Members of the Mapuche Indian Community in Chile listen to their Chief, Melitran Painemal, following an outdoor meal. Painemal said the Church has been siding with the Indians in efforts to keep their communal land and gain skills needed to improve their lot.

Apostolic Delegate Named to U.S.

WASHINGTON (NC) - Pope John Paul II has named Archbishop Pio Laghi, now apostolic nuncio in Argentina, to be the new apostolic delegate in the United States and permanent observer of the Holy See at the Washington-based Organization of American States (OAS).

Archbishop Laghi, 58, papal representative in Argentina for the past six years, succeeds Archbishop Jean Jadot, who was apostolic delegate in the United States from 1973 until his appointment this year as president of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians.

Archbishop Jadot, a Belgian, is the only non-Italian to have served as apostolic delegate in the United States.

This past March Pope John Paul II sent Archbishop Laghi to the Vatican's special envoy to Bogota, Colombia, after the Marxist guerrillas there seized about 60 diplomats, including the papal nuncio to Colombia, and Colombian officials and held them hostage in the embassy of the Holy See in the Republic. They were released April 27.

ARCHBISHOP LAGHI has held posts in the diplomatic service of the Holy See in the United States, Nicaragua, India, Jerusalem and Palestine, and has served at the Vatican in the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church.

In a statement thanking Pope John Paul II for the appointment and welcoming Archbishop Laghi to his new post, Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul and Minneapolis, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said:

"Archbishop Laghi's background makes him an especially welcome choice for this position. He has served with distinction in the Holy See's diplomatic service holding posts of high responsibility in several nations, and is extremely familiar with the United States because of the seven fruitful and effective years which he spent here."

Archbishop Laghi was born on May 21, 1922, in Catiglione, a mountain town of about 2,200 people in the Emilia-Romagna region of north central Italy.

ORDAINED A PRIEST April 20, 1946, he holds doctorates in theology and canon law.

He entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See in March 1952. He served in Nicaragua before coming to the United States in 1954, where he was stationed until 1963.

In 1969, Archbishop Laghi was appointed apostolic delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine and made titular archbishop of Mauriana. On April 25, 1974, he was named apostolic nuncio in Argentina.

School Prayer Challenged in Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS (NC) - The American Civil Liberties Union has filed suit in U.S. District Court in New Orleans challenging the constitutionality of a new school prayer policy adopted by the school board of Jefferson Parish (County), LA.

The suit was filed Dec. 5, two days after the board decided to start daily prayer sessions on a relay basis in three schools Dec. 18 and in all public schools in the parish in January.

The Jefferson Parish plan allows students who do not wish to participate in prayer sessions to remain outside the classrooms or to sit quietly at their desks while their classmates pray.

"But the ACLU says that those provisions do not change the basic situation of religious observance being held by order of a public body. In addition the ACLU argues that children who do not wish to participate in the prayer sessions would be put in "embarrassing" positions. "School-age children are anxious to conform and keeping those children apart that do not want to pray is not going to get around the problem," said the ACLU's Louisiana director, Jayultz.

Five Jefferson Parish school students, three parents and a rabbi from the parish are plainiffs in the suit.

The Voice

Catholics invited to pray for troubled Ireland

WASHINGTON (NC) - The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) has invited Catholics in the United States to join in prayer for the bishops in Northern Ireland and others there in the wake of the U.S. Catholic bishop's decision regarding dissident episcopal clergymen.

Stop playing political games -- Italian Salons told

ROME (NC) - "This is not the time for recriminations or political games," a Jesuit magazine warned Italian politicians following the earthquake in southern Italy. The latest edition of Civita Cattolica called for peace in the battle of words between the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian communists over the handling of earthquake rescue and aid efforts.

Pope Tells Methodists to "continue quest for unity"

VATICAN CITY (NC) - Pope John Paul II told Methodists to ignore "the cries of the impatient and the skeptical" and to continue their quest for Christian unity.

Students protest Justice Rehnquist's stand on capital punishment

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (NC) - Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist addressed a standing-room crowd at Vanderbilt University in late November, but not before being greeted by pickets protesting Rehnquist's position favoring capital punishment.

Catholics may not be Klansmen -- Louisville Archdiocese

No Catholic may be a member of the Ku Klux Klan, a Louisville archdiocesan commission stated, and Archbishop Thomas Donnellan of Atlanta said membership in the "Klan is in conflict with the teachings of our religious heritage. The Louisville Commission on Peace and Justice adopted a statement calling on Catholics in the archdiocese to reject the Klan.

Unionization friction "apt to get worse" - Msgr. Higgins

OAKLAND, Calif. (NC) - Friction between Catholic institutions such as schools and hospitals and employees who seek unionization "will probably get worse before it gets better," predicted a widely recognized U.S. labor expert. Msgr. George Higgins said the unionization issue "is more of a hospital problem than one for the (Catholic) schools."

Is earthquake relief getting to the needy?

(UNDATED) - Freezing temperatures and bureaucratic squabbles hampered efforts to aid victims of southern Italy's Nov. 23 earthquake, which killed as many as 300,000 people and left more than 300,000 homeless. Catholic agencies and governments throughout the world responded to the crisis but it was unclear nearly two weeks after the quake whether supplies were reaching the most needy.
**Salvadoran firms, leaders criticized**

ALBANY, N.Y. (NC) - A priest working in El Salvador said in a telephone interview that in the wake of recent killings paranoia swept the small Central American nation so that "most people are afraid to say anything in any way negative about the government.

More than 10,000 people have been killed, many allegedly by government forces, since the beginning of the year. Foreign newspaper reporters whose articles have been critical of the government have received death threats and fled the country for their safety. The actions have helped to stifle the flow of accurate news from the country.

The priest spoke to The Evangelist, Albany diocesan newspaper, by telephone, with the understanding that his name would not be used.

* I REALIZE I'm putting myself in a compromising position just talking on the phone," said the priest, hinting at the tapping of telephone lines by the government and rightist groups.

"For the government to continue denouncing the killings and harassment of people is meaningless. Somewhat they're trying to do is provoke the international sympathy it would need to slaughter all opposition in this country," said the priest.

The priest said the crux of the problem in El Salvador is the "starving of the people by the international corporations." He said they involve anyone in labor unions or any kind of self-help programs for the poor is automatically labeled a communist by the government.

"There are some communist here, it's true who are getting moral support from Russia and Cuba. But they're not getting arms, they're not getting money, and that support is nothing compared to the amount of money the United States is giving to back up the junta," he said.

(The Carter administration has suspended aid to El Salvador pending a U.S. investigation of the recent killings of four North American missionary women.)

THE PRIEST indicated that despite the Carter administration's touting of human rights in Latin America and around the world, most Salvadorans feel the United States has taken an aggressive stance in support of its own interests, the corporations which are the worst violators of those rights. In El Salvador the belief is that the incoming Reagan administration will "probably be a continuation of what Carter already started," he said.

Within El Salvador, he said, the church is "full of ambiguities." He said that within the Salvadoran hierarchy only Bishop Arturo Rivera, apostolic administrator of San Salvador, has denounced the actions of security forces and rightists, he said one bishop is a colonel and a chaplain in the military and another has denounced parish priests whom he says follow the "communist line."

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**Tax credit law seen more likely**

ST. LOUIS (NC) — The election of Ronald Reagan has given new hope to leaders of Citizens for Educational Freedom that a school tuition tax credit bill will be approved by the 97th Congress.

Robert E. Baldwin, CEF executive director who was in St. Louis in early December for the annual meeting of the national organization said that President-elect Reagan's task force on education and his Department of Education transition team are pushing the tax credit bill. The measure would allow parents to deduct part of the cost of private schools for their children according to the dictates of their conscience and according to the school tuition voucher system that would provide freedom of choice for parents in the education of their children.

Baldwin said he sees "a whole new complexion in Washington" and predicted smooth sailing for the tax credit bill in the Senate, where Republicans are taking over key committee positions. A 1978 tuition tax credit measure never got out of a House-Senate conference committee because President Carter, despite 1976 campaign promises, threatened to veto it, according to Baldwin.

That bill, which would have allowed a tax credit of up to $250 for each private school student, would be introduced in the new Congress, Baldwin said.

CEF leaders believe a federal tax credit bill could be used to supplement a school tuition voucher system that would provide freedom of choice for parents in the education of their children. The Carter administration's touting of human rights in Latin America and around the world, most Salvadorans feel the United States has taken an aggressive stance in support of its own interests, the corporations which are the worst violators of those rights. In El Salvador the belief is that the new Reagan administration will probably be a continuation of what Carter already started," he said.

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**Notice: No Voice next week**

Offices of The Voice are closed Christmas Week and there will be no paper Dec. 26. The next edition will be Friday, Jan. 2.

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**A MESSAGE to the community from Catholics is displayed by Archbishop McCarthy Wednesday on the bumper of his car. The red and white stickers, available in English and Spanish, are being distributed in Catholic parishes and schools.**

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**New Vicar General of Missionary Oblates**

ROME (NC) — Father Francis George, 43, former chairman of the philosophy department at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., was re-elected vicar general of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate during the congregation's general meeting in Rome.
Seniors are ho-ho-ho’d at St. Mary’s

Mary Ann Buffone, driving force behind the party, and Marie Palmer talk with friend.

Dancing was part of the festivities.

More than 800 senior citizens from nursing homes, extended care facilities, retirement complexes, all over the Archdiocese were transported to St. Mary’s Cathedral for the 10th annual Mass and Christmas Party last Friday.

THE AFFAIR, which has been held for the past 10 years is an annual event, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Buffone, who receive help, aid and assistance from many people.

For instance, Senator Richard Renick played Santa Claus. His mother, Mrs. Rosalie Speidel presented an original reading.

PETER AND Veronica Mc Cormick Fuchs, local entertainers, again appeared as they have each year. The band, procured through special cooperation of P.A.C.E., the “Dave Lewis Trio” also provided dance music, as they have for 10 years.

Over 900 box lunches were prepared. Students from Archbishop Curley High School and Notre Dame Academy assisted in the serving and cleaning up.

THE PARTY provides an excursion out from facilities which the residents do not ordinarily leave. While there are usually parties for them in their respective residences, this is an opportunity to “get away” for a day – and Mary Anne Buffone sees to this, along with her husband and children who also have their jobs at the party.

Fr. Thomas J. Rynne, of St. John the Apostle, Hialeah, celebrated the Mass as he has for the past 10 years. Honored guests were Bishop Robert F. Joyce, Retired Bishop of Burlington, Vt., Bishop John Nevins and Bishop Agustin Roman of the Archdiocese.

IT IS a labor of love for a great many people which has become eagerly awaited each year by our senior members.
John Lennon aided Catholic Institutions

NEW YORK (NC) - Two Catholic institutions, the New York Foundling Hospital and Covenant House, are among those that have been assisted by John Lennon, the singer-songwriter and former member of the Beatles who was shot to death in New York City Dec. 8.

Sister Miriam Duggan, a spokeswoman for the New York Foundling Hospital, a hospital for children run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, said Lennon "has been consistently wonderful to our hospital, a great friend," she said. Sister Duggan said she did not have figures available on the assistance given to the hospital by Lennon.

Celine Gallo, a spokeswoman for Covenant House, an agency in New York City founded and directed by Conventual Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter to assist homeless and runaway youth, said Lennon and his wife, Yoko Ono, sent two checks for $10,000 each, one the week before he was shot and the other a year ago, to Covenant House. They had also sent gift-wrapped packages this past Thanksgiving to the youngsters at Covenant House, which is caring for about 200 youngsters at present, Ms. Gallo said.

Covenant House provides social, psychological, educational, legal and medical assistance to about 15,000 youngsters a year, she said.

She said Father Ritter had invited Lennon and his wife to visit Covenant House. They had not come and Father Ritter had no personal contact with the couple, she said.

Other institutions were among those listed by a spokesman for Miss Ono as among those assisted by the Spirit Foundation, which Lennon established a year ago with a grant of $100,000.

Other beneficiaries listed include the Salvation Army and St. Barnabas House, an agency of the Episcopal Mission Society, which provides emergency shelter and foster care to runaway, abandoned, abused and neglected teen-agers. A spokesman for St. Barnabas House, Richard Pease, confirmed that Lennon had sent gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas to the youngsters.

Midnight Mass at Cathedral

Midnight Mass celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John J. Nevins in St. Mary Cathedral on Christmas Eve will mark the beginning of the Christmas season in the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami.

Traditional Carols will be sung during the half-hour before the Mass at 11:30 p.m.

Archbishop Edward A. McCarthy will preside at the 11 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day.

