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From the Rector's Desk

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

by Rev. Bruno Danis

Among the many questions in our religious life the most important question is: who is Christ? Is He merely a messenger sent by God, as Moses and the Prophets were? Or is He something more than a man? The issue of this question is of paramount importance: neither the institution of the Universal Church, nor the powers and offices conferred upon her, can be rightly understood or duly appreciated unless we possess a full knowledge of Christ Himself.

Who, then, is Jesus Christ, Who was born about 2,000 years ago in a small town of Bethlehem; Who was living mostly at Nazareth, and died on the Cross on the Mount of Calvary near the city of Jerusalem, but the third day rose from the dead and later ascended up to heaven?

Arius (256-326), a priest of Alexandria, dared to teach that Christ was a mere man, born in time, who, however, could be called God.

Modern Unitarians (rejecting the doctrine of the Holy Trinity) hold the same doctrine. The Semi-Arians allowed the existence of Christ from all eternity, His similarity to God, and still they proclaimed Him to be a mere creature.

But the whole Christian Church has always believed Christ is true God and true Man, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, coequal (not similar) with the Father and the Holy Ghost; He took upon Himself our human nature, to suffer and die for the salvation of human race.

In Christ, therefore, there are two natures entirely distinct: the divine and the human; but these two natures being united in a special way like the sun with its radiation and heat; this special union of two natures in Christ, using theological terminology, is called hypostatic Union.

Therefore, in Christ there is one Person only: the divine one, supplying the personality of the human nature. Thus the actions performed by the sacred humanity, though finite in themselves, are yet infinite in dignity and merit, since, owing to the Hypostatic Union, they belong in truth to the Person of the Godhead; and Christ, Who as God can say: "I am the infinite Ruler and Lord of the universe, as Man may also say: I have suffered and died on the Cross!"

The whole economy of the Christian Religion necessarily supposes the divinity of the Saviour; without it Christianity would be meaningless! Hence those who deny it, deny the Atonement (the act of

reconciling man to God) also, one of the main pivots on which revolves whole religious belief of all Christians.

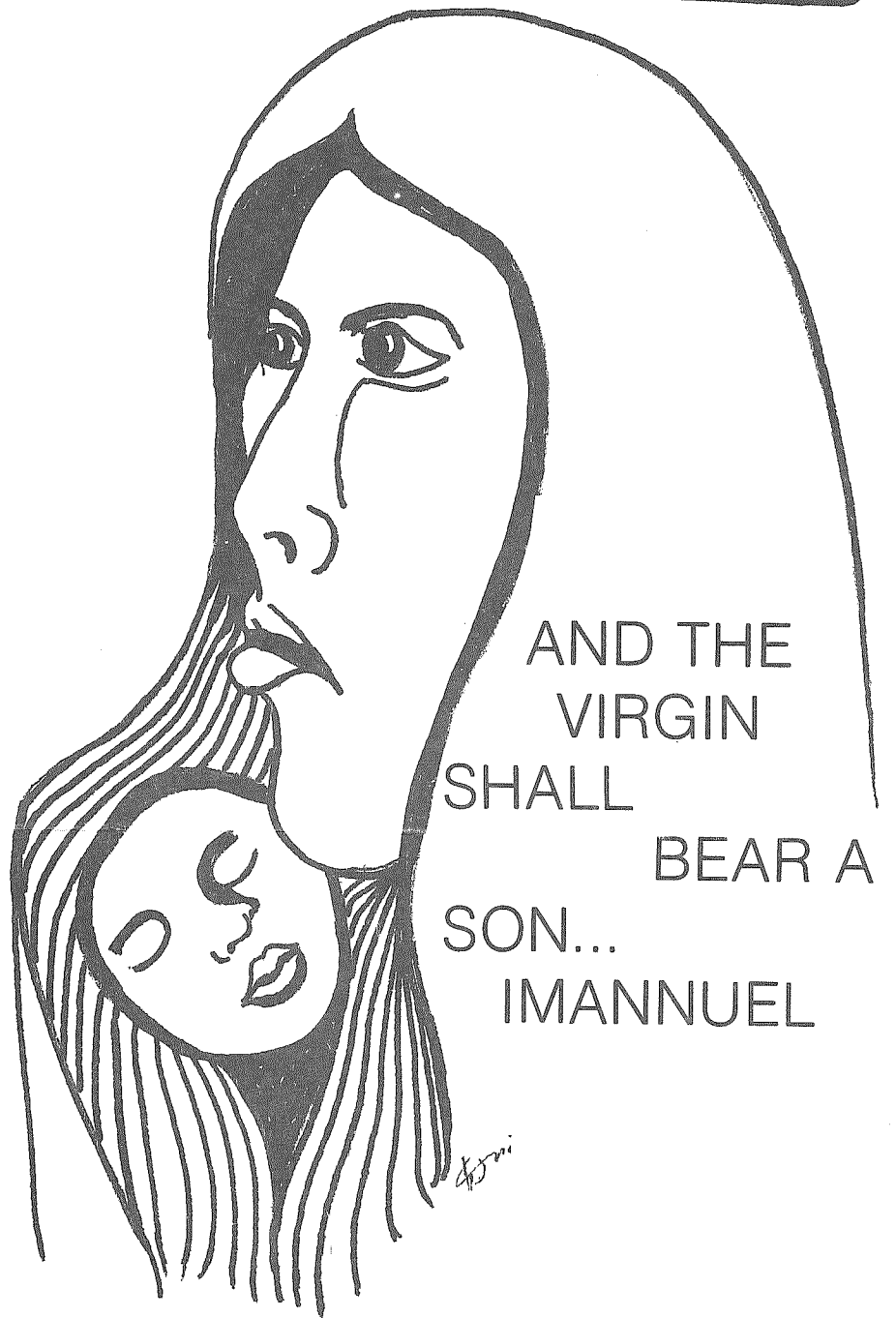
That the Messiah in the Person of Christ promised to the ancient Jews was not a mere man, but God Himself, is evident from the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Psalms of David the King. Micheas the Prophet not only predicts the place of His birth, but also His eternal generation: "His going forth from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. 5:2). Isaias the Prophet calls Him "Emmanuel" - "God with us".

Psalm 109 also bears testimony to the divinity of the Messiah: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109:4). St. Paul Apostle, in His Epistle to the Hebrews, applies this text to the Messiah.

