought us the sacrament of reconciliation to wipe away our sins and make us into a new creation. These are facts.

We also tend to forget all the good things we have done throughout our life, cooperating with his graces year in and year out.

If you feel blue this Christmas, the most important thing to remember is that God is unchanging love. When the full meaning of this truth dawns on you, it just might awaken you from the doldrums. Your feelings may not brighten immediately, but they will in time.

Try to "live joyfully in all circum-

stances because of the knowledge of God's love," my favorite quote from St. Julian of Norwich. By focusing frequently on our blessings, we can learn to short-circuit the blues. Once we realize that we are destined for eternal bliss, the journey through life, though tedious and painful at times, becomes more bearable. Learn to control your thought. The thoughts you think will always affect your emotional life, so keep them bright.

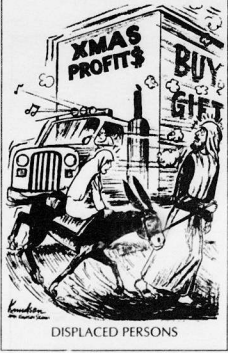
St. Augustine in his "Confessions" made this observation: "Imagine for a moment that all of nature suddenly grew still. Listen and hear creation saying: 'We did not make ourselves, he made us who abides forever.'"

Think of a beautiful sunset, or a mountain range carpeted in sparkling white majesty, or a tropical beach with its crystal blue water. All this is a reflection of God's beauty. Drink it in. When you are really down, look at an image of Jesus and hear him speaking directly to you in this way: "You are my beloved, look to me for refreshment and light. I am the way. I am your destiny. Live in my joy."

Think of your journey from infancy to childhood to adolescence and finally to adulthood. Step and think, you did not make yourself. The One who made you abides in you, and he calls you to abide in his love. He promises eternal happiness. These are good thoughts.

You may not be able to control your emotions directly, but you can control your thoughts and, when you do, your feelings will slowly move from sadness to joy.

(For a free copy of Fr. Christopher News Net "Live Joyfully," write to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, NY 10017.)



Cornucopia Cynthia Dewes

Let's go home for Christmas

"I'll be home for Christmas," warbles the popular song. It's popular because most of us can relate to going home for Christmas, either in fact or imagination.



Sometimes we need to define our terms. One person's "home" is certainly not another's, nor is it always "where the heart is."

Some of us think of home as the place where Mom and Dad or Grandma and Grandpa still live, waiting for us to visit them and replay Christmases past. Whether we return out of a sense of duty or the anticipation of real pleasure, we experience feelings of home every Christmas.

Looking at the same ol' overdecorated tree, tasting Aunt Tillie's boozy fruitcake, and even sniffing the dreaded figgy pudding place us immediately at home.

Others of us believe that home is where our beloved dwells, and all the little beloveds who came along later. We respond to the homely pleasures: sitting through Sunday school Christmas pageants; taking kids to see Santa among crowds of germ-ridden juveniles; and witnessing their delight on Christmas morning through the pounding heads of sleep deprivation.

Home for those of us who live alone can be an efficiency apartment, with Christmas songs playing on the radio and a votive candle placed next to a Christmas greeting bearing a Nativity scene. Sadly, home for others can even be a cardboard box over the heat

grate in the sidewalk of a large city.

Home may be an institution where we must live because of illness or incompetence. If we're wealthy, home may be several habitats in several locations, including yachts and private islands. And for some apocryphal saints, home was the pinnacle of a skinny pillar out in the desert. Whatever our home may be, we want to be there at Christmas time.

Movies, books and songs often refer to the need to go home for Christmas. Their storylines revolve around the challenges their heroes and heroines overcome on the way home in time for Midnight Mass or Christmas dinner. These fictional Christmas pilgrims even struggle toward surrogate homes such as

the ski lodge or the inn or wherever.

So what exactly is the attraction, sometimes even the compulsion, leading us home at Christmas? Is it Mom's food? Curiosity about old haunts? The desire to be treated as a guest? A chance to show off the new baby? What?

The climax of the classic Christmas movie, "It's a Wonderful Life," occurs in George Bailey's home, where he's surrounded by loving family and friends. George's is the quintessential "home" we all seek, in fact and in fiction, because it's a place of security and truth.

It's equally symbolic that Christ was born "at home," in a place of security and truth. He was brought to human birth by a loving mother, and protected by a generous father. He was paid homage as God's own son by the oxen and sheep and other creatures of his making. Men humble and great, also recognizing him, sought him out to worship.

We feel a natural urge to go home at Christmas because Christ is our security and our truth. He is our home.



Caitlin and Brianne Kovacs visit Santa as part of a Dec. 16 Home School Association program at St. Christopher Parish in Speedway. Two hundred parish children had breakfast and a visit with Santa, working at craft tables while they waited. Proceeds went to the Holy Family Shelter.

Photo by Margaret Nelson



Taking part in Good Shepherd Parish's Advent Prayer Partnership are (from left) Mike Taylor, Fran Krebs, Wendy and Katrina Taylor. Participating families and individuals drew names, agreeing to pray throughout the Advent season and send a Christmas card to the prayer partner. Krebs is praying a rosary for the Taylor family each day during Advent.

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Check It Out...

Sacred Heart Church in Indianapolis will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with a family Mass and children's choir at 5:30 p.m., Dec. 24. Later that evening at 11:30 p.m., the choir will perform its annual Christmas concert before midnight Mass.

Marriage Ministries International will present "Married for Life Outreach," at 7 p.m., Dec. 28, at Faith Community Church, 6801 S. East St., in Indianapolis. For more information call 317-882-8518 or 317-787-6229.

For those who are practicing centering prayer and would like more intense experience, a retreat will be offered Jan. 12-21 at the Beech Grove Benedictine

Center in Beech Grove. The program will include centering prayer three times daily and video tapes of Father Thomas Keating on "The Spiritual Journey." Participants must have prior attendance at an introductory workshop and be currently practicing centering prayer. The cost is \$350 per person. For more information call 317-788-7581.

"Peace: The Benedictine Way," a retreat that will explore St. Benedict's plan for wholeness and happiness that has survived through time, will be offered Jan. 9-11, at the St. Jude Guest House at St. Meinrad, Benedictine Father Eric Lies is the presenter. For more information call 1-800-581-6906 or 812-357-6585.

VIPS...



Edwin H. and Margaret Enneking will celebrate their 50th anniversary Dec. 30 with a 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg. A reception will follow in Father Kasper Hall in St. Lawrence School. They were married Dec. 29, 1945, at Holy Name Church in Louisville, Ky. The couple has a daughter and three grandchildren.

Providence Sister Julia Kramer received her nursing degree "with highest honors" from the Indiana University School of Nursing on the Indiana University Purdue University at

Indianapolis campus Dec. 16. Sister Julia is a former faculty member at Secena High School, where she taught math from 1986 to 1991.



Robert A. and Eleanor Reimer will celebrate their 50th anniversary Dec. 29 with a dinner dance at the Columbia Club in Indianapolis. The couple was married Dec. 29, 1945 at Sacred Heart Church in Indianapolis. Mr. and Mrs. Reimer are parishioners at St. Barnabas in Indianapolis. They have two children: Kathleen Shank and Barbara Glanz. The couple also has five grandchildren.

People Who Live Their Faith

'Just take one step, the Lord will do the rest'

By Margaret Nelson

When people think of Bill Spangler, the chairperson of the archdiocesan Social Justice Task Force, they think of someone who helps feed the poor.

That's because he works with a retired Baptist minister on the Food Link program. And he has St. Luke parishioners growing food on the parish property to help feed the poor in Indianapolis.

"One of the most important things we do is the Food Link program," said Spangler. He said that helping those less fortunate is inspirational.

"I have learned something about my journey of faith, which became pronounced five or six years ago," he said. "If you just open yourself to the experience—if you take one step—the Lord will do the rest."

Spangler said that people who are participating in service projects worry. They want to see the fruits of their own actions.

"I've learned just to take the first steps and be open," he said. "The Lord will work with you. He will take the project and make it more wonderful than you ever imagined!"

As "evidence" he talks about his experience. "It all started when some St. Luke parishioners decided to cook breakfast one Saturday a month at the Mt. Olive Crisis Care Center," Spangler said. "Reverend Lucas Newsome had a project. We'd meet and help cook breakfast. Afterwards, he'd pick up bread from Kroger and distribute it to people on the street and the needy."

The project has multiplied. They recently received a grant for a refrigerated truck, which should arrive before Christmas, to help with the retired minister's project.

Spangler said people would think one person with that idea could not possibly achieve what Rev. Newsome has. "But there was need and people opened themselves up to the need and opened themselves to the possibilities."

"I guess what I've learned through this program is to really trust in the Lord to take care of things," he said. "If you start with a reasonable idea, don't worry so much about how to get it done."

Now it is possible to get extra food from stores out to people the same day, he said. "We deal directly with people and their needs. We use food for our calling card. We give people



William S. Spangler

confidence to talk with us about other needs."

Spangler told of working with Rev. Newsome to help people with drug, alcohol and other problems. "They open their hearts to us; they confide in us; they ask for help."

He remembers a family situation about this time two years ago. The kids asked for help because both parents were drug addicts. The lights were off; the water was off. The kids had to study by candlelight.

The Food Link men were able to get them into a better home and get the lights on. Rev. Newsome "continually showed his love for the people. He went by the house and eventually got the parents jobs. That was one-on-one love. That's the thing we need to practice more."

"When you experience that need and see that people can be redeemed and saved, then it's got to move you toward social justice," Spangler said.

"We have to create an environment in which people can be saved. We have to provide enough for their basic needs—with love—to open them up to further progress."

"We have to value our children above all," he said. "It's an outrage that we can think of spending \$1 million on a single bomber and not have enough for childhood immunization. The wealthiest nation in the world has the worst child mortality rate. What does that say about our priorities?"

"One of the things we haven't done enough of—and we're

all guilty to some extent—is treat people like people—God's creation." He said the faithful should not just be *against* abortion, but *for* life.

"Social justice at its best leads by inspiring people to do what is right," said Spangler. "Social justice is nothing more than paying each human being the love and respect that he or she is due. I think we're led best when we are inspired. Social justice isn't an onerous burden. The Gospel of life isn't a negative. It presents a positive picture of the world filled with faith and love."

But he said he is not trying to convey the idea that justice is not going to cost us anything. "It will cost each one of us love and work."

But Spangler said it is necessary, unless "we want to bring our children up in a world dominated by fear." He said, "All evils are a result of failure to respect and love people."

"My children motivate me," he said. "I look in their faces and want a better world for them. That doesn't come from just dreaming about it. It comes from prayer, work, and a belief that we can build the city of God."

"We are so much more powerful with the grace of God than we give ourselves credit for being," he said.

Spangler said his own work for justice was "no grand design" on his part. "Father Steve Schwab asked me to work on the first Christian Service Commission at St. Luke. That invitation opened up my life. It was a casual conversation."

It has shown Spangler that "it's important to ask people to do things—to give one-on-one suggestions to people."

He has chaired St. Luke's Christian Service Commission for about four years and coordinated efforts for a North Deanery Peace and Justice task force. This fall, he began chairing the new archdiocesan Social Justice Task Force.

At St. Luke, he is a eucharistic minister and lector. He has two children, Rita Rose, 14, and Will, 11, both students at St. Luke.

"They are my two great blessings along with my wife, Pam, who also volunteers," Spangler said. "We are both given strength by the faith community we are part of." They are members of a faith sharing group with five other couples. "That is a huge source of strength for me."

"They are all very important: the family, faith sharing, and church," said Bill Spangler. "They give me the strength to move outward."

Christmas Greetings from Archabbot Lambert and the monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.



Saint Meinrad

O my child, my delight!
How do I hold you, the Almighty?
How do I nourish you, the nourishment of all that lives?
How can I wrap you in swaddling bands,
who with the clouds encompass the whole earth?

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Parish Profile

Seymour Deanery

St. Joseph is Catholic presence in Jennings Co.

By Millie Harmon

"Over the river and through the hills to Jesus' house we go."

This traditional holiday carol, with a "minor" word change, might just be the best tune parishioners of St. Joseph's Parish of Jennings County should sing on their way to Sunday Mass.

Located in the southwestern part of the county, in North Vernon, considered the fastest growing community in the United States, St. Joseph Parish truly enjoys the majestic beauty of God's nature. Sprawling farms, grazing horses, wonderful hills and valleys are neighbors to this parish of 110 families.

St. Joseph's (St. James' until 1892) was founded in 1850 when a group of St. Catherine's parishioners wanted to build a brick church.

Originally, the Irish, who were railroad workers, had built St. Catherine's out of wood in 1841. That was in keeping with the Irish tradition of being able to take the church apart and literally "take it with them" as they moved down the line to add more tracks.



Father Robert Drewes

But St. Catherine's German parishioners, who were farmers, wanted stability and a church built of bricks and mortar. Hence, in 1850, the Germans left St. Catherine's and built a church out of logs, named St. James, and began saving money to build a brick church.

They accomplished their goal in 1892 and renamed the brick church (seating capacity 272) St. Joseph's, after its pastor at the time, Father Joseph Thie.

The first pastor of St. Joseph was Father Alphonsus Munsch, who had helped found several Indiana parishes.

By the mid 1860s, the parish's adjoining cemetery was nearly full and land was purchased (\$1,450.00) to begin a new cemetery. Early in 1890, the parish inaugurated plans to erect a brick church, the present St. Joseph's Church, on this acreage.

Many of its furnishings were donated by parishioners, including the altar, windows, wooden benches and front doors. Between 1906-13 a school was built for the children to attend in the warm weather. Each spring, nuns taught religion to area children in a three-week session and conducted beautiful May crowning ceremonies for them to participate in. This school was torn down in the 1960s.

In 1930, St. Joseph parishioners removed the church's towering steeple which was in need of repair, and replaced it with the present structure. Following Vatican II, the church was remodeled in 1967. A new tabernacle was purchased and new pews were installed.

Today, St. Joseph's shares the faith building process with the mission church of St. Anne, the first Catholic church in Jennings County and St. Mary's of North Vernon.

Father James Ameson, who retired in 1993, was St. Joe's last resident pastor. Presently, Father Robert Drewes, pastor of St. Mary's, North Vernon, is the administrator of St. Anne's and St. Joseph's.

"The parishioners are very eager to help; they have a real sense of commitment," said Father Drewes. "It is a very positive situation because people are willing to carry the ball."

Felicia Vogel is administrative assistant to Father Drewes. Vogel married into a family which has always supported the parish. Her parents-in-law, Ed and Stella Vogel, are in charge of cemetery upkeep. Ed recently built a crib for the indoor nativity scene. Stella is chair of the spiritual life ministry.

"I have a banking background," said Felicia. "I was hired to pay bills and keep books." Being a detail oriented person with a paper trail for everything, Vogel knows she was a natural for the job.

Prior to this, she was involved in church ministry as lector, eucharistic minister and choir director.

A "part-timer," Felicia attends several committee meetings including the pastoral council, stewardship (which she is helping to form), finance and all executive committee meetings.

Though St. Joseph's has not had a resident pastor since 1993, it is enjoying the benefits of a sacramental minister, Father

Father James Meade (from left), Stella and Ed Vogel and Felicia Vogel play active roles in the life of St. Joseph, Jennings County.



Photos by Millie Harmon

James Meade, a visiting priest from the Diocese of Gary and a student at Indiana University, Bloomington. He has been living in St. Joe's rectory since 1993, but will return to the Gary Diocese in May.

As a sacramental minister, Father Meade says daily and Sunday Mass at St. Joe's and is a visiting priest at St. Anne's on Sundays. He is involved in sacramental preparation and administration of the sacraments.

"This is such a great place," said Father Meade. "Everyone is relaxed to everyone else. Where I'm from there is so much change; here, the people you work with, you see their family names on the tombstone."

Everytime this native of Dyer steps outside his door and views his beautiful surroundings, he knows he'll never have it quite so good again.

And he understands exactly what the people mean when they call Father Drewes "the Catholic Church in Jennings County."

Father Meade has clearly enjoyed his work and life experiences with Father Drewes and the parishioners these past few years.

Originally, Father Meade's diocese did not want him to study civil law. He was assigned to St. John's in northern Indiana. "Before Mass, I'd pray to St. Anne's statue: Let me go to law school," explained Father Meade. "After Mass, I would turn to St. Joe's statue, the defender and protector of our faith, and pray to him: Let me go to study law."

Was it a coincidence that Father Meade ended up at St. Anne and St. Joe?

Father Meade thinks not. "I feel God loves this parish very much," said Father Meade. "He made sure there would be someone to help take care of his people."

But in spring, Father Meade will leave and once more St. Joseph's will face the possibility of no resident priest.

"The parish definitely is facing a transi-



Patron saint of St. Joseph, Jennings County

tion regarding pastoral ministry," said Father Drewes. "We are trying to be ready for it; we may have a parish life coordinator. And there is always a possibility we may have another sacramental minister."

Felicia Vogel agreed that the unknown future was the biggest negative; however, she feels there will always be a need for her parish church.

"We are in the middle: With the new industry, plus Walmart and the Tanger Outlet, our parish population could grow," said Vogel.

There are many positive things happening in this parish to encourage that growth.

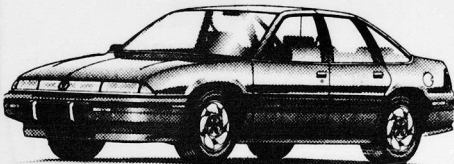
The pastoral council, founded July 1995, is eagerly assuming its leadership role by seeking to unite its parishioners and involve them in the larger community in a positive way.

The newly-formed Stewardship Committee is eager to help its parish grow in time, talent and treasure.

