



They All Came To Bethlehem...

Joseph was a just man. If God had other plans for Mary, if God wanted him to give her up, Joseph was willing. But how could Joseph, free Mary from her betrothal promises to him, if that was what God wanted, without exposing her to public shame and reproach?

An espoused couple, in Jewish law, were legally married. Joseph could not just break it with Mary and send her away without exposing her as a target for the village scandal-mongers.

Whose eye, since he was convinced of her innocence, Joseph could not just break it with Mary and send her away without exposing her as a target for the village scandal-mongers.

Joseph was to give Mary her freedom, as he felt that he must, then it would have to be done in some private and secret manner. Only in this way could he protect her reputation.

THROUGH THIS whole silent ordeal we see Joseph as the faithful defender of Mary's honor before the world. Here against the backdrop of divine mystery, Joseph looms forever as the sturdy and loyal champion of the Immaculate Mother of Christ.

How can Joseph explain the mystery of Mary's condition? He remains silent. When other men might have screamed in outrage and anger, Joseph holds his peace. And his silence is a tribute to Mary's innocence, a witness to her integrity and pureness.

In this dark hour Joseph stands as the sole figure of faith between Mary and the world that would condemn her. Through his agony of worry Joseph elicits sympathy and tenderness to one conviction—Mary is absolutely blameless!

Joseph's faith in Mary stood the test of the hard fulfillment. Now God decided to lit the

veil of mystery for Mary's devoted spouse. While Joseph was in a worried sleep there came to him an angel who said:

"Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."

NOW JOSEPH shares the great secret of the incarnation of the Son of God, God's and Mary's secret. Joseph is to have an important role in the unfolding of this mystery to the world.

No longer need the humble carpenter have any fears that he has no place in God's plan for Mary. "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit."

These words of the angel reveal God's plan for Joseph, his vocation and his duty. In accepting Mary as his wife, Joseph will appear before men as the father of the Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Through His foster father Joseph, the Divine Child will receive his rights as an heir in the house of David.

The angelic messages to Joseph and Mary reveal the wisdom and beauty of God's plan. The birth of the Redeemer will take place within the secure sanctuary of a holy marriage, the virgin union of Mary and Joseph.

In the carpenter of Nazareth the Virgin Mother will have a

see the new born infant. Here in Bethlehem Joseph found his greatest moment of joy. It was enough for him. To be the first to take the Child from Mary's hands was all the honor Joseph ever wanted. Bethlehem is the hour and place of Joseph's reward. Here in Bethlehem's cave his faith in Mary's holiness is vindicated.

In the dark hours of Nazareth, when the skeptical world might have rejected him, even condemned him, Joseph kept his faith in Mary. Now Joseph's blind trust in the purity of the Virgin Mother has led him to Bethlehem, to the cave, to the Christ.

Faith in Mary has brought Joseph to Christ. "To Christ through Mary" Joseph was the first to discover this truth but he would not be the last.

AS JOSEPH gazed upon the Mother and Child for the first time he must have wondered at the goodness of God. Joseph alone of all men could share a proud boast with God on this first Christmas night. Here in Bethlehem only Joseph had the right to look on the Infant Son of God and dare to say: "My Son."

As God's vicar in the Holy Family Joseph could say to the Virgin Mother: "My Son shall be called Jesus."

And in Bethlehem the next day men spoke a stranger truth than they realized. "Did you hear," they asked, "what happened last night in the hillside? A Carpenter's Son was born."

Bob Crosby Sees Actors Key To Film Cleanup

St. Louis, Mo. — (RNS) — Entertainer Bob Crosby says the best way to raise the moral standards of movies would be to get top actors and actresses to improve their scripts.

Pointing out that the big stars have story acceptance clauses in their contracts, Mr. Crosby said: "If the performer realizes he is losing his box office he would be pretty stupid to continue to insist on better movies."

"THIS THING is big enough to justify using a Bishop Sheen or someone of his caliber to get the job done," he said in an interview here.

The way to handle television programs that are in bad taste is

Survey Reports 'Aged Can Take Care Of Selves'

Washington — (NC) — A top charitable official said here that the frequent picture of old age as a time of isolation, dependence and want has been shown as not entirely accurate.

Msgr. John J. O'Grady, secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, said this was made clear in a survey of elderly persons in a city parish in western New York State. It is the latest survey in the present program of parish studies of the aging being carried out by the NCCC.

ENTITLED "OLDER People of St. Boniface Parish," the study is based on interviews with 238 members of that parish in Buffalo, N. Y., who are 60 years of age or older.

"There is abundant evidence in the study of the efforts on the part of the respondents to maintain themselves, both physically and financially, as independent members within their families and neighborhoods," Msgr. O'Grady said at conference headquarters here.

"This stands in contrast to the more frequently presented picture of old age," he said.