There are some who, though claiming to be Christians, deny that Christ is God; they do not want to find in the writings of the New Testament any mention made of the divinity of Our Lord, nor do they pay any attention to the miracles of Christ, which can be performed just by God alone! But the testimony of St. John the Apostle is more explicit: "In the beginning was the word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Christ, answering the question put to Him by the Jews, "Who art Thou?" said: "Before Abraham was made, I am" (John 8:58). He therefore attributes to Himself the ineffable name of God, and thus was He understood by the Jews, who, on this assertion, immediately set about stoning Him. And additionally we can repeat the words of Christ: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30); Christ makes Himself equal to the God the Father, and this truth He emphasized very strongly by saying: "He who sees me, sees Him Who sent me" (John 12:45).

It is worthy of remark that the four Evangelists, and all other writers of the New Testament, strongly insist on giving to Christ the title of "Son of God", because in it is really embodied the doctrine of His divinity. At the same time, it points out the distinction of persons and distinction Christ's divinity from His humanity.



HOW ARE VALUES CREATED?

by Cleric Daniel Holgate

If values are not only objective but absolute, then they must be given to us, discovered by us, but cannot have their origin in us. In that case, the question is legitimate: What has created them?

The notion has been attacked: One's responsibility to life. Paralleled is the idea of transcendence with one's relationship to one's Creator. There is room in comparing the notions of responsibility, values, will to meaning, and the meaning of suffering with Christian thought.

There is a spirit in man which is implicit throughout his works, a spirit which is explicit in his everyday life, that breathes love for humanity.

Of course values have not become on their own. Like all laws, there is a creator. However, the creator of values may be yourself. It is permissible to say you have been influenced by the environment you live in. If you feel controlled by comments made by others, you are influenced.

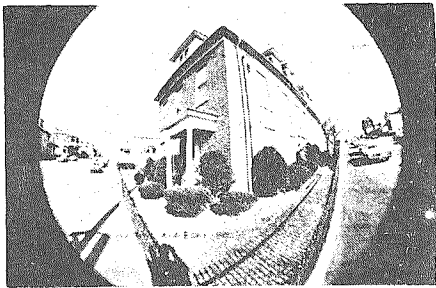
Values and morals have existed since the beginning. As soon as a law is set it receives value. Otherwise, there is no

sense in having the law.

Certainly values are important. You have been given a life. And more or less you are told: Do something with your life. As you look around you find certain actions and beliefs have different meanings. Struggling, you try to do all that will be accepted. Why? Because actions and beliefs have an importance that give them value. This importance is whether it is right or wrong: good or bad.

The values you have, accepted by the majority, you will find have existed since the early days. These values, morals, have directly been set by the divine providence of God. We therefore find that value is placed on the actions and beliefs as a price tag on a material object. In like manner our life is valued. All that we do, all that we say, and all that we think, has value.

The higher the value, the more perfect the owner. Bring yourself to the full height of perfect values and morals to live as an example of a true disciple of Christ Jesus.



SAVONAROLA SEMINARY
THEOLOGICAL

EDITORIAL

A Christmas Prayer

“...Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord.”

Lk. 2:10 (Jersualem Bible)

Thus was the arrival of mankind's re-generation proclaimed. God assumed mortal flesh that man could achieve immortality. A king's birth was hailed; and not to emperors, or kings, or sages, but to lowly shepherds. The shepherds sought out Christ. Finding Him in a stable, over-come by the magnitude of God's presence. Then having experienced His divinity, "the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God...!"

A question is sometimes asked, "How must those shepherds have felt?" Any question to this is vague at best. However a strong parallel exists between the shepherds' story and the call to the priesthood. A man receives a call from God to come and grow in the reality of Christ's life and resurrection. He leaves his temporal duties to spend a period of time in God's presence, studying and increasing in the knowledge of God. And when the time comes, the man is filled with the Holy Spirit and the grace of the priesthood. This man then returns as a shepherd of souls, glorifying and praising God.

How fitting then, that the Church recognizes the importance of that moment through the Feast of the Poor Shepherds, celebrated the first Sunday after Christ-

mas. In keeping with this theme the Church also designates a special offering be taken up for the support and improvement of our seminary; the place where a man studies for the holy priesthood.

Once again, we of the seminary appeal to our readership to give generously. In this we ask not only for financial support, but more importantly, for your prayers; for the students, faculty, and staff of our seminary, that God may bless us with strength, wisdom, and a determined will to proclaim "the Good News!" We ask you to pray for the priesthood; that it may, in these times of great need, increase.

The need for priests is great. Our clerical ranks are understaffed and over-worked. Yet ask any priest in the Church and he'll tell you that there's no job in the world that could satisfy him more. A priest's work is not a job, or a role, it is a life; a life of LOVE. True Christian love drives a priest and will sustain him. "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:30)

This Christmas then, when you are in church, or with your families enjoying the Christmas Eve meal at home, or when you are spending some quiet moments with God alone; please remember in your prayers our seminary and priesthood.. that they both may increase. For myself and the staff of the Student Press may I wish all of our readership a most blessed and joyful Christmas. Peace be with you all.

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STAFF CHANGES

by Cleric Joseph Soltysiak

With departures and arrivals of Seminary Students, changes in **THE STUDENT PRESS** staff has come about. These include election of a new editor-in-chief, Cleric Paul Sobiechowski. Accepting the position of layout manager was Cleric Joseph Soltysiak.

First year student Raymond Drada now has the job of subscription manager, while Cleric Daniel Holgate became the new staff artist. Retaining his position as treasurer was Cleric Stanley Bilinski.

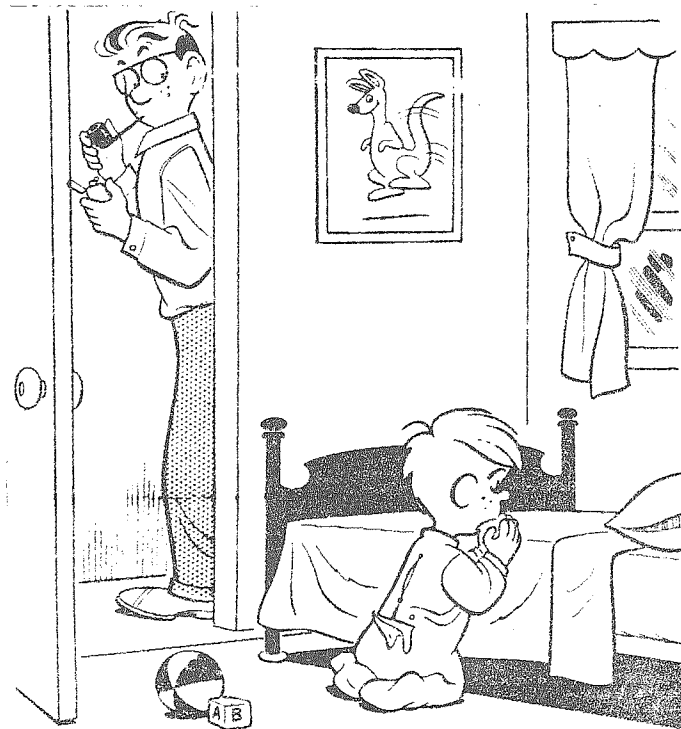
The student body feels the new staff changes will insure quality editions. With the Seminary faculty now submitting articles, a wider range of topics should be looked forward to in upcoming issues.