Religious education for elementary and junior high continues to thrive with Anita Boye in charge. For "Spirit of Advent" the youths collected canned food and paper products for the needy. These gifts were brought up during the Offertory. A living rosary is prayed and is a very effective experience for all who participate.

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A youth ministry program is being rejuvenated and the Boy Scout program is very successful, with many scouts winning awards.

The Rosary Society reaches out to the parish and local community with support of auctions, preparing funeral luncheons, and conducting rummage sales.

The society decorates for the church seasons, orders church banners, altar cloths, vestments, creates a Christmas bag of treats for children in religious education; and holds an annual Christmas craft bazaar.

Many parishioners are active in St. Vincent de Paul.

Every summer, the Knights of Columbus sponsors an old fashioned Family Day complete with turtle races, greased pigs, horse and buggy hayrides, and the "hay throw," a contest to see who can throw a 50-pound bale of hay over a volleyball net.

Father Meade knows he can't. But hay throwing and volleyball nets aside, Father Meade knows this parish can overcome any challenge it may meet this spring.

He would like to see the cooperation among St. Anne's, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's continue.

"We are three separate places, we are individuals, but we work together in some areas," said Father Meade. One example: St. Joe's and many St. Mary's pastoral councils both meet on the same evening.

Father Meade would like to see more cooperation, especially among the religious education programs.

Acknowledging the need for each parish to maintain a strong identity and yet create a spirit of cooperation under a common administrator are definitely challenging agendas.

But to this temporary and most welcomed visitor from the north, the challenge provides an opportunity to give Jesus and his way of life some positive publicity.

Museum features St. Nicholas customs

By Mary Ann Wyand

The fourth century Bishop of Myra would no doubt be amazed by the elaborate display in his honor at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

St. Nicholas customs from many countries are featured in the museum's "Jolly Days" exhibit continuing until Jan. 7.

The exhibit offers an opportunity for museum visitors to explore Christmas traditions from their ancestors' homelands.

In 16th century England, for example, it was unpopular to celebrate any occasion connected with a saint, so St. Nicholas was instead called Father Christmas. His miter was replaced with a floral headpiece, but his flowing white beard remained the same.

Traditional St. Nicholas customs from the United States, England, the Scandinavian countries, and other areas of the world featured in the exhibit combine for a retrospective look - how many different peoples celebrate the season of giving.

The museum is located at 30th and Meridian streets and is open from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. It is closed on Monday. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for senior citizens, and \$3 for children ages 2-17. Children under 2 are admitted free.

"Jolly Days" also includes a giant slide, teddy bear display, and other seasonal decorations and activities.

There's even an ornate display dedicated to the Three Wise Men, who are shown bearing gifts for the Christ child. This exhibit helps children visualize the story of the Nativity, and in so doing honors the birth of Jesus.

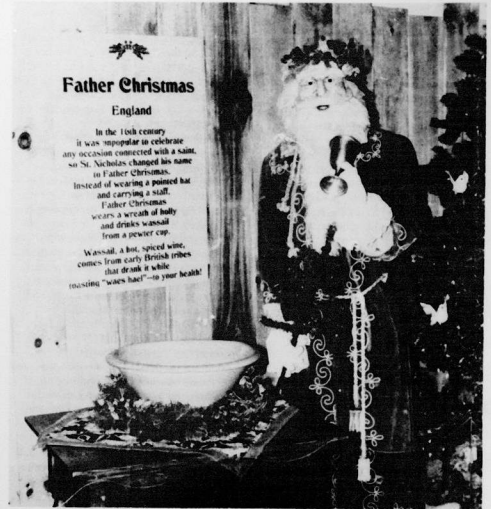


Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

England's Father Christmas raises a pewter cup of wassail to toast someone's health in the "Jolly Days" exhibit at The Children's Museum in Indianapolis. The exhibit features Christmas traditions from many countries. It will remain on display until Jan. 7. In 16th century England, it was unpopular to celebrate any occasion connected with a saint, so St. Nicholas was instead called Father Christmas.

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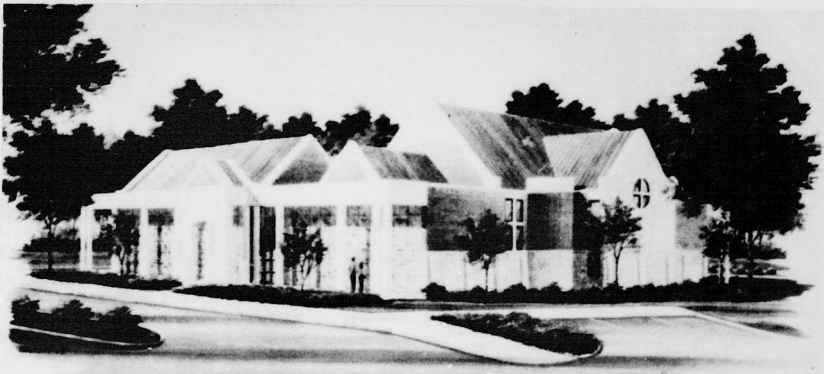
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Lourdes parishioner expresses faith via art

By Mary Ann Wyand

Scripture and icons inspire Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner and gifted painter E. Adele Schluge of Indianapolis. The talented artist said she prays while she paints and loves to create watercolors based on verses from the Old and New Testaments.

Schluge's beautiful paintings of the Christmas story, St. Nicholas, a bevy of angels, and a variety of biblical stories decorate her home. Some are sold as hand-painted prints or limited-edition lithographs.

Her watercolor of "Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors" was purchased by the Museum of American Folk Art shop in New York and exhibited in a window at Rockefeller Plaza. Another watercolor of "Moses in the Rushes" was published in *Country Living* magazine in a December 1987 feature on biblical art in America.

Schluge paints at her kitchen table beside an east window overlooking a wooded neighborhood in historic Irvington. She enjoys recreating memories and scenes from her childhood and loves to draw her four children and the family cat.

She might spend a hot afternoon in July painting a charming picture of St. Nicholas, the fourth-century Bishop of Myra, but during Advent she stores her painting supplies and focuses on family preparations for Christmas.

"In December I just concentrate on my family and going into the holidays peacefully," Schluge said. "I hope to illustrate some children's books someday, but right now I think of motherhood as my main career. I paint when I can fit it in my

schedule. I am a mother first and then an artist. I think my influence as a mother is more important than any painting I would ever sell. Right now my time with our four children—Katie, Caroline, John and Betsy—is a priority, and I am thankful for my husband Lee's support."

Celebrating holidays with family members inspired her first set of lithographs in 1988. After completing "A Holiday Collection," she began painting angels and biblical figures based on narratives about the Creation, Noah's Ark, and Jonah and the Great Fish.

"Angels of the Seasons," her latest set of lithographs, depicts angels in whimsical settings. Completed in 1993, the pictures feature angels sprinkling snow in winter, cradling a baby amidst spring blossoms, strumming a harp in summer fields, and harvesting fruits in the autumn.

"My biblical art is mostly taken from the Psalms," Schluge said. "I've also painted Old Testament stories, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the theme of when Christ comes again. I also love the peaceable kingdom theme from Isaiah, 'the lion will lie down with the lamb,' which is a very typical early American art theme."

Before sitting down at her kitchen table to draw and paint, Schluge said she often reads Scripture and reflects on its meanings. Then she expresses it in her art.

"It's been encouraging to me to see the growing interest in art with biblical and Christian themes," she said. "I love the idea of showing the Lord's protection in my art. I painted Psalm 27 about the Lord lighting the way and the importance of seeking the house of the Lord."



Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner Adele Schluge of Indianapolis displays her seasonal art featuring the Christmas story, St. Nicholas, and angels during St. Joan of Arc's French Market last September. Schluge stores her painting supplies during Advent so she can focus on the season and her family.

Schluge said she tries to use her artistic talents to glorify God, express her hope for world peace, and promote respect for life.

"I hope that I can project peace and the hope of Christ coming back someday," she said. "On one of my favorite paintings, I put a paraphrase from Isaiah around the edge which said, 'One day there will be perfect peace, there will be no need for weapons or war, there will be no more hunger, and every child will be cherished.' I was really excited when a woman bought that painting, because I had painted an expectant mother and you could see the little baby nestled in her womb. Christ was coming on clouds, like a chariot, and because of his coming all the children will be safe. It was a chance to express my reverence for life."

She also promoted respect for life in a lithograph of an angel holding a baby. While painting, Schluge said she

"prays and talks to God" and asks for his help with her work. She always wears a cross and Marian medal and enjoys reading the Bible.

"A couple of weeks ago, we had a day of reflection at Lourdes," she said. "The theme was 'Seek the Face of the Lord,' the archbishop's motto. Later I painted a face of Christ that was almost an icon in style. I don't use the term 'icon' lightly. My painting was just of the face. I felt like he looked very caring and loving."

Adele Schluge sells most of her paintings, hand-painted prints, and limited-edition lithographs, but said she will never part with a crayon rendering of the Mother and Child because it is one of her favorite works.

"I got out of bed one night to draw it," she said, smiling. "It was the middle of the night, and it just came to me, and it was important that I draw it."

The Criterion staff
wishes you all the
blessings of the season!

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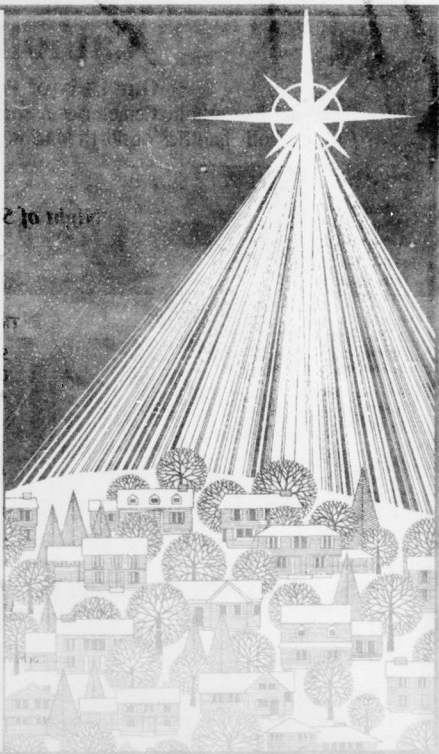
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Celebrate *His Birth*



Photo by Catholic News Service

Night of Stars, Heaven's Light

**Virgin Mother
Full of grace
Hallows now
This humble place.**

**Shepherds come
On bended knee
As angels chant
Their litany.**

**Night of stars,
Heaven's Light,
Love is born
To us this night.**

**Love is starlight,
Love is bright.
Prince of Peace
Will come tonight.**

By Arlene Locke

(Arlene Locke is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.)

The Criterion Christmas Supplement

The creche isn't just for children

The creche combines elements found in the two narratives related by Luke and Matthew

By John F. Fink

St. Francis of Assisi is sometimes credited with carving and building the first creche, the crib set that depicts Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. It is said that he considered it an excellent way to teach the meaning of Jesus' birth.

The creche continues to fill that role today. Of course, children like to see the figures and we can teach them as we explain the role of each one. But a meditation on the creche can also be useful for adults who want to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas.

The creche tells the full story of Jesus' birth better than any one of the Gospels because it typically combines elements from both the Gospel According to Matthew and the Gospel According to Luke. These are the only two Gospels that say anything about Jesus' birth.

The prologue to the Gospel According to John gives a theological explanation of the Incarnation, emphasizing that the Word who was made flesh was the same God of creation who existed from the beginning. But it doesn't narrate the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Only Matthew and Luke do that.

Since Luke's and Matthew's Gospels tell the story of Jesus' birth so differently, the manger is able to select its cast of characters from each. Thus, the shepherds and the angels come from Luke's Gospel while the Magi and their gifts come from Matthew's Gospel.

There are, however, some details in the



Photo by Margaret Nelson

The creche at the Cathedral of St. Peter & Paul in Indianapolis. The creche tells the full story of Jesus' birth better than any one of the Gospels

of Matthew and Luke because it combines the elements of the two infancy narratives.

Gospels that cannot be depicted in the manger scene. One of those details is in both infancy narratives—the teaching that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, that Mary remained a virgin and that Jesus had no human father. Luke presents that doctrine of Christianity during his story of the Annunciation when Gabriel tells Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). Matthew has an angel appearing to Joseph in a dream with the words, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her" (Mt 1:20).

The choice of a stable instead of a house in most creches is taken from Luke's Gospel. Matthew has Mary and Joseph living in a house in Bethlehem, while Luke tells us about a huge census that requires Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem—despite the fact that Mary's time to deliver is so near. Nevertheless, both Gospels make it clear that Jesus was born in a stable, to fulfill scriptural prophecies that the Jew's messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Although the stable in which Jesus was born was actually a cave, we are accustomed to identifying it with a barn, complete with animals. Indeed, a manger is nothing more than a feeding trough for animals and Luke tells us that Mary "wrapped [Jesus] in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger" (Lk 2:7). Most creches include both an ox and an ass. Few of us consider that there are there to recall what Isaiah wrote: "The ox knows its owner, and an ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people has not understood" (Is 1:3).

We sometimes pass over those "swaddling clothes" without much thought. My Bible has a footnote that says that "there may be an allusion here to the birth of another descendant of David, his son Solomon, who though a great king was wrapped in swaddling clothes like any other infant." In the Book of Wisdom (which was written less than 50 years before Jesus' birth and was widely known), Solomon is said to declare: "I was nurtured in swaddling clothes, with every care" (Wis 7:4).

Every creche has shepherds, of course, along with their sheep. It is typical of Luke to have shepherds in his story because no Gospel writer was as concerned as was Luke with the outcast, the poor, the sinner or the afflicted. And shepherds were looked down upon by the Jews of Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth. After all, they had to take care of the sheep even on the Sabbath. Furthermore, they couldn't observe all the Jewish dietary and cleansing rules while living in the fields with the sheep. They were poor and they were outcasts, but they were the ones to whom the angels announced the birth of the Savior.

Matthew, on the other hand, tells us the story of the Magi, astrologers from the East who followed a new star to Jerusalem, where they met with King Herod, and then continued on to Bethlehem. (Herod, by the way, died in the year 4 B.C., so it is believed that Jesus probably was born around 7 B.C.) When they arrived at the house in

Bethlehem, they prostrated themselves in front of Jesus and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Since there were three gifts, it has always been assumed that there were three Magi (although Matthew doesn't say so), and the creche includes them in its cast of characters—sometimes with their camels. The Magi's star is also positioned above the creche.

These characters have multiple functions in telling the story of Jesus' birth. First of all, they are not Jews; they are gentiles, so they represent you and me and all the rest of the non-Jewish world that Christianity would appeal to in the future.

They are also from "the East," although Matthew is no more specific than that. Perhaps they were from Persia (modern Iran) since the word "magi" was originally a designation of the Persian priestly caste. There's a vast land east of Palestine from which they could have come.

(The story of the Magi played an important role in saving the Church of the Nativity from destruction. This is the church built by Constantine's mother, Helena, over the site of Jesus' birth. In the year 614 the Persians invaded the Holy Land and destroyed about 300 Christian churches, but they spared the Church of the Nativity because there was a mosaic scene of the adoration of the Magi in the church that showed the Magi in Persian costumes.)

Matthew also undoubtedly included the story of the Magi in his Gospel in order to recall the visits received by Solomon. The First Book of Kings tells us, "Men from all nations came to hear Solomon's wisdom, and he received gifts from all the kings of the world, who heard of his wisdom" (1 Kgs 5:14). Further on, in chapter 10, we learn that the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. Ruler of a principality in what is now Yemen, she "arrived in Jerusalem with a very numerous retinue, and with camels bearing spices, a large amount of gold, and precious stones" (1 Kgs 10:2).

Throughout his Gospel, Matthew was intent on showing how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures. Thus, when the Magi fell prostrate to pay Jesus homage, it recalled Isaiah's words, "Kings will be your foster fathers. . . . Bowing to the ground, they shall worship you" (Is 49:23). There was also this line in the Book of Psalms: "The kings of Sheba and Saba will offer gifts; all kings will do him homage" (Ps 72:11).

The creche isn't just for children. We can all benefit from meditating on its figures.



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Readers share their special Christmas memories

Christmas Store patron receives holiday miracle

By Donna Novotney

We were frantically filling the last of the shelves at the Terre Haute Deane Catholic Charities annual Christmas Store. The customers would soon be coming in to shop for their free gifts. For some of them, it would be the only Christmas presents they and their children would have that year.

Marcella Evard of Terre Haute, a member of the National Council of Catholic Women and a Christmas Store volunteer, had just opened the last box left over from the previous year.

"Here are the shoes again," she said.

"We've had them for four years." She held up a pair of shiny new men's black leather oxfords. They were such expensive-looking shoes, and we couldn't believe we still had them. They were a very odd size and simply wouldn't fit any man who had tried them.

"Maybe if we'd all say a little prayer," someone said, "we might find our Cinderella."

It was a busy day. We helped many grateful mothers shop for their families.

I looked up to find my next shopper, an elderly man, waiting for his turn to select gifts. It was hard to keep from looking down at his feet. To keep the soles of his shoes intact, he had wrapped them in duct tape.

I took his gift form and read the names and ages.

"I'm shopping for my granddaughter and her three children," he said. "They've come on to some hard times and they're living with me now."

He chose the gifts for each member of his family, then it was time to find a gift for himself.

"I don't want a thing, m'am," he said. "Just pick out something else for the children."

I slipped another gift into the bag as he prepared to leave. He was thanking me over and over and wishing us all a "Merry Christmas."

As he was going out the door, I called after him.

"Come back," I said. "We have a pair of shoes I want you to try."