Mother Seton story on TV

WASHINGTON (NC) - Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholics Bishops A.C. Catholic Conference, has praised the ABC-Television program "A Time for Miracles: The Story of Mother Seton."

The show is to be presented at 9 p.m. (EST) Dec. 21.

In portraying the life of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the American Broadcasting Co. is not only offering well-deserved tribute to a significant figure in the history of America and of U.S. Catholicism, but it is also presenting a moving demonstration of the courage and commitment that are the fiber of sainthood," he said.

HELPING the ALCOHOLIC

ALCOHOLISM...is a TREATABLE Disease...and Now Treatment is Available...

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a facility of the PALM BEACH MARTIN COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER in Jupiter. This 28 Day Residential Program is Covered by Most Group Insurance Policies and Offers Both Individual and Group Therapy for the Suffering Alcoholic and the Afflicted Family.

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Fred Wass, Clinical Director, the PBI Hospital Program
1210 South Old Dixie Highway, Jupiter, Florida 33458
Telephone: (305) 746-6602

He'd give him one of his kidneys, if he could. Both of Joey's have failed. Unfortunately, willing relatives don't always have kidneys that will match.

So Joey waits.

A kidney machine can buy precious time. But the longer kids like Joey have to wait for real kidneys, the more their growth and development are stunted.

And living with a kidney machine - hours and hours, several days a week - is living only half a life. It's emotionally and socially crippling. It's very expensive.

There are thousands of children and adults whose only chance for a full, normal life is a donated kidney. Their odds for a suitable match improve every time someone signs and carries a donor card.

To be an organ donor is a decision you should make for yourself. What would you do if Joey were your child?

For more information, ask your local kidney foundation. And for a free booklet about all kinds of anatomical gifts of life (including a nationally recognized uniform donor card), write Liberty National, Dept. K.

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How to word abortion amendment?

By Jim Lackey  
WASHINGTON (NC) — Confident that its goal of a constitutional amendment on abortion is now within reach, the right to life movement is trying again to reach consensus on the exact wording for such an amendment. Pro-lifers have found their greatest unity in their overriding goal to pass an abortion amendment. But for some time there has been disagreement on whether an "no exceptions" abortion amendment should be pushed, or whether an amendment should express permit abortions in cases where the life of the mother is threatened.  

THE LACK of a united front, according to some pro-lifers, presents a potentially serious stumbling block since Congress will have to settle on one version of an amendment before submitting it to the states for ratification.

Since 1974 The National Right to Life Committee has endorsed an abortion amendment which would allow "medical procedures to prevent the death of the mother." That approach or similar to it, seems to be the most popular among the various proposed amendments which have been introduced in Congress over the past several years.

But others in the movement, notably Nelli Gray, who led the annual March for Life in Washington, want a "no exceptions" amendment like the one proposed by Rep. Robert Drinan (D-Calif.) and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.)

That split could be resolved soon, though. The Right to Life Committee recently announced that a panel of lawyers and doctors is studying the issue and that it is expected to report its findings to the full committee shortly.

THE COMMITTEE then will decide, possibly as early as this January, whether to continue its support for the life-of-the-mother exception or whether to embrace the no-exceptions approach.

Both approaches have their supporters and their detractors.

While the no-exceptions approach may seem overly radical, its proponents say an exception clause is unnecessary for two reasons: the rarity in which abortion is necessary today to save the life of the mother and the fact that criminal law already recognizes the legal principles of self-defense, duress and choice of evils.

No-exceptions proponents also are concerned that opening the amendment to a life-of-the-mother exception would lead to other exceptions such as the more ambiguous "health-of-the-mother" being tackled on during the legislative process.

But those who favor writing in an exception to permit medical procedures preventing the death of the mother say their approach is more realistic and more practical. They say the ambiguity of the no-exceptions approach would raise more questions than it would answer for doctors facing life and death situations with pregnant women. They also note that Congress, which always has supported at least a life-of-the-mother exception in limiting federal funding of abortion, is not likely to back off from the same exception in a Constitutional amendment.

THERE ALSO has been disagreement over whether a "states' rights" approach on the abortion issue should be accepted as a last resort as well as some debate over the wisdom of allowing a constitutional convention to decide the issue.

In an amendment granting "states' rights" on abortion, the various states would be freed to re-enact the abortion laws most had on their books before the Supreme Court wiped out most abortion restrictions in 1973.

Many if not most pro-lifers oppose that approach, though, saying states still could choose to be abortion havens as a handful were before 1973.

While the no-exceptions approach to bypassing the Congress and enacting an abortion amendment in a constitutional convention also has been growing more attractive, it too has been opposed on the grounds that elected representatives to Congress can be better trusted to approve an effective anti-abortion amendment than can the people chosen to draw up an amendment at a unwieldy constitutional convention.

The U.S. bishops, meanwhile, have stayed out of the debate over which abortion amendment should be passed or how it should be enacted.
Somehow, the dream never dies...

This is a time of the year when all things are magnified. We buy more television sets, hair spray, bangles and Barbie dolls. Also we give more food, money and clothing to people who don’t have as much as we do. Our materialism is magnified, as is our magnanimity.

But our materialism seemingly is more than mere greed. It is becoming a cultural imperative. We make a living, such as it is, directly or indirectly through the manufacture and supply of material goods. Much of our lives is involved with the consumption of things, the constant flow of products, natural or artificial, essential or non-essential, through our lives. We are surrounded by goods, so what are we to do but use them?

But we are also surrounded by the poor, the sick and the elderly, and what are we to do with them?

Now is the birthday of the Prince of Peace. Yet, there is no peace. In Northern Ireland terrorism waits for its next victim. In Afghanistan Soviet soldiers crush an innocent people. In Poland the threat of massive killings lurks just beyond its borders. In America’s cities muggings are routine.

And in the Mideast where the whole story of Christmas began, centuries of hatred and hostility continue on the very ground He touched.

And yet...

Through the centuries of man’s failures, the foolish and painful groping down agonizing path of history. He has somehow, miraculously, kept the candle lit. The cross, the symbol of suffering and love, has always emerged above the ashes, and the dream burns on.

Children’s tiny voices, slightly off key, hark to the herald angels in thousands of churches throughout the world and parents’ eyes fill with tears of pride and love. The Holy Family huddles under rain and snow in countless miniature mangers throughout the world, proclaiming the same message to all passersby that here is what we are all about: life and love.

And it is this each year, the rebirth of the dream, Christ’s message of hope, that makes all the foolishness worth living through.

Is this couple married?

Q. A Catholic friend of mine married a non-Catholic, divorced woman. They now have three children. After their marriage the lady converted to the Catholic faith and was baptized. Her first marriage was annulled by the Catholic Church. Up to now the couple have not remarried in the Catholic Church yet they both regularly receive the sacraments. My understanding of the church’s teaching is that in the eyes of the church he was not really married to this woman. Even though he has the annulment, they are not yet married according to the church since there has been no Catholic ceremony.

A. After the first marriage was annulled, this couple certainly should have had their marriage validated in the Catholic Church. I suspect there may be some facts here you are not aware of. Perhaps they have indeed declared their marriage vows before a catholic priest.

This validation ceremony can be very private and simple. Sometimes couples do not wish to make a big ceremony of this validation, though they should have some way of making known to their close friends that their marriage has been validated in the Catholic Church.

As far as the annulment process is complete? I find it difficult to believe that a couple who would persevere in the tedious annulment process would not take the final simple step of declaring their vows before a priest. If they have not yet been married before a priest they should not, of course, be receiving the sacraments.

It is always important to remember something: I am sure you already know. This sacrament is not only intended to forgive sins, but to strengthen us and help us to live good Christian and Catholic lives. The grace which Jesus gives us when we go to confession therefore helps us to remember and to want to direct our lives along the lines that Jesus tells us.

One of the consequences of this is that we should not bother ourselves too much in trying to remember in detail all the sinful or partially sinful actions that we have done. I am sure with your attitude there are no serious sins in your life. It’s more important that you aim at trying to grow in your trust in God, and your love in a practical way for God and for those around you — your family, your friends, and, of course, yourself.

I mention these few items only to emphasize that the first thing Our Lord wants from us is to be comfortable and happy in our meetings with him. For us to forgive sins is the most important part of the sacrament of penance. Beyond that you need to read up on this and other elements of your faith. Your knowledge in these subjects should grow along with your knowledge of other things as you move toward adulthood.

If your public library has no books that will help you at your level of faith and understanding, I suggest you go to a nearby Catholic bookstore (I know there are some not too far from where you live) or go to your parish priest and ask him for one or two catalogs from Catholic publishers. For not too much money, I am sure you will find two or three publications that will assist you greatly in your understanding and use of the sacraments.

Questions for this column should be sent to Father Dietzen, 1113 W. Bradley, Peoria, Ill., 61606.

To The Editor:

It was like a “breath of fresh air” to read Dick Conklin’s article “In Defense of the moral Majority.”

It seems to me that it is about time that the clergy concern themselves with the state of this country. I see nothing wrong in furnishing their guidance to us who are less educated and partly not in a position to understand the issues. If Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Cetinik of Detroit made such dumb statements which are an affront to every veteran and every American to the effect, “Catholic tradition” to call upon Americans to “lay down their arms before the Soviets.” Martyrdom is

Moral Majority

When statements such as these are made by a Bishop of our church for publication, then thank God for men like Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Had the clergy of our church spoke out many years ago in New York State their abortion law would have not passed. It passed by a one vote which was cast by a member of our church.

Surely, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been able to accomplish all that he did by having a passive position on candidates. I also, noticed the Rev. Jesse Jackson at the President’s side on election night after continuously supporting him.

Thomas J. Walsh

Plantation

Miami, Florida / THE VOICE / Friday, December 19, 1980 / page 7
A Christmas Miracle

By Dolores Curran

(Dearest readers, the following in its entirety was sent me by a Los Angeles reader. I am happy to share S.S.A.'s miracle with you this Christmas.)

Two years after the birth of our first child, I discovered that, because of physical problems, my child-bearing days were over. After the initial shock wore off, I became reconciled to the fact and thanked God for the child I did have. Why feel sorry for myself? I had a beautiful baby and a wonderful husband. We decided to look into adoption but to our dismay we found out the waiting period was about two years, so we put it off for a while.

I was panic stricken. Christmas was but a month away. I couldn’t very well tell her Jesus had made a mistake.

During this time I happened to meet a nun who was visiting L.A. She was here to raise funds for a home for unwed mothers and an orphanage in Mexico. I told her of our desire to wed mothers and an orphanage in a nun who was visiting L.A. She was an only child.

In November of 1973, as we were having breakfast one day, she mentioned she had had a nice dream. She went on to tell us that in her dream she told Baby Jesus she wanted a baby sister for Christmas. She said Baby Jesus said okay. She was thrilled beyond words. After all, who could question such a reliable source?

I was panic stricken. Christmas was but a month away. I couldn’t very well tell her Jesus had made a mistake. My husband and I were terrified at the thought of disappointing her. We even toyed with the idea of not celebrating Christmas that year and hoping she wouldn’t notice. To make matters worse, she was telling anyone and everyone who would listen that we were expecting a baby sister for Christmas because Baby Jesus had promised her one.

It is in the middle of December and we hadn’t even bought our tree. Nothing in our home had the slightest hint of the holiday season. I guess we figured if we wished hard enough, Christmas would somehow pass us by.

On December 16th the phone rang very early in the morning. It was our friend, the nun. She had a baby girl available, and wanted to know if we could come and pick her up. We were speechless. This had to be a miracle. We had no other explanation for it.

We told our daughter the happy news. She was excited but not at all surprised. After all, Baby Jesus had promised.

On December 17th, we arrived home with our frail five pound daughter and had the merriest Christmas of them all.

OUR BABY is now 7 years old. Seven years that have been filled with legal red tape because of her national origin. They have also been years filled with the joy of watching the devotion and love of a mother she is, at last, legally our own. All is well. The happiness she has brought to our family can only be measured by the love we have for each other. How could we go wrong? After all, Baby Jesus promised. Didn’t he?

Santa Who?

By Antoinette Bosco

Time is getting close now for Santa Claus to come to town. At least that’s what Santa Claus hasn’t been able to whip up much enthusiasm for the old boy with the belly and the beard for a long, long time. Not since I was 5 years old, in fact.

It isn’t Santa’s fault that early on I rejected the public relations stories that every December he told me about a good guy he is and how he gets high on remeande. It’s my mother’s fault, actually.

Until I was 6, everything I heard and read about the benevolent gift giver, I believed. I also believed in fairy godmothers, wicked witches, beautiful princesses and enchanted frogs. To top off my innocence, I had figured out that the “fathers” were delivered by angels to women chosen to be mothers.