KISSING UNDER MISTLETOE

The word "mistletoe" derives from the Anglo-Saxon word "mistletan." It is a parasitic plant which grows on evergreen trees, with small yellowish-green leaves, yellowish flowers and waxy white, poisonous berries.

Under a sprig of mistletoe men are privileged to kiss any women standing under it. The man is supposed to first remove one of the berries and present it to the woman. When all the berries are gone, the kissing game is over. It is thought this custom comes from an early pagan marriage rite.

Mistletoe was considered sacred by the Druids in ancient Britain and they performed elaborate ceremonies around it at the winter solstice. Because of these pagan associations, it is seldom used in church decorations.



"DEAR LORD. SAME THING AS LAST NIGHT. AMEN."

"OH, GOD!"

by Cleric Stanley Bilinski

In a way of challenging our moral fiber, Hollywood film producers have done little to do so. In a refreshing change, Carl Reiner's newest offering, "Oh, God!", is just that. Not to put on it any redeeming religious import, the movie, none the less, has a definite meaning to the Christian world today. As pure entertainment, the movie provides some theological food for thought.

God, portrayed by George Burns, has as his message, "I've given you everything you need," and "What you have can work." His messenger for whom he chooses to spread this message is an agnostic assistant supermarket manager. The main point to bring out here is that it would be as easy for any of us to have been chosen to be his messenger. As 'God' states in the movie, "I chose you just as if you were the millionth person to walk across the bridge to shake hands with the governor."

Before continuing, it should be noted that the producers and writers of the movie were very careful in developing their 'ideology' of God. It is not in any way offensive to any religious persuasion.

As the messenger that had been chosen, (John Denver) sets out to tell the world that God is alive and well, and 'he

cares.' Denver is ridiculed and laughed at. He is slandered in the newspapers and on television. His family rejects him and he is in jeopardy of losing his job. The main point in his screening by society comes when he is asked to appear before a community ministerium. After allegations were made and verbal insults thrown at him, the messenger was given a list of fifty questions the answers to which only God could know. Jerry (Denver) was locked into a hotel room where he would have to answer the questions, which were written in the ancient tongue of Aramaic (Hebrew). The questions ranged from the problem with Adam and Eve to "was Jesus your son?" to "Will there be a judgement day?" 'God' visited Jerry in the room and answered the questions, remarking at the end, "I hope I get an A."

As the messenger, Jerry is physically abused, slandered, and finally brought to trial. The only witness he can produce is God himself. As God speaks in the court, his testimony is tape recorded. However, in reviewing the tape it is found to be blank. Even the court stenographer's record is blank. As 'God' departs from the courtroom, his final statement is: 'Have faith, it could change the times - Do not hurt each other - It can work - And more importantly, I believe in you.' In our time of personal preparation in this season of Advent, are not these statements worthy of more than just entertainment?

Happy Holiday

4 ŚWIĄTECZNO NOWOROCZNE TRADYCJE I OBYCZAJE

by Deacon Chester Kulickowski

Okres świąt Bożego Narodzenia oraz Nowego Roku, zadziwiają nas rozmaitością oraz bogactwem zwyczajów i praktyk obchodzonych w tym właśnie czasie. Motywy prawdziwej chrześcijańskiej wiary spletają się wtedy z elementami nie mającymi nic wspólnego z samą religią i Kościołem. W tym okresie powagi liturgicznej oraz wielkiemu świątecznemu nastrojowi towarzyszy na wskroś świecka radość i uciecha. Adorowanie Jezusowego żłóbka w kościołach i kaplicach łączy się ściśle z kolędnikami oraz cudacznymi przebierańcami, krążącymi po ulicach miast i wsi. Są to więc bardzo odległe zwyczaje przynależące jednak do tej samej pory roku kalendarzowego. Oczywiście tylko znawcy mogą zrozumieć i dostrzec różnicę a także i dwoistość źródła takich obyczajów i tradycji. Chodzi tutaj mianowicie o sam chrześcijaństwo i z drugiej strony o pogaństwo. Przenikanie oraz powiązanie starej obrzędowości z nową tłumaczy pewną zbieżność dorocznych chrześcijańskich uroczystości z pogańskimi obrzędami.

Ludowy obyczaj chodzenia z "Królem Herodem" już przez sam wyraz Herod niewątpliwie powiązany jest z teatralną formą religijnych widowisk kościelnych, bardzo często odgrywanych w kościołach w tym okresie.

Harce oraz tańce przebierańców na ulicach to już typowy i charakterystyczny obrzęd pogański - związany z pożegnaniem starego roku oraz powitaniem nowego, nadchodzącego roku. Przebierańcy, głównie zaś młodzież, ubrana w różnokolorowe stroje oraz fantastyczne maski; diabły, turonie, anioły i niedźwiedzie to całe korowody przetaczające się przez ulice miast i wsi. Takich przebierańców spotkać można w Polsce tylko raz w roku, między św. Szczepana a świętem Trzech Króli. Tradycja tych korowodów wywodzi się z Podhala, gdzie były one bardzo popularne. Jednak wraz z upływem czasu obyczaj ten zaczął powoli zanikać, zaś same korowody stały się bardzo popularne w miastach.

Chodzenie z "Ziarnem" od chaty do chaty, od wioski do wioski, to obyczaj, który na trwałe zrosł się z pejzażem starej polskiej wsi. Zwyczaj ten, szczególnie popularny we wschodnich terenach kraju, stanowi bardzo długą historię. Sąsiedzi, czy też członkowie rodzin odwiedzali się w pierwszy dzień Nowego Roku, aby w imię nowonarodzonego Zbawiciela świata, przekazać sobie jak najlepsze życzenia, posypując w tym czasie podłogę ziarnem, które symbolizować miało dobrobyt i dostatek oraz dobry urodzaj w nadchodzącym nowym roku. Godne jest podkreślenia również, iż w tym dniu w kościołach posypywano podłogi za pomyślność i szczęście w zbliżającym się nowym roku kalendarzowym.