"No shoes fit me, m'am," he explained. "This pair I got here, I had to go to St. Louis for them three years ago."

Reluctantly, he took the black oxfords and looked them over.

"Try them," I urged him.

"Don't think it's any use," he said, but he sat down and removed his old shoes.

We were all standing around watching him and waiting. Slowly he stood up and began to smile.

"They were made for me," he said.

"Thank you so much and God bless you!"

And that was just one of our Christmas miracles!

(Holy Rosary parishioner Donna Novotney of Seelyville is a Terre Haute Catholic Charities Christmas Store volunteer and a member of the National Council of Catholic Women.)

Reader remembers year JFK was assassinated

By Marie LeRoy

My most memorable Christmas occurred in 1963, the year that President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

It was also the year that I, as a 10-year-old, found myself unsure about the existence of Santa. Financially, it was a lean year for my parents. My sister and I, however, had our hopes and dreams about the

gifts that we would receive under the Christmas tree.

As all Christmases had gone to that point in my young life, it was certainly still exciting, with a big Christmas Eve dinner at my grandmother's house and then on to Midnight Mass. It was there that I participated as an angel in the procession to deliver Baby Jesus to his manger. It always seemed that no matter what happened, this had always been the highlight of the holiday. Even with this excitement, however, that year was different. There was a sadness that was very noticeable, but no one ever actually acknowledged it.

Christmas morning finally arrived after an anticipatory twilight sleep. My sister and I awoke and ran frantically to the tree. We couldn't help but notice how few gifts were there. This was quickly becoming a disappointing Christmas.

Then we spied the traditional note from Santa. This year I recognized that the handwriting was my father's cursive script. Now it seemed as though all of my dreams had been totally shattered. This truly had become my worst Christmas ever.

I thought it best at this point to do my good deed and read the letter to my younger sister, who could not yet do it for herself. At least I could go along with the charade for her sake.

To my amazement, Santa's note tucked at my heartstrings! He wrote about how terribly sad he and his elves were about the death of President Kennedy. He said that they could barely work to make the toys because they just could not stop crying. He hoped that we were not too disappointed, and that he would try to make it up to us the next Christmas.

As I read on, I realized how selfish I had been. Now that I knew my parents were buying the gifts, this letter took on new meaning for me. That they had taken the time to write to their children about the grief of a nation was so incredible. That letter became the ultimate gift, certainly better than any boxed toy under the Christmas tree.

I cherish that letter in my mind and heart to this day. I saw the love of baby Jesus illustrated so beautifully through the actions of loving, sensitive, protective parents. That Christmas, which I initially perceived as my worst, paradoxically became my most precious holiday memory ever. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

(Marie LeRoy is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.)

Three Christmases were very different

By Edwin Enneking

On Christmas Eve of 1944 our Liberty ship was headed for Guam at eight knots under a full moon. We passed Oahu Island on Christmas Day.

Shortly after noon we were ordered below deck and soon were invited back out on the deck again to find Santa Claus ready to climb down a mast. Some of our soldiers who were dressed as women helped Santa pass out gifts from the United Service Organization.

By Christmas of 1945, I was back home with my mother at Oldenburg. We had decorated a tree and put lights on bushes in the front yard.

My bride-to-be was coming by train from Louisville to Osgood, where I was to meet her. However, there was a sleet storm on the morning of Christmas Eve and I had to drive 20 miles to Osgood on icy roads.

The electricity went off about noon that day, but the absence of electrical service did not affect the furnace or cook-stove. We took turns dressing by kerosene lamp for Midnight Mass.

Luckily, Holy Family Church was powered by electricity from the (Oldenburg Franciscans') convent power plant so the outdoor tree and inside of the

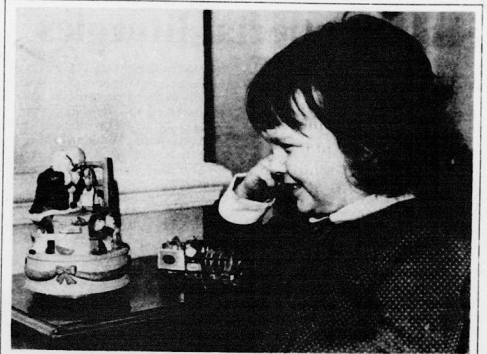


Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Three-year-old Lauren Barr of Indianapolis enjoys listening to a Santa Claus music box at home. She is the daughter of Craig and Pam Barr. Her father teaches at Bishop Chatard High School and also coaches the varsity football team.

church were lighted and the organ worked during the Mass.

At that time, the Franciscan friars studied their last four years at Oldenburg, so it was a Solemn High Mass with a deacon, subdeacon and master of ceremonies.

The choir sang in Latin, and with solos and repetitions the music took longer than the priest's silent reading. As the choir neared "Incarnatus Est" the ministers returned to the foot of the altar to kneel. On returning to the chair, the priest's stiff, open-sided chasuble had to be guided again into the opening between the seat and back.

By Christmas of 1946 my wife and I

had been married almost a year and were living at Alexandria, La., where roses were in bloom and screen doors in use. We had supper and spent Christmas Eve with our landlord and his wife, who went to Midnight Mass with us at the cathedral.

My family had always opened our gifts on Christmas Eve, but my wife's family traditionally opened gifts on Christmas Day. We opened our gifts after the Mass that year. Since we had not yet gone to bed, it seemed like Christmas Eve to me but for my wife it was Christmas Day. (Edwin Enneking is a member of St. Lawrence Parish at Lawrenceburg.)

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Memories of Christmas include special liturgies

Mass at police station was unique, meaningful

By Janet Miller

In December of 1951, my brother was stationed at Camp Rucker in Alabama, and my family joined him for the holidays.

Everything was a new experience: warm weather, no snow, holy gathered from the woods for decorating, and the familiar friends and functions of Christmas "up North" far away. All of this paled by comparison, however, to the experience of Midnight Mass there.

I was 21, totally immersed in pre-Vatican II liturgy and the magnificence of the choirs and decorations at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis.

Nit was my preparation for Mass in Enterprise, Ala. It was celebrated in a corner of the local police station! A temporary altar, folding chairs, a small poinsettia, and carols on a speaker which

alternated with incoming police calls set the scene for this Christmas Eve Mass.

My heart sank as I entered the station, for this was my favorite liturgy of the year. I readied myself to offer this sacrifice to the Christ Child as my gift.

Not to be outdone in the gift area, however, God himself shifted my focus and gave me the gift of clearer vision. Stripped of all the lovely but non-essential trappings, I saw clearly the elements of Mass, worship, and the Word of God made flesh in the Eucharist, in the Scripture, and in a stable so long ago. What I had thought lost was right there. The Incarnate God was in my heart.

As the years have gone by, I have grown spiritually with the post-conciliar Church and have celebrated many magnificent Midnight Mass liturgies. However, none of these has given me the insight and peace I gained that Christmas of 1951. It will always remain special to me.

(Janet Miller is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.)



Illustration by Andrea Mattucci

Oldenburg Academy freshman Andrea Mattucci created this award-winning drawing when she was a student at St. Louis School in Batesville. Andrea's artwork is among 25 student pictures which have been reproduced as 1995 Holy Childhood Association Christmas seals.

Christmas elf brings joy to empty-nesters

By Cynthia Dewes

It was the first Christmas Eve that my husband and I would spend without all the kids at home. Our comfy traditions of a special supper, reading from St. Luke's Nativity Gospel, opening presents, and attending Midnight Mass together would be no fun by ourselves, and probably sad to boot.

So the two of us went to Mass alone. As we sat in the darkened church, scented with balsam and incense, the organist began to play a medley of beloved carols and hymns. I could feel tears beginning to rise, and no one could feel sorrow for herself that I was at that moment.

Suddenly an apparition appeared, flitting down the center aisle in a green leotard and pausing in front of the altar. It was a friend and fellow parishioner who had convinced the liturgy committee they needed something new for the Christmas Eve Mass, and she was it.

Now, this was during the heady post-Vatican II time of creative liturgical innovation and invention. My friend demonstrated these: plus grace and reverence, as she danced about in front of the congregation. She was an inspired green elf cowering with enthusiastic spiritual joy.

Unfortunately, I was not prepared for such an event. And my husband, more attuned to conventional displays of piety than what he was witnessing, turned to me with a look of stunned disbelief. As our eyes met, overpowering waves of hilarity began to engulf us and we had to look away.

Scrunching together, we struggled to contain ourselves without insulting our friend or alerting those nearby. It was tough, but we managed to cover our snorts of glee with Kleenex. Only the entrance of the priest and his entourage sobered us up.

What had perturbed to be a gloomy event instead turned out to be a source of great joy for us. The absent kids were delighted not to be held accountable for our feelings of loss, and we had a funny Christmas memory which brings smiles to our faces to this day.

(Cynthia Dewes is now a member of St. Paul Parish in Greencastle, and is a columnist for The Criterion.)

Woman recalls year she got to 'carry' baby Jesus

By Jean Allen

It was a tradition for our family to attend Midnight Mass at Christmas, and all of my holiday memories are filled with warmth and joy.

We didn't receive much as far as gifts, but the food that was prepared for our bodies fed us to over-satisfaction and our spirits were nourished with the meaning of this most holy occasion. Such love was present.

But it was my eighth-grade year that I think I shall always treasure the most in

my heart. It was then that I was selected by all my classmates to carry the Baby Jesus to the manger at Midnight Mass.

It was a tradition for all the children at St. Mary School in Lanesville to march around the aisles of the church while carrying candles and singing Christmas carols.

My heart was filled with such excitement as I readied myself in the beautiful long white dress and flowing veil that had been made just for me for this special occasion by the loving hands of a neighbor and good family friend.

Oh, I remember how the candles glowed with a soft warmth and the singing itself seemed as angels beckoning for the coming of our Lord. This must just be a portion of joy that Mary must have felt, and I could taste of that pleasure through this experience.

I was so honored to think that I had the privilege to carry the Baby Jesus.

Years later, as I tell my grandchildren of this most precious moment of mine, I remind them that we all are called to carry Jesus in our life and to bring Him forth to the world of today. What a joy to be loved by Him.

(Jean Allen is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.)

Expectant mother thinks of Mary on Christmas

By Donna Swinford

I shall never forget that very special Christmas 14 years ago as I sat at Midnight Mass. I was eagerly expecting my first child, due on Dec. 28, and had already been experiencing contractions.

At Mass I was tired but excited. The contractions had started again. Would this be the night? Would my baby be born today?

Surely this was how the Blessed Virgin felt on that first Christmas. I could truly picture her thoughts and feelings that night so long ago, for I was experiencing the pain, the longing to have four other children, and the desire to hold my child.

I prayed, "Please let this baby come tonight." Then I prayed again, "No, not tonight, for I pity the child who must share his or her birthday with Jesus."

After Mass ended, I went home to bed. One prayer was answered, for the labor pains stopped and Christmas came and went without the birth of our baby.

When I go to Midnight Mass this year, I will stand next to my firstborn son, Jesse, who will be 14 years old on Jan. 4. He is as tall as I am, and is handsome and devout. I know I am truly blessed.

As I do every year at Christmas Eve Mass, I will remember again that Christmas as I waited for his birth and the memories will be fresh and new once again. I will thank God for the gift of motherhood, for this child, and for all their other children. I remember all their births, but none of those memories are quite as vivid as the ones I recall from the year I waited for Jesse to be born.

(Donna Swinford is a member of St. Mary Parish in Greencastle.)



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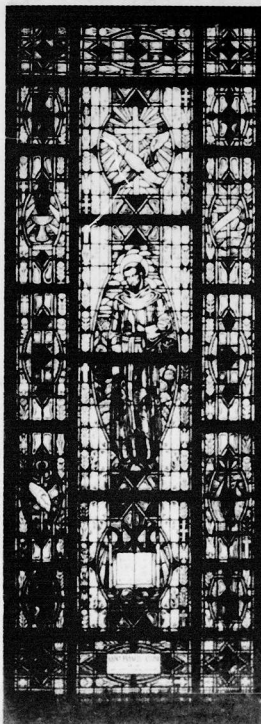
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Readers recall helping others enjoy Christmas

Christmas with Carl meant special stories

By Ben Kelker

There was a light snow falling outside. It was cold, and ice had formed on the inside of the windows downstairs. The Globe Boy stove did a nice job of heating the living room and—combined with the cook stove in the kitchen—the dining room in between was quite cozy. Upstairs was always warm, as the open stairway was a natural conduit for the rising heat.

It was Christmas morning, and the gifts were neatly placed under the tree. My two sisters and brothers were impatiently waiting with me, but it wasn't time yet. We had just returned from 6 o'clock Christmas Mass, and it was getting near time for Dad to go back into town to pick up "Carl," a bucheur in his 50s.

Dad couldn't think of someone spending Christmas alone. Carl wasn't the first single man that Dad had brought home. He had been a friend of "Doc's" before, and he even gave Doc a part of our garden in the summer because Doc really liked to grow things but couldn't because he lived in an apartment.

Doc had died during the summer, after undergoing an operation. Carl began coming to our home for Christmas in 1943, and he continued spending the holiday with us until his death in 1951.

Mom and Dad were putting on their coats, so we knew Dad was on his way to pick up Carl.

Dad's car was old and needed a new starter, but life in America during World War II meant that people couldn't get car parts easily except on the black market. Dad started the car, a 1939 Ford sedan with a straight stick, by parking it on a grade.

On this winter morning, he placed it in first gear, depressed the clutch, and Mom began to push the car. It began to roll, Dad let out on the clutch, and it started. We knew it wouldn't be long now.

We had really grown to love Carl. It was like having a "spare" Grandpa. He brought a box of rock candy, but the best gift he brought was himself. He was as excited as we were about the gifts. He told us stories about his life as a boy in Switzerland, and we listened intently as he talked about times gone by.

At dinner—that was our noon meal on Christmas—we all fought over who got to sit next to Carl at the table. Mom finally resolved the problem. Each of us was allowed to sit next to Carl for a portion of the meal, then Mom would move us and our dishes around on the table so we all would have our time next to him.

Carl asked to go home about two hours after dinner, but we wanted him to stay for supper. We won. Carl was happy too. I don't remember any of the gifts we got that year, except the rock candy from Carl.

It's been 50 years since my first Christmas with Carl, but I still remember it as if it was yesterday.

(Ben Kelker is a member of St. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood.)

Family sends search party for grandmother

By Dawn Debes

A yearly tradition for the Conti family is attending the children's Christmas Eve Mass together at Holy Family Church in Richmond.

For a while, it was easy to fit four granddaughters, two moms, two dads, and a pair of grandparents into two cars. However, the family expanded to include two grandsons and a third vehicle was a must. Christmas Eve was always a little

hectic. After Mass, we all hurried to cold cars in anticipation of a wonderful meal prepared by our family's star chef, Gramma. The trip home was short, only about a five-minute drive.

Our family has a tendency to tease and make jokes, even on Christmas Eve. Uncle Mike directed one at Gramma, trying to get a rise out of her. He circled the house, repeating his joke, with no response. He believed that we had turned the joke around on him and Gramma was hiding somewhere.

As we all promised him we didn't know where she was, the reality hit like a ton of bricks. Gramma was still at church!

It was a tense moment as we waited for Gramma's reaction. Slowly a smile crept across his face, and then he laughed. And when Gramma laughed, he always laughed from head to toe.

Uncle Mike and my father jumped in a car and hurried back to church while the rest of us waited anxiously, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

When she finally arrived, Gramma met Gramma at the door and, with a smile, said, "I thought you got run over by a reindeer!"

Later, when Gramma was beginning to find some humor in the fiasco, she shared the conversation she had with Father Pat Mercier while she was waiting at Holy Family Church.

"Marilyn," Father Mercier said, "I've heard of a woman being left at the altar, but never a grandma left at the church!"

It was another memorable Christmas in 1993, as it was also the last time we were all together in church before Dominick Conti, my Grampa, passed away on Dec. 27, 1994, following a lengthy illness.

(Dawn Debes lives in Annapolis, Md.)

'Christmas Angel' helps man find joy in season

By Mike Rhinaman

Once again, my co-workers came through to help brighten Christmas for a needy family. Last year we were able to collect over \$300 in cash donations plus gifts of food, toys and clothing. We estimated that over \$600 in money and gifts was sent to our Christmas family.

All of this came at a time when I didn't care whether Christmas 1994 came or went because I was preoccupied with my own problems. As I spent time in several stores, shopping for the kids in the family, I felt no Christmas spirit.

In all the years I had worked on the Christmas family program, I had never gone along to make the delivery. I always came up with an excuse not to go, and this year would be no exception. I made it quite clear that I would not go. What was I afraid of? A visit from the ghost of Christmas past? I was told that maybe if I did go on the delivery run I just might find some of the Christmas spirit I was missing this year. Somehow I was talked into going.

As we pulled up in front of the family's house, I took a deep breath and proceeded toward the door. We made trip after trip into the house and placed more than 45 packages around the tree.

Angel, the mother, stared in disbelief as we brought in all of the packages. After the gifts were in place around the tree, I introduced everyone and told Angel that we were glad we could do something to make Christmas a little better for her and her family.

As the tears started to well up in her eyes and in the eyes of those around her—including mine—it was apparent how much she appreciated what had been done for her family.

I don't know what I had been expecting.



Photo by Charles J. Schula

Winter scenes like this view of Fall Creek in Indianapolis covered with ice and snow are serene and beautiful reminders of Christmases from yesteryear.

It seemed funny that at a time in my life when I was searching to find some inner peace I would somehow be talked into going and sharing in this very special delivery. What seemed even more odd to me, now that I've had time to reflect on the holiday gift delivery, was that we helped a woman named Angel.