The year before Christmas the days I turned 6 were exciting because mother had told me God was sending her a baby. I had begun to notice that my mother was getting larger, mainly around the stomach, but never thought twice about it until one day about three weeks before Christmas. Mother was standing with her arms around her stomach. I said spontaneously, “Mommy, you look like you’re already holding the baby in your arms,” followed by a giggle.

She looked at me, surprised, and said simply, “I am.” Mother then told me that angels didn’t bring babies. The babies grew in mothers’ stomachs.

That jolted me, but not as much as her next revelations. “If I told you that, I might as well tell you more,” she said. “Santa Claus isn’t real. He doesn’t come at Christmas. Parents leave the gifts under the tree after the children fall asleep.” For good measure, she added, “Fairy tales aren’t true, either.”

I was numb. Reality is better swallowed in small doses. Mother had, in about 60 seconds, shattered my innocence, and I was tumbling from fantasy – an essential for all children and most grownups. My joy was displaced by anger and disillusionment. I had one question left. I blurted out: “I suppose you’re going to tell me next that the baby Jesus isn’t real?”

She hugged me and smiled. “No, he’s real.”

The relief I felt was overwhelming, and I was saved.

In the truth of Baby Jesus, I could retain my innocence, wonder, dreams and hopes, my quest for goodness, gratitude for gifts. My mother, who plunged me into reality, had inadvertently opened my eyes to where Christmas really starts and why it renews the earth.

I want to tell you, I wasn’t easy knowing about Santa. That was a burden for an 8-year-old, particularly in school.

The worst, however, was yet to come. Do you know what an oddball mother you are when you raise six kids who tell their little peers that Christmas is one big birthday party and that celebrating the birth of baby Jesus is such a tremendous it has to be experienced by giving and receiving gifts?

Adults thought I was weird. My kids adored Baby Jesus and loved the gift-getting part.

But always the question of Santa Claus would come up. I eased my conscience, telling myself that the Bosco kids grew up without having to go through the trauma I had at age 8. They have never forgiven me for that deprivation.
Why Christmas lives on

By Msgr. James J. Walsh

A few years ago in one of the innumerable polls we find ourselves blessed with, the question was asked, "What has kept Christmas alive all these centuries?"

As usually happens in off-the-head answers, most of them were frothy and meaningless. Others had more substance.

Some said the spirit of gift giving answered the need in human nature and was responsible for the perennial celebration. Another felt that the beauty and charm of the Gospel story as penned by St. Luke had to live on and create interest, as all true classics do. And a third said Christmas had endured because in sending a great Teacher to us God had proved his interest in the human race, and this could not be forgotten.

Finally one person said, "Christmas will never end, because the child born was God himself." And indeed this is the only answer profound enough to explain why Christmas is fully alive in 1980.

Gift Giving indeed is one of the good side effects of Christmas, (if we can look beyond the bizarre commercial efforts to give us the "real spirit" of the day). Gift giving, however, is only a minor, albeit pleasant, aspect of Christmas.

Even the gift concept has a deep meaning when put in the proper context, namely, when we remind us that God, too, wants a gift from us, namely, ourselves. "I want not your gift, but yourself."

A classic in literature is a treasured possession worth to a dying man even the most beloved and brilliant of classics impress only a comparative few. And if Jesus were only an unusually gifted teacher, which unfortunately is the weak, watered down belief of many Christians today, his birthday would probably be as popular as Buddha's around the world.

Just one fact makes all the difference. Everyone has a birthday but this birthday, Christmas, is unlike any other. Like any birth, this one has a mother present, but after the delivery of the child she remained a virgin. This child could have no human father, because he had come from heaven as the second person of the Blessed Trinity.

His mother gave him a human nature which God does not have. He came to the home of miserable, wretched people on planet earth in a most unlikely place and under most unlikely circumstances.

This truth was so deeply rooted in the first centuries of Christianity and propagated in later generations so enthusiastically that our sophisticated age cannot ignore it, even while misinterpreting its meaning.

Because of this, Christmas can never become a bore or go out of existence.

How full of contradictions all this is in our disenchanted, frenzied world! God, the creator of the universe, was actually on earth and was born in a hole in the wall in a hamlet few had then heard of.

What is all this? Remember we have been to the moon and brought part of it back to earth. Part of earth is now on Mars. We are presently trying to count the rings around Saturn. So we are just flexing our scientific muscles. Our power potential is so enormous and untapped that we are frightened.

In the light of all this are we still expected to believe in the Christmas message?

A baby is God? A baby is the most helpless of beings. The calf when free of its mother wobbles to its feet. The colt at once assumes some independence. A kitten quickly recovers from its sleepiness and slowly roams.

"Remember we have been to the moon and brought part of it back to earth. Part of earth is now on Mars. We are presently trying to count the rings around Saturn. So we are just flexing our scientific muscles. Our power potential is so enormous and untapped that we are frightened. In the light of all this, are we still expected to believe in the Christmas message?"

By contrast, an infant seems the least intelligent, the weakest, the most dependent of all creatures.

With this in mind we can grasp some of the magnitude of the act of faith made by the Magi after their long journey led them not to the palace of a king, but to a makeshift shelter just off the road.

When he reached adulthood, we would guess that accepting his divinity would become easier. People saw him do things no other person had done. He opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf and breathed life into the dead, all in his own name. But it really easier to see God in the man than in the Infant?

On the cross he was bound by the nails of prejudice, ignorance and blindness, a prisoner of retribution, but even though he looked like a criminal, the power of grace broke through the hard shell of some close enough to hear his hoarse breathing and impelled them to confess, "Indeed, this is the Son of God."

Robert Southwell expressed this truth so beautifully:

O dying souls, behold your living spring.
O dazzled eyes! Behold your Son of grace.
Dull ears attend what words this Word doth bring.
Up, heavy hearts, with joy your joy embrace.
From death, from dark, from deafness, from despair.
This Life, this Light, this Word, this joy repairs.
Christmas will endure even in the next world when the wondrous truth that God came to earth as a child will never be exhausted.

How do bread and wine become body and blood?

By Tom Lennon

Q. I don't understand what happens at Mass when the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus. Can you explain this? (Ala.)

A. Not long ago, a friend talked to me about her son, Phil, 18. Phil had stayed away from Sunday Mass for five months. Then when his favorite brother-in-law, Dave, unexpectedly had heart surgery, Phil began to attend Mass to pray for him. Phil kept on attending Mass but then one day said to his mother: "In some ways I like Mass and think it's good. But I really can't buy the bread and wine being changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. I just don't believe it."

Phil's mother asked me to write about this. Well, I can't. Neither can anyone else, completely. The eucharistic presence is a mystery, something Catholics believe, though no scientific proof, as science is generally understood, can be given.

Well, then, what are we to think?

First, that in this question we are in the realm of faith and must trust Jesus. At the final meal of his life on earth, which was also the first Mass, Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body." He said of the wine, "This is my blood." (The Gospel of Matthew, Chap. 26).

Earlier Jesus said: "The bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world... He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John).

When some disciples could not believe what Jesus was saying and walked away, he did not back down and say he was speaking only symbolically or in metaphors.

The church gives a partial explanation of Christ's teaching through the technical term, "transubstantiation." This means that all the appearances or bread and wine remain - the color, the taste, the smell, the "substance" of bread and wine changes into the reality, the "substance," of the body and blood of Jesus. Pope Paul VI taught that this process of transubstantiation "surpasses the laws of nature and constitutes the greatest miracle of its kind."

POPE PAUL said that at Mass this takes place "when by the words of consecration he (Jesus) begins to be sacramentally present as the spiritual food of the faithful under the appearances of bread and wine."

The Second Vatican Council, an assembly in Rome of the world's bishops during the 1960's, said that in the Eucharist Christ is present. That is why we speak of the real presence. But perhaps rather than trying to explain this mystery, we should relax and enjoy it. For Christ's presence is a pledge of warm and lasting friendship - and friends always enjoy one another's presence.

(Questions on moral or social issues of interest to young people may be sent to Tom Lennon, 1312 Mass., Av. N.W. Washington, D.C.)

/ Miami, Florida / THE VOICE / Friday, December 19, 1980 / Page 9
Christmas around Immaculate Conception school

An Irish-jig-style Christmas

Aztec Indians praise the sun during the play while...

Christmas is a time for celebration, and last week at Immaculate Conception school in Hialeah, no one wasted any time in getting down to it.

Many other parishes put on Nativity plays and concerts this time of year, and Immaculate's festivities were an outstanding example. For six nights, a different variety show performed by students from each different grade preceded the main attraction, a play re-enacting the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the Indian Juan Diego in colonial Mexico.

Kindergarteners put on “Christmas Customs for Little People;” first graders had “A Hello in My Heart;” second graders performed “Mary Poppins Pops;” third graders showed “Christmas Around the World;” sixth graders sang and danced “Happy Birthday Chuck, Country Western

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Bishop (Andy Perez) sees image of Our Lady Diego’s (Nelson Paganacci) cloak
Style; seventh graders snapped to attention in a "Salute to the American Forces;" and eighth graders cheered, "Up With People All Over the World." Meanwhile, the fourth graders played singers and dancers from Mexico in the play, and the fifth graders their counterparts, the Aztec Indians.

According to Sister Regina, music director at the school who worked with the children for two months in getting the whole show together, the reason for the celebration was two-fold: to inaugurate the school's newly-built cafeteria/auditorium, Mercy Hall, and to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast day was December 12.

Besides, said Sister, who expected to make good use of the theatrical facilities at Mercy Hall in the future, as well as of the talent present in the school, "I really wanted to do this."
**Family Life**

**Adults Can Make Giving Meaningful**

Most parents want their children to understand that Christmas is a time of personal and meaningful giving. But personal giving is not just for kids. The best way to communicate the spirit of giving is to practice it ourselves and now is the time to think of personal and giving gifts we adults might give this Christmas.

1. **Give away a treasure.** Perhaps you have a picture, a piece of jewelry, a vase, some china you value and plan to leave to your son or daughter when you die. Why not share that treasure now? Give your picture window we could see how togethers. The one doesn’t seem to this Christmas while you are alive to you die. Why not share that treasure the wind was whipping up Lake Erie.

2. **Give away services.** Almost every parent has received a coupon book from a child, bulging with promises to perform such helpful tasks as dishwashing and room cleaning. This is not just for kids. Here are some “coupons” or services adult children might give their older parents:

   - Many elderly people dislike driving long distances. Give your elderly parents a weekend of time. Arrange a sitter for your children and take your parents to visit a relative or to relax and sightsee at an interesting nearby attraction.
   - Almost everyone likes to eat. Give your parents a dinner-of-the-month-club membership. Each month you take them out to dinner, perhaps at 12 different restaurants, if both you and they like the food. Get onto the theater or to music events are other good gifts.
   - What services might older parents give their young married offspring? Young mothers almost never catch up on clothing repairs. Grandma could offer her services one or more days each month to mend or sew.

3. **Give away personal gifts.**

   - Dinner that day was around the biggest, most bountiful table I have ever seen. The sparkle of the holiday season. We were visiting storybook Christmas. We were visiting.

   - One has never been another like it. And there probably never will be.

   - Childhood memories also support our fantasies. We remember only the good parts – the fun, the excitement, the sparkle of the holiday season. Then we know only the joy of home-

   - And pleasure as well as a privilege.

   - Have always tried to keep the little children out from underfoot and beyond ear-shot while this part of our fantasy was being enacted. By the time we get the tree securely supported by some hopefuly-no-too-replaceable twice, Pat wants nothing more to do with it and leaves to us the fun of deciding who will put the most and prettiest ornaments in place. No one has ever felt that he was the one to have this privilege, while all six children have felt that they had both the least and the yuckiest. But, allowing for just a bit of exaggeration, I’ll bet that’s what most family tree trimming nights are like.

   - In our house, setting up the tree is not just an event, it is usually a catastrophe. We have never quite mastered whatever skill is required to put the tree in the stand in such a way as to be sure it would stay there. One year the tree feels three times its height.

   - Eating by candlelight is much more romantic than in daylight, but it does prove that we and the children are normal, imperfect human beings learning to compromise and work together. We have sun instead of snow, but many people would gladly exchange places with us. We do not have the whole family with us, but we have never been alone. Others have always shared our table. It is true, we have to do most of the cooking, but that has always been a source of pride and pleasure as well as a privilege. And finally, while it is very hard to see children grow beyond Santa (I suffer more than they do it seems), it is beautiful to realize that they are growing into a true joy and delight in giving to others.

   - May you have a REAL and merry Christmas!