Nieco egzotycznym i nieznanym dla mieszkańców miast są wizyty "Kolędników". Tradycja ta posiada długowiekową historię. Młodzi chłopcy, z miniaturami lub modelami stajenki z Betlejem, oraz instrumentami muzycznymi, odwiedzali domy, odgrywając małe przedstawienia związane z narodzinami Jezusa Chrystusa; śpiewając przy tym kolędy, oraz grając na instrumentach.

"Chodzenie z Gwiazdą" to kolejna tradycja i wschodni, polski obyczaj. Dwóch chłopców wraz ze zrobioną przez siebie betlejemską gwiazdą, obchodziło domostwa śpiewając kolędy, nie wchodząc jednak do domów. Wszystko to

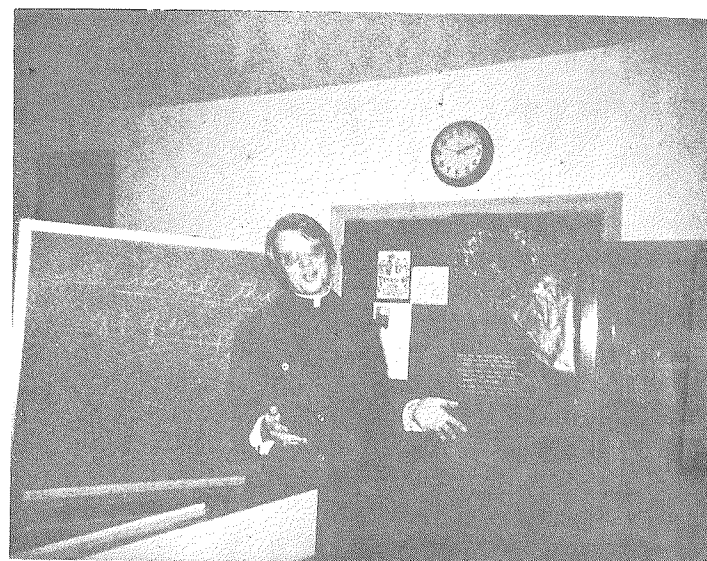
odbywało się wieczorem przy pięknie, oświetlonej gwieździe oraz dziecięcym śpiewie kolęd.

"Przedstawienia Jasełkowe", były stałą pozycją w porgramie oraz działalności kół dla ministrantów. W obecności licznie zebranych wiernych, najczęściej zaś w kościołach odbywały się te przedstawienia, w których pokazywano kolejne sceny z narodzin Zbawiciela i Odkupiciela świata, a także przybycia Mędrców ze Wschodu oraz pasterzy z pokłonem.

Typowe rozrywkową, oraz kiedyś wyłącznie szlachecką swawolą były staropolskie kuligi. I ta tradycja ma długą i bogatą historię. Już w XVII wieku, uprawiona tę zimową zabawę. Szlachcice oraz panowie wraz ze swoimi najbliższymi, odwiedzali swoich znajomych pośród rozrzuconych wiejskich dworów. Z czasem zwyczaj ten rozprzestrzenił się również i w miastach, a szczególnie szybko w stolicy Rzeczypospolitej, we Warszawie. Całe orszaki sań, zaprzężone w bogato zdobione konie udekorowane tygrysami i lamparcimi skórami, z dzwonkami czyli janczarami dodawały szczególnego uroku tej zabawie. Najwspanialszy kulig odbył się w roku 1755, kiedy to ulicami stolicy, przejechał orszak składający się z 248 bogato strojnych i zdobionych sań.

Corocznym i jednym z najbardziej ulubionych zajęć myśliwych, były polowania na grubego zwierza. Całe grupy myśliwych, wraz z naganiaczami oraz hordami myśliwskich psów, wyruszały w ciemne i głębokie bory w poszukiwaniu turów, niedźwiedzi i rysiów. Każde łowy zakończano przy ognisku, gdzie spożywano świeże kęsy upolowanych zwierząt przy obfitym napitku.

Jak więc widzimy, okres świąt Bożego Narodzenia oraz Nowego Roku, to czas szczególnie; gdzie elementy wiary chrześcijańskiej ściśle powiązane są z ludowymi, a często też i pogańskimi tradycjami i obyczajami.



Rev. Nowicki explains a point of Clerical Ethics.

Thoughts on Pastoral Theology

by Raymond Drada

"My efforts at the Seminary are directed at presenting to the students a realistic overview of the pastoral role in the Polish National Catholic Church, and equipping them with some of the resources necessary to effectively function as Christ's priest in that role".

These are the words of Rev. Bernard Nowicki, the new instructor of pastoral theology at Savonarola Seminary.

Pastoral theology began with the establishment of the church when Christ gave pastoral instructions to His disciples.

As teacher the pastor must instruct the faithful in the truths of revelation and Christian doctrine. A large section of pastoral theology is concerned with outlining the duties of the priest as the minister of the Eucharist. Another part of pastoral theology deals with the administration of the Sacrament of Penance. The pastor, as administrator, faces a variety of situations that increase with the growing complexity of modern life.

Fr. Nowicki was ordained Oct. 14, 1967. His first assignment was at Sacred Heart Church, Homestead, Pa. While at Homestead he studied at Pittsburgh University, receiving a bachelor's degree in psychology. When Father Nowicki was at Homestead, the parish was the first P.N.C. Church to try the "choral mass", now known as the "renewed liturgy".

After Homestead he was assigned to Canonsburg, Pa. There Father Nowicki started an adult School of Christian Living Class.

In July of this year Father Nowicki was transferred to Heart of Jesus Church, Bayonne, N.J. which will be observing its 75th anniversary.

Father Nowicki has served or is serving on the following church commissions and organizations: chaplain of youth, Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese; chaplain of Pittsburgh Circle Choir, Liturgical Commission, Chaplain, N.Y.-N.J. United Choirs and Liturgical Commission, Central Diocese.

Father Nowicki teaches pastoral theology with effectiveness. His way of teaching is informal. His communication with the students is good, relating to their needs.

RED HOLLY BERRIES

A legend relates that on the first Christmas night, when the shepherds went to the manger, a little lamb following them was caught by the holly thorns, and the red berries are the drops of its blood that froze on the branches.

Important Notice

This newsletter, published by seminarians of the Polish National Catholic Church, is an independent, self-sustaining endeavor which exists solely through paid subscriptions.