Perhaps she was a "Christmas angel." The few moments that I spent with Angel that morning gave me some of the inner peace that I so desperately needed to find. What Angel didn't realize was that she also gave me back the spirit of giving to someone.

As we made our way back to work, my troubles and problems didn't seem so big anymore. And where Christmas spirit had been lacking, I now had a better feeling about myself and in what direction my life was heading.

That day touched my life in a way that I may never know. Angel's words, her expression of heartfelt thanks, and her emotions showed me what Christmas is all about. It's not jolly old St. Nick. It's not getting gifts and the materialistic side that I once was concerned with. Christmas is giving and caring and sharing your time and talents for the sake of others.

I am proud to be associated with a group of people who took the time to care and share their time and talents to make someone's Christmas special. I may not have received the gift that I was hoping for, but I did receive the gift of a "Christmas angel." And you can never tell how or when you will receive that type of gift.

(Mike Rhinaman is a member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. He is an employee of National City Bank.)



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Readers share happy memories

Son's recovery from cancer is answer to holiday prayers

By Donna Laughlin

A year ago, around the first of November, was the beginning of the most devastating year I have ever experienced.

My 25-year-old son, Sean, became ill. It was a Sunday, and he was on his way to work as a detention officer at the Marion County Home. He decided to stop by and ask me to feel a swollen gland in his neck. I suggested that he go to a walk-in medical care facility open on Sundays and have it checked by a doctor.

A clinic staff member took an X-ray, which was normal, and the doctor prescribed some medication, but recommended that Sean see an internist because the swollen gland needed to be looked at further.

Sean went to an internist, who ran more tests and prescribed a different medication. A few weeks later, the internist saw Sean again and recommended that he go to an ear, nose and throat specialist as the swollen gland did not seem to be getting any better.

The specialist saw Sean and decided to do a needle-point biopsy in his office and send it off for a pathology report.

By this time, the Christmas holidays were rapidly approaching and we experienced a delay in receiving the results. We tried to put Sean's medical concerns of the last few months out of our minds so we could have a wonderful Christmas and celebrate the birth of Jesus. We did have a wonderful family Christmas. This was the first year we got to spend the holidays with Gina, Sean's fiancée.

A few days after Christmas we were back on the merry-go-round of doctors and tests. The needlepoint biopsy was inconclusive as three of the five samples were normal, but two were atypical. The specialist decided he wanted to do outpatient surgery to remove some lymph nodes from Sean's neck so a pathologist could examine them.

When the doctor called us into a hospital room after Sean's surgery, we all felt an overwhelming feeling that "something" was not right. The specialist told us he and the pathologist both felt that Sean had some sort of lymphoma, either Hodgkin's or Non-Hodgkin's disease.

My husband, Joe, in almost utter disbelief, kept asking the doctor, "You mean my son has cancer? My son has cancer?"

I cannot express the pain and despair I felt when the doctor told my son that he had cancer and would be seen by an oncologist within the next few days. We all cried, and then we prayed and prayed for strength and healing.

The next day, Sean was examined by an oncologist. As the whole family walked down the corridor to the specialist's office, Sean said, "Mom, I never thought that at 26 years of age I would be walking down the hall to see an oncologist."

How my heart ached for him at that moment.

Sean was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease. The oncologist was extremely kind, caring, compassionate and gentle. He was very positive with Sean and told him that there was every reason to believe in a cure. At this point, he recommended surgery to remove Sean's spleen and examine his abdominal area for any sign of disease before prescribing radiation therapy or chemotherapy.

Thanks to Jesus and the wonderful physicians at St. Francis Hospital Center in Beech Grove, the surgery was a complete success. Sean showed no additional signs of disease. Again Jesus blessed us with another fine physician for Sean's radiation therapy. Sean developed an instant rapport with him. The whole family could sense the doctor's caring, compassion, kindness, and dedication to his profession.

Sean was told he would have 11 weeks of radiation therapy and five years of follow-up medical care.

It is once again the beginning of another Christmas season and time to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Sean is fine and is the "picture of health." He has had two follow-up visits with the specialist and has been told he is "healthy as a horse."

Sean and Gina are now married and are the proud parents of Megan.

I thank God for his many, many blessings and the many, many prayers offered for Sean and our family over the past year. I could truly feel the presence of God in our lives through all these prayers.

We have learned that the most important things in life are not "things." I want to thank Jesus for having already given me the most precious Christmas gift ever—Sean's health and well-being.

Our whole family looks forward to a real celebration of life on Dec. 25, 1995, as we wish Jesus a happy birthday again.

(Donna Laughlin is a member of Holy Name Parish in Beech Grove and is an archdiocesan employee. She works for Catholic Social Services.)



Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

This display at The Children's Museum in Indianapolis pays tribute to the Three Wise Men who brought gifts to the Christ Child on that first Christmas.

Mother superior displays true spirit of Christmas

By Alice Dailey

With Christmas vacation looming, 7-year-old Jeanie blurted out, "All the kids are bringing cookies and things to the sisters. When do I get to take something?"

Good question, and one that had been bugging me. Gold and silver I had none, so what could I give? "Petit fours," I announced triumphantly. "I'll make petit fours. But they've never had anything like those before." (Nor since.)

New at this parent/school stage, and a little in awe of the sisters—especially of the tall, formidable superior, Sister Rose Aloysia—I just had to make something, well, superior.

During free time, as in naptime for a 2-year-old, I assembled all the scratch materials (Betty Crocker's time had not yet come), and confidently mixed, stirred, and beat the batter, then finally floated the blend into the oven.

Never before had such a boated, bulgy cake emerged from anyone's oven.

"How," I wondered nervously, "can this monster be cut into dainty little tea cakes?"

The art of splitting cake into layers had not yet become part of my culinary expertise. With gloom pervading my previously hopeful outlook, I decided to just cut the cake into fat squares. While they sat on the tray, cooling and leering, I stirred up a batch of icing that had all the flexibility of quick-drying cement.

Trying to spread the icing around caused the cakes to crumble faster than my pride. A corner fell off here, and another there, and still another caved in completely. My debate about whether to pitch the whole mess and start over was settled by loud, vigorous thumpings from a cradle. Peace time was at an end. I shoved the misshapen things into a box and out of sight.

Even the uncritical eyes of a 7-year-old found the cakes wanting. She asked uneasily, "Are they supposed to be lopsided-y like that?"

In a word, no. But with caution thrown to the winds, I gussied up the box with recycled ribbon and dispatched it and her off to school.

Dreading the after-school report, but nevertheless very curious, later that day I feebly questioned my daughter about the cakes.

"Well," I asked, "what did Sister say?" "She was out of the room," Jeanie replied, "but the superior was there so I gave them to her. She opened the box right away."

The superior? The high and mighty? And in full view of the class? Grasping at my last shred of dignity, I demanded, "Well, did she laugh? Make a face?"

"Oh, no!" Jeanie's eyes crinkled happily. "She said, 'These little cakes that good Mrs. Dailey made look so delicious!' The sisters and I will have them this very evening!"

The biased image I had of Sister Rose Aloysia, authority figure in high command, quickly faded from my memory. In its place emerged a true picture, that of a diplomat and gracious woman who spared the feelings of a little girl and those of her mother.

(Alice Dailey is a member of Little Flower Parish in Indianapolis.)

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Christmas spirit strengthens families

Son loses mother but gains new friendship with father

By Ron Massey

My most memorable Christmas was the Christmas of 1987. My mother had died in August, and my dad—who thought pills and alcohol would solve all his problems—tried to end his life. One might ask why I would want to remember that year.

Christmas was "no big deal" for my dad. He usually gave mom something nice, but she always would have to finish paying for it as dad was forever in debt.

Mother always tried to make Christmas special for my brother and me, even though we were not rich and at times not even comfortable. I always wondered how she was able to make ends meet.

I knew this Christmas would be extremely difficult without her.

After my father was discharged from the hospital, I became his guardian. I gave him no choices, and I forced him into retirement. I moved him to his birthplace in Tennessee to be closer to his sister and brothers. I knew he would have no income for three months and that his retirement benefits would be greatly reduced for the next two years. I found him a nice little house to rent and moved him in on Thanksgiving Day. The next morning I came back to Indianapolis alone.

Over the next three weeks, I agonized over having to go back to Tennessee to see him at Christmas because we were not always close. But I did go, and how very thankful I am for that trip.

When I drove into his driveway on Dec. 23, it was dark outside but a wonderful warm glow was coming from every window of the house. He had put the Christmas candles up! This was always mom's job. I walked inside and saw that he had the tree up and decorated nicely. He had even cooked some of mom's traditional foods.

Christmas Eve morning we went into town and made the rounds to get the fruit, country ham, and Christmas candy. We bought all of the special things that were always in our stockings. We had an early dinner, then watched the Christmas choirs on television. I explained Handel's "Messiah" to him.

The next morning dad fixed breakfast for the two of us, then we went into the living room to open three small presents that were under the tree. I had brought dad a couple of things that he truly needed, and he gave me a small present wrapped in newspaper. Inside the package was an antique Hopalong Cassidy wristwatch that I had seen months earlier. I knew how much it cost, and also knew what funds he had to live on. We both started crying.

We refilled our coffee cups and stared on the long journey of talking about the years past. I found out later from my aunt that dad had been working at odd jobs to earn enough money to buy the watch.

That Christmas was one of the most wonderful times for me, a child of 38! Yes, I had lost a parent earlier that year. But I had gained a very special friend.

(Ron Massey is the administrative assistant at SS, Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.)

Worn angel ornament shines each year on family's tree

By Mary Jo Keegan

Christmas always seems to emphasize certain feelings and emotions that surface at no other time. For some people, these feelings are best expressed in how we decorate our tree.

Christmas trees may be elegantly adorned, color-coordinated, theme-oriented, or even an collector's dream. I suppose there are some people who trim a tree simply because it's the thing to do for the holiday.

But what would a Christmas tree be without ornaments? Nearly every ornament on our tree has a story. Family and friends are represented on many branches because ornaments have been their gifts to us. My husband has often put the first ornament on the tree, and I—in a very different mood—take the last two (first-grade pictures of our sons) off the tree in early January.

A couple years ago, we added a bat made from a cardboard roll painted black with paper wings. It was made by our small grandson during his preschool class and given to us "for your tree, Grammy."

I wonder if there is a tree decorated in any home that does not wear at least one very special ornament that is its owner's very favorite one.

Of all the couple hundred plus beautiful and sentimental ornaments we put on our tree, my most precious, priceless one is a small angel whose wings were "lost" more than 30 years ago. She came to be mine the summer our younger son turned 5. He came in from play all excited one day be-

cause he had retrieved an angel which he thought someone had rather heartlessly thrown away. And he knew it would be just perfect for our tree.

Each year we use wire to attach this treasured ornament to a very visible branch. It doesn't matter that her wings were broken, her gold paint spotted, and her hanging gone. All these Christmas we have had her on our tree.

Isn't it remarkable how often what we treasure most once belonged to someone else? For us, an angel that was discarded as having no value continues to represent love, caring and sharing as it reminds us of the beautiful thoughts and actions of a child young enough to still believe in Santa Claus.

Love, caring and sharing may be the message of Christmas after all. God's love for us is so evident in the birth of his son, his caring for us is so obvious as he supports us as we carry the crosses we must bear, and the promise that continually comforts us is the one that assures us that we may share his kingdom through all eternity.

Kevin has given me lovely gifts over the years, but none has the value of the injured angel cradled so carefully in both of his small hands as he told me, "Mom, you'll love what I found for you! It's an angel we can save for the tree."

(Mary Jo Keegan is a member of St. John Parish in Indianapolis.)

Cousins' Christmas party spans two generations

By Anne Johnson

"It's someone's birthday
And if you know whose
We'll sing songs to him
About the wonderful news."

So read part of the invitation I composed for my nieces and nephews 30 Christmases ago. The verse beckoned each of the 13 children by name before ending:

"It'll be over at eight.
That leaves no time for fussin'
As we all celebrate
A Christmas with cousins!"



CNS photo

The U.S. Postal Service has issued a 1995 stamp of the Madonna and Child which was painted by Florentine artist Giotto di Bondone.

The rhyme may have been questionable, but the enthusiasm was not! My mother (their loving and loved grandmother) eagerly joined in buying gifts for everyone, but even she thought I went overboard on candy and balloons.

We played games (with prizes!) and sang songs, ending with "Happy Birthday, Jesus," before devouring his birthday cake. I had a ball during the party that was to become one of my favorite Christmas memories.

Last year I was invited to another Christmas Cousin Party in our hometown of Loogootee. This time the names joined in rhyme were those of my great-nieces and great-nephews, cousins whose parents had continued a tradition begun for them so long ago.

We still had games and birthday cake, but with a new twist: presents for the Birthday Jesus. Following the festivities, I drove home to Bedford with a car full of items for the local Pregnancy Center, and a heart full of an old Christmas memory made new, a memory more cherished because of its sharing transcended generations.

(Anne Johnson is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford.)

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Families inspire special memories of Christmas

Families and holidays change over the years

By Mary Ruback Benson

Since life is always changing, family holidays are always changing too. I remember my brother, Bill, and I used to sit on the floor outside our parents' bedroom door while mother wrapped Christmas presents for us. She would open the door holding two gifts, one for Bill and one for me. We would carry the beautifully wrapped packages to the tree.

Every year we went to my father's parents' house, which was overflowing with his brother's and three sisters' families, for a big holiday dinner. My mother was always asked to make meatloaf, and there would also be ham, turkey, rabbit, many different vegetables, and desserts to satisfy everyone's sweet tooth. A pot-belly stove warmed their house as the adults talked, the children played, and everyone enjoyed the family meal and gathering.

Time moves on. New loved ones enter our lives. Some of our loved ones pass on to celebrate Christmas in heaven.

When my sons were little and it was time to put up the tree, they would haul out the decorations and scatter them everywhere in their excitement. They would hold ornaments dangling from

hooks in their little hands, ready to place them on the tree, and we were still trying to get the tree straight in the stand!

On Christmas Eve, after Mass, we would set up our homemade nativity. Our sons kept track of whose turn it was to place the baby Jesus in the manger.

On the Christmas Eve before our oldest son married, our two sons—with their man-sized hands—together placed the baby in the nativity.

Our oldest son was married last year, and we now have a kind and thoughtful daughter-in-law. They invited us to their apartment for dinner and to see their first Christmas tree.

My husband and I attended Christmas Eve Mass. We missed our sons, but we understood that life is always changing. Around midnight, our youngest son, Stephen, arrived home. For the first time, we set up the nativity without Jonathan.

We missed Jonathan on Christmas morning, but we were happy that he and his wife were sharing their first Christmas morning together. Later, all of us met at my parents' house to celebrate the holiday.

Our family will continue to change and grow. I hope someday there will be grand-children to share the beauty and joy of Christmas. And one day all of us will share the love of Christmas in heaven with Christ and loved ones we haven't seen in a while.

(Mary Ruback Benson is a member of St. Simon Parish in Indianapolis.)



Photo by Charles J. Schula
A Peruvian artist created this Nativity scene to honor the Christ Child's birth.

Cardinal shares his happy Christmas song

By Ruth Steinmetz

Fifty-six years later, I can still remember the thrill of a Christmas Day in Charleston, W.V.

A common winter custom there was to remove the screen door. It was unseasonably warm that Christmas Day, so I opened the front door to let in the fresh, balmy air.

I was alone and was busily cooking Christmas dinner. As I mashed potatoes with a certain rhythm, I was suddenly accompanied by the very loud sound of a bird singing nearby.

The song's intensity piqued my curiosity. I started for the door, then stood still, in shock, when I saw the cardinal sitting on a branch of my Christmas tree in the living room. What a beautiful decoration the red-feathered visitor made against the green of the tree and the ornaments.

The cardinal seemed delighted as he pecked at the ornaments, sang another song, jumped from branch to branch, and started singing again. Did he think he was in Bird Heaven?

What to do? If I disturbed him, he might fly all around the house.

I returned to the kitchen to cover the gravy and other foods because I remembered what happened when my friend, Betsy, gave her parakeet the run of the house. One day, mistaking the brown gravy for dirt, he landed in it.

Suddenly the cardinal's loud voice went silent. Quietly I went back to the living room to see what mischief he could be doing. Oh no! He was gone! He must have flown out the same way he flew in, because he was gone.

I smiled to myself and thought, "How nice! A Christmas carol from a bird!" (Ruth Steinmetz is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She resides at the St. Paul Hermitage, which is operated by the Sisters of St. Benedict in Beech Grove.)

Grandma finds stocking is full each Christmas

By Margaret Royle Lawley

Brendan, age 5, had visited Grandma and Grandpa Morse's home on a bright and sunny winter day.

As they left, Margi, my daughter and Brendan's mother, said, "Let's stop at Grandma Lawley's."

We had cookies and milk and talked of our day.

That evening at dinner at Margi and Ray's home, Brendan said, "Grandma and Grandpa Morse had their stockings hung on their mantle, but Grandma Lawley didn't have one at her house. Could we hang one at her house?"

Margi assured him that they could, so

the next day they went to a craft show and bought a beautiful handmade stocking. She asked Brendan what they should put in the stocking.

"Well, Grandma likes oranges and cashew nuts," Brendan said.

Each year after that, my stocking had something in it on Christmas morning.

A few years ago, I sold my home and moved into a small apartment. When I decorated for Christmas, I hung my beautiful stocking on the edge of an antique marble-topped table.

I talked with Margi, who now lives in Boulder, Colo., on the telephone and jokingly said, "I wonder if Santa Claus will find my stocking."

A week or so later, I received a package postmarked from Santa Claus, Ind.

Inside was an orange and cashew nuts and a few small packages that would fit into the stocking.