   - By Carol Farrell

**Fantasy vs. reality at Christmas**

"Christmas and family are "go-togethers. The one doesn't seem to make a lot of sense without the other. But more than any other time of year, Christmas, most is the place where our fantasies and our reality are on a collision course.

A dozen years ago we experienced a storybook Christmas. We were visiting my parents in Ohio. Snow began falling early Christmas morning and it was hard to know whether Santa or the snow was a bigger thrill for the children. Dinner that day was around the most bountiful table I have ever sat at and our entire family was there to share it with us. In the next room was a roaring fire, and from the picture window we could see how the wind was whipping up Lake Erie. We savored every exquisite detail of that day.

I have spent every Christmas since coming our celebration with that one magic Christmas when everything fell together with perfection. There has never been another like it. And there probably never will be.

Childhood memories also support our fantasies. We remember only the good parts – the fun, the excitement, the sparkle of the holiday season. Then we know only the joy of home-

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- May you have a REAL and merry Christmas!

**OPENING PRAYER**

Christ, Light of the World, Shine above me, Shine below me, Lord Jesus. Amen.

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:**

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- May you have a REAL and merry Christmas!

**SNACK TIME:**

Christmas cookies.

**ENTERTAINMENT:**

Sing Christmas carols. Take turns letting each family member lead a carol. You might go caroling at the home of a friend. You will go caroling at the home of a friend. You will go caroling at the home of a friend.

**SHARING:**

- Share a memory of a favorite Christmas tree from the past.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Oh, God, thank you for this Family Night and the warmth and joy we feel this Christmas season. How grateful we are at Jesus’ birthday. Be with us, Lord, in our celebration of this great day. Amen.
Kids Sing (to pray twice) at Festival

By Jose Alonso  
Voice Spanish Editor

The Little Havana Community Center was the setting for a first ever Festival of Christian Music recently organized by the Josie Marti Youth Center. The purpose of this festival was to unite Christian youth so that they will pray singing.

The 15 songs presented at the festival were original and were judged by a five person panel. The Youth center plans to hold a similar festival every year, but this year its purpose was to raise funds for a space where members of the group can meet.

THE THEME of the festival was derived from the writings of St. Augustine. "To pray singing is to pray twice."

Cecilia London


Fr. Victor was the principal celebrant of a concelebrated Mass of the Resurrection held at Immaculate Conception Church, Clinton, New Jersey.

The Center also plans to offer karate courses and philosophy classes taught by German Munoz, who teaches "Philosophy and the Natural Sciences" at Miami-Dade Community College.

The course tries to dispute the materialistic theories present in today's society and propose the spirit as the essence of man. Professor Munoz is one of the organizers of the group.

The group composed of youths of many different cultural backgrounds, including three angels, hopes young people will come together at the center.

For the festival, MC's were Leticia Callava and Rene Gilardo of Channel 23. About 400 people attended. The songs were judged according to their lyrical, literary, musical and spiritual qualities. Among the judges were: Ariel Remos, of Diario Las Americas; Carlos Oliva of Common Cause Records; Frank J. Marcos, director of the musical group Clouds; and poet Roxana Manga.

THE WINNING song, "Reflections," written by Jorge de Rivera and sung by Iris Salazar, will become the theme of the Center until a new song is chosen at next year's festival.

Participants decided to also form a musical association. Called "Antorcha, " (The Torch), it will offer concerts and recitals, based on the ideal of the center: to bring to the public music that is both artistic and spiritual. A live recording of the songs presented at the festival will be available soon.

St. John Neumann

The Christmas Masses of St. John Neumann, will be celebrated at St. John Vianney Chapel at 2900 SW 87th Ave. A special Christmas Concert featuring a thirteen piece orchestra will be held on Christmas Eve at 9:30 p.m. in the Chapel. Following the concert a Vigil Mass and blessing the Crib will be held at 10:00 p.m. Masses on Christmas Day in the Chapel will be 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Our Family's Concern For Yours

The past executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Monsignor John F. Murphy, S.T.D., will be the commencement speaker at Barry College, Saturday, Dec. 20.

Barry will grant baccalaureate degrees to 98 men and women and master's degrees to 19. Another 14 who graduated in August will participate in the ceremony.

The December commencement is the first during Barry's 40th anniversary year. Another will be held for students graduating in May 1981.

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"Queen Of Peace" (793-0711)

A large number of the Archdiocese of Miami is the maintenance of a consecrated enclosure set aside especially as a Catholic Cemetery. What greater consolation could a good Catholic have than the certain knowledge that he will be buried in consecrated grounds under the loving care and age-old ritual of Holy Mother Church. It is the ardent desire of our Archbishop, Most Reverend Edward A. McCarthy, that all Catholic families be informed of their right to participate in this loving service. To that end, new programs are available by which you may reserve on-time spaces of our grounds, crypts in our Mausoleum or in our Monument section at the three cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Miami.

For complete information send this coupon to:  
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Youth ‘retreat’ toward Christmas

By Karen Dorsey

The Christmas season is here. While most people flock to shopping centers to prepare for the holiday, youth all over the Archdiocese have been preparing in another way. Nearly 1,000 youths and young adults have spiritually prepared for the birth of Jesus by attending one of the many retreat programs sponsored or supported by the Archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry. These programs include Search, Kerygma, Fieri, Encuentro, Encuentro Missional, and Lock-ins.

While it is encouraging to see our Youth respond to the many spiritual programs being offered, it is even more gratifying to see so many parishes willing to respond to the needs of their youth. What makes this especially exciting is the effort being made to minister to the youth of the many cultures that make up our Archdiocese.

There have been 12 Searches, Fieri’s Kerygma’s, and Encuentro Juvenil’s put on successfully in various parts of the Archdiocese. Beyond these programs there have been two Encuentro’s Missionales, where the youth of our Migrant Mission Parishes themselves, have prepared and sponsored retreat experiences for their peers.

St. Francis of Assisi parish has begun a Youth Praise Night in which the youth of the parish are invited to reflect on various themes once a month through song, discussion and prayer.

Holy Cross parish in Indiantown, with the help of St. Joan and their Men’s Cursillo Group sponsored a Lock-in that provided an opportunity for the youth of Indiantown to become more aware of the activity of God in their lives and their role in the parish church community.

As a part of a Parish Renewal Week, St. Ignatius sponsored a Youth Serendipity Night in which youth reflected on the meaning of the birth of the Lord in their own lives. The night encompassed separate sessions for junior and senior high students.

Deacon Ray Ortega has taken the Amanecer One Day Hispanic retreat program to eight different parishes helping to form a basis for a Parish Youth ministry program for our young Hispanic teenagers.

The Hispanic Advent Retreat held at St. John Vianney Seminary attracted more than 130 young people who spent their day in prayer, meditation and reconciliation for the Lord’s meeting.

These are just a few of the many efforts being made by our youth to prepare spiritually for Christmas. As has been tradition for the past five years, most parishes are also participating in Operation Santa Claus, an effort to collect toys for underprivileged children.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a baby, we must remember that before he became a man He was a teenager.

St. John Vianney gets college status

St. John Vianney College Seminary passed yet another milestone in its history Dec. 12, when it was voted full accreditation as a Level II, Four Year Liberal Arts College by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Beginning with its May graduates St. John Vianney will now become an accredited college in its own name and its diploma and credits will be universally accepted throughout the nation.

Begun in 1959, first as a high school and later as a high school and junior college, St. John Vianney College Seminary has been seeking full accreditation as a four-year degree granting college for several years. An institutional self-study was completed in late 1979 and a six person evaluation team from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has been visiting the campus as an extension of the Boynton Beach program.

At the present time there are 51 students enrolled at the college and studying for the priesthood. Approximately half are studying for the Archdiocese of Miami and the rest are studying for six other dioceses in the United States and Puerto Rico.

A building program is already underway at the College which will see the educational program underway there. Since becoming a four-year residence program in 1977, the degree of Bachelor of Arts has been awarded by St. Vincent de Paul Seminary using the campus as an extension of the Boynton Beach program. The campus is at 2900 S.W. 87 Ave.

“Combined with our expansion program and the great interest being shown in our seminary by many dioceses throughout the South and in the Caribbean, this is just another milestone in the seminary’s service to the Church.

“I am grateful to the faculty and staff, to students past and present and to the many benefactors of this seminary who always have and who always will believe in what is being done here.”

St. John Vianney will award the new degree of Bachelor of Arts upon twenty-two students at the May 1981, commencement.
Marriage Encounter couple join Broward lay ministry

By Sue Blum

Mr. and Mrs. John DiPrima of St. Maurice Parish were recently named Co-Directors of Broward County Office of Lay Ministry, according to Dr. Mercedes A. Scopetta, director of the Archdiocesan Office of Lay Ministry.

Lynda and John DiPrima, well-known in the Archdiocese as the past Executive Couple for Marriage Encounter, of South Florida, have a rich background in ministry as they enter their new assignment.

LYNDA, a graduate of the University of Georgia, has served as a CCD teacher, Coordinator for the Marriage Preparation Program (P.M.I), and Engaged Encounter at St. Maurice Church and served on the Archdiocesan Family Enrichment Board and Advisory Council of Layla.

Hilda Montalvo says that she "has done all the usual parish work, having served as a CCD teacher, President of St. Edward's Women's Guild and established the Library in her parish."

IN HER NEW assignment, Hilda will be kept busy coordinating the activities of the Office of Lay Ministry in the northern end of the Archdiocese. This will involve recruiting and processing the new candidates for the Ecclesial Lay Ministry Program, keeping in close personal contact with the Commissioned Lay Ministers and Second Year Candidates, helping them with their ministries, pointing out the resources of the Archdiocese and giving them support and encouragement.

With another couple, Eleanor and Mike Robel, she plans to visit every Parish in the Territory to explain to the pastors the Lay Ministry Program, to recruit new candidates, and to aid them in informing and forming their laity for service to their parish communities.

This can be accomplished by offering them various seminars or workshops in Leadership Training, Evangelization or any area that the pastor feels his parish really needs. All of these programs are available through the Archdiocesan Office of Lay Ministry.

"Although I was born a Catholic, I never went to Catholic schools," Hilda replied when asked about her motivation to serve in the Lay Ministry Program. "When I had my 'true conversion' experience, I decided to find out what Catholicism is all about. I feel that the greatest need among Catholics today is to interiorize their faith so that they may truly become the Church. My ministry, then, is to proclaim the GOOD NEWS."

Holding a B.A. in Religious Studies from Barry College and nearly halfway through the course work for her Master's Degree in the same area of study, Mrs. Juan F. Montalvo has recently been named Regional Director for the Office of Lay Ministry from Palm Beach, Martin, Glades and Hendry County.

A member of St. Edward's Parish, Hilda Montalvo says that she "has done all the usual parish work, having served as a CCD teacher, President of St. Edward's Women's Guild and established the Library in her parish."

ST. IGNATIUS youth perform a Christmas play, "Star of Wonder" Saturday Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m. All are invited. Free. Refreshments after.

9999 Military Trail, P.B. Gardens.

Lynda and John DiPrima, new codirectors

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SAVING AND HAVE...

It took America about one hundred years to get the savings habit. Prior to that time we were dependent on European financing. If America is to continue to lead the world, individual savings must be the answer.

5½ interest on savings, payable quarterly, (which we will be paying January 1, 1981) is not to be sneezed at. We are anxious, willing, and able to encourage American independence, which the individual must secure by saving.

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THE ANNUAL Christmas pageant of Our Lady of the Lakes Church, "It Came to Pass," will have a one night performance on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 8:30 with a cast of over 50 people and a 40-voice choir. The pageant will be presented on the church grounds of the parish at 15801 N.W. 67 Ave., Miami Lakes. The public is invited and for further information, call George Dyer, Director of Music at 558-2202 any weekday.

CUBAN CHORALE - The Church and the World Today, weekly telecast of the Archdiocese on WCKT Channel 7, will feature the Cuban Chorale under the direction of Mrs. Carmen Riera. This is a special Christmas program to be aired on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 9 AM. The Cuban Chorale will also visit Archbishop McCarthy at his residence on Dec. 23 for a special program of Christmas music.

New Year's Eve
Holy Spirit Council 6032, K of C, 2118 SW 60 Terr., Miramar, will sponsor a New Year's Eve Dinner Dance including open bar from 9:00 p.m. to Midnight and continental breakfast for $37.50 per person. For information call 757-5511.

405 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Telephone 371-9641
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Correction
The times given in last week's issue for the Christmas Show to be held at Little House Church and sponsored by Amor en Accion should have read two shows 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. only. Additional information can be obtained from Kathy or Marzo Artime, 251-5205.