The Student Press Staff is proud to announce it has an ever-increasing subscribers' list. The cost of publishing, however, constantly is increasing as well.

Therefore we find it necessary to remind our readers we need your subscriptions during the new year to keep our independent and informative publication alive. The fact that so many have subscribed to date is indicative there is a true need for this newsletter within the Church.

If you are a new subscriber or wish to renew your subscription, you may use the convenient ordering form found in this newsletter. The students of Savonarola Seminary, who donate their free time to make this publication a reality, thank you in advance for your interest.



NATIVITY GROUP, Mary and Joseph attributed to Salvatore di Franco; Baby Jesus to Giuseppe Sammartino. Polychromed terracotta, wood, fabric, tow and wire, silver-gilt, straw and cork. Height of Joseph, 15". Italian (Neapolitan) 2nd half of 18th century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Loretta H. Howard.

by Cleric Joseph Soltysiak

A problem that many people encounter in religious debate is holding a stand on their belief in God. Refutations often outweigh the believer's stand simply because of their lack of familiarity with the subject.

Here are two arguments for the existence of God that will better prepare the believers and open new avenues of thought. These two arguments include the cosmological argument, or Argument from a First Cause, which deals with the existence of a being outside creation, as well as inside it. The teleological argument, or Argument from Design, deals with a divine Creator and Designer of the universe.

Let us first deal with the Cosmological Argument. A concept almost all accept is that every effect must have a cause. The cause of the painting is the artist, making the painting an effect of the artist. The cause of this article is the writer, making the article an effect of the cause, and so on. The whole universe, which is certainly an effect, must have had a cause. Scientists have brought the origin of the universe all the way back to a cloud of cosmic dust, but present scientific data fails to give further explanations. Since the cause-effect is scientifically accepted, a cause for this cloud of dust must exist. But, in dealing with solid scientific facts, an answer for this will be improbable in attaining. Presently, many scientists rule this a scientific inexplicability, but others contend that a force we know as God was responsible.

God should not only be thought of as the First Cause, but the Only Cause. He is indirectly the First Cause for what we and other rational beings do, because through Him we are rational. He is indirectly the cause for everything else that happens. God must be self-existent and self-determined, because the One who is the cause of everything must be Himself uncaused. He must be personal and not impersonal, because He is the cause of personality. If He were impersonal, He could not be the cause at all.

If the universe exists in an orderly fashion, such as planets revolving around the sun, causes for this must link back to One who is Infinite and keeps this order. This Cause must be outside the universe, to watch it and maintain a stability in order. Though scientists cannot physically fathom outside the universe, many believe that God is the Cause of order. If we speak on God outside the universe, we speak of One who cannot be limited by anything except His own nature.

Another argument for the existence of God is the Teleological Argument, or Argument from Design. There are many ways in which the universe is connected is taking a certain direction. Elements that are found in the earth can also be found in the sun and stars. By this alone, one is able to perceive a unity of sorts in the universe. This could be attributed to a Designer, who designed the vast whole.

The universe, such a vast and ever growing system, could not have come into existence without Someone to design it. The same is true with the analogy that a painting could not be one without the painter; it could not come together by just a mass of colors being thrown together either. The designer of the painting was the artist, working carefully to develop the painting into a beautiful work. The amazing beauty that nature displays leads us to believe that the designer was no ordinary artist, but the greatest engineer

artist of all time. The way that gravity itself works shows this faultless engineering. A stalk of grain, when carefully observed, has re-enforcing joints along its stem for extra support against the wind; the Designing Engineer's plan for this is clearly seen. Man himself has taken this natural phenomena and developed it in mechanical engineering. The beautiful rose with its sharp thorns protects itself, but the rose itself does not know it has thorns. An Intellectual Designer allowed for the thorns thus protecting the rose.

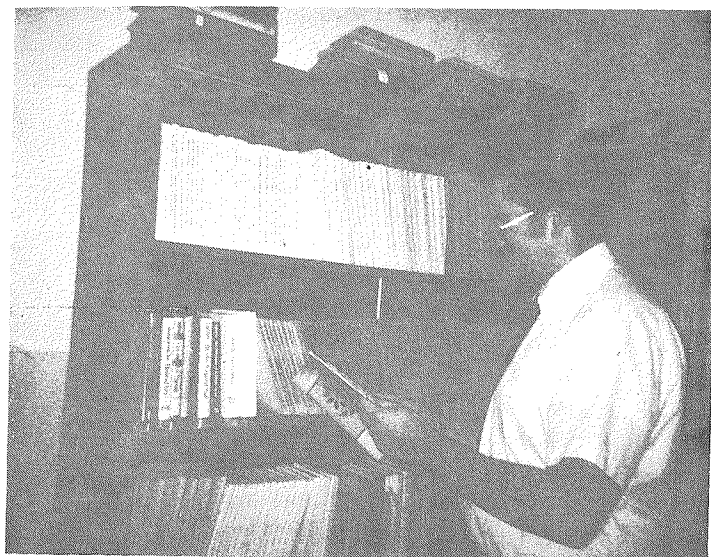
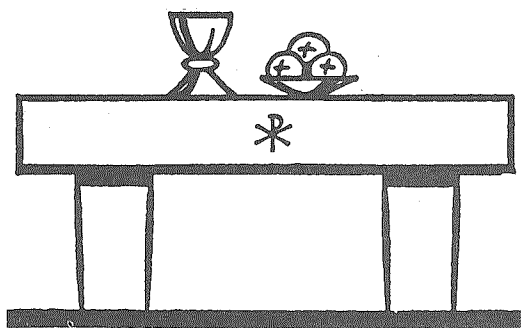
In the animal kingdom, the common bat has the gift of radar. The Designer's plans for bats to have radar preceded man's discovery of it for millions of years. By adaptation to environmental conditions, creatures in the animal kingdom have been suited themselves. The camel can exist in a dry climate with little or no water for extended periods of time, due to their gift of an extra stomach which serves as a water pouch. Other trademarks of the Designer include man's gift of a thumb, enabling him to advance architecturally and create dwellings surpassing that of any other creatures.

The Teleological Argument is probably the easier of these two arguments to comprehend. It shows a Designer of the universe using wisdom to create beauty. If nature is so beautiful, imagine how much more beautiful its Creator!