Each year my stocking is filled. (Margaret Royle Lawley is a member of Little Flower Parish in Indianapolis.)

Beloved aunt will be missed at Christmas

By Rita Phillips

On Nov. 27, I received news that my aunt, Helen Hagedorn, had passed away. I started thinking about her and all she had done for me when I was a little girl growing up in Tell City.

Aunt Helen was a gracious and beautiful lady. She took me to Evansville to get my first pair of glasses, and while we were there she bought me a yellow organdy dress. She had a piano, which she allowed me to play. How she stood it I'll never know.

In December of 1948, she lost her husband, my uncle, in a mine accident at the Christmas Mine near St. Meinrad. She was left alone to raise five children and was expecting a baby at the time of her husband's death. Later, she remarried and had two more children. She lived all of her life in Tell City.

I suppose what I'll remember most about her this Christmas season is how she cried tears of joy for me at St. Paul Church in Tell City.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein was celebrating a eucharistic liturgy at the church after his appointment as archbishop, and the Tell City Diocese was hosting the Mass and reception.

I was asked to sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." This was a great honor, and I was terribly nervous about it. I wanted to sound good and not make any mistakes. I told myself not to look at the congregation, just at the music. I did look up one time, and I saw my Aunt Helen sitting across from me. She was smiling at me, and she looked so happy. After the service, she tearfully hugged me.

I'm so proud to be her niece. May God keep you safe this Christmas, Aunt Helen. (Rita Phillips is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad.)

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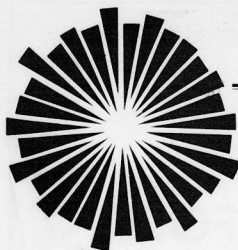
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Families discover Christmas joy

Dog's gift rescues soldier from weekend Army duties

By George Zimmer

Christmas of 1950 was a chaotic time in the Zimmer household.

Military orders that called me to report for Army duty a few days after the holidays left my parents and sister confused about what they might give me as Christmas gifts.

I suggested socks, underwear, a razor, and a small sewing kit. "For Uncle Sam will provide everything else."

In just a few days, I found out how wrong I was. Sandwiched between new friends Eddie Zawada and Larry Zirkelbach at the end of a long line of servicemen, I shuffled along warehouse counters to gather up the various articles of Army clothing tossed my way by the supply clerks.

I was pleased at the final counter when I didn't have to add another item to my bulging barracks bag.

"Just ran out of 'Ike' jackets in your size," said the corporal. "We may get some more in six or eight weeks."

But glee turned to despair when the sergeant boomed, "No Ike jacket, no passes. You're restricted to weekend duty in the battalion area."

And so my life became a long seven-day week of basic training sessions augmented with weekend duty in K.P., barracks assignments, and guard duty.

My mother discussed the events that led to this extra duty with "Wally" Fox, her close friend.

Wally nodded, left the room, and returned with a garment which she gave to my mother. She explained that it had been her son's Ike jacket during World War II, and was now used as a blanket by the family dog!

"Needs a cleaning... and a repair job on that hole from a cigarette burn," she said. "Just tell George it's a late Christmas gift from the dog!"

In a few days I received the cleaned and repaired jacket, and wore it for my sergeant's inspection. Though he frowned at the patch under the left arm, he released me from extra duty and issued the pass I had requested for free time on weekends.

As a result of my newly-won Sunday free time, I was able to begin writing a series of 60 articles on Army life that were published in *The Indiana Catholic* and *Record*, the weekly diocesan newspaper in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis which is now known as *The Criterion*.

A superior who learned of my journalism project then assigned me to produce a daily newspaper, the only regimental publication on our 20,000-person Army base.

This editorial opportunity led to an offer to join the staff of the Post Public Information Office.

Regretfully, I had to turn down this offer because military orders arrived that required me to be reassigned to a distant camp.

Forty-five years later, I still feel gratitude to Mrs. Fox for her kindness and thoughtfulness in my time of need.

My story of the "Christmas Gift from a Dog" has become a part of the family history of those days when Grandpa George was a soldier.

I hope my grandchildren remember it as a time when friends sacrificed to help friends, neighbors assisted neighbors, and even a dog's blanket had its place in the scheme of things.

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

Transplanted Hoosiers find holiday joy during the war

By Rosalynn DeFelice

Of all the Christmases past, the Christmas of 1950 is especially memorable, perhaps because it was so different from all the others.

My husband, a World War II veteran and a reservist, was called back into active duty at the outbreak of the Korean War, much to our dismay. We had a 2-year-old son and were expecting a second child in the spring. In early September, he was sent to Camp Roberts in California, and in November I boarded a train with our son and reached California in time for Thanksgiving.

We rented a small apartment about 50 miles from Camp Roberts. Army pay was very meager, and we were often in real need. For the first time ever, I had to ask for credit at a local grocery. The compassionate owner seemed to sense my desperation and agreed. I'll never forget him.

As Christmas neared, I knew it wouldn't be the same as those we'd known in Indianapolis with our loving families. I felt very homesick as I put up decorations and listened to carols on the radio.

In the afternoon on Christmas Eve, I baked a pie and fixed a roast. When my husband arrived at dusk, he had a soldier friend with him who also was from Indianapolis. They arrived with packages and a bag of groceries and were laughing and joking. Our little son happily climbed all over them. The friend gave our son a mechanical tractor which could climb over books and pillows. It was his favorite toy.

We ate our Christmas Eve dinner and talked about home. We were a little sad, but even in California the magic of Christmas filled the air. We told our son the story of the birth of Jesus.

Although we were far from our families and missed them very much, we had each other and a friend from home to share our Christmas in California.

(Rosalynn DeFelice is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.)

Priest helps family cope when father dies on Christmas Eve

By Therese Hollis

No one in my family will ever forget Christmas Eve of 1980. Our precious father died that day.

My father was a robust, healthy father to seven children, and we were all crushed when we learned that our healthy dad had been diagnosed with cancer. He had never been sick a day in his life. Surely there must be some mistake.

When numerous treatments failed, our father entered the hospital on Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in 1980. My mother never left my father's bedside during that time.

We got a call on the morning of Dec. 24 to come to the hospital, and we all gathered around my father's bedside and told him goodbye on his final Christmas Eve. It seemed fitting that if my father had to die, he did so on the most beautiful of days, Christ's birthday.

We knew our father would want us to keep on with the

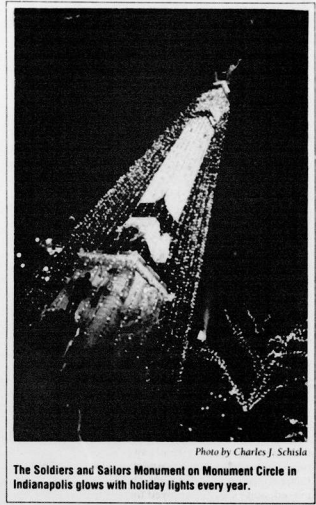


Photo by Charles J. Schida

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Monument Circle in Indianapolis glows with holiday lights every year.

family tradition of celebrating Christmas Eve at my sister's house so, in our father's memory, we did just that.

Our parish priest made a special visit to my sister's house that Christmas Eve and celebrated Mass for all of us that special night.

Our faith held us together during that Christmas season of 1980 and has continued to strengthen our family during every Christmas since his death. Even though we miss our father terribly, we feel his presence with us.

(Therese Hollis is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.)

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Readers share Christmas stories

Sister discovers joy in spreading Christmas cheer

By Tina Szady

My younger sister, Becky, and I are only 19 months apart in age, which probably explains why we were such great partners in crime in our younger days. We were never too far from each other's side, which caused many tangles and arguments related to who was smarter, better, and right about something.

We shared a bedroom... which now looks entirely too small for one person. In the sharing of close quarters, we became best of friends.

Some friendship and caring that came from this time evolved around a certain Christmas. I forget the year, but Becky and I were at the age where I didn't believe in Santa Claus but she still did.

It was Christmas Eve, and all of us were excited about our presents. We kept asking, "How soon before Santa comes?" This question had been asked at least 200 times, if not 2,000.

I had been warned by my parents not to let Becky know the truth about Santa. I was tempted to burst her bubble by telling her the truth so I could make her cry and stomp her feet in a fit of rage. I decided the temptation was too hard to resist, and I would tell her about Santa Claus.

I removed a stocking from the fireplace, one that no one would miss. I had chosen this stocking because it was trimmed with several gold jingle bells. When you shook them, they made a sound as close to what I thought Santa's reindeer and sleigh would sound like. I secretly tucked the bells under my bed, taking time to position them in a place easily within reach but not visible. My plan was so clever! The excitement and anticipation were killing me. On this night, bedtime did not come soon enough.

Finally we were in our beds and ready for sleep. The

timing has to be perfect, I thought to myself. It must be convincing, and as real as I can make it. After waiting a half hour or so in the dark, I could tell by the sound of my sister's breathing that she was almost asleep.

I made my calculated reach for the mysterious sound that I was about to create. Softly, as though far away and intertwined with the winter wind blowing outside, I gave the bells a wiggle. Yes, they did sound very much like Santa's sleigh bells. I was almost laughing, and was having difficulty stifling the excitement boiling up inside me.

After the first jingle, and no response came from across the room, I jiggled the bells again. This time I let the jingle become louder and longer. Finally, the response I had been waiting for came in the form of an urgent whisper.

"Tina?"

"Yes, Becky?"

"Did you hear that noise?"

"Pinching myself and trying not to laugh, I replied,

"No. What noise?"

I could tell by the intensity behind the question that she would be listening very closely for the next jingle, so I waited a few more minutes before jiggling the bells again.

"Didn't you hear it that time?" she asked, so sweetly and innocently.

I made my heart wish I still had her belief in Santa Claus. I suddenly realized the importance of the balloon I was about to burst. How could I be so cruel? But why shouldn't I take away that belief, just like someone else had done to me? Wouldn't the ends justify the means (or the "meanies")? Or could I restore and keep a dream alive for her, and let someone else be the bad guy?

It was my moment of truth, the time to decide whether to keep the charade intact. The choice was totally mine.

"Yes, I did," I replied. "What do you think it is?"

Silence. After careful timing again, I gave the bells yet another jingle.

"It sounded like sleigh bells!" she said quietly, with all the enthusiasm possible in a whisper.

"Yes, I think you're right," I said. "It must be Santa and his reindeer on our roof!"



Photo by Charles J. Schisla

Visions of Christmas in the country inspire thoughts of family, friends and good times from years gone by.

I was amazed by my words, and even more amazed by my change of heart that somehow made those bells seem real to me too!

We fell asleep quietly that night. The excitement of redeeming myself in this self-created fantasy made for a clean conscience. As well as the feeling of doing good, it is most conducive to restful sleep.

Many years have come and gone since that special Christmas Eve, but I can still remember the warm good feeling from my change of heart as clear as a (jingle) bell. (Tina Szady is a member of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville.)

Baby's fight for life was priceless Christmas present

By Bill and Lisa Nesbitt

Our most memorable Christmas could sound like a disaster story, but it wasn't. We had the closest Christmas inspirational story that any family could have 350 miles from all our extended family.

It started when our third child, Steven, was born five weeks early, on Nov. 4, at St. Vincent Hospital and Health Care Center in Indianapolis. He weighed 6 pounds, but could not breathe on his own very well.

Later that day, Steve took on a fight that was a daily battle for his life. We baptized him that first night.

He was placed on a respirator and experimental drugs were used to try to keep his lungs inflated and his heart pumping. He had numerous lung collapses, and a total of 21 chest tubes plunged into his tiny body.

All the while, we prayed, consoled and talked to Steve and visited him with our other two children, 2-year-old Erin and 4-year-old Mike. Our extended family pulled together to help, and visited Steve often.

My husband and I never lost faith. That's what kept us going. We knew there was a way Steve would pull through somehow.

The whole neonatal intensive care unit staff supported us and knew us well. We shared Christmas preparation stories, bought each other gifts, and supported each other during the days leading up to the holiday.

Then, one day we walked into the unit and Steve was breathing on his own! It was five days before Christmas.

The doctor said Steve was out of the woods. The clouded lung X-rays were clear somehow, and could not be explained. They all told us we just had received our early Christmas gift.

Some people would hate to spend Christmas at the hospital, but we didn't mind.

We grew up in Cleveland, and all the family always met there to celebrate the holiday. But we had the best Christmas at St. Vincent Hospital with our family.

We gave Steve his first toys while he was on oxygen. His infant bed was surrounded by signs saying "Merry Christmas, our big boy Steve!"

The whole neonatal intensive care unit celebrated with us, and staff members told us that, "Kids like Steve keep us going."

We live every day full of life, and we are a very spontaneous family. Some people wonder how we can live that way. We tell them that, "Life is just too short. Steve taught us that!"

(Bill and Lisa Nesbitt are members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsville.)

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Christmas memories grow more special each year

Passing of years changes Christmas wish list items

By Bernadine Purcell

Living in a large family requires much sharing, a lesson that isn't easy to learn. The joy of sharing became evident at Christmas time. This was an exciting time in our home.

As we wrote our letters to Santa Claus, we were careful not to ask for everything that caught our eyes. We knew that other members of our family had a "hope list" too.

I remember the Christmas when Santa Claus brought me the dark blue wicker baby buggy. Tucked under pretty pink blankets was a new baby doll. My sister's buggy was brown wicker. Her baby's blankets were light blue. We wondered how Santa knew our favorite colors.

We younger children received new ball-bearing roller skates. Our old skates had barely survived the past year. Weather permitting, we would soon be joining our neighborhood friends for skating on the street in front of our house. It was safe to skate in the street because automobiles were few in those days.

That same year I received a fishing game. It consisted of a four-sided cardboard box representing a fish tank. Pictures of many varieties of fish covered the outside. Each of the four fishing poles was made of a 6-inch stick with a short string attached at the tip and a horseshoe-shaped magnet tied at the end of the string. Also included with the game were 20 numbered fish with small metal clips. It wasn't a matter of who caught the most fish, but who had the highest score after adding up the numbers attached to the catch.

As life goes on, our personal world changes with the years. My letter to Santa Claus would be quite different today.

Forget the roller skates, Santa. I now have to watch my every step so that I don't fall down. And I no longer need baby dolls. I have had the privilege of rocking my own babies, my grandchildren, and now my great-grandchild. The only fishing pole I use today is my rosary. The prayers are like magnets to catch souls for God. Scripture study reminds me that Jesus' birth was his gift to us, our salvation.

(Bernadine Purcell is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville.)

Soldier spends Christmas season helping with KP

By Frank Mivec

We all try to remember the Christmas when something good or something humorous occurred. On this particular Christmas something sad happened, but it was so long ago that looking at it now makes it appear humorous.

The good news was: I was on the great ocean liner Queen Mary.

The bad news was: The year was 1943 and I was in the U.S. Army.

We boarded the great British vessel at night. My quarters were in what was usually the crews' quarters, a hold. In this case, the hold was a big area in the front of the ship. It was distinguished by the fact that you could see the anchor chain on each side of the hold. There was nothing in the hold except hooks in the ceiling to hold hammocks. I hung my hammock and climbed in. It held.

Ships pitch and roll, and this ship was doing both. By the time I remembered the terms "pitch and roll," I was sick. I was seasick, and the ship was still docked. It hadn't moved an inch, and I was seasick.

Morning came, the first day at sea. Big decision. Do I go to breakfast? Seasickness and food usually do not mix. I decided to give it a try. What will they have for breakfast on a British ship?

I found the mess hall, picked a table, and sat down. A server set down a pan of food on the table. The ship pitched, and the pan of food slid on the table. At the edge, the pan flipped off the table and into my lap.

I had kidney stew for breakfast.

The reason the pan flipped was because a carpenter had added a restraining lip to the edge of the table. The edge stopped the pan, but there was too much momentum and the pan flipped over the side anyway.

A server was very helpful in getting the kidney stew back in the pan. With the stew back inside the pan, the server placed the pan back on the table.

I hurried out of the mess hall.

Where could I wash my fatigue pants? My question was answered. At the exit of the mess hall there were three garbage cans full of water. Not thinking, I scooped hot water all over my pants. The kidney stew was washing off.

"What do you think you are doing, soldier?" a voice roared. "You are dirtying my clean water. On a ship, water is a precious commodity, and not to be drenched capriciously. Soldier, you are on KP duty for the duration."

Since the person who was doing the screaming was a sergeant, I was on kitchen police duty three meals a day for five days. This included Christmas day.

I spent Christmas day that year screaming at the top of my voice: "Keep the line moving! Shake the mess kit three times and move on! Do you really expect hot water? Keep moving, moving, moving!"

(Frank Mivec is a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.)

Family always thanks Jesus for coming into their lives

By Janis Striegel

Christmas has always been special in our family. My grandparents and parents made it so. We would have a special program each year, and everyone would take part in it by reciting poems, singing, or telling stories about the baby Jesus. We also would get a visit from Santa that brought a smile to our tiny faces.

But the best part of Christmas lives in each of our lives today. On Christmas Eve, a seed from many years ago was planted in our hearts of love and peace. We learned the true meaning of Christmas is not in the "getting" but in the "giving." We learned about Jesus and what he should mean in our lives. The very miracle of his birth brings hope to all of us today. Because of his birth and his life, we can choose to be part of Jesus' family.

My grandparents and parents brought stability to our lives which continues today because of the tradition they started so many years ago that we still carry on to this day. On Christmas Eve, I give thanks for my family and to Jesus for coming into all of our lives. The Star of Bethlehem should shine for all of us in our hearts, not just on Christmas Eve but on every day of the year.

Thank you, Jesus.

(Janis Striegel is a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.)

