



Meriting The Blessings A Home For Christ Replica Of Birthplace

By MONSIGNOR HART

Peace To Men Of Good Will

The original text of the song of the angels on Christmas promised glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will.

Men of good will are those whose will is in accordance with God's law. In their activities they wish to bless God for all He has done for them.

Any man that expresses his good will toward God and toward his neighbor is bound to find peace in the blessings that come at Christmas.

God's Home On Earth

It was no palace that opened its doors to greet Jesus at His birth. It was not even a human dwelling place. It was a simple stable in the hills, but it was the choice of Christ for His first dwelling place on earth.

How Christ has multiplied the places in which He will dwell! In Bethlehem and in Nazareth we find Him living in an abode that He had chosen for the Holy Family.

The Road To Bethlehem

We can look back over the years and in spirit behold Joseph and Mary already on the road that leads to Bethlehem. Just how long the journey took we cannot know, but the hours and days just preceding Christmas night found them filled with hope and anticipation.

So today we go with Joseph and Mary with confidence that God will make proper provision for the birth of His Son. Here in the lowliest place that earth could offer, the love of Christ for all men is shown by His choice of a stable for His birthplace.

'Men Of Good Will' - What's Your Rating?

Chicago (NC) - How do you rate in the "men of good will" list? Remember that Christmas angels promised peace on earth to men of good will.

42,684

JOSEPH BREIG

The Dream Of Tom Smith

It was quite the most curious dream that Mr. Smith had ever dreamed.



It seemed to him that he heard one of his children calling. Some how he got his eyes open, and snatched on the light.

His wife already had her feet out of bed. "Never mind, Tom," she said. "You need your rest. I'll go."

For an instant, Tom Smith was tempted. Through his mind flashed the thought of a day at the office tomorrow.

With one hand, he pushed her head gently back to the pillow. With the other, he caught up his bathrobe.

Four-year-old Tommy was the one who was calling. Tom Smith averted his eyes from the bed, and carried him away before he could wake the other youngsters.

Downstairs, the decorations of the Christmas tree shone gently in the dim light in the living room.

Tom Smith carried his son into the kitchen, pressed the light button, and asked, "Thirsty, Tommy?"

The boy shook his head. "I hurt," he said.

Tom Smith felt the little forehead. It was hot. He got the thermometer from a shelf and inserted it carefully into the boy's mouth.

"I hurt," the youngster repeated. He pointed to his head. Then to his stomach.

"Well, fix it," promised his father. He poured medicine from a bottle into a spoon.

Tom Smith carried the boy into the living room, put him in a big chair, and turned on the Christmas tree lights and the crib light.

"That's pretty, Daddy," said Tommy.

His father brought a blanket, wrapped it around him, lifted him, sat down, and held him on his knee.

"Daddy," he said. "Yes, Tommy."

"Tell me about Christmas. About the stable and the star."

Searching for words for a four-year-old mind, Tom Smith began the story that never grows old.

"So YOU SEE," he said, "God loves us. He wants us to live with Him always. So he came to live with us. He showed us how to be good. He told us to love one another, the way He loves us. He told us to do things to make people happy. That's why we give presents on Christmas. Presents help to make people happy. And making people happy makes us happy."

"Can we give Jesus presents?" Tommy asked sleepily.

"We can love Him and try to be like Him. That's what he wants."

"THE REASON Tom Smith is sure that it was all a dream is simple enough. After Tommy at last fell asleep, he carried him upstairs in the gray dawn and tucked him in. Then he went to his own room for forty winks before going to work."

But as he turned off his light and put his head on the pillow, Mr. Smith distinctly heard a voice saying, "Thank you, Thomas. He has never asked his wife whether he really got up and sat with Tommy that night. He is just a tiny bit afraid that she might say yes."

Faith and Fun

By SISTER MARGARET TERESA

(Professor of Literature, Nazareth College, Rochester, N. Y.) ONLY SON, by Walter Farrel, O.P. Sheed & Ward, 1953. Available at Trant's Bookstore.