These arguments for the existence of God may not totally convince non-believers, but since they are well formed they will be impressive with thoughtful people. To the believers, these arguments will strengthen and enrich their faith in God, as well as help them considerably in their religious augmentation.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

According to legend a little shepherd girl from Bethlehem followed the shepherds on their way to the manger. All the shepherds had gifts for Jesus but the little girl had none. She felt very sad and unworthy about this and hung back from the others. Just before they reached the stable, an angel appeared in a blaze of light and scattered lovely white roses before the little girl. So she gathered them up and laid them before the manger.



Student Raymond Drada examining the recently donated library volumes.

SANTA CLAUS vs. JESUS CHRIST

by Cleric Daniel Holgate

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Immanuel..."

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people..."

It's just around the corner! The houses are so beautiful this time of the year! Santa Claus is coming to town. SAVE MONEY! Do your Christmas shopping at our store. Bring your child to visit with Santa--and have a picture taken, too.

Between Santa Claus and presents, parties and dinners, evergreen trees and sparkling eyes, does anyone stop these days to remember what Christmas really means? Or are we in too much of a hurry buying gifts?

Truly it is better to give than to receive. However, this year let us give more to God than we have been. This is suppose to be the warmest time of the year. Love seems to be in over abundance. Material gifts mean little in comparison to the gifts of God. Our love, courteous behavior, compassion and help is of greater meaning to your loved ones. How many times have you heard: "It's the thought that counts."

In the middle of all the bustling through the streets let's stop and thank God for His most important gift; Jesus Christ.

The beauty of Christmas and the true meaning is being lost. With all the commercialization of this great celebration, it is no wonder many forget what we are celebrating.

Do you tell your child Jesus is coming or Santa is coming? Asking a child what the meaning of Christmas was for him; he said, "Christmas is when my family decorates the tree and we have a big dinner, then open the presents Santa brought." There is really nothing wrong with this child's version of Christmas. But when asking his mother she said, "It is when I do a lot of shopping, even more than my budget can handle. I prepare a nice meal for my family and hope that I can get some time for myself." The most important gift to this lady is that she would have some time to do as she pleases. Surely this is a love filled gift that her family could give to her.

by Cleric Joseph Soltysiak

The Seminary welcomed a generous supply of theological journals donated by Mr. Peter Bakarich, a law student in Clifton, New Jersey. Rev. Jonathan Trela, Seminary instructor, delivered the 15 cartons of these journals and arranged them in the Seminary library. The books are intended to build and enrich the student library with more current theological material, pertaining to the religious world of today. The Seminary thanks Mr. Bakarich for his donation, and Rev. Trela for bringing the books.

The Seminary also is moving to acquire a video tape recorder to aid in the educational process. Liturgical functions would be filmed and used in assisting the students with practical needs. Historical church events could also be filmed and preserved for future reference. A drive has started but funds are lacking.

Does this sound like anyone you know? Where did Jesus come in? All the stores are making twice the profit of any other time of the year. Is this telling you something? It seems that the time people feel like giving the most is around Christmas: why?

Somewhere along through the years we have lost the true meaning of Christmas. For the most part the emphasis is placed on the secular aspects.

With the chain department stores throwing sales pitches that only ask you to spend money, we have another alternative. This year give eternal gifts, gifts which last forever, love which shines on throughout the whole year. Help your neighbor, give comfort to the afflicted, your gift will be deeply appreciated when your gift is yourself.

Consider this: It is a sign in a store window, entitled THE VALUE OF A SMILE AT CHRISTMAS.

It costs nothing, but creates much. It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich they can get along without it, and one so poor but are richer for its benefits.

It creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in a business, and is the countersign of friends.

It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and Nature's best antidote for trouble.

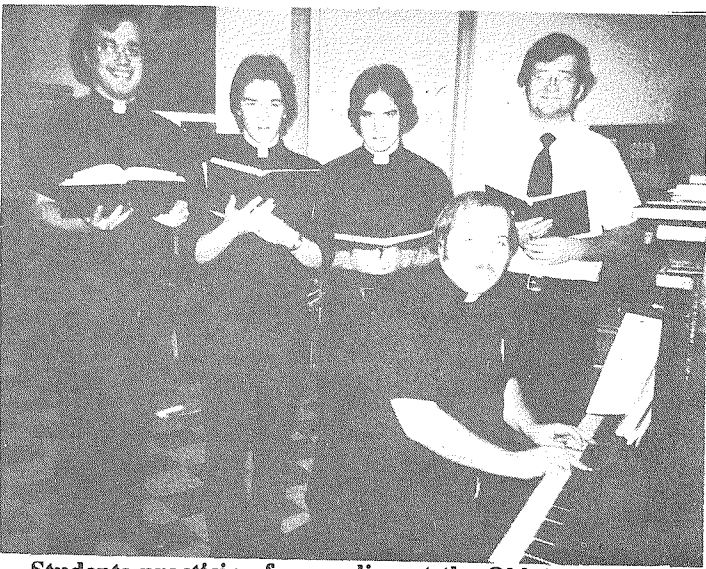
Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is no earthly good to anybody till it is given away!

And if in the last-minute rush of Christmas buying some of our salespeople should be too tired to give you a smile, may we ask you to leave one of yours?

For nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none left to give!

SHEAF OF GRAIN - A SCANDINAVIAN CUSTOM

Scandinavian farmers traditionally practice the custom of attaching a sheaf of grain to a pole and placing it out in the snow as a Christmas feast for birds, often with suet added as an extra treat. It is said that no peasant would sit down to Christmas dinner until the birds had been provided for.



Students practicing for caroling at the Old Age Home.

Seminary Yule Activities

by Cleric Joseph Soltysiak

A Wigilia supper and caroling will be part of the Seminarian's activities during the Christmas season.

Savonarola's second annual Wigilia supper will be held on December 19 at 6:30 P.M. in the Seminary dining hall. Invited guests include Prime Bishop Thaddeus Zielinski, and members of the faculty along with their wives. The traditional Wigilia will include a program of Christmas readings and hymns presented by the Seminarians. Preceding the Wigilia will be a social hour for members of the

faculty. The successful 1976 Wigilia was highly acclaimed by invited guests, and the student body looks forward to this second annual event. Approximately 35 people are expected to attend.

Another holiday-related event will be Christmas caroling at Spojnia Home for the Aged. Residents at the Home warmly appreciated the Seminarians' participation last year. A program of hymns and religious readings will be presented, directed by Cleric Stanley Bilinski.



Students Decorating Tree

Old Testament Canon Development

by Cleric Paul Sobiechowski

The Bible is the best known, most widely read, most referred to book in the world. It has been a source of inspiration for Christians and non-Christians alike... The Old Testament in particular is revered as Holy Scripture by three of the world's largest religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism. How many of us know either how such a prominent work came to be, or what form of the Old Testament is accepted by the Polish National Catholic Church?