Young woman learns joy of giving of self to help others

By Mary Chew Ohlemiller

It was my first grown-up Christmas, and I had gifts for all my loved ones. These were not things wrapped by my mother and credited to me, but simple gifts, thoughtfully and thoughtfully chosen by me.

I had redeemed them from layaway that day with scrippings saved from my \$8-a-week salary as a salesgirl in a small department store. At 16, just out of high school, this was my first job. I worked 50 hours a week, and I loved my life.

For weeks I had lunched daily on one-third of a three-section nickel candy bar. I was hungry, but the weight of that bulging shopping bag filled me with joy.

I felt work on Christmas Eve as The Little German Band boomed, oompah-ed, and caroled in and out of the stores, and up and down the Noel-festooned street.

Fluffy snow angels floated down, blessing the bare head and dark overcoat of my first love as he greeted me with a happy smile. He tucked my free hand inside his coat pocket. He was young and fair and he thought I was pretty.

We sang and laughed as we drove through swirling snow in my sweetheart's little coupe. I anticipated how pleased he would be with his new bright blue sweater.

We admired the twinkling tree lights through the frosted window of my parent's big home, and then we went into the warmth inside. Everyone was there. Mother, daddy, grandma, grandpa, my brother, and my sweetheart all liked their gifts.

They are gone now, all but my brother and me.

I like to remember, though, that under that long ago tree were gifts for everyone, earned by me with love. I learned then that they are never so rich as we are when we give of ourselves.

(Mary Chew Ohlemiller is a member of St. Rose Parish in Knightstown.)

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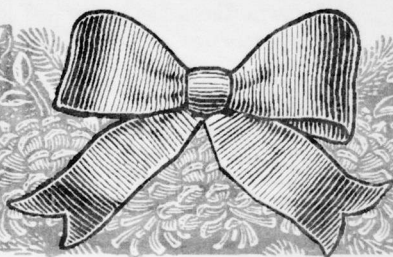
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Joseph and Mary inspire us to place trust in God

By Fr. W. Thomas Faucher

The third floor of the Human Services Department was cold. The ancient paper Santa decorations only added to a sense of gloom there.

On two metal chairs at the street-wise twins, Barbara and Bobby, 11-year-olds who had been abandoned by their drug-addicted mother.

Tony, the young case worker, was having no success talking with them about going to a foster family for Christmas.

"We won't go nowhere," said Bobby. "The last foster parents were mean. We don't trust foster parents."

"You can trust these people," Tony assured them. "They won't hurt you. They just want to let you have a happy Christmas. Christmas is all about trusting others."

Barbara responded defiantly. "Gramma said Christmas was about Jesus."

"It's the same thing," the case worker replied. "Jesus had a foster-father and he trusted him."

"Jesus didn't have no foster-father!" Barbara insisted.

"Yes he did," Tony said. "Joseph was Jesus' foster-father, and it wasn't easy. He was set to marry a girl named Mary. But before the ceremony Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant, and he decided to call off the wedding."

"Who was it, her old boyfriend?" Bobby asked. "At least the kids were listening," Tony thought. He went on. "But an angel appeared to him and called his name."

Tony urged the twins to try to imagine the conversation, then he told the story of Christ's birth in contemporary words:

"Joseph!"
"Who are you?"
"I'm an angel, and I have come from God to tell you not to break up with Mary."
"But she's pregnant and the baby isn't mine," Joseph said. "I'm not going to raise somebody else's kid."
"The Holy Spirit of God has come over her and this child is God's son," the angel said. "You have been chosen

to be his foster-father, to raise him as your own."

"How can I do that?" Joseph asked.
"God is trusting you with his Son, and you need to trust God," the angel said. "He will take care of you and Mary."

"Wait a minute," Bobby said. "There was no guy, but she was pregnant and God did it?"
"That's right," Tony said.

"Cool."
"Anyway," Tony continued, "then Joseph went and asked Mary what had happened. She told him that one day she was at home and an angel appeared, said his name was Gabriel, and told her that she was going to have a baby and was supposed to name him Jesus."

"Mary told the angel that she couldn't have a baby, that she was a virgin. The angel said God's Spirit would come to her. She told Joseph she trusted the angel and had said yes."

"Both Joseph and Mary were really confused by all of this, but felt that if they trusted each other and trusted God they would be OK."

"Just before the baby was due, Joseph and Mary had to make a trip down south to a place called Bethlehem. Joseph walked and Mary rode a donkey."

"Joseph, do you know where we will stay?" Mary asked.

"I have enough money for us to stay at a motel," he told her.

"But there are so many people on the road," she said. "What if there isn't a motel?"
"Then we will just have to let God take care of us."

"They were sort of like you guys," Tony added, looking right at the twins. "Every motel was full," he continued.

"The manager of the last place they tried, a wonderful woman named Rebecca, had an idea."

"I am so sorry," Rebecca said. "There's absolutely no room. But you two wait here. Trust me, I'll find a place for you."

"When Rebecca came back, she said they could stay at a barn down the road. It wasn't much, but it was clean and warm."

"That night, in that barn, Mary had her baby. When Joseph picked up the



CNS illustration by Robert F. McGovern

Two children in foster care learn the meaning of trust when their caseworker tells them the story of the Nativity and how Joseph and Mary placed their trust in God.

infant, he felt a joy like nothing he had ever experienced. It might not be his child physically, but he knew he was this baby's father.

"A few miles away, in a field outside Bethlehem, two brothers, Aaron and Amos, and their sister Anna, were tending sheep. Amos suddenly started yelling," said Tony.

"Aaron! Anna! Come here, quick."
"When the other two came, they saw this enormous bunch of angels, singing and dancing and having a great time," Tony told the children. "One of the angels flew toward them. The three shepherds were scared."

"Don't hurt us! We didn't do anything," they cried.
"Calm down. We're just celebrating because the Messiah has been born tonight in Bethlehem," the angel said. "You can go see him if you want."

"But we can't leave the sheep," said Aaron, always the practical one of the siblings.

"Trust me," the angel said. "We'll take care of them until you get back."

"When the three shepherds came to the barn, Mary was resting. Joseph let each of them hold the baby.

"There's a lot more to the story. But it's all more about trusting God and God trusting them," Tony told the twins.

"That's what you two have to do," he added. "You trust each other and now you have to trust somebody else just like God and Joseph and Mary."

When Tony finished, Barbara said, "OK, so this Joseph was a good guy. How do you know we can trust these people you want us to go to?"

"Because it's my wife and I who want to take you home with us," Tony told them with a smile.

(Father W. Thomas Faucher is a priest of the Diocese of Boise, Idaho.)

Discussion Point

Honesty and respect help build trust

This Week's Question

What contributes to building trust between two people or in a family?

"A combination of factors: good communication, respect, compassion and caring. There's also a time factor. Trust doesn't happen in one day." (Melissa Kruger, St. Cloud, Minn.)

"Trust is created by the reaction you get from the other person and the follow-through from that person. There has to be an understanding reaction instead of anger or derision, and acceptance of the other person regardless of whether you agree or not about a particular topic." (Cheryl Jones, St. Louis, Mo.)

"Honesty and respect. The other thing is a sense of integrity, a kind of self-respect that allows for honesty, good communication and compassion. There needs to be a recognition of our own imperfections because that is common to us all and can draw us together. Finally, there has to be a safety factor; that the other person will accept you with your imperfections and still will care for you." (Rev. Ed Dziedzicko, Mount Calvary, Wis.)

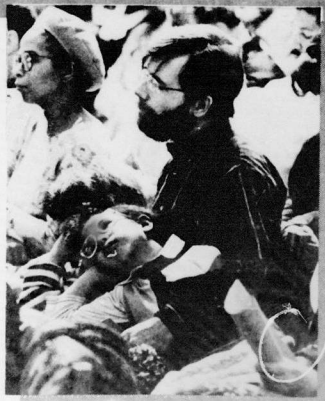
"I guess if you're consistently reliable. If you always live up to what you say you'll do. If your words and actions go together, because actions speak louder than words. People can talk a good game, but if you want to trust someone, their words have to fit their actions." (Mary Jane Kuebler, Toledo, Ohio)

"I'd say communication would be the first thing. If you don't have that, you'd be guessing all the time. Spending time with each other, doing things for each other, loving each other, serving each other." (Brother Mark Gehret, Hazard, Ky.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: People speak of "tough love." What does this mean to you? Is it sometimes needed?

If you would like to respond for possible publication, write to "Faith Alive!" at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.



CNS photo

Entertainment

Viewing with Arnold/james W. Arnold

'Toy Story' has great computer-animated plot

"Toy Story" is one of the few movies this fall to get overwhelming, fall-down positive reactions from cynical movie critics. It wasn't a real choice for them, since it's simple and positive and technically innovative—a computer-animated comedy about kids and toys and the ties that bind them.

It's from Disney, a fact that tempers the enthusiasm. Disney is already a major exploiter of the connection between movies and toys, and certainly it won't let this one easily pass from the nation's consciousness. Some of the onus is removed by the film's independent origins.

Young director John Lasseter and the small computer animation company Pixar developed it from their project named "Tin Toy," an Oscar-winning short that maybe a poker table full of people saw. But little is "small" in private enterprise anymore. Pixar is owned by Steven Jobs, the billionaire computer whiz. The film's genre is basically slapstick, but it builds compassion. You could say it's about how toys survive and see themselves amid adult human indifference and a lot of rough love (at best) from their kid-owners and terror from the family dog.

"Toy Story" is different in its cartoon look because all its images are created with computers. That's like saying it's done by magic, since I don't really know what that means. For the viewer,

the main difference is in the complexity of the "realistic" images and the exhilaration of some effects, e.g., a comic car chase climax that recalls the wacky thrills provided "live" by the Keystone Kops of the 1920s.

The screenplay, created by a committee of writers (a bad sign), is built on the familiar premise of toys coming to life when Andy, their 6-year-old owner, is out of his room. (A similar concept was used in last summer's Frank Oz film "The Indian in the Cupboard.")

Except for Woody, a pull-string cowboy doll who is the leader (and Andy's favorite), these toys are mostly familiar commercial friends—Mr. Potato Head, a dinosaur, a piggy bank, a Slinky dog, an Etch-a-Sketch, a platoon of toy soldiers, a porcelain Little Bo Peep, etc. The theme is change and anxiety. Andy is having a birthday, and the toys are afraid they'll be replaced and become "rummage sale" bait.

The newcomer, it turns out, threatens mainly Woody. He's Buzz Lightyear, a space ranger and take-charge guy. He's an action toy and very high tech. He's different in another crucial way. The other toys know they're just toys. Buzz thinks he's real. In any case, he quickly usurps Woody's place as Andy's "favorite."

The film exploits some witty lines and unexpected character traits (Bo Peep is ladylike but amusingly sexually aggressive). "Toy Story" also gets a push from a gifted cast of voices, from Tom Hanks and Tim Allen to Wallace Shawn, Don Rickles and Annie Potts.

After a brief feud, Buzz and Woody share the harrowing "out of house" adventure that brings them together as pals. They're eventually picked up by Andy's "unhappy" little neighbor, Sid, who owns Rex, a fearsome pit bull, and taints his quiet little sister, Hannah. He's got a plan to send Buzz into orbit on a fireworks rocket.

Sid is a villain we hope kids won't want to emulate. He tortures toys for fun, breaks them into parts and reshapes them in monstrous combinations. But not to worry, these scary mutant creatures eventually rebel and are key to the escape that allows Buzz and



Actress Julia Ormond stars as Sabrina Fairchild and actor Harrison Ford is corporate magnate Linus Larabee in a remake of the romantic comedy "Sabrina." The U.S. Catholic Conference classifies the film A-II for adults and adolescents.

CNS photo from Paramount Pictures

Woody to catch the moving van and family car en route to a new house.

While in danger, Buzz learns poignantly that he's only a "virtual" human, made in Taiwan, and can't really fly or zap anyone with a laser. (In a nice touch, he sees a TV commercial that glorifies his attributes but then reads in a small-print disclaimer: "Not a flying toy.")

Woody makes him feel better by giving him the movie's central message: "A toy is better than a space ranger. You are (Andy's) toy." In short, be the best toy you can possibly be.

That's not necessarily a lock on wisdom. Parents might want to talk with their children and compare this to other toy-themed movies. Here, being a toy is good, a kind of vocation. In "Indian in the Cupboard," it was let toys be toys, and humans be humans. Giving life to

toys was a cause of great mischief.

In the granddaddy of all Disney toy movies, "Pinocchio" was a toy who wanted to become human. Being a toy was not good enough. It's better to be human and (of course) have an immortal soul. Pinocchio was a puppet who didn't know his proper role.

You could also argue that "Cupboard" had a deeper social message. (What it lacked was a bigger advertising budget.) But probably none of these films compare in all aspects of artistry to the one that began the recent trend—"Toys," released in 1992, with Robin Williams—a movie with a fatal mix of too much creativity and politics.

(Fast-paced, witty, but less than meets the eye, OK entertainment for families).

USCC classification: A-I, general patronage.

Film Classifications

Recently reviewed by the USCC

Balto	A-I
Heat	O
Orchello	A-III
Sabrina	A-II
Sense and Sensibility	A-II

A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; A-IV — adults, with reservations; O — morally offensive

Bilingual storytime airing on PBS will delight children

By Henry Herz and Gerri Pare, Catholic News Service

Stories are read in both English and Spanish in the holiday special "Storytime Para Ti" airing Monday, Dec. 25, from 1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings to verify the program date and time.)

The series is meant to introduce young children to the world of stories and literature, and to encourage parents and caregivers to read regularly to little ones.

In this special bilingual episode, host Marabina James reads the delightful "Too Many Tamales" in English to Kimo, the puppet kid who finds learning words in Spanish from friend Isabel is fun as well.

Along comes actor-singer Ruben Blades, who has two Spanish storybooks to share with them, the tale of "The Little Red Hen" and "Where Is My Teddy Bear?" For those who don't understand Spanish, Blades' expressive reading technique and the books' colorful illustrations help bridge the gap.

The English story is particularly warm-hearted and believable, while the Spanish teddy bear tale is a whimsical wonder where the artwork tells it all and words seem almost superfluous.

Meanwhile, as Blades reads, several Anglo and Latino children are seen listening and interacting and not letting language barriers stop their get-together.

As directed by Cordelia Stone, it's an interesting experiment that may make young children aware that many other children in the country speak another language instead of, or in addition to, English—but that they can equally enjoy good stories.

TV Programs of Note

Sunday, Dec. 24, 9-11 p.m. (CBS) "Christmas on Division Street." In this rebroadcast of a drama, a 14-year-old (Fred Savage) new to Philadelphia befriends a feisty old man (Hume Cronyn) who teaches him about the city's history and inspires the lad to help homeless people.

Monday, Dec. 25, 10 a.m.-noon (ABC) "The Walt Disney World Very Merry Christmas Parade." Live from the Florida Disney-MGM Studios and hosted by Joan Lunden and Regis Philbin, the holiday parade features dozens of floats and familiar animated characters and musical performances.

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 8-11 p.m. (PBS) "Madama Butterfly." From "The Metropolitan Opera Presents" series, the three-act opera by Puccini is conducted by Daniele Gatti and sung in Italian with English subtitles.

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 9-11 p.m. (CBS) "The Kennedy Center: Honors: A Celebration of the Performing Arts." This year's special, broadcast from the Kennedy Center in Washington and hosted by Walter Cronkite, salutes Jacques D'Amboise, Marilyn Horne, B.B. King, Sidney Pottier and Neil Simon.

Friday, Dec. 29, 9-10 p.m. (PBS) "Mark Russell's 1995." In this comedy special, the political satirist reviews the year in compilations from his live broadcasts.

(Check local listings to verify program dates and times. Henry Herz is the director and Gerri Pare is on the staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for film and broadcasting.)

EWTN expands broadcast services via satellite

By Catholic News Service

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—The Eternal Word Television Network in Birmingham has made an affiliation agreement with an Englewood, Colo., company to be placed on its new direct broadcast DISH satellite network, scheduled for distribution in early 1996.

Initially, EWTN will be available on the DISH network from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. eastern standard time, with plans to expand to 24-hour availability.

DISH is an acronym for Digital Sky Highway, a new direct broadcast satellite system of EchoStar Communications Corp. The company plans to start with 65 cable channels in early 1996 and expand to deliver more than 150 channels of digital, audio and data services by mid-1996.

"This event is truly a blessing for people living in areas where EWTN is not available on cable," said Mother Angelica, EWTN founder and board chairwoman, in a statement.

"EWTN provides a positive viewing alternative and reflects our commitment to offering a broad selection of quality programming," said a statement by Larry Smith, vice president of distribution for EchoStar.

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen I. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 24, 1995

- Isaiah 7:1-14
- Romans 1:1-7
- Matthew 1:18-24

As has occurred in the previous three Sundays of Advent, the first part of



Isaiah's prophecy supplies this liturgy with its initial reading.

This prophet lived many centuries ago, but he was not unlike people today who hope for a better tomorrow.

Britons who bewail the present domestic tragedies in their royal family hopefully look forward one day to the arrival upon the scene of King William V, who is now Prince William, the eldest teen-age son of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, and a prince whose personal life is untarnished.

In this country, Americans who oppose a sitting President eagerly anticipate the inauguration of his successor. Even if the identity of the successor is unknown, hope is strong since at least the presently perceived problems will pass away with the incumbent.

This yearning applied to Americans who longed to see the Truman era end, as well as to those who dreamed of the day when Richard Nixon would return to private life.