MAYBE HEAVEN does it often and I just don't happen to know the statistics—but you'll be hearing this Christmas from three men who had very lucky deaths, in that Heaven

He is consistently the "poet-thinker" from the first page to the last. The false dawn, the catastrophic glare, the opiate and sultry glow between wars of the twentieth century pass through the prism of his clean and ordered mind.

"I had spoken in many cities which apparently belonged to an almost exclusively contemporary world. When I visited these countries as a Catholic, I became aware for the first time of a great world behind the superficial scene, a world that belonged to the ages and held the keys to the treasure-house of history."

"I was received into the Church on December 8, 1945, at Mother of Good Counsel Church, My Faith meant so much to me that I determined to show my gratitude to God by seeking to share it with as many as possible."

"That's the thanks offering most pleasing to God," I broke in. "How did you go about your task?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Thompson. "I joined the Legion of Mary. It's the organization most active in winning converts and reclaiming fallen-aways. When I was coming out of a supermarket, the check-out girl tipped me off. 'We have a clerk, Mrs. Fred Miller. She and her family have not been to church for years.'"

"I INVESTIGATED and found that the Millers had had a quarrel with a priest and were showing their resentment by not going to Church. Some of their older children had not even made their First Communion. They didn't realize that they were splitting off themselves."

"It happened that we were having a mission at our church at the time. So I phoned the rectory. The missionary was in the confessional at the time, so I left the message for him to call Mrs. Miller. He did so and then went down to their home, one evening after the services, and showed them what a tragic mistake they were making."

"You see Hilaire Belloc getting back at an offender by pretending he doesn't know the man is within earshot; you see Bishop Barnes, who labeled the Holy Eucharist "divine magic" (the "invisibly ignorant" of Christian doctrine, according to the "gloomy Dean"). Inquiring the name of a priest who guides him in a (real) fog, and receiving the answer, "Oh just the local magician!"

There are gems—and limericks and parodies galore, composed by people you wouldn't think would write them.

But the fun is only comic relief for lasting matter: the Meynells, Swinburne, Hardy, Hugh Walpole (and what an analyst!), H. G. Wells, the Woods, Admiral Jellicoe, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, seen intimately; new light on the conduct of wars and Anglo-American relations; the whole history of Noyes' controversial Vespers, objection which Pope Pius XII calls "nonsensical"; travel in many countries, and surprises about our own California and New England.

Greatest of all values is Noyes himself, the child; the man. It is good that God makes such men steady and true and noble under pressure.

Your Christmas story, new minted out of the Faith and dear and contemporary, the Holy Family and their joys and sorrows, await you in Only Son. The book has been completed in his own words by the adding of two chapters from his Companion.

DO YOU REMEMBER "The Highwayman"? Did you ever hear the glorious presentation of it in cantata form, with Deems Taylor as soloist and a great women's choir giving it a background of living wind and dark and music? Then you know the kernel of the secret of Alfred Noyes: he is that kind of poet, a born poet, a singer of stories not to any esthetic audience but to us all.

His autobiography, Two Worlds for Memory, bears out that trait.

Pope's Support Of UN Based on Catholic Ethics

Mount Morris, Ill. (NC) - Support of the United Nations by His Holiness Pope Pius XII is "solidly founded on Catholic ethics," and not just a "personal whim," according to a close student of the modern Popes and their struggle for peace.

Monsignor Harry C. Koenig, librarian of the Chicago Archdiocese Seminary, holds that at the very beginning of his pontificate — when he promised to give first place in his apostolic ministry to the work for peace — the Holy Father "recognized the absolute necessity of an international organization to achieve a just and lasting peace."

Monsignor Koenig, who edited such books as "Principles of Peace" and "Papal Peace Message," set forth his views in an article in the current issue of the Claretian Missionary Fathers' monthly "Voice of St. John." In the article, Monsignor Koenig recalled that in his Christmas message of 1950, the Pope, in the wake of World War II, had proposed his famous five-point plan for peace. In the third point, the Holy Father noted that "it is of the first importance to erect some juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfillment of the conditions agreed upon and which shall, in case of recognized need, revise and correct them."