The set of books making up the Old Testament is referred to as its Canon. Presently Jews and Protestants recognize 39 books as Old Testament Canon, whereas Orthodox, Roman, and Old Catholics (of which the PNCC is a part) recognize 46. This difference has its origins in the early centuries of the Christian era.

By the end of the second century A.D. the canon of the Old Testament had become fixed, but in two forms. One canon was that which is attributed to the, so called, Jamnian council. The other canon was composed by 70 rabbis in Alexandria and hence its name, the Septuagint, which in Greek means seventy. The Septuagint is more liberal than the Palestinian canon because it includes the seven books which scholars now designate Deuterocanonical.

The Deuterocanonical books; 1 and 2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom, and portions of Daniel and Esther, were not as quickly accepted as the remaining 39 of the canon. There were questions raised as to their divine authority. However, the Catholic Church finally did accept the books as canonical. Following in the Catholic tradition the PNCC too, accepts these works as canonical.

The Septuagint became standard for the Catholic Church. Judaism grew to accept the Palestinian version. The Protestant churches, in response to the lax attitude of the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation, moved toward a conservatism which included shortening the Old Testament canon, removing the Deuterocanonical books in favor of the more conservative Palestinian version.

The Protestant Church then labeled the Deuterocanonical books as Apocryphal. Apocryphal works are defined in the 1977 Catholic Almanac as "...books which have some resemblance to the canonical books in subject matter and title, but which have not been recognized as canonical by the church." (i.e. not having divine authority...)

The word "canon" comes from the Greek and means something straight and upright. When used in regards to the Old Testament it designates these books as holding absolute truth in matters of faith, that the whole revealed Word of God essential to faith is contained therein. The Jewish Mishna refers to the scriptures as "sacred writings." It also uses the concept of "defiling the hands" when referring to books that would be of canonical status. It is reasoned by scholars that "defiling the hands" refers to a ritual washing that may have occurred following handling of these books. This prevented the sacredness of their impression on one's hands from being desecrated by something worldly.

Scholars are uncertain as to what factors were involved in determining whether a book would be given canonical status or not. The very fact there exist sacred writings from the same time periods, that were not considered canon-

ical, does attest some means of determination being used. In this regard Bibli-cists have found certain qualities common to all books regarded canonical and these may have, in part, determined canonicity.

Books presently accepted as canonical were (1) accepted as having divine authority and used as norms for the religious life of the Jewish community, (2) fixed in number, (3) originated from an expressly limited time period, (4) regarded as unaltered and unalterable in transmission from their beginning.

The books of the Old Testament Canon are separated into three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and the Other Writings. The Law refers to the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Old Testament. Their writing was directly attributed to Moses. Recent Biblical exegesis has found this not to be the case however. Now they are determined to be compilations of two different Hebrew traditions, the book of Deuteronomy found in the temple in 621 B.C., and an editing priestly strain which was apparently added last. The discovery of Deuteronomy is mentioned in the Bible in 2 Kings, chapter 22. Research has determined these books to be accepted as normative around the middle of the fifth century B.C.

The second section, or Prophets is composed of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets. These all came to be accepted as normative in a complicated process. It is unknown whether collectively they were at once accepted as normative of faith. In Deuteronomy 18:22 we find a point of determination, as to a work's prophetic nature; "...when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him."

Apparently the prophetic writings were all accepted as authoritative at least a generation before the book of Daniel was written, or around the beginning of the second century B.C. A letter confirming this was written around the mid second century B.C. It is produced in 2 Maccabees 1:10 - 2:18. It concerns the establishment of a library, containing among other things prophetic writings. This library is attributed to Nehemiah.

The third group, other writings, is composed of all the remaining books of the Old Testament Canon. Daniel and Maccabees, mentioned above, are included in this group. These books were generally accepted as normative of faith by around 100 A.D.

Whether they were especially designated as canonical by that time is still unclear. Circumstances do indicate that a need for discussing a canon was present around the end of the first century A.D. First, the dispersion of the Hebrew nation from Israel had already become fact for a few centuries. This separation from the temple necessitated Judaism becoming a "book religion." In 70 A.D. the temple was destroyed leaving the Jewish people with only their writings. Finally, the rise of Christianity necessitated the designating of certain "canonical writings" to delineate the Hebrew faith from the influx of Christian writing and teaching.

Many scholars feel that the issue of canonicity was resolved completely at a rabbinical council held in Jamnia, Palestine, in the year 100 A.D. This assumption however does not take into account the canon of the Septuagint. Further, there is no certain evidence that a list of books was drawn up at Jamnia, nor that there was convened any council. Actually Jamnia was a rabbinical school for studying the Law. Thus the question of when canonical status was definitely attributed the books, still remains unsolved.

VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN TROUBLED LIVES

Kindness is the overflowing of love
Into the lives of others

by Deacon Joseph Victor

(Editor's Note: The author has worked in the Corrections field for 13 years. He is a faculty member in the Criminal Justice Department, William Paterson College, Wayne, New Jersey)

More than a quarter million of them, in fact, are giving the most precious gift which anyone can give to a fellow being... the gift of caring and sharing.

They are a new kind of volunteer... serving as probation aides on a one-to-one basis in thousands of courts throughout the nation. They work with professionals, helping to produce attitude changes and self-understanding in those persons who are rejected and hurt and who frequently strike out angrily against society.

More than 300,000 of these very important people, many of whom are Christians, are at work in 2,000 court-related programs and similar volunteer efforts in thousands of communities helping to redirect the lives of young people. They are all VIP's ... Volunteers in Probation. Who are these volunteers? They are concerned citizens involved in a positive crime prevention effort -- housewives, businessmen, teachers, clergymen, secretaries, factory workers, senior citizens and students -- all serving as volunteer probation aides. In most instances, they are responsible for a single case. This arrangement permits them to respond in times of crisis, to offer moral support when it is needed and to give individual attention which probation officers with large caseloads are unable to provide.

The volunteers include:

--an Indiana Protestant minister who made a midnight visit to the police station to assist an 18-year-old youth who had been arrested for drinking beer while on probation.

--a Denver housewife who stood by a 20-year-old reformed prostitute in court who had stabbed a drunk in self-defense.

--A Massachusetts priest who found a new home for a run-away high school boy who had stolen food from a store.

--a Michigan businessman who won the confidence of a hostile teenager arrested four times in seven months ... and helped the youth to develop self-confidence and return to school on a full-time basis.