Christmas Pageant
The Second Annual Christmas Pageant will be presented by the Family Enrichment Program at St. Vincent's Parish, 5400 NW 18 St., Margate on Friday and Saturday evenings, Dec. 19 and 20, at 8:00 p.m. Members of all faiths are invited.

Southern Trust Band
The Southern Trust Band will appear at Queen of Peace Hall, St. Timothy Church, Miller Road and 102nd Ave., on Dec. 20 from 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. Donation: $1.00 each. Proceeds go to South Dade Youth Federation Charities. For more information call Ronald Bereiter, 674-5749.

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The Church is for sinners

By Father Philip Murnion

In a letter she once wrote, Flannery O'Connor told of her impatience with someone who lamented the fact that there are sinners in the church. With characteristic insight, the short-story writer insisted: The church is for sinners.

Jesus faced the same problem and answered similarly. He was attacked for consorting with sinners. But he insisted he had come for those who needed salvation.

A great many people have difficulty with this notion. Remember the older brother in the biblical story about the prodigal son? The older brother complained about the generous treatment given by his father to the repentant younger brother who had finally come home. The story is a reminder: God has the most needy in mind.

All parishes and their people face a common danger. They could become complacent, all ready to complain about the presence of someone they feel is not measuring up.

Priests have often been criticized for spending too much time with the troublesome youth in the parish or with families suffering many problems or with the young woman or man whose life has gone into a human and moral tailspin.

Again, in a time of church renewal such as the present there is a danger that zeal will turn inside out, that people who do not give evidence of really profound commitment to the church will be regarded, somehow, as not real members of the church. This danger can even appear among some people who have participated in very good movements in the church.

Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, the charismatic renewal and other old and new movements, have contributed greatly to the church's life. They have helped people to make deeper, more lasting commitments to the Lord and to others. The church would be much poorer without these activities. But a danger arises if people who have benefited from these and other movements suggest, however unintentionally, that those who have not participated in them are lesser members of the church.

The church challenges people and the challenge needs to be felt keenly. At the same time, the church is a community of reconciliation, a place where people can always experience the patience and love of Christ.

A difficult balance is sought by the whole church in this area. The difficulty can be seen when current efforts to prepare people to receive a sacrament for the first time — Confirmation, preparation of parents for their child's baptism — are considered.

The celebration of all these sacraments has benefited because of the care given to preparing people and helping them understand how the reception of a sacrament is related to their own commitment and faith.

A PROBLEM CAN develop, however, if it is suggested that reception of a sacrament expresses something already achieved, in such a way that it is forgotten how sacraments are acts of Christ and of the church community that help people achieve new levels of faith and commitment.

The extremes in these matters are far apart: not challenging people at all, on the one end; excluding large numbers because of their inadequate commitment, on the other end. These extremes are rare.

In the center, the line being urged people on to Christian commitment and making the church an elite church is more difficult to draw. Efforts in these matters require considerable wisdom.

No private sin
Changing perspectives

The boy rather awkwardly took a seat near the back of the church. His father was late for Mass. This was the church where the boy was baptized. He received his first Communion. Now he was 17 and right at the moment he was in a turmoil. He wore rumpled jeans and yesterday's shirt. Feelings of confusion, anger and regret kept rushing through him as he remembered his father's anger and their argument.

His father sat down next to him. They hadn't spoken on the way to church. The father too was confused at the moment. The boy had badly broken his curfew last night. But the father knew his own strong reaction was caused by more than that. The incident brought some hidden anger to the surface.

The boy realized his lifestyle was a bit alien from his father's wishes right now. But like many teenagers, he felt his father didn't understand him. He wondered how much his father would like him if he really did understand.

The father knew his son wanted to be understood. As a matter of fact, the father wanted to be understood too.

by his son. The pressures of work, the problems of family finances, the demands placed on his time — the father wanted his son to comprehend these things.

The boy was getting older. His father wanted the best for him. What's more, the father remembered his own mistakes and lived in some fear his son would make similar mistakes. He wanted his own experience in life to help his son.

Soon this boy would leave home, for college or for work. The father was concerned about that approaching moment, wondering if he had done enough for the boy, hoping he had.

"Hoping," was the word. The father was hoping that his own sometimes clumsy efforts to reach out to his son would be understood. At this moment, this father's relationship with his son seemed less than successful.

Neither father nor son heard much. The boy and his father spoke softly, to think. They each had their own special intentions. In their own ways, each hoped for a not-too-difficult way out of their present difficulty and into a better relationship.

The Mass ended. They rose to leave. Some friends came over to the boy and his father in the back of the church. One friend told of a funny item in the morning newspaper. The father and his son managed to laugh — a little.

On the way home in the car, father and son exchanged a few words. Each could feel that time was doing what time often does in families. It was putting their big problem into a different context.

The difficulty they had with each other from time to time wasn't being erased. But bit by bit it was beginning to seem different, less all-encompassing. They were beginning to remember some of the other important things that bound them together.

A cathedral parish

By Dan Morris

When we told good friends of ours in the Northwest that we had accepted a job in Oakland, Calif., the first thing they said was, "have you been to the cathedral yet?"

Little did we know then that we would shortly become one of the adopted members of that parish.

ST. FRANCIS de Sales Cathedral in the Oakland diocese has become something of a center for liturgy students. A recent conference of pastoral musicians, for example, concluded a three-day convention in San Francisco by traveling across the bay to celebrate its closing liturgy at St. Francis de Sales.

Liturgy students from Berkeley theology schools are often seen at the cathedral. Visiting priests from all over the country show up incognito and borrow ideas for their own parishes.

"But the story that doesn't get told about St. Francis de Sales Cathedral is that its parish life is more than Sunday-deep. A kind of liturgy of ministry and concern and support ties the parish into a unique Christian community."

For the past half-dozen years the parish has been led by Father Donald Osuna, justly acclaimed an expert in liturgical affairs. When he arrived, the parish community was said to be somewhat adrift. The cathedral administrator, Father Michael Galvin, is blunt. "When Father Osuna started here, there was no community."

Led by Father Osuna, the staff poured its energies into the Sunday liturgies. The choir is superb. The music selection is appropriate. The liturgy, from beginning to end, possesses a tangible unity. Readings are clear and understandable. Homilies are bright, addressed to people's lives and remarkably brief.

But the story that doesn't get told about St. Francis de Sales Cathedral is that its parish life is more than Sunday-deep. A kind of liturgy of ministry and concern and support ties the parish into a unique Christian community.

FATHER OSUNA, Father Galvin, and other members of the cathedral staff agree that the community that now exists was drawn together through the Mass. The enthusiastic and prayerful celebration of the Eucharist was the catalyst. Now, however, the Sunday celebration is a reflection of the life of the Cathedral's community as well.

St. Francis de Sales is located in a low-income, multiracial part of downtown Oakland. Father Galvin describes the parish as a "primarily adult community and a cross-section of every segment of American society."

He's accurate. Affluent, not-so-affluent, black, white, brown, married, single, older and young — all are found in the parish. People come to this cathedral from suburbs as far as 40 or 50 miles away.

The parish community reaches out to its own members as well as the wider community in a number of ways. The parish organizes a complex ministry to the aging, a prison ministry, prayer groups, adult education classes and an active St. Vincent de Paul group among other programs.

Parishioners recently joined with a neighboring Baptist community to sponsor refugees from Argentina, the parish also has days of collection "for the elderly, for lectors, for ministers of Communion, or acolytes," notes Father Galvin, adding that the choir has made weekend retreats as a group.

The young priest says: "The people here know that their ministry is important. They respond to challenges. And yet it's not a stagnant community. It's still exploring, reflecting and is very open to challenge. My own experience is that there is a special atmosphere here," he adds. "People are accepted as they are."
Christmas is leaving for Midnight Mass at 11:30 and finding out everybody else left at 11:15.

Christmas is substituting a plastic tyrannosaurus for one of the camels in the crib scene because the last time anyone saw the camel, Michael had it in his mouth.

Christmas is unsnarling tinsel from the vacuum cleaner rolls.

Christmas is racing checks to the bank on pay day.

Christmas is staring at that monument of color and light known as a Christmas tree through the eyes of a 4-year-old.

Christmas is borrowing candies from the camping gear for the Advent Wreath.

Christmas is the kiss of a snowflake.

Christmas is Scotch tape, scissors, smashed bows, reusing ribbons, wrinkled wrapping paper - and packaging that last gift in birthday paper because you're all out of the other, but it's Jesus' birthday so that's OK.

Christmas is a good excuse to make new friends, patch up old friendships, give thanks for the ones of the past, and look for the ones that lurk in some of the most unlikely faces.

Christmas is the smile that comes to your face when you look into the plastic eyes of the infant Jesus and feel the flesh and blood touch of the living Christ in your soul.

Advent
A quiet evening before Christmas

By Katharine Bird
NC News Service

Celebrating the last week of Advent. How can Christians follow John's example and prepare for the coming celebration on Christmas day? What can be done to heighten family unity and friendship?

Plan to set aside one evening, perhaps Sunday, to spend with your favorite people - your own family and relatives, friends, neighbors - those people with whom you celebrate life's joys and sorrows.

Plan an evening of work and fun. Perhaps begin with a prayer at the Advent wreath. Then plan to work together baking special goodies for Christmas. Some can only be made shortly before Christmas.

1. One year my children and I baked and assembled a gingerbread house. This takes a great deal of time and patient effort. But my children loved it and we all enjoyed seeing the sparkling house on the dining room table all through the season. Now, long after our creation has crumbled, its memory reminds us of a happy evening together.

Directions for gingerbread houses can be found in popular magazines. Or, look for a recipe book for Christmas celebrations at your public library or in a bookstore.

2. Some families may prefer to bake cookies. Children often want to make personal fancy, can provide hours of pleasure.

4. Other ornaments easy to construct include strings of popcorn or cranberries to hang on a Christmas tree. One note of caution: In some families, cranberries work better; the popcorn seems to disappear before it gets to the tree.

3. Other families may decide to bake cookies to hang on the Christmas tree. Cutting out dough in the shape of trees, stars, bells and reindeers, baking and decorating them according to personal fancy, can provide hours of pleasure.

5. Spend an evening together making various items to give away to friends and neighbors. One neighbor gives busy friends a selection of cookies on a Christmas plate. Another makes a decorative tree from rows of gumdrops, toothpicks and a styrofoam tree form.

During the last days before Christmas, the hectic pace of life can easily crowd out the time for friends and families to be together in ways that they genuinely enjoy. Advent is the time to prepare, to make things ready for Christ.

One way to prepare for the one who is to come is by making room in our lives for each other.
Condena el Papa La Violencia Otra Vez

Vaticano.- En un largo discurso a los participantes del Congreso Nacional de Juristas Católicos celebrado en Roma, bajo el título "Violencia y Derecho", cuyo tema discutieron, el Santo Padre reafirmó que "no se puede construir una sociedad sólo sobre el principio negativo de la no-violencia (no oponer violencia a la violencia) ni tampoco podrá edificarse una sociedad sin derecho y sin estado". El Pontífice, refiriéndose a la "eterna dialéctica entre posiciones conservadoras y movimientos innovadores" dijo que, en las sociedades actuales, que se dice están en curso de transformación, ese tipo de dialéctica con frecuencia es presentado por cuantos creen que se puede y debe reformar las estructuras por medios pacíficos y por cuantos creen que se puede edificar una sociedad más justa y humana después del aniquilamiento total, violento, de dichas estructuras. "La ideología de la violencia es un fruto muy amargo de la confusión de ideas..." y definió la violencia como la "violación" de la dignidad humana. Refiriéndose a la no-violencia señaló que no basta su visión negativa, sino que el "pensamiento cristiano le da un alcance positivo, "vencer el mal con el bien", a fin de contribuir a la edificación de "la civilización del amor" propuesta por pablo VI.

Lennon y la Música Litúrgica

Nueva York (NC):- El asesinato el 8 de diciembre del compositor de los "Beatles" John Lennon puso de relieve la connubialidad que este célebre grupo hizo a la música contemporánea, la religiosa incluida. Sor Jane Marie Perrot, de la Asociación Nacional de Músicos Religiosos, dijo que la música de los Beatles "influyó mucho en los cantos folklóricos introducidos en la liturgia después del Segundo Concilio Vaticano." Charlie Martin, compositor y comentarista, dijo que de 1965 a 1971 la música de los Beatles maduró en contenido, y agregó que John Lennon "planteo en la letra de sus canciones muchas cuestiones válidas y fue un crítico de la sociedad." También se ha hecho público que el joven compositor ayudaba generosamente en obras de caridad religiosa, entre ellas un refugio para jóvenes sin hogar de los Franciscanos y un hospital infantil de las hermanas de la Caridad. La viuda Yoko Ono confirmó que su Fundación del Espíritu (capital $100,000) daba fondos a ambas, lo mismo que el Ejército de Salvación, la Casa San Barbás, y obras protestantes de asistencia social. El refugio atiende a unos 15,000 muchachos y muchascales; el hospital tiene 200 pacientes.