"Tracing the Pontiff's repeated endorsements of an international organization," Monsignor Koenig recounted that shortly after the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference which laid the framework for the United Nations, Pope Pius had declared that "no one could halt this development with greater joy." Early in 1947, he described the U.N. as "the fond and holy

You Can Win Converts

In a Supermarket

By Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D.

"I had to grope my way into the Church without much help from Catholics," said Mrs. James Thompson of Mother of Good Counsel parish in Milwaukee.

"Most of the Catholics with whom I was acquainted shied away from talking about their religion. They seemed reluctant to explain it even to persons who were interested in learning about it and not in merely arguing."

"But one very dear friend, who had entered the Notre Dame convent here, was an exception. She taught me how to say the Rosary and loaned me a set of Radio Replies by Rumble and Carly."

"Then I purchased a copy of The Faith of Millions from Our Sunday Visitor (\$2.50) and that showed how the Catholic Church was founded by Christ and empowered to teach in His name. No one can read it with an open mind and a prayerful heart without becoming convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith."

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CHURCH MUSIC

6: Variety In Church Music

By REV. BENEDICT EHMANN

(This series of articles commemorates the golden jubilee of the "Mota Propria" letter on Church music issued by blessed Pope Pius X on Nov. 22, 1903. Author of these articles is the Rev. Benedict Ehmman, nationally known authority on Church Music and pastor of St. Mary of the Lake Church, Watkins Glen, N. Y.)

Perhaps there are some people so devoted to Gregorian Chant that they want nothing else in church. But if there are, I've met few of them. Each man to his taste, of course. The Chant is actually so exquisite and appealing, more even in the singing of it than in listening to it, that I (for one) can sympathize with the person who has no ear for any other kind of church music. And we may not forget what Blessed Pope Pius X said, "that an ecclesiastical function loses none of its solemnity when accompanied by this music alone," and he was speaking of Gregorian Chant.

To be more Catholic than the Church is sometimes to be less Catholic (small 'c' intended). It is possible to ride one's preference so hard that one becomes a fanatic; and the fact that the preference is for something highly recommended by the Church doesn't make the diagnosis any easier. Love for the Chant should not blind anyone to the worth, sometimes even the excellence, of other kinds of church music. It is true, of course, that the Church gives priority of choice to the Gregorian music, but she does not exclude, or even merely tolerate, other legitimate kinds: she welcomes them and even urges their use. The Catholic Church would be the last to maintain that the Chant is the last word in church music.

IN THE 16TH century there flourished in Europe a marvelous development of music. It is known as Classic Polyphony. Its most shining light was an Italian who is familiarly known by the name of his birthplace, Palestrina. But there were other stars to make a constellation at the same time: Victoria in Spain, (a priest and contemporary townsman of St. Teresa of Avila); Orlando de Lasso (in the Netherlands); William Byrd in England. They had such famous contemporaries as Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Raphael and Rubens. It was the age called the Renaissance, and it witnessed a prodigious flowering of the arts almost unparalleled in the history of the world.

The music of that time was called Polyphony, because the word means "many-voiced"; not just in the sense that many voices are singing, but rather that several or many different lines of music are going at once, and all of them harmoniously. It gives magnificent play to the wide range of the human voice, from resonant bass up to brilliant soprano. Its composition was controlled by mathematically precise and sometimes intricate laws, which are assiduously studied to this day in music schools as admirable and perfect models of intelligent composition.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S called "barber-shop harmony." Well, polyphonic harmony is miles away from that. Each part — soprano, alto, tenor, bass — has its own free-flowing line to sing. Its entrances and pauses hardly ever coinciding with those of the others, and yet in its whole progress it is in harmonious agreement with all the other lines. This means, of course, that the words of the text are not being sung at the same time by the different sections of the choir, and therefore cannot be heard as clearly as in unison singing. This was the big reason why many churchmen of the time,

while admiring the unearthly beauty of the music, still raised a protest about its use in church. They considered that the music dominated and submerged the text. Finally the Council of Trent decided the issue in favor of Polyphony.