Thus it was with Primo-Isaiah. This prophet had access to the court, and there he saw nothing to satisfy his intense religious expectations. King Ahaz was simply unfit, at least in the prophet's eyes. However, the prophet had hopes when the king's young wife conceived a child. Surely, the prophet reasoned, the unborn prince will one day bring right to all the wrongs his father had tolerated.

As time passed, it became evident that justice and honor would prevail not just with the rule of an earthly king, but by the reign of a king sent from God.

Paul's letter to the Christian Romans is the source of the second reading.

In this reading, Paul identifies Jesus as descended from David but also as the Son of God. It is a succinct testament to the Incarnation.

The apostle reminds his readers that his own credentials proceed from Jesus, and the apostolic role in the church is to spread trust in the holy name of Jesus.

St. Matthew's Gospel offers this week-end liturgy its Gospel proclamation.

Of the four Gospels, only two, Luke and Matthew, discuss any of the details of the Lord's birth. This reading reveals the

moment Christians call the "Annunciation." At this moment, Joseph learned from an angel that in God's plan, and by God's dispensation from the order of nature, Mary his wife was to be the mother of the Redeemer.

In this setting, the angel also made clear that the prophecy of Isaiah, written so long before, was being fulfilled in the child of Mary, the Son of God.

Reflection

In any age, anywhere, people find themselves displeased with the prevailing political authority. This may be in democratic societies, such as in the United States, where unpopular political authorities can be replaced through the electoral process.

In other places, all too often, people must carry the heavy burden of tyranny. Usually only long years with the gradual change of circumstances, or occasionally an abrupt change, modifies the unhappy situations in these places of dictatorial rule.

Political problems are not the only sources of anguish for people. Many suffer beneath the heavy load of despair, of dilemma, or of all the many worries human experience visits upon us.

These people too yearn for a better day, a day of relief, in short for a better future.

The church, excited as this Fourth Sunday of Advent is the very vigil of Christmas itself, tells us through these readings that our new day is at hand.

Tomorrow the new day will dawn! All our hopes, dreams and expectations will be met in the birth of Emmanuel-El, "God among us," Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord, son of Mary and Son of God.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans reassures us. The effects of the momentous birth of Jesus were not confined to a Holy Land 19 centuries ago. The church, blessed with the divinely-protected memory of its apostolic beginnings, brings Jesus to us anew in sacrament, in word, and in community.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for consideration

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Please include name, address, parish, and telephone number. Send material for consideration to the "My Journey to God" column in care of The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.

My Journey to God

The First Christmas Eve

Little mother, so dear, so blessed,
You hold your babe close to your breast,
Oh, how you love your little one,
God's gift to you, his only son.

You've traveled long and far this day
Searching for a place to stay.
Your journey's over, your pain is done,
And now you hold your baby son.

He whimpers, you smile and kiss his brow
So soft and sweet and warm,
As Joseph stands watching over you,
Keeping you both from harm.

Someday he'll belong to all mankind
His name known the world through,
His love will save the souls of men,
But tonight he belongs to you.

By Rosalynn DeFelice



CNS illustration by Joan Hyne

(Rosalynn DeFelice is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 25

Christmas
Midnight
Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14
Dawn
Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20
Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18 or
John 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday, Dec. 26

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

Wednesday, Dec. 27

John, apostle, evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:2-8

Thursday, Dec. 28

The Holy Innocents, martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2
Psalm 124:2-3, 7-8
Matthew 23:13-18

Friday, Dec. 29

Fifth day in the Octave of Christmas
Thomas Becket, bishop, martyr
1 John 2:3-11
Psalm 96:1-3, 5-6
Luke 2:22-35

Saturday, Dec. 30

Sixth day in the Octave of Christmas
1 John 2:12-17
Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

The Shaping of the Papacy/John F. Fink

Papacy reached the height of its temporal glory under Innocent III

Under Pope Innocent III the papacy reached the height of its temporal glory. This pope also had far-reaching effects on the spiritual life of the church through the Fourth Lateran Council—the most important synod of the Middle Ages—and through his approval of two new types of religious orders—the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

Innocent III, the nephew of Pope Clement III, was only 37 when he was elected pope Jan. 8, 1198. His pontificate extended for 18 years. Still a deacon when he was unanimously elected pope, he was ordained a priest on Feb. 21 and consecrated pope the following day.

He was a born ruler, and he made claims of his office that had never been made before. Previous popes had called themselves the vicar of St. Peter, he called himself the vicar of Christ. He was, he said, "set midway between God and man, below God but above man," given "not only the universal church but the whole world to govern."

Innocent quickly assumed control of the papal state that had so often been promised by past emperors, so that it covered all of central Italy, separating the north that belonged to the German empire from the Kingdom of Sicily.

Turning to Germany, where Henry VI had died, Innocent mediated between two rivals for the throne—Philip (Henry's brother) and Otto of Brunswick. Declaring that the pope had the right to determine who was emperor, he chose Otto who had promised to recognize the enlarged papal states. He crowned him emperor on Oct. 4, 1209. However, when Otto invaded the Sicilian kingdom the following year, Innocent excommunicated and deposed him. Since Philip was dead, the pope gave his support to Frederick of Hohenstaufen, the son of Henry VI.

His influence reached to England and France as he mediated their constant strife. By threatening Philip Augustus of France and Richard of England with interdict (refusal of the sacraments and Christian burial), he was able to end the war between their two countries.

In England itself, he forced King John to recognize Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury by excommunicating the king. Later, after John submitted to the pope and even made his Anglo-Irish domains a papal fief, the pope declared the Magna Carta void because, he said, it had been extorted by the English barons without papal consent.

Innocent III's activity was wide. He annulled the marriage of Prince Alfonso

of Portugal with the daughter of the king of Castile. He arbitrated between two claimants for the Norwegian throne. He mediated a dispute between the king of Hungary and his brother. He reformed the church in Poland. He dispatched missionaries to Prussia. He recognized Joanitza as king of Bulgaria, sending a legate to crown him.

He preached the Fourth Crusade to try to win back Jerusalem. This crusade, though, through the intrigue of Venice, was diverted to Constantinople. The city was sacked and the Byzantine Empire was overthrown. Innocent had no choice but to accept what had happened and he established a Latin patriarchate in Constantinople in the (mistaken) hope that that would lead to a reunification of the Eastern and Western churches.

This was not Innocent's only crusade, though. In 1208 he called for the first crusade within Christendom itself, against the Albigensians in France and northern Italy. This crusade resulted in bloodshed among Christians, casting a pall over an otherwise brilliant pontificate. It was a war that was to continue until 1229.

Innocent was particularly determined to reform the church. It was to that end that he gave his verbal approval to St. Francis of Assisi in 1209 for the rule of life for the Order of Friars Minor and in 1216 formal approval to the rule of life for the Order of Preachers started by St. Dominic.

In 1215, Innocent convoked the Fourth Council of the Lateran, attended by more than 1,200 prelates. It condemned all heresies, published 70 decrees of reform, and formulated a creed against the Albigensians. It defined and made the first official use of the term "transubstantiation" to explain the change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and it ordered annual reception of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. It also called for a four-year truce by Christian rulers so that a new crusade could be launched in 1217. And, in a reflection of the discrimination that existed during that period of history, it decreed that Jews and Muslims should wear a distinctive dress.

Pope Innocent III died quite suddenly on July 16, 1216 in Perugia, while trying to settle some differences between Pisa and Genoa. He was buried there, but Pope Leo XIII had his remains brought back to Rome. His tomb is now prominent in the right transept of the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

The papacy was never again to achieve the secular power it enjoyed under Pope Innocent III.

The Active List

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 will be taken by telephone. No pictures, please. Notices must be in our offices by 10 a.m. Monday 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 23

A pro-life rosary will be prayed every Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m. at the Clinic for Women, 38th and Parker. Everyone is welcome.

December 24

St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, will celebrate a Mass in Spanish at midnight.

December 26

The prayer group of St. Lawrence, 4650 Shadeland Ave., will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel. All are welcome. For more information, call 317-546-4065 or 317-842-8805.

Our Lady of Greenwood Marian Prayer Group will meet to pray the rosary at 7 p.m. in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome.

December 28

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis, will hold Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel from 7 a.m. until the 5:30 p.m. Mass. Everyone is welcome.

St. Roch Parish, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., will hold a family Eucharist holy hour with rosary and Benediction from 7-8

p.m. in the church. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 317-784-1763.

Sacred Heart Parish, Indianapolis, will hold a Family Rosary night at 7 p.m.

December 29

A pro-life rosary will be prayed every Friday morning at 10 a.m. in front of Affiliated Women's Services, Inc., 2215 Distributors Drive. Everyone is welcome.

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis, will hold Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel from 7 a.m. to the 5:30 p.m. Mass. Everyone is welcome.

St. Christopher Parish, Indianapolis, Singles and Friends will meet to watch the Packers game. For time and meeting place, call Jorge at 317-388-8101 or Mike at 317-879-8018.

St. Philip Neri Parish, Indianapolis, will hold a Monte Carlo Night from 7 p.m.-12 midnight. Admission is \$3.

December 30

St. Christopher Parish,

Indianapolis, Singles and Friends will meet at church at 8 a.m. to volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul to assist the needy of the community. For more information, call Mike at 317-879-8018. This is an Interact event.

December 31

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal will celebrate New Year's Eve Mass at St. Gabriel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis, starting with fellowship at 8:30 p.m., followed by praise and worship, Mass at 10 p.m. For more information, call 317-927-6900.

January 2

The prayer group of St. Lawrence, 4650 Shadeland Ave., will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel. All are welcome. For more information, call 317-546-4065 or 317-842-8805.

Our Lady of Greenwood Marian Prayer Group will meet to pray the rosary at 7 p.m. in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will be held in the Divine Mercy Adoration Chapel located next to Cardinal Ritter High School, Indianapolis, beginning with confession at 6:45 p.m., followed by service at 7 p.m.

January 3

St. Christopher Parish, Indianapolis, Singles and Friends will attend a healing Mass at Marian College Chapel at 7 p.m. For more information,

call Mary at 317-293-7402 or Debbie at 317-388-4940.

January 4

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis, will hold Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel from 7 a.m. until the 5:30 p.m. Mass. Everyone is welcome.

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January 5

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St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis, will hold Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel from 7 a.m. to the 5:30 p.m. Mass. Everyone is welcome.

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral's Council and Count #191 of the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver will sponsor the First Friday Rosary at 5:15 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. All are welcome.



"I'm a king in the living nativity
I need some gold and a camel by Friday."

© 1995 CBB Graphics

Sacred Heart Parish, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis, will hold "First Friday" after the 8 a.m. Mass. Religion topics will be discussed. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

January 5-7

A Benedictine Life Weekend for single Catholic women, ages 20 to 40, who are interested in religious life will be held at the Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand. For more information, call Sister Rose Mary Rensing at 800-738-9999.

January 6

The Positively Singles, Indianapolis, will meet at Action Bowl at 7:45 p.m. for an evening of bowling and jazz. For directions, information, and reservations, call Cheryl at 317-788-4254.

Apostolate of Fatima will hold a holy hour at 2 p.m. in the Little Flower Chapel, 13th and Bosart.

For more information, call Lean Poomi at 317-784-9757.

St. Nicholas Church, Sunman, will hold a S.A.C.R.E.D. meeting at 7:30 a.m.

Holy Angels Parish, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis, will hold exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 11 a.m.-noon. All are invited.

January 7

The Positively Singles, Indianapolis, will hold a planning meeting and pitch-in at 6 p.m. For directions and more information, call Sue Ann at 317-254-1715.

The Secular Franciscans will meet in Sacred Heart Parish Chapel, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis, at 1 p.m. for ongoing formation classes. Benediction, service and business meeting following. For more information, call 317-888-8833.

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December 24th
Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Liturgy - 10 a.m.

December 25th, Monday
Nativity of Our Lord
10 a.m.

December 26th, Tuesday
Synaxis
10 a.m.

December 30th, Saturday
No Liturgy

December 31st
Sunday before Theophany
10 a.m.

January 1st
Circumcision of Our Lord
10 a.m.

January 6th
Theophany of Our Lord
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Annual World Day of Peace message

Pope says children have a right to peace and love

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY—Children have a right to grow up surrounded by peace and love, free of abuse and exploitation, Pope John Paul II said in his message for the World Day of Peace.

"Children are not a burden on society; they are not a means of profit or people without rights. Children are precious members of the human family, for they embody its hopes, its expectations and its potential," said the pope's peace day message.

The theme for the Jan. 1, 1996, celebration is: "Let us give children a future of peace."

The papal message was released Dec. 12, one day after the U.N. Children's Fund published its annual report on the state of the world's children, providing statistics on the "inhuman sufferings" the pope condemned.

As a result of wars and conflicts over the last 10 years, the UNICEF report said, 2 million children were killed, between 4 million and 5 million were left disabled, 1 million were left orphaned or cannot find their parents and an estimated 10 million have suffered psychological trauma.

"The deliberate killing of a child is one of the most disturbing signs of the breakdown of all respect for human life," the pope said in his message.

In the message, the pope condemned governments and armed groups that have ignored international agreements to give special protection to children in times of war, leading to "a veritable slaughter" of youngsters.

With the peace message, Pope John Paul "wants to embrace all children who suffer and all healthy and happy children and say to all grown-ups: 'Let us give children a future of peace. They are only children.'"

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The cardinal, who often visits world trouble spots on behalf of the pope, said he has shed many tears at the sight of children murdered or maimed in war or totting guns, forced to join the fighting.

"Peace, a gift of God, is in the hands of adults," the cardinal said at a Dec. 12 press conference. "Children never start wars; they don't know how to organize themselves to exploit the weak."

The cardinal said there has been a "horrendous escalation" of wars' impact on civilians, especially children, since the turn of the century.

In World War I, he said, an estimated 10 percent of the victims were civilians. The proportion rose to 50 percent in World War II, 80 percent of the victims of the Vietnam War and 90 percent of the victims of the Lebanese conflict were civilians, "many of them women and children."

"Children's faces should always be happy and trusting, but at times they are full of sadness and fear. How much have these children already seen and suffered in the course of their short lives!" Pope John Paul said in his message.

In addition to condemning war, exploitation of child workers, forced prostitution, rape and the recruitment of children in the home, the breakup of families and the "dismal loneliness" of children left by themselves for hours each day as both parents work.

Children imitate the behavior of the adults around them, the pope said.

"They rapidly learn love and respect for others, but they also quickly absorb the poison of violence and hatred," he said.

Even if they do not grow up under the shadow of war and civil conflict, many children's main contact with the world is through television programs filled with violence or immorality, the pope said.

"It is no wonder if this kind of widespread and pernicious violence also has its effect on their young hearts, changing their natural enthusiasm into disillusionment or cynicism, and their instinctive goodness into indifference or selfishness," the pope said.

If a young child's world is filled with parental arguments, examples of selfishness, violence and disdain for others, he said, they are not experiencing the childhood they have a right to and they will have a difficult time being peacemakers themselves.

Pope John Paul repeated a request he made before the September U.N. conference on women, asking Catholic schools and institutions to give priority to helping girls and young women, especially those growing up under war or extreme poverty.

"I ask them to help girls who have suffered as a result of war and violence, to teach boys to acknowledge and respect the dignity of women and to help all children to rediscover the tenderness of the love of God," he said.

U.S. Sacred Heart of Mary Sister Marjorie Keenan, an official at the justice and peace council, said the call to educate boys to respect women is an important part of the message.

"Young boys trained to respect women will be less likely to start the wars women refuse" to initiate or support, she said.

The papal message, in addition to condemning acts of war and exploitation against children, also outlines steps parents and teachers can take to develop the inherent peacemaking potential of children.

The family, the pope said, is the first place children learn to love and respect others, to share and to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Pope John Paul praised school programs that teach children to resolve their own conflicts and asked educators to include in their lessons stories of successful peacemakers and peacemaking, rather than focusing simply on wars and victories in battle.

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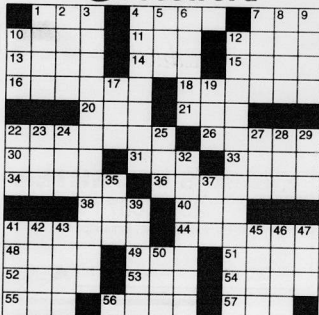
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Catholic
Crossword

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1 Hur's son (1 Cl. 200)

4 Ruth's husband (Ruth 4:13)

7 Make a mistake

10 They send forth their little — like a flock (Job 21:11)

11 Pot cover

12 Loten ingredient

13 First human

14 Agad

15 "Massed" mammal, for short

16 — John was not — cast into prison" (John 3:24)

18 Alaska native

20 "And he that — upon him was called 'Faithful and True'" (Rev 19:11)

21 Jig

22 "The glory of God did —" (Rev 21:23)

26 The — peace prize

30 Out of the wind

31 Use a shovel

33 Mad on

34 "I said me down and —" (Psa 2:3)

38 "Thou wilt — the king's life" (Psa 61:6)

39 Egg layer

40 Metal-bearing rock

41 Montana's capital

42 City built by Solomon (2 Cl. 4)

48 "My cup runneth —" (Ps 134:6)

49 Benet of Fedora

51 "And he took the cup and — thanks" (Mat 26:27)

52 Of sound — and body

53 Spanish one

54 Squeezed out a living

55 Urban railways

56 Book following Joel

57 "A — of theives" (Mark 11:7)

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1 Reversed an action

2 Back part

3 "The Lord —" (Psa 23:1)

4 Supported up

5 Astringent substance

6 Snake in Placitas

9 113

7 Term for God (Mark 15:34)

8 "There was no — for them in the mo'" (Luke 2:7)

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Youth News/Views

Cathedral students help the poor at Christmas

By Mary Ann Wyand

The holidays will be a lot brighter for hundreds of needy Indianapolis area residents thanks to the generosity of Cathedral High School students.