¡Aleluya! Ha Nacido el Salvador

(Prologo del Evangelio de San Juan)

- En el principio existió el Verbo y el Verbo estaba en Dios y el Verbo era Dios... - En El estaba la vida y la vida era la luz de los hombres, luz que brilló en las tinieblas... - El Verbo era la verdadera luz que alumbró a todo hombre que viene a este mundo; y el Verbo vino al mundo... - Vino a los suyos... - A los que le recibieron les dio potestad de llegar a ser hijos de Dios... - El Verbo se hizo carne y habió entre nosotros; y nosotros vimos su humildad, su fama de Padre, lleno de gloria y de verdad... - De su plenitud recibimos todos gracia sobre gracia... - La gracia y la verdad vienen por Jesucristo... - Aleluya! ¡Gloria a Dios en las Alturas y paz en la tierra a los hombres de buena voluntad! Aleluya!

AVISO IMPORTANTE

La semana próxima, con motivo de las fiestas navideñas, no será editado The Voice/La Voz. The Voice/La Voz desea a todos las bendiciones de Dios Padre y de Nuestro Señor Jesús.

Arzobispo Bendecirá Estatuas en Cementerio

El día 20 de Diciembre, a las 10 a.m., el Arzobispo de Miami, Mons. Edward McCarthy bendecirá, en el cementerio Our Lady of Mercy, la estatua en granito de Cristo Resucitado, recientemente esculpida, en memoria de los obispos y sacerdotes enterrados en dicho cementerio. También allí bendecirá una estatua de Nuestra Sra. de la Caridad del Cobre, Patrona de Cuba. Todos los fieles de la Arquidiócesis están invitados a estas bendiciones. El cementerio Our Lady of Mercy está situado en 11411 NW Calle 25, Miami.
Liga Católica Descubre a Farsante
Milwaukee (NC) - Al cabo de una investigación, la Liga Católica de Derechos Civiles y Religiosos informa que el editor de una campaña anti-católica que incluye la difusión de historietas fútiles, "Alberto," no fue nunca sacerdote jesuita como alega. Documentos de supervivientes jesuitas en España dicen que Alberto Rivera no fue ordenado ni declarado miembro de esta orden en la década de los 1960, fechas que declaró que dirigió una Liga Católica de Derechos Civiles y Religiosos. Rivera, quien se niega a retirar las historietas de la circulación entre grupos protestantes, Rivera, quien llama a la iglesia católica el anticomunista y a los superiores jesuitas "comunistas" es un farsante que trata de explotar a los protestantes.

Nuevo Libro del P. F. Santana
Un folleto titulado "La Familia y el Sacramento de los Enfermos" acaba de ver la luz. Este es el segundo libro del Rev. P. Francisco Santana, párróco asociado de St. Kevin, editado por Publicaciones Claretianas en su colección Guadalup. El primer trató sobre el Bautismo. Recomendamos la lectura del librito por cuanto explica claramente el mal comprendido "santo Padre de enfermos" y el uso y efecto de los sacramentos. El libro es de 32 páginas y está escrito con mucha claridad y entendimiento. Debemos señalar, sin embargo, que el libro no es una obra completa sobre el tema y, por lo tanto, no puede ser recomendado como un libro de estudio para aquellos que deseen profundizar en el tema.

Gracias por su apoyo al trabajo de la Liga Católica de Derechos Civiles y Religiosos. Su contribución ayuda a mantener esta organización en funcionamiento y a garantizar que la voz de la iglesia católica sea escuchada.

Por sus obedientes sirvientes,

[Nombre]
Liga Católica
Para Decidir Hace Falta Conocer...

Hay una Oficina que Ayuda a las mujeres embarazadas

Tienes 15 años, o 30; eres soltera o estás casada; viven en Miami o están pasando unos días en la ciudad. Estás embarazada y no quieres estarlo. Necesitas ayuda y ya dónde puedes dirigirte. Quizás sólo deseas alguna información sobre los diferentes métodos de control de natalidad. ¿A dónde ir?

Sobre dos anuncios muy grandes y atractivos en las páginas amarillas para “terminación de la preñez”, hay un pequeño anuncio que dice simplemente “We Care” (somos nosotros). Es de la Oficina de Respeto a la Vida de la Arquidiócesis Católica de Miami cuyo personal entrenado y voluntario dice que a ellos sí les importa tu y tu niño por hacer las 24 horas del día, los siete días de la semana.

“Hemos comprobado que si nosotros ofrecemos un sistema de apoyo moral y material a las mujeres que creen tener problemas debido a su embarazo, ellas estarán menos dispuestas para ‘terminación positiva’, dice Libby Johnson, enfermera registrada quien ofrece sus horas libres voluntariamente para hacer pruebas de embarazo en la mencionada oficina.

Las pruebas, confirmadas por un médico, son sólo una parte de los Servicios de Emergencia de Embarazos establecidos por la Oficina de Respeto a la Vida. Estos servicios proveen hogar para la mujer embarazada que no tiene a dónde ir, educación sobre cuidado del bebé, salud y nutrición, cura y ropas, transporte al hospital y la consulta del médico. También son referidas a otras agencias, si lo requiere el caso, que pueden brindarle ayuda adicional.

“Cualquier cosa que ellas puedan necesitar, nosotros los proporcionamos”, dice Carolyn, una de las voluntarias. “Las tratamos como adultos”, añade Delia Ros, BSW, trabajadora social de la oficina. La señora Johnson añade, “Queremos ayudarlas a ayudarse a sí mismas. Las ayudamos a hacer la decisión, pero no hacemos la decisión ellas”.

Los empleados de la oficina no saben exactamente a cuántas mujeres han ayudado desde que abrieron la oficina hace un año, pero están convencidos de que están ayudando a muchos. El Padre Daniel Kubala, su director, dice que el último mes hubo ochenta llamadas al teléfono de la oficina se quedan, una vez que las pruebas de embarazo son confirmadas.

Muchos de los que van a la oficina se quedan, una vez que saben que no es una clínica de aborto. Algunas siguen adelante en busca del aborto, pero van informadas de las complicaciones de tal propósito, según la Sra. Johnson. Ella da énfasis a la importancia de esta información para que “si eligen sin saberlo todo no han hecho una real elección”. La mayoría de las que dan luz dan los bebés en adopciones en la batalla que deciden quedarse con ellos.

“Uglen aquí perdidas, inseguras”, dice la Sra. Ros, “y después de tener al niño algo se abre en ellas”. Deciden terminar sus estudios y consiguir un trabajo. “Sienten una nueva responsabilidad hacia la criatura y es tremendo el cambio que se opera en ellas”.

Servicios de Emergencias se verá pronto suplementado por un Fondo de Emergencia para Embarazadas llamado “Fondo Guadalupe” porque Ntra. Sra. de Guadalupe es la Patrona de los niños nacidos. El fondo ayudará a sufragar los gastos del cuidado prenatal y del parteria a aquellas que no tienen recursos.

La Oficina cuenta con 25 voluntarios que atienden los teléfonos las 24 horas del día y 50 más que brindan sus hogares para albergar a las embarazadas inmediatamente. “Estas personas son unos cristianos muy especiales”, agrega la enfermera Johnson.

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Director o Líder: “Señor Nuestro, creemos que tú estás aquí presente, que tú eres parte de nuestra familia. Vamos a celebrar tu cumpleaños de una manera muy especial. Te alabamos y damos gracias por el regalo de la vida, bendecida aquel arbol que que rey...”

Compartan el aspecto de la Navidad que más les fluye sus corazones explicando por qué.

Comparten la Navidad más feliz que hayan tenido. Cuente cual es el regalo con más significado que han recibido en sus vidas.

ORACION FINAL

“Gracias Señor, por el regalo de tu Hijo Jesús. Que nuestra familia, ahora mas que nunca sienta la vida y el amor que tú trae. Ayudanos a vivir nuestras vidas en el ejemplo de tu Hijo, desde su pobreza en Belén, pasando por las riquezas de sus enseñanzas, hasta su sufriemiento en la cruz, sabiendo que nos lleva a la gloria de la Resurrección. Amén.”

TEMAl

El Adyentro cublina en Navidad, la celebracion de la bondad y generosidad de Dios hacia nosotros.

ACTIVIDADES

Familia Joven

Mientras leen en la Biblia el nacimiento como si caminan.

Familia de Edad Mediana Y Adulta

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La Oficina cuyos gastos son pagados por los fondos de la colecta anual en las parroquias y con donaciones de los Caballeros de Colón e individuales, es ya muy pequeña. Se está haciendo una adición que estará abierta para el entrante mes de Enero.

Todas las ciudades en las que se ha establecido el seminario voluntario en la Oficina dice que “aún los anclanos pueden ayudar bastante tejiendo ropitas y organizando los artículos donados y orando. Otros seminarios se encuentran también en la Oficina. Los trabajadores voluntarios de Respeto a la Vida se sienten optimistas en la batalla que están librando contra el aborto. La Sra. Israel dice que “ellos (los aborticionistas) son los que están preocupados”.

Las Oficinas de Respeto a la Vida están situadas en 18340 NW 12 Avenida y el teléfono es 653-2921. Toda donación, especialmente de bebé o cunas, es bienvenida y agradecida.

Para Decidir Hace Falta Conocer...
Rezar Cantando es Rezar Dos Veces

El pasado Domingo 30 de Noviembre se celebró en el Centro Comunitario de la Pequeña Habana un festival de Música Cristiana, organizado por el Centro de Juventudes José Martí. El propósito de este festival es unir a la juventud de todas las denominaciones cristianas para "oral cantando", las canciones presentadas en el festival son inéditas y fueron seleccionadas por un jurado compuesto de cinco personas.

Este festival es el primero de su clase y el Centro de Juventudes planea ofrecerlo anualmente. Además, este año incluían otro propósito: recaudar fondos para abrir un local que albergue al Centro y donde puedan reunirse sus miembros.

El lema del festival fue inspirado en San Agustín: "Rezar cantando es rezar dos veces."

El Centro tiene planes ambiciosos como son ofrecer clases de karate y también clases de filosofía por el profesor Germán Muñoz siguiendo el mismo curso que el citado profesor tiene en el Miami Dade Community College titulado "Filosofía y Ciencias Sociales", cuyo enfoque es rebatir las teorías materialistas titulado "Filosofía y Ciencias por el profesor German Munoz clases de karate y también con el asesinato de tres monjas cerca de 1500 Nicaraquenses se reunieron la víspera de la fiesta y aunque creyes que has cambiado ves que todo sigue igual.

No es que tú no hayas cambiado, es que no has cambiado en ti esa imagen desconocida que no te deja vivir. Ten la fe que mueve a las montañas, mira al sol, no deja de brillar. No busques más allá del corazón, ten fe tan alta que casi llegue a Dios.

El mirante en el espejo ves aquella que fue, pero más que lo que ha sido es saber qué puede ser. Hay caminos no trazados. Hay alturas por subir. Y si crees que está cansada descansa el alma en Mii. Un paso atrás es igual que ver la misma cara reflejada en el cristal. Un paso adelante deja huellas por seguir y-as, a cada instante, hallarás tu porvenir.

NO ENCUENTRAN EVIDENCIAS
El Salvador.- La comisión investigadora enviada por el gobierno americano a El Salvador para investigar lo relacionado con el asesinato de tres monjas, NO ENCUENTRAN EVIDENCIAS.

Las Griterías de Nicaragua

Cerca de 1500 Nicaraquenses se reunieron la víspera de la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción, Patróna de Nicaragua, en la Iglesia de la Divina Providencia para celebrar una tradición de años: las Griterías Nicaraquenses. Arriba, un voluntario reparte flautas descargadas a los niños allí presentes, mientras el pueblo se congrege alrededor de la imagen de la Virgen, cantando hinosos.
'Peace on earth'

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

Isaiah 11:1
Memories of past Christmases are filled with traditions, laughter, special moments, a favorite gift and a tree that looked pretty good on the shivery YMCA lot but left a bit to be desired in the warmth of the living room.

Memories of past Christmases are filled with traditions, laughter, special moments, a favorite gift and a tree that looked pretty good on the shivery YMCA lot but left a bit to be desired in the warmth of the living room.

A PHILIPPINE Nativity. Dec. 25 was a day of visiting for Sister Mary Nino's family in the Philippines. Sister Nino, of the Sisters of Notre Dame, recalls the ritual of visiting God, parents and grandparents every Christmas.