And wisely so. The great compositions of the polyphonic masters are a most ethereal and wonderful music. Their composers were not only geniuses, but dedicated men devoting their art to God. St. Richard Tovey, a modern music critic, styled Palestrina a "God-intoxicated man," and it is not a far-fetched designation. There are many moments in their music which represent the highest achievement in sacred art. Sacred Polyphony has been called a "cathedral in sound," and you could hardly improve on that metaphor. Here in musical sounds you have a marvelous counterpart of the sturdy foundations and walls, the vaults and spirals and towers of a great cathedral — the same sense of exalted elevation and hushed reverence, the same ruminous radiance from the sanctuary of the All-holy God.

But now, coming back to earth, let's admit one great drawback to Sacred Polyphony. It is too difficult for average singing. It demands considerable musical training and experience, and surely it was never intended for congregational singing. In fact, that was how congregations had come to the point of no longer singing at Mass. But even the average parish choir would find this music far beyond their ability. Where then is its use? Blessed Pius X answers that question. "This music, too, must be restored largely in ecclesiastical functions, especially in the more important basilicas, in cathedrals, and in the churches and chapels of seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions in which the necessary means are usually not lacking."

IN EVERY diocese comprising many parishes, there ought to be at least two or three key parishes, including the Cathedral, where a trained polyphonic choir (preferably of men and boys) sings these great masterpieces, at least on the great occasions. It is the shame of us Catholics that this music is sung principally in Protestant churches and by secular big clubs like Yale and Harvard, and almost never hear in the place for which their composers wrote them. Since it is the Church's dear wish that they be sung at great church festivals in our Cathedrals and greater basilicas, strong efforts should be made in that direction. Our parochial school boys could be selected for the soprano and alto sections, and with the support of three or four (or even two) paid singers, the men of our cathedral choirs and their choirs of our more prominent parishes could with adequate training contribute their part in creditable way to the ensemble.

Besides adding substantially to the singing of the polyphonic masses would draw many non-Catholics to attend the Church's great festivals where, by the grace of God, they may be enlightened by some ray of His truth and there discover the one and only Faith. Many roads, they say, lead to Rome; here surely is one of them, and far from the least.

(To Be Continued)

Sunday Sermon

By Magr. Hart

THE VOICE IN THE DESERT The preaching of John the Baptist was not set for the smaller and larger cities of Palestine. John, looking for a favorable spot in which to make known the coming of Christ and to prepare the people by a Baptism of penance for Christ's coming, chose the region in Galilee about the Jordan.

People came forth from the villages and the cities to hear his message. John came not by his own choice but because God found him in the desert preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the forgiveness of sins. His indeed was the voice of one crying in the desert, make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his path.

All things that would interfere with the success of John's witness to Christ were to be definitely removed, just as with the coming of a King to his far away territories strenuous efforts were made to fill up the valleys, to bring low every mountain and hill, to straighten out the crooked roads and smooth over the rough ways. So now John was trying to get the people listening to him to give up sin permanently, to express their love for God and their readiness to receive Him as the Saviour that God had sent.

The Voice in the Desert was now speaking its message. Those who had left their homes and sought out John as he preached in the desert were surely men moved by desire to be ready for the coming of the Redeemer.

John the Baptist came to the people about the Jordan. John the Baptist first spoke His message some sixteen hundred years ago. John the Baptist made straight the way of the Lord for the people of his generation. John the Baptist remains to all generations as the voice of one crying in the desert, make ready the way of the Lord. We of this generation must be ready to answer the call of John; must be ready to receive Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and our Saviour.

Courier Journal

Official newspaper of the Rochester Diocese

Friday December 18, 1953

Editor: REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, S.J., President

Business Manager: REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, S.J., President

Address: 100 N. Broadway, Rochester, N.Y.

Subscription: \$1.00 per year in advance

Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Post Office at Rochester, N.Y. is authorized to sell this publication at special rate of 5¢ per copy.

Printed at the Courier-Journal Press, 100 N. Broadway, Rochester, N.Y.