"If you were to ask, what are the things that stand out more prominently in these studies," Msgr. O'Grady asserted, "we would say first, it is the idea of self-support. In our figures, over 90 per cent of the aging were pretty well able to take care of themselves. Of course, our aging group constitutes a part of the approximately seven million who receive Social Security but this is only one source of their support. Home-ownership runs over 70%."

The Buffalo study, carried out by the Catholic Charities of the

Buffalo diocese, is the third such survey in the past five years. Others were in St. Philomena parish, Cleveland, and in St. Philip Neri parish, St. Louis.

THE STRENGTH of individuals in providing for their own security was evident in the other two surveys as well, Msgr. O'Grady said.

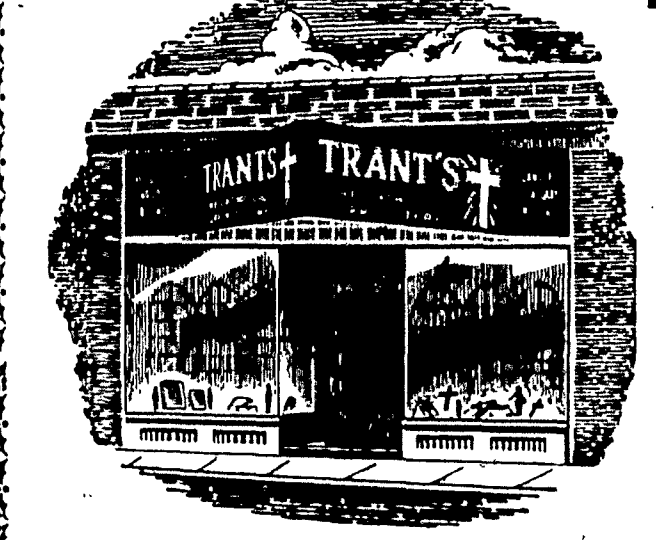
Another "impressive result" of the Buffalo study, he said, was "the great cohesion of the family life of the aging." He stated "there were independent members of families and there was great tendency to look to children for support, but everywhere there was strong family feeling."

"Very strong opposition" to receiving any form of relief was shown in the study results, as was a strong desire of the aging to continue in some form of work, Msgr. O'Grady stated.

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IN THE MOUNTAINS OF SOUTHERN INDIA THERE ARE MANY SOULS WAITING TO BE RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH. HOWEVER, WE MUST HAVE MISSION CHAPELS FOR DIVINE SERVICES. ANAPARA, IN THE DIOCESE OF ERNAKULAM, HAS A CATHOLIC POPULATION OF 2,000, AND MANY PAGANS ASKING TO BE RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH. UP UNTIL NOW THIS VILLAGE DID NOT EVEN HAVE A PRIEST. NOW WE HAVE THE PRIEST BUT NO CHAPEL. THE ARCHBISHOP WRITES: "MOST OF THE PEOPLE ARE EXTREMELY POOR, EARNING OUT THEIR LIVING BY DAY TO DAY LABOR. A CHAPEL IN THIS LOCALITY IS AN URGENT NECESSITY." \$3,000 WILL DO IT! WE PRAY THAT OUR BENEFACTORS WILL HELP US FIND THE FUNDS TO BUILD THIS HOUSE OF GOD. CAN YOU GIVE A LITTLE GIFT IN HONOR OF THE CHRIST CHILD WHO WAS BORN IN A STABLE ON THE FIRST CHRISTMAS MORNING?

MAKE YOUR WILL HIS WILL. PLEASE REMEMBER THE GOOD LORD AND HIS NEAR EAST MISSIONS IN YOUR LAST WILL.

OUR NEEDEST CASES
Christmas finds us with all too many needs, especially among the refugees of the Holy Land... a little orphan, people under tents, sick families. There are those cloistered Carmels, whom we try to help. The variety and the degree of our needs urge us to tell you that a \$10 stringless gift is truly precious to us.

ARRANGE NOW FOR GREGORIAN MASSES AFTER DEATH. ASK ABOUT THE SUSPENSE-CARD.

IN GRATITUDE TO YOU! The special Midnight Mass at the Crib of Bethlehem will be offered by the Archbishop of Jerusalem for all our Near East benefactors, while ten other Masses will be offered for the same intentions at the Crib during Christmas Day.

YOUR ADOPTED DAUGHTER FOR ALL ETERNITY! Sister M. Agustin and Sister M. Lucia desire to be active missionary Sisters in Egypt. Poor in this world's goods, they are praying for some good soul to adopt them—for they need \$150 for each of their two years training—\$300 in all. Maybe you could adopt one of these young novices in honor of our Blessed Mother and the Christ Child. This truly would be a real Christmas gift to the Holy Family.

BE GOOD TO GOD AND GOD WILL BE GOOD TO YOU.

THOMAS AND ZACHARIAS are just beginning their six years of study in the Seminary at Alway, India. Can you adopt one of these modern apostles and give the \$800 needed for his six years of study in any installments. Surely the Master will bless you for this kindness and charity.

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