This year Cathedral students are helping 54 children from St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis by providing underwear, socks and toys for them, religion teacher Jim Obergfell said. Cathedral students also are assisting 117 families from St. Rita Parish with holiday needs as well as adopting several families from the Noble Center, sending money to a mission in Haiti, and donating funds to a haven for abused women and children.

And again this year, he said, Cathedral students generously responded to a senior religion class project to provide gifts for the Midtown Community Mental Health Center's annual Toy Shop.

That project dates back 18 years at Cathedral. Toy Shop coordinator Barry Irons said. Until Central State Hospital was closed, Cathedral students volunteered there and collected money and gifts so patients with mental health problems could give presents to loved ones. During the past two Christmas seasons, students have helped clients at the Midtown Community Mental Health Center select gifts for family members.

Cathedral senior Khristi Autajay from St. Luke Parish said she will always remember this volunteer experience.

"I was so happy I was able to help," Khristi said. "The parents were just so grateful that we were helping them pick things out and wrap gifts."

"I saw this as a learning experience," Cathedral senior Chris Boyd of Carmel said. "It got me ready for the Christmas season, and I think it helped all of the students who collected money or bought gifts or worked at the booths."



Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Cathedral High School seniors Al Davis (from left), Jack Rice and Lisa Schlagenhauf arrange donated gifts for the Midtown Community Mental Health Center's annual Toy Shop project during Advent. Cathedral students also raised money for a number of other community service projects this year.

I think it helped all of us find the Christmas spirit."

In the process of helping people in need, Chris said, "you feel good when you give of yourself to other people. You feel like you're making a difference."

Students raised \$700 to buy gifts for Midtown Community Mental Health Center clients to give to their families, he said. "It was a really good project. It was fun going shopping and testing the toys and helping the people. We had a good time."

Chris said he enjoys helping with service projects because "you're able to put yourself out for people who are missing something in their lives."

And that, Obergfell said, is the goal of Cathedral's participation in the Toy Shop and other community service projects.

"It's a very good learning experience for the students to meet people who have mental health problems and other challenges," he said. "It helps teach the students responsibility and an awareness that they need to be doing things to help other people. The whole thrust of our religion is to be of service to others. Giving back to the community is a hallmark of a Cathedral education. We try to emphasize to the students that they have an obligation to do something for the community."

Midtown Community Mental Health clients were overjoyed by the generosity of Cathedral students, Irons said, and the many Christmas gifts from teen-agers who attend Brebeuf Preparatory School, Lawrence North High School, Lawrence Central High School, Pike High School, and Broad Ripple High School.

"We had about 175 clients come through the Toy Shop this year," Irons said. "If it wasn't for the community as a whole, we wouldn't be able to open the Toy Shop every year. One client was able to save enough money to buy a round-trip bus ticket to visit his family at Christmas, but he didn't have any money for gifts. Thanks to generous community support of the Toy Shop, he was able to pick out presents for his grandchildren he hasn't seen in five years. Another client, a lady, said the students were so sweet and caring that she was overwhelmed with tears of joy as they helped her select gifts."

The Toy Shop offers hope to people with mental health problems, Irons said, and gives students positive feelings about helping people in need.

Again this holiday season, the gift of giving brought many rewards to high school students in the archdiocese who offered their time, talent and treasure to help the less fortunate have a joyful Christmas.



Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Roncalli High school seniors Jeff Allard (from left) and Elana Salinas from St. Barnabas Parish, Whitney Fulkerson from St. Mark Parish, and Rob Bowman from Holy Name Parish help stock Food Pantry shelves at the Catholic Social Services Crisis Center with some of the 46,000 food items that Roncalli students, faculty and staff collected for the needy. The Crisis Center, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Hunger Inc., and the Dayspring Shelter benefited from their generosity.

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Photo by Mary Ann Wyand

Bishop Chataud High School sophomores Drew Fillenwarth from St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis helps unload some of the canned goods collected by Chataud students for distribution by the Catholic Social Services Crisis Center at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center. Bishop Chataud students recently delivered two vans full of groceries to the Crisis Center, which is now located in the Xavier Building, following a holiday service project at the North Deane high school.

The Woods claims title in historic competition

By David Delaney

It was history in the making for the St. Mary-of-the-Woods College women's basketball team when they played cross-town rival Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

The much-awaited contest between the two Terre Haute schools which took place recently, pitted the Woods—the nation's oldest Catholic liberal arts col-

lege for women—against Rose, a 121-year-old engineering school that only this year admitted women.

Hence the excitement.

St. Mary's, having had a basketball program since last year, had a jump on Rose and came through with a 77-38 rout. The victory allowed the Woodsies to claim the newly initiated Clabber Girl Trophy for a year.

The two colleges are located about 10 miles apart and have been around a

combined 276 years. Never before have they met in any sport.

I'm so happy we finally got to play them," team co-captain Tammy Gordon of Marshall, Ill., said moments after the encounter ended in a packed Shook Fieldhouse.

"It will be a great rivalry," Gordon continued. "This is the beginning of a whole new tradition." Gordon's 13 points led all St. Mary scorers.

Woods freshman, Sarah Titus, who

was in the crowd to witness the historic event, said people were talking about the game at least a month before the two teams met on the court. "Everybody's been pumped up for it," she added.

St. Mary's President Sister Barbara Doherty was on hand along with Rose President Sam Hulbert—who threw up the first ball.

Sister Doherty referred to the competition as "the game of the century."

Faith plays role in drummer's success

By Julie Downs, Catholic News Service

CHARLESTON, S.C.—Jim "Sonni" Sonefeld has come a long way from mimicking the drummers he heard on the radio.

Now the Catholic from the Midwest is a drummer for Hootie & The Blowfish, one of the hottest rock groups in the country with a No. 1 album and a top-selling tour.

Their award-winning album "Cracked Rear View" is selling more than 1 million copies a month for a total of more than 11 million CDs or tapes. That makes it the fifth best-selling debut album of all time.

Sonefeld says his Catholic faith has played a part in his profession.

In seventh grade at St. Raphael School in Naperville, Ill., Sonefeld began taking drum lessons. He was influenced by the music of his parents, from classic rock and Motown to the Christmas hymns his mother played, such as "Go Tell It On the Mountain."

Young Adult Forum/ Tom Ehart

'Life' is the true gift of Christmas

She was a young adult fresh out of college. It was 1980. She was pregnant. And she had a lot of choices to make.

Abortion was becoming acceptable. Her boyfriend didn't have to know. Her parents would probably kill her if they found out. The neighbors would stare and call her names. The people at church would be scandalized by her sin and probably reject her. The shame was "mothering her."

It would be so easy to get rid of her baby. No one would have to know. She could keep the secret hidden. The memory could be buried in silence.

It was all so dark. So cold. So ugly. And so painful.

Or she could go another way. She could stay and face the family. Stay and face the friends and neighbors and the people at church. She could stand up for the child who was inside her and give it a chance. It was a choice she had to make.

And she chose life.

The decision nearly killed her parents. The family was shocked—but they got over it. She went to another town, so their neighbors and the church never knew. And the father of the child by some incredible grace, decided to stay by her side and the two were married.

The child was born. Not without difficulty, but born nonetheless. And what a beautiful child it was. And the child became the talk of the family. No one could take their eyes off the infant. Everyone wanted his or her turn at holding the child, cooing and making goofy faces all the while.

And hearts began to melt. Old frictions between family members were healed. Stories of each family member's own childhood days began to resurface, and lives were once again shared. All because a child was given a chance at life.

"That was one of my favorite songs as a kid," he told *The New Catholic Miscellany*, Charleston's diocesan paper.

A strong soccer program and the distance from Illinois brought Sonefeld to the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Like many students, the college years were a period of some transition.

College wasn't "a turning point," he recalled, but a time of "discovery" and enlightenment that brought with it a new perspective of his Catholic roots.

"I had taken classes in philosophy that taught me about different religions," he said. "It gave me a good picture of where I stood religiously."

One thing he discovered was that he was a "little bit like a foreigner" as a Northern Catholic at a large, primarily Southern Baptist university.

Sonefeld remembers the pope's visit to the university campus during the Holy Father's 1987 U.S. trip as "one of the coolest things ever."

"I felt like that was something special

for me," he said, "because I was a Catholic and it was my religion."

While in college, he took up guitar and piano in addition to the drums, and eventually met the friends and classmates who would form Hootie & The Blowfish. After graduating in 1989, they spent the next several years traveling and touring.

Their album "Cracked Rear View" was released in July 1994 and continues to make a steady climb up the charts.

The songs of Hootie & The Blowfish stand out for their simple and straightforward declarations of love and loss.

"We just write about things that happen to us in our lives," said Sonefeld, adding that religion and faith have influenced the group's song-writing and its emphasis on hope even in desperate situations.

Since Sonefeld spends most of his time traveling, it is difficult to attend Mass regularly, but he feels he practices his faith in his daily life by "being true to the things that the church taught me, if that means anything. It means a lot to



CNS photo by Julie Downs

Hootie & The Blowfish drummer Jim "Sonni" Sonefeld.

me, and I think it comes across to other people that you're still carrying on the traditions of love, giving, caring and hope and faith."

He said an ever-present symbol of his faith are "my Catholic duds"—the two Catholic medals he always wears around his neck. "It is always a reminder to me that I am a Catholic," he said, "and there is some responsibility that goes along with that."

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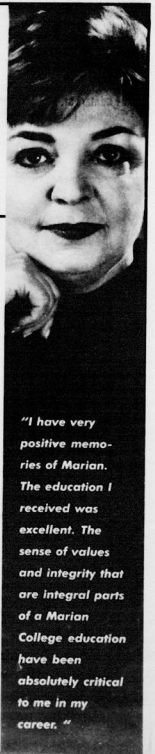
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Book Reviews/By Peggy Weber

Book is geared to a marriage course

CONTEMPLATING MARRIAGE: A READER, edited by Gloria Blanchfield Thomas, Sheed and Ward (Kansas City, Mo., 1995) 445 pp., \$19.95.

Often in a college class a professor will distribute "hand-outs," mimeographed articles that add to the class discussion. In "Contemplating Marriage: A Reader," Gloria Blanchfield Thomas, an associate professor of religious studies at Marymount College in Tarrytown, N.Y., has created a book that is a cohesive series of handouts.

She has assembled more than 40 articles on marriage that could be used in a marriage course. The book is geared toward a college marriage course and for students who are "engaged or contemplating marriage."

The articles are divided into 12 chapters that focus on such concerns as expectations of marriage, spirituality in marriage, parenting and love, intimacy and sexual intimacy.

The book is certainly useful as the balance of a class or a discussion group in order to be appreciated.

The book is a fine component in a class on marriage. However, it could not stand alone. The editor recommends guest speakers and research topics to fill in the gaps.

She notes that such topics as alternative lifestyles, adoption, abortion, infertility and childless marriages are not addressed in this book. She also notes that the teacher must be a witness as one teaches the class.

"Much of the learning in this course is accomplished within

the method itself. . . . Interpreting one's experience, much reading and reflection and exposure to the wisdom of people in happy marriages and even those in failed marriages are essential components," she writes.

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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.

BLAYLOCK, Learmon C., 85, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Husband of Doris Lee Blaylock; father of Learmon C. Jr., Melvin E. Blaylock, Debra Hanes; grandfather of seven; great-grandfather of 10.

BRASHEAR, Rosa, 81, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 12. Wife of Edward W. Brashear Sr.; mother of Damon J. Alvis K. Moses; stepmother of Woodie, Jim Brashear, Eddie Rose; grandmother of eight; great-grandmother of eight.

CLARK, Laura Geneva, 70, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Sister of Carl Eugene Clark, Rita Krich, aunt of several nieces and nephews.

COOK, Raymond, 58, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 12. Husband of Patty (Hanrahan) Cook; father of Billy Cook, Tom Jones, Kathy Cummings, Candy Spanton, Glenda McCullough, Anna Horning, Margie Barron; brother of Irene Lovell, Shirley Haney, Sandy Wells, Sue Hicks; grandfather of 22; great-grandfather of 10.

DANIEL, Leo A., 80, St. Elizabeth, Cambridge, Dec. 5. Husband of Josephine Daniel; father of Lucille Burgess, Jerry Daniel; grandfather of three; great-grandfather of three.

DERLETH, Alvin G., 76, St. Mark, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Husband of Mary E. (Sweeney) Derleth; father of Michael, Thomas Derleth, Patricia Hill; brother of

Catherine Cord, Martha Riccobono, Mary McGinnis; grandfather of six; great-grandfather of two.

ECKERLE, Wilfred F., 78, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Father of Ted Eckerle, Rebecca Ann Trainowski, Rita S. Wright, Theresa Walker; brother of Valerie, Dennis, Norbert Eckerle, Virginia Miller; grandfather of four.

EICHER, Roger Dale, 35, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 9. Son of Martha L. Eicher; brother of Lee, Keith Eicher, Martha True.

FAHY, Margaret, 77, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 30. Mother of Donald R., Francis M., Christopher Fahy, Mary Archer, Patricia Lang.

FERGUSON, Clara Marguerite (Sweat), 72, St. Bridget, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Sister of Harry E. Reid, Sr.

GERWIG, Sarah L., 102, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Louis Zeph, Paul Gages; grandmother of eight; great-grandmother of 27; great-grandmother of 17.

GERWIG, Victoria L., 34, St.

Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Wife of Ronald Gerwig; mother of Carrie, Claire Gerwig.

NEAL, Norma Jean, 61, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Tom Neal; mother of John, Jim Standish, Sarah Latimer; grandmother of seven; great-grandmother of one.

NEWMAN, Thomas W., 76, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Husband of Betty A. (Henn) Newman; father of John T., George W., Joseph H. Newman, Kathleen A. White, Mary E. Chenoweth; grandfather of eight; great-grandfather of two.

O'NEILL, Mary M., 81, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 2. Mother of Timothy J., Patrick S., Dennis M. O'Neill, Linda Butler; sister of Lester Scott, Hazel Hall; grandmother of 13; great-grandmother of eight.

PATTERSON, Milton Millard "Mickey", 60, St. Bridget, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Brother of Naomi O'Banyon.

PETRICK, Anthony J., 78, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 13. Husband of Blanche (Carroll) Petrick; father of Carol A. Petrick; brother of Steve Petrick, Ann Krikorian.

RICHE, Gerald L., 58, St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyds Knobs, Dec. 11. Husband of Shirley A. Riche; father of Mark, Kevin, Jean Anne Riche; brother of Jack Riche.

ROEMKE, Clara E. (Schoenbacher), 82, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Mother of Gerald L., Dennis O. Roemke, Carol A. Pickett, Linda K. Yorgner, Patricia L. Cardwell; sister of Edna L. Kendrick; grandmother of 14; great-grandmother of 11.

SCHWERT, Lorraine, 91, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 18. Mother of Mary D. Spragg, Dorothea Ahlers; grandmother of ten; great-grandmother of seven; great-grandmother of one.

SHORT, Dorothy L., 76, St. Malachi, Brownsburg, Dec. 9. Mother of Marianne Mileham, Tim Short; sister of Joseph, George, Judith A. Jones, Alice Orschel; grandmother of three.

STRAHL, Emma A., 86, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 9. Sister of Alma Knable, Benedictine Sister M. Germaine, Benedictine Sister M. Annelle.

THOMAS, Jack R., 79, Little Flower, Indianapolis, Dec. 4. Husband of Mary M. Thomas; father of Mary Carolyn Billerman, Sue A. Heath; grandfather of two.

VAUGHN, Helen R., 79, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 30. Wife of Troy Vaughn; mother of Sonja Ferencak; sister of Lawrence, Edward Ropelewski, Irene McElhoes, Cecilia Knopka; grandmother of one.

ST. MARY, Greensburg, Dec. 13. Sister of Albert L., Louis, Rosaline Muckheide.

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VAUGHN, Thomas, 79, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Husband of Frances A. (Feist) Vaughn; father of Jan M. Stetzel, Carol Patterson, Thomas L. Vaughn, Jr., Richard Vaughn; brother of John, James, Vic Vaughn, Mary Elizabeth Stetzel, Anna Roberts, Katie Percy, Eileen Priest; grandfather of 11; great-grandfather of four.

VOEGELE, John F., 75, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 15. Husband of Rosemary (Forsyth) Voegel; father of John, Keith, George, Randy, Dean, Philip, Warren, Steve, Debbie Voegel, Chrissy Schene, Tina Holt, Rose Ann Ellinghausen; brother of Eugene, Pete, Father Fridolun, Hugo, Tom, Don Voegel, Mary Leinberger, Virginia Suling, Gertrude Shane; grandfather of 14; great-grandfather of one.

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She notes that using this kind of method "requires great flexibility and is often messy." However, she adds that the method and the course do work.

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If one were just to pick this book up for a day's reading, it would leave one with an incomplete feeling. There are many wonderful articles, but they need a facilitator or a class or the journal to help one put it all into perspective.

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IN SEARCH OF caring person to help me with the care of my father who has emphysema. He's on oxygen. Flexible hours will work around your schedule. Days part time. He lives two streets from St. Anthony. Please call me for more information at 317-781-1809.

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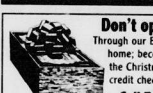
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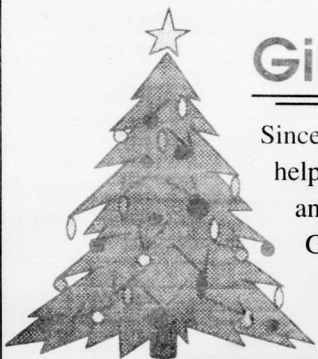
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