"Christmas was such a wonderful occasion for our family, that I chose it as my feast day," she says.

"Nine days before the holiday, the family began making novenas, going before dawn to church. It was important for them to be in church at the time the Christ child was born."

Sister Nino explains: "Since Christmas celebrates the birth of the child Jesus, Christmas in my homeland is focused on children."

Christmas in the French provinces was a family day starting with midnight Mass. Dinner might include turkey stuffed with chestnut dressing.

Other visiting was postponed until the holiday on Jan. 1.

Clothes were an important part of the holiday too, and children often wore new outfits — from bows in the girls' hair to new shoes.

Sister Nino's most vivid memory is of the 11 girls in her family, standing in line wearing identical dresses made by her mother.

"OURS WAS a homemade holiday," she continued. "Trees in our country were much too expensive. So we cut dry branches and covered them with crepe paper and stuck on bits of cotton to look like snow."

"We would all help, making stars from bamboo and tissue paper, pasting sequins on lids. Everyone helped with the cooking too."

The highlight of the family feast would be a whole roasted pig cooked over coals and basted with barbecue sauce.

Santa always came to visit, says Sister Nino. "We would hang our stockings by the window or door. One Christmas I put up two stockings thinking Santa would never know the difference!"

Christmas in France. Children in France set their shoes by the chimney or under the Christmas tree, according to Josette Fergusson. "On one occasion, my father put his shoes out too — but got no presents!"

Mrs. Fergusson remembers.

Her six brothers would go into the woods surrounding their village and bring home a freshly cut tree.

"Then we made our decorations."

Christmas in the French provinces was a family day starting with midnight Mass. Dinner might include turkey stuffed with chestnut dressing.

Other visiting was postponed until the holiday on Jan. 1.
Christmas can be a tiring time for some of us.

By Theodore Hengesbach

Christmas celebrates God's unlimited love for humans. But, for my friend Al, the season is not always a time of contentment. Rather, he complains, it is a time of frantic activity, added responsibility and even dread. The end result for him often is exhaustion and disappointment.

IN THE COURSE of several talks, Al and I explored possible reasons for his annual unhappiness with Christmas. It seems to me that Al and many other Christians feel immense internal and external pressures to copy God's love for us. God's love is unlimited. Somehow we feel that our expressions of affection for others should be unlimited as well at Christmas.

So in the Christmas season we spend beyond our means, overschedule our calendars, make excessive demands on our reservoirs of physical and emotional energy. Yet, in fact, only God has the capacity for unlimited love. We humans have limited capacities. Christmas does call us to generosity. But Christmas contentment, I feel, depends on recognizing, defining and remaining within reasonable limits.

With my friend Al, I worked out a remedy for Christmas frenzy, a prescription for Christmas contentment: a careful, thorough budgeting of money, time and energy.

1. Budgeting financial resources. The limit here should be set at what a person or family can comfortably spend without having to endure "easy payments" which begin in February. The budget should include all Christmas expenses for gifts, decorations, special foods, contributions, postage and the cost of traveling "over the meadow and through the woods."

2. Budgeting time. Obviously there is no more time available to us over the Christmas season than at any other time. Nevertheless, people routinely cram their schedules with extra parties, lengthy projects like baking, building gifts and making crafts, shopping and cutting down the Christmas tree. No wonder Christmas is a frantic time! A time budget should be as thorough as a financial budget in order to promote a peaceful Christmas.

3. Budgeting energy. The Christmas season somehow demands a high energy level. Many demands are made on us. We often want to do more. Furthermore, Christmas calls us to be in a good mood, to smile, to be outgoing, understanding and responsive. Scrooge at Christmas invariably strikes a repellent note.

At the same time we may not be in our best form. Many people are tempted to eat many rich foods and inordinate...
May your Holidays be filled with joyous celebration. May the Spirit of this Season bring happiness to all people on earth.

continued from p. 3 B

amounts of sugar, even to drink too much Christmas cheer. Often people also cut down on their regular exercise programs and lose sleep.

IS IT ANY wonder people become ill-tempered? The antedote is to develop a plan to conserve energy and even to replenish it.

Al followed this prescription for budgeting money, time and energy last year. He reports he felt more in control of Christmas for the first time in several years. Furthermore, he explained that his Christmas with limits was anything but ho-hum.

By changing the way he approached the Christmas holiday, he and his family were able to really celebrate Christmas rather than be overwhelmed by it.

Finally, being considerate of our limits also means looking ahead and planning for gift giving, parties and affectionate relationships throughout the year. It makes us realize that displays of affection need not be limited to a single period in the year. Love is not something to be confined. It should pervade all of life and all seasons of the year.

Then, suddenly, perhaps we will find we are like God after all - loving in our limited ways through unlimited seasons.

THE KING IS COMING — The angel in the sparkling Christmas tree ornament symbolizes the feast of Christ's coming. Russell Shaw writes, "The manner of His (Christ's) coming—in the utmost simplicity and poverty—reminds us that our final and lasting fulfillment will be infinitely beyond the limited capacities of this world."

May your Holidays be filled with joyous celebration. May the Spirit of this Season bring happiness to all people on earth.
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Grandma’s gift: a short story

By Ann M. Murphy

"It is Christmas Eve, and it seems only yesterday was the Fourth of July," she thought, as she opened the mail and taped 10 more Christmas cards on the den doorway. Nancy Murray had laughed and cried through 42 Christmas Eves. She declared each year, "Someday I'll write a book about them all!"

The pies were cooked, the gifts wrapped, the fresh spruce was dressed for the holidays and the magician was in place. Mrs. Murray sat down in the living room with a cup of coffee to relax and think about tomorrow.

She gazed at the Christmas tree, admiring each ornament. Her eyes fixed upon a tiny, gold ball. Susan had made it in third grade. Mrs. Murray’s eyes were as it always was at Christmas except for one thing: Susan, now 18, was 3,000 miles away. Susan had made it in third grade. Mrs. Murray’s eyes were as it always was at Christmas except for one thing: Susan, now 18, was 3,000 miles away. Susan would not be home for Christmas this year.

Mrs. Murray had laughed and cried through 42 Christmas Eves. She smiled as the three generations of Murrays collected around the table.

"Nana's gift should arrive any minute now." The twins were inseparable at Christmas. Mrs. Murray heard, "Nana, will you play cards with me?" It was Nana and her youngest granddaughter, Jane. These two were inseparable at Christmas time, a perfect pair.

The two walked into the living room where Janet's father was building a warm, inviting fire. Janet raced over and jumped up on his knees. "I can hardly wait for Christmas Daddy," she exclaimed.

Jack Murray gave his daughter a kiss and glanced up at his mother. "Why don't you help Nana wrap her gifts, Jane?"

The grandmother winked and spoke not a word. She gently placed her hand in Jane's and as they walked toward the den to play Old Maids, the father heard their duet of "Silent Night." It was a bit off tune, but he thought it was quite beautiful.

He looked out the window. His eyes grew misty, as he realized it would be a different Christmas this year. Susan would not be home.

"Time for Dinner!" Mrs. Murray called. "Is anybody hungry around here?" She smiled as the three generations of Murrays collected around the table.

"Nana began the conversation. "You've noticed I have no gifts this Christmas Eve. I decided to save my pennies all year long to give you a special gift."

The family looked puzzled. "In fact," she said, looking at her watch and appearing a bit nervous, "my gift should arrive any minute now." Nana was usually right and within 10 minutes the doorbell rang. They all ran toward the front hallway. Mrs. Murray opened the door and almost lost her breath. "Susan's home!" she cried. "Nana, thank you. This is the best Christmas Eve we've ever had."
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The mysterious Magi

By Sean Freyne
NC News Service

The Magi are the most obscure, most mysterious characters appearing on stage for the drama surrounding the birth of the Savior. They also are among the most celebrated actors in the Gospel narratives. Their name, Magi or Wise Men, and their homeland in the East, only add to their mystique.

Since we know so little about them, it is little wonder that popular thinking has tended to fill in the details which Matthew left so tantalizingly vague in the second chapter of his Gospel.

First, the story in many ways resembles popular stories about the birth of Moses. In both, a hostile leader rules the land: Herod at the time of Jesus' birth to the ruler. Furthermore, both Jesus and Moses were threatened, even in their infancy.

Second, the Slaughter of the Innocents, which the visit of the Wise Men prompted, led to the precipitous flight of Jesus and his family to Egypt. This jogged Jewish memories of Israel's exile in the land of Egypt, as well. For Matthew, Jesus and his church of Jews and Gentiles are the new Israel responsive to God's call. Matthew seems to subtly foreshadow this in his infancy accounts.

Finally, like the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon to hear his wisdom, the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus introduces him to us as the Wise One par excellence. To him all human wisdom must submit.

In addition, much has been written about the star in the East which the Magi follow. Some have identified this star with Hale's Comet or with a very rare configuration of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. All such speculation, however, may be of greater interest to the antiquarian and astrologer than to Matthew.

Of greater interest to Matthew, many of his readers would have believed the stars guided the affairs of people's lives. Hearing that Jesus' star was seen and recognized by people in more countries where astrology was an important science, but who had no ties to Judaism, was significant to them. This gave the birth of Jesus a universal dimension.

It was this universal aspect of the event that the Christian liturgy, with its very sure touch, fastened onto in the feast of the Wise Men, Epiphany, as the feast is called in the Greek Church, became and remains the fitting climax of the Christmas Gospel.

To us a Son is born: to us a Savior is given, irrespective of our ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The legend of Befana

By Jerry Elitzau
NC News Service

(Here is a story to read aloud)

Many, many years ago - nearly 2000 in fact - an old woman lived in Nazareth, and called Jutes. Her name was Befana.

She lived alone in a small country cottage. Once, years before, Befana had a husband and a small son. But her husband died, and she and her son were left alone.

Befana had one treasure in her home, a chest of toys, gold, red and purple. It was covered with heavy velvet and small, bare home was a chest of toys, gold, red and purple. It was covered with heavy velvet and other items that once belonged to the little boy, Befana often opened the chest and pulled the toys out, one by one. They reminded her of the delightful days when her small son filled the house with laughter.

One day a wise man came riding along on his brown camel. They rode down the hill leading to the little town of Bethlehem.

"Who are you?" she asked as it reached the little path to her home.

"We are Wise Men from the East," the first Wise Man said.

"Oh, you look hungry and thin," said Befana. "Please come in and have something to eat."

"Oh, no, we can't stop," the second Wise Man said.

"We're in a terrible hurry," the third Wise Man said. "Looking for the newborn King of the Jews, who has just been born. We have royal presents for him."

Befana watched the Wise Men ride away, until they disappeared. Her camels and their harnesses faded in the distance. Her eyes were moist, and she felt a little sorrowful.

"And so Joseph went to the town of Bethlehem," the Wise Man said, "to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child." Luke, 2:4-5

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"And so Joseph went to the town of Bethlehem," the Wise Man said, "to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child." Luke, 2:4-5
That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared among them, and the landscape shone bright with the glory of the Lord. They were badly frightened, but the angel reassured them.

"Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem! How will you recognize him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger!"

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, they sang, "and peace on earth for all those pleasing him."

—Luke 2:8-14

"The Living Bible"

fana, 'the good witch'

That is the night Belana reached a city on the sea. She met a ship's captain and asked, "Do you know where I can find the new king of the Jews?"

"I'VE HEARD of no such king," the captain responded. "But there is one he must be in Rome. That is where the kings in this world live."

In those days the Roman Empire covered what many thought was practically the whole world.

So Belana and her faithful herdsman traveled to Rome. Some of the kindly ship captain took them on his ship. Others say they flew through the sky in any way, even that they arrived in Rome. There Belana asked the wise men in the empire if they had ever heard of the new king of the Jews. The men ridiculed her. "Of course, the Jews have no new king," she told them. "Besides, such a person would be a traitor and Caesar would have him killed. There is no king but Caesar."

Belana was disappointed. She realized that even if she found the wonderful king, she wouldn't be able to find the new king of the Jews. She turned around and went back to her home. She knew that she couldn't look for the new king of the Jews, but she wanted to find the old king of the Jews.

"WHAT A MARVELOUS man I thought Belana. The king who has been born must be great, and how it blesses him."

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Reviving past Christmas customs

By Katharine Bird
NC News Service

Christmas is a fascinating blend of religious remembrances and secular customs whose origins often are shrouded in the mists of the past.

The term, "Christmas," first used in the 11th century, seems to come from the old English term, "Cristes Maesse," meaning the Mass of Christ. Legend has it that King Arthur of the famed Round Table in the fifth century was an early celebrant of Christmas in England, while records show that King Alfred the Great set aside the 12 days of Yule as a time of celebration in the 9th century.