--a mother of two young children responsible for rehabilitating a cynical young woman who had been on probation when arrested for drunken driving.

--a busy New Jersey mother and full-time secretary who helped a run-away boy charged with stealing.

These men and women and thousands like them have one thing in common.



They care enough to help young people in trouble. At little cost to the public, they provide the machinery and the personal attention needed to prevent youths from drifting into a life of crime.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Volunteers in Probation (originally known as Project Misdemeanant) got its start in the court of Municipal Judge Keith J. Leenhouts in Royal Oak, Michigan in 1959. Frustrated by the lack of facilities for providing guidance and hope to young offenders, he invited a group of friends to consider how the problem could be resolved.

A plan evolved for a program in which the judge could put young misdemeanants on probation for as long as two years. During this period, they would be brought into regular, close contact with qualified specialists and sponsors before the offenders could drift into criminal habits. Unlike other probation programs that rely exclusively on professionals, private citizens were to be the sponsors -- people without specialized training who would voluntarily devote time, on a continuing basis, often in their own home, to help guide the youthful lawbreakers.

Shortly after its launching, the program was overloaded, and additional sponsors were recruited. Several professionally-trained counselors were employed on a part-time basis to coordinate the work. Retirees volunteered their services as counselors and for secretarial and clerical tasks. Business and fraternal organizations provided facilities and donated operating funds.

Later, important funding was provided by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Board of Social Concerns of the Methodist Church to prove the program's effectiveness and to promote the development of similar programs elsewhere.

Success of the Volunteers in Probation movement can be substantiated by what happened in Royal Oak. There, only 39 out of a total of 357 probationers had violated probation in the first two and a half years. Now, 15 years and several thousand probationers later, this success ratio continues.

In the Royal Oak Program alone, nine thousand hours of volunteer work a year is provided in addition to funds contributed by individuals, organizations and the city government.

Starting with an idea in the judge's chamber in 1959, the Volunteers in Probation movement has expanded to more than 2,000 courts in cities across the nation from Bergenfield, New Jersey to Olympia, Washington.

In 1971, the VIP Program was further strengthened as a result of its merger with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. NCCD is the major non-governmental agency working to prevent and control crime and delinquency by fully utilizing citizen and professional involvement.

Each month more courts join the ranks of those which have programs such as Volunteers in Probation. It is vital, however, that efforts be accelerated so that such innovative programs will be undertaken in all 15,000 misdemeanor and juvenile courts. Expansion of the one-to-one movement is also scheduled in other areas of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement which needs auxiliaries to help with non-dangerous tasks; into parole programs; into halfway houses and into crime prevention programs. Thousands of additional citizen-volunteers will be needed for a wide variety of assignments.

The results achieved by Volunteers in Probation in little more than a decade can be measured in the lives of thousands of young men and women who were encouraged to turn away from crime and to become useful citizens. The savings in human values is incalculable. Taxpayers' dollars saved probably run into the billions.

Crime involving young people continues to increase steadily. It's been proved time after time that most existing programs designed to combat youth crime and delinquent behavior are fragmentary and ineffective.

Thousands of youngsters not even fortunate enough to receive the guidance and concern of overburdened probation officers and other professionals all too often are locked in jails and other institutions so destructive that the young people come out greater threats to society than when they went in.

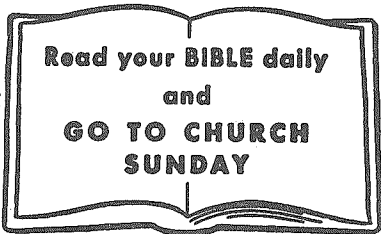
Many delinquents and misdemeanants are at a turning point. With proper help, most can go on to lead useful lives. With no one to turn to, they may become habitual criminals.

Ordinarily, first offenders are fined and jailed for a few days, then released to go out and get into trouble again. For lack of funds, only five percent of misdemeanor courts have professional probation programs to provide the guidance and the sponsorship these youths so desperately need. Where such a program does exist, it is frequently too overburdened to be effective.

fective.

Volunteers in Probation came into being to fill that void.

The support of thousands of additional citizens is needed to prevent troubled children and young people from becoming future criminals. You can help by becoming a member of Volunteers in Probation in your area. For further information, write: Dr. Joseph Victor, VIP Program, Savonarola Theological Seminary.



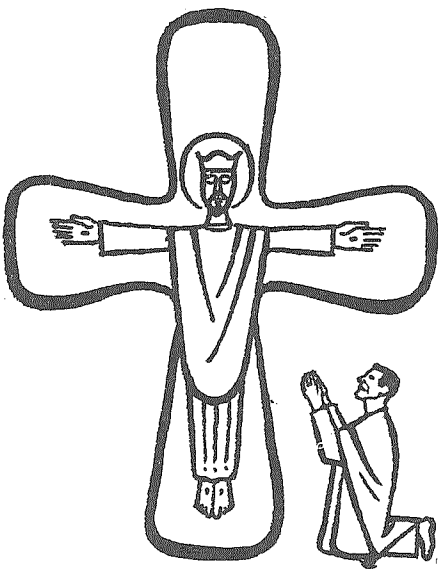
CHRISTMAS TOWNS

There are five towns or villages in the United States that are named "Christmas." They are in Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Christmas, Florida, population about 300, handles an average half-million pieces of mail during the Christmas season. Located in Orlando, it began as a fort that was completed on Christmas 1835.

WELL OF THE WISE MEN

There is a "Well of the Wise Men" on the outskirts of Bethlehem where, according to legend, the three discouraged Magi found their lost star reflected and continued their quest.



CHRISTMAS WIND BREAKERS

Each year, Hundreds of volunteers from several Long Island communities gather discarded Christmas trees in order to implant them in the fragile dunes of Fire Island across the bay, which helps to prevent the sand from being blown off and washed away.

BOXING DAY

In England, Boxing Day, the first weekday after Christmas is so named from the practice of giving boxes of food, gifts and money to tenants, tradesmen, and servants.

To the Editor; Here is a Christmas Cake recipe;

- 1 cup of thanks to God
- 1 cup good thoughts
- 2 cups kind deeds
- 2 cups sacrifice for others
- 3 cups well beaten thoughts (compassion)

Mix thoroughly, add tears of joy, sorrow and sympathy for others. Flavor with little gifts of love and kindly service.

Fold in prayer and faith to lighten other ingredients and raise to texture of great heights of Christian living. Bake well at a high degree of human kindness and serve with a warm smile.

Enjoy every bite.