For the church, Christmas traditions evolved gradually over many centuries. Father Francis Weiser in his "Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs," writes that the Church first celebrated an octave, eight days, of Christmas early on, in the 8th century.

FOR PEOPLE in the Middle Ages, Christmas became a hallowed time, a week-long series of religious festivals when families rested from their labors, performing only the most necessary chores. Often people prayed the rosary and sang carols at night.

For people today, Christmas often marks the end of celebration rather than the beginning. Yet for Catholics, the Christmas season traditionally begins with Christmas Eve and extends until the baptism of Jesus (in 1981 this day is Jan. 11).

Father Frederick McManus of the Catholic University of America, a well-known liturgical scholar and canon lawyer, points out that the church's celebration focuses on the "twin feasts" of Christmas and the Epiphany, days which mark God's manifestation to the world as a human being.

In remembrance of the past, I would like to suggest some ways for observing the Christmas season.

"For people in the Middle Ages, Christmas became a hallowed time, a week-long series of religious festivals when families rested from their labors, performing only the most necessary chores. Often people prayed the rosary and sang carols at night."

Centuries ago during the octave of Christmas the church designated certain days to honor the "companions of Christ," saints from earlier centuries who had a special connection with Jesus. Some of "Christ's nobility," as these saints are called: St. Stephen, the first martyr (Dec. 26), and St. John, the beloved apostle and evangelist (Dec. 27).

Talk about reasons why Jesus especially loved St. John. 27.


2. CELEBRATE the third day of Christmas, the feast of St. John the Evangelist. On this day in central Europe people often bring wine and cider to the church for blessing. Perhaps this custom could be adapted for the home today. Serve cider with your dinner, in memory of St. John.

Ceremonies, and festivities.

This painting of Bloemaert's "The Adoration of the Three Kings" hangs in the Central Museum of Utrecht, The Netherlands. (NC Photo courtesy KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.)

1. PLAN a merry evening at home with family or friends. During our party, copy an early 19th century tradition found in the British Isles. Children and adults then played a game of forfeits to the rhymes of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

To play the game; arrange dining room chairs in a circle. Choose a leader. The leader says or sings the rhyme for the first gift:

On the first day of Christmas
My true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree.

Each person repeats the leader's words. When all have finished, the leader starts again, this time calling out the first and second rhyme, with each person repeating the rhymes in turn again. This continues through all 12 gifts.

When a person misses a gift, he or she forfeiting a penny or small trinket which is handed over to the leader. At the game's conclusion, the forfeits are "cried for" by game participants. The leader raises high the trinket, the group suggests an appropriate ransom and the person who owns the item earns it back by performing the ransom.

Ransoms might include: reciting a nursery rhyme, turning a summersault, counting from 12 backward to one, singing a song.

Finally, following another British tradition, bake a 12th night cake in a large round pan, like a pie. Put a bean in the cake. The person who finds the bean is the king or queen of the evening's festivities.
’Tis the season to mix business with pleasure.

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A Christmas reverie

By Richard Conklin

(Here is a story that friends and families can read aloud during the Christmas season. What memories of Christmas past does this tale bring back for you.)

Back between the softest blankets, snugly against a familiar pillow, in a darkened room close to childhood happiness, we find them — our memories of Christmas.

In a dusty corner in the attic of the human mind, we come across the much-marked box with the Advent candles, bearing the scent of the incense drifting up from the censer at Midnight Mass, mingling with the smell of natural pine. We see the snowflakes brush a scarf drawn up against the mouth, and we taste the cinnamon imbedded in handmade wreath cookies.

Over the years, we've stored these experiences up, locked them in airtight, wooden chests with hinge locks we lift once a year. Out comes the visual imagery of expensive puppets in Thanksgiving store windows now long shuttered; the succulent gifts of ovens now long closed, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered; the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered; the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered, the succulent gifts of ovens now long shuttered.

This Christmas, would you help tell the Christmas story? Please send a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, supporting the Mission work of the Church around the world. Let the Light of Christ shine into their lives, too!

Yes, I want to tell the Christmas story to those who have never heard it. Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ $1,000 ☐ $500 ☐ $200 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ $20 ☐ $10 ☐ $5 ☐ Other $

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ______ State ______ Zip ______

Please ask the missioners to remember my special intentions in their Masses and prayers ______

12/80

Send your gift to:
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH
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Dept. C, 366 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10001

OR
Msgr. John J. Donnelly
Archdiocesan Director
6301 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33138
Reverie...

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...blinking the computer numbers of microwave appliances, the toy service stations, now replaced by computer games with sounds like those made by city garbage trucks when they back up.

PLACE, too, keeps well in Christmas memory. I retain old family floor plans only because the Christmas tree stood in a particular place, as did a fake fireplace and a fragile village hummocked in cotton with a Christmas bulb backlighting the crimson windows of the frosted church steeple.

PLACE, too, keeps well in Christmas memory. I retain old family floor plans only because the Christmas tree stood in a particular place, as did a fake fireplace and a fragile village hummocked in cotton with a Christmas bulb backlighting the crimson windows of the frosted church steeple.

I can also recall the details of downtown street corners in blustery December, the coziness of defunct bars strung with evergreen, the excitement of concealing a gift saw in the dank fruit cellar, secure against a father's curiosity.

Weather stirs remembrance. It always seemed the coldest night in December when we did it. The YMCA men's tree lot was framed in frigid white light. The men wore the heavy boots and wool-lined parkas favored by deer hunters in the Upper Midwest.

The snow had been trampled hard, and if you stood too long in one spot, the cold gripped right through your galoshes, wrapped around your shivering ankles and threatened to freeze you next to the balsams.

When the purchase was made, after much examination of the half-frozen trees for defects that would only become apparent in the warmth of a living room, the money passed from exposed hand to exposed hand above a flaming barrel.

The people. Grandmother presided in the old duplex, where four generations eventually would gather to receive the kind of blessing that comes from repeating small acts that testify to large hopes.

CHILDREN were always underfoot, usually entwined in the wrappings of someone else's present, while Claire Keeler, the unruffled matriarch, served grapefruit topped with sherry to the adults. It was, she explained, a tradition.

Almost anything done more than once at Christmas in our family became a tradition. The accretions over the years never seemed burdensome, they just piled up, fitting together in a cluttered sort of way, like the hodgepodge of ornaments that engulfed our balsam.

Yet not everything lasts. Kindergarten Christmas tree loops are discarded, grandmothers die and their homes pass out of the family; jasmine replaces pine in incense shops; Lionel Barrymore's "Christmas Carol," with its "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, clutching old sinner" is replaced by a "Peanuts" holiday television special.

YET WE hold fast. We change, but our Christmas memory endures. It is a curious benchmark. If we did not have it, we could not so easily mark our passage, nor know how much baggage we carry from innocence to maturity.

So there is a snow that will continue to fall fresh on the half-lit streets of Christmas memory. Let it fall to the sound of Salvation Army bells and colorful toys. Let it fall to the taste of hard candy and hard sauce.

Let it fall to the remembrance that makes each Christmas cumulative.

The Nativity is depicted with the use of "Hummel" figurines at a display in New York.

MAY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON BRING PEACE AND SECURITY TO ALL PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Shepard Broad
Chairman

Morris N. Broad
President

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1980
Dear Mom and Dad:

For the past 30 some years, you have devoted yourselves to looking after first me and my brothers, and now our husbands, wives and children. You have listened to our dreams, tolerated our mistakes and soothed our disappointments. You’ve never turned your backs on us.

“We’ve all said, ‘Thank you’ when you’ve helped us, just as we were taught. And we meant it, every time. But somehow that hasn’t been enough for us. It’s time to say ‘thank you’ in a better way.”

So began an unusual Christmas present from one woman and her brothers to their parents.

“It took a lot of courage for us to do that,” the woman said later. “Our family never was much at sharing feelings or talking about them.

“It used to be that families tended to stay in the same area as they grew up,” said one neighbor when I asked about gift giving. “They knew each other better and knew what pleased each person. Gift giving was easier then.

“But now, even if it is meaningful, you end up feeling like your gift was just another thing from the catalogue.”

His children are scattered to three corners of the country. He rarely sees them, and they see each other together even more rarely.

“In some ways we’re almost strangers. We try to make our gifts tell something about us to each other.”

Sometimes there is success. Once there was a Christmas resolution: A daughter promised to quit smoking. She knew that would mean something.

A brief survey of other friends and neighbors unearthed a variety of unusual gifts welcomed by the recipients:

- A carefully hand-lettered, framed copy of a favorite poem.
- A resolution to telephone once a week (from a son transferred to a city 2,500 miles away from his hometown).
- An IOU to paint the house on the first warm spring weekend.
- A portable cassette recorder with which to exchange news — and the sounds of growing grandchildren—from a daughter living in the Far East.

Of course, there are the failures, too. The handcraft that falls apart in 20 minutes; the well-intentioned letter that sounds like a show-and-tell script. As William Bolitho wrote:

“You need more tact in the dangerous art of giving presents than in any other social function.”

“But after all,” said a neighbor, “I don’t give grades for great presents that people give me. I enjoy receiving gifts — and I enjoy giving them.

“I try to make gifts that tell something about me and how I feel. I hope others do the same for me.”

All of us have grappled with the problem of what to give to those who are closest to us. There are, after all, only so many gloves, sweaters, neckties, platters and other geegaws that adults can use. It is the gift of oneself that often is the most difficult but also can be the most meaningful. (NC Photo by Bob Taylor)
Early Christmas celebrations

Too marvelous for words!

By the Rev. Robert L. Wilken

The first Christians did not celebrate Christmas at all, strange as that may seem today. No Christmas tree, no exchanging of gifts, no carols, no yule log, not even midnight Mass. They only didn’t commemorate the anniversary of Christ’s birth; they didn’t even remember the day. When the ancient Christians began to wonder about the date of Jesus’ birth, it was already too late to find out for sure. No one had taken the trouble to write the date down.

When did Christians first begin to celebrate Christmas? The first mention of a Christian Christmas celebration comes early in the fourth century, more than 300 years after Christ’s birth. But it was not until the end of the fourth century that the Christmas festival began to be observed widely. The first Christmas sermon that we still possess was preached by Optatus, a bishop in Numidia (now Algeria) in North Africa in the year 383.

About the same time, records indicate that St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan in Italy, St. John Chrysostom of Antioch in Syria and St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, (Tunisia today), were celebrating the festival of the Nativity.

How did earlier Christians celebrate Christmas?

In Jerusalem the nativity celebration began the afternoon before the day itself, in Bethlehem, at a church called “At the Shepherds.” This was followed by a service at the Cave of the Nativity and a long vigil which culminated in a midnight Mass.

Then the bishop, monks and the faithful marched in procession to Jerusalem, approximately four miles away, arriving at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre just before dawn. After a brief service, according to ancient sources, the bishop and people retired for a rest. The monks, however, continued to sing hymns until daybreak. Later they gathered at the church on Mt. Golgotha.

According to a fourth century pilgrim, its decorations were “too marvelous for words.” This pilgrim said “the hangings are entirely silk with gold stripes, the curtains, the same. You simply cannot imagine the number and the sheer weight of the candles and the tapers and lamps and everything else they used for the services.”

In Jerusalem the festival continued for eight days. In other parts of the Christian world, the celebration was not so elaborate, but the general pattern developed of having three liturgies: a Mass at midnight, another Mass at dawn and later the Mass for the day itself.

What day did the Christians celebrate the festival?

Since no one knew for certain when Christ was born, some proposed one day, such as May 20; others preferred a different date. Finally, the festival was fixed on the day of the winter solstice, Dec. 21 in our calendar today.

The Christian fathers reasoned this way: since Christ was the “light of the world and the Sun of justice” (Malachi 4:2), why not fix his birthday celebration on the day when the sun begins to shine more brightly and the days begin to grow longer.

They also hoped the Christian celebration would take place of the pagan festival held on the winter solstice. This celebrated the pagan god, Sol Invictus, Unconquered Sun. In ancient calendars the winter solstice fell on Dec. 25 in the West and on Jan. 6 in the East. Hence Dec. 25 became the day of celebration for Christians in the Western Church, Jan. 6 for Christians in the Eastern Church.

What did Christmas mean for the early Christians?

For them, Christmas was the celebration of Christ’s birth, the mystery of the Word made flesh. But Christmas also was the occasion to recall the birth of the church to a new life in Christ.

As Leo the bishop of Rome in the fifth century put it in a Christmas sermon: “The birth of Christ is the source of life for Christian folk, and the birthday of the head is the birthday of the body.”
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