

Space Age Nativity Scene

\$35 Million Drive in N.Y.

Bologna — (NC) — A Nativity scene for the space age and another finely worked into an oyster shell are parts of an exhibit of Christmas creches displayed in St. Francis church here.

Organizers of the exhibit consider themselves specialists in the field for they are Franciscan friars whose spiritual father, St. Francis of Assisi, presented the first Christmas creche to the world in a cave at Greccio, Italy, in 1223.

The exhibit, opened by Cardinal Teardo, the city's archbishop, features creches of different nations and different ages.

There is a scene depicting the birth of the Christ child in the conch-shaped hut which is characteristic of the

Italian island of Sardinia. In another, the birth of Christ takes place in a Bolognese home, with the family gathered around a crib lighted by a paraffin lamp.

Nineteenth-century Rome during the reign of Pope Pius VII is the setting for another creche, with Rome's familiar landmarks recreated in the background.

Across the globe to other parts of the world, the Holy Family is placed in an Argentinian house or in a Hindustani mission. In the home of a wealthy Portuguese merchant the newborn Christ is adored in a quiet room of the house while a party is in full swing out on the patio.

A modern "electronic creche" breaks with tradition and suggests a new mystic-

ism. The creche of the future is suspended in space amidst circling satellites and space ships. Beside it is the traditional Neapolitan creche in a room peering where right-angled figures walk among Greek columns.

Miniature creches are also played in a show case. The story of the birth of the Redeemer is told with nut shells, match boxes, egg shells, oyster shells and even a hypodermic syringe.

According to the Franciscan friars, the exhibit is meant to say that there is no part of creation that is not touched by the birth of the Child Jesus, from the vast reaches of the cosmos to the minutest parts of man's daily living, from age to age, and from nation to nation.

New York — (RNS) — Cardinal Spellman of New York announced that Catholics in his archdiocese had raised more than \$35,000,000 for the construction of new educational facilities.

The minimum goal of the fund drive, known as the "Cardinal's Campaign for the New Seminary and High Schools," had been set at \$25,000,000. Final returns are expected to exceed \$40,000,000.

Funds will be used to finance the construction of a new seminary near Harriman in Orange County for 300 seminarians, a high school, expansion program to provide for 5,000 additional students and replenishment of the archdiocesan educational fund to build more high schools.

Churchmen Liars, Judas Says Castro

Havana — (RNS) — Premier Fidel Castro, in his most violent attack so far on the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba, denounced ecclesiastics "whose counter-revolutionary activity is each day more visible, more evident, more provocative and more constant."

He charged that a recent open letter to him from the Catholic hierarchy complaining of attacks on the Church and a drift toward Communism in Cuba contained some "big lies" and he "respectfully" reminded the bishops of God's commandment against lying.

Feffering his talk with sarcastic taunts, Premier Castro addressed a three-and-a-half hour audience at the headquarters of the Confederation of Cuban Workers in between denunciations of the clergy, he promised to live and let live if only the Church would stick to religious and philosophical issues.

The premier's most bitter taunts were leveled at Manuel Cardinal Arteaga y Belandier, 82-year-old Archbishop of Havana. He charged the cardinal had given the former dictator Fulgencio Batista "the kiss of Judas."

"When the bloody tyrant needed His Excellency or His Lordship, or whatever he is called, in the presidential palace, there was His Excellency in the bloody and corrupt palace of the tyrant," he said. "That he (Batista) had stolen 50, 60 or 100 million pesos — that did not matter to the cardinal."

The rally was convened as a forum to approve the start of construction next year of day nurseries for the children of working mothers and of 300 workers' social clubs to provide inexpensive recreation. Premier Castro took the occasion to announce that, contrary to his earlier promise, workers' traditional Christmas bonuses this month would be smaller than in the past.

Beatification

Madrid — (NC) — Spanish Catholic Action has collected several hundred thousand signatures to a petition to be forwarded to the Holy See for the beatification of the late Pope Pius XII.



Blessing Bread Of St. Nicholas

Rome — (NC) — Archbishop Ismaele Mario Castellano swings a censor while blessing two platefuls of rolls before their distribution to the faithful at St. Nicholas Church here. The ceremony, dating from 300 A.D., is performed each year on the feast of St. Nicholas, better known to American youngsters as Santa Claus.

Frosty The Snowman OK

Rules Given For Christmas

Chicago — (NC) — Cook County public schools plan little change in their traditional Christmas observances despite suggestions from the American Civil Liberties Union on how to observe the holidays.

The ACLU's Illinois division mailed to 1,200 schools a "Policy Statement on Christmas in the Public Schools."

The statement said: "The question has again arisen concerning the propriety of recognition by the public schools of certain religious holidays, particularly Christmas."

Asked who raised the question, John McKnight, executive director of the Illinois ACLU, said that no one has raised it yet and that the function of the statement was preventive. He said: "We don't want to cause a stir. We want to forestall any stir over the question."

The statement, which was unsigned, claimed that the public schools' "attention given to Christmas has often gone beyond what is legal and proper under our Constitution and system of government."

The ACLU advocated:

1) That there be no display in public schools of religious symbols such as the Nativity scene, crèches, the Star of Bethlehem or angels.

2) That Christmas songs like "Frosty the Snowman," "Here We Come A-Wassailing," or "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" be substituted for traditional carols with religious content like "Silent Night" or "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing."

3) That "nondenominational" public schools be allowed to include Santa Claus, the stocking on the fireplace, holly wreaths, and candies.

The ACLU advised school officials that public school Christmas observances with Christian religious content do not become permissible by the addition of sectarian content from other faiths, such as symbols of the Jewish faith or Hanukkah holiday.

PUBLIC SCHOOL officials in Chicago and its suburbs had varying reactions to the ACLU statement, but they agreed it would not substantially affect school plans for observing Christmas.

Lester Schlerb, associate superintendent of Chicago public schools, said the city has no specific rule about Christmas observances, but instead will leave it up to the discretion of individual principals. He added: "Most of them are guided by the wishes of their school population."

An Evanston school official said that the ACLU's advice had been received but that it will not affect the school's observance of the holiday season. The official, Gordon Anderson, personnel director, said:

"Our policy is set by our board. Three years ago it decided that each school should largely decide its own observance based on the type of community it served. There is no board policy on eliminating

angels or figures from our Christmas trees, although displays of religious symbols are, in some cases, not thought proper."

Classes of most schools will sing the traditional Christmas carols since they are proper objects of study, he said.

Eugene Oliver, principal of Arlington Heights High School, said his school plans to put on Handel's "Messiah" as usual this year. He added:

"This is a community project open alike to adults and students, and does not come under the head of a school program exclusively."

James Bagg, superintendent of elementary district 63 which takes in parts of Niles, Morton Grove, Glenview and Des Plaines, said he has sent principals in his district copies of the ACLU statement "just as a reminder to keep Christmas programs in good taste and not give offense."

Carols such as "Silent Night" will not be forbidden in classes if taught as great music, he said.

The children of Park Ridge schools will decide for themselves what they want to hang on their Christmas trees, whether the ornaments be stars or angels, according to Blair Pimpston, the superintendent.

300 Vehicles For Missions

Lax — (RNS) — Three hundred cars, motorcycles and special vehicles have been given to missionaries by the "Company for Mission Traffic" during the past 12 years, it was reported here by Dr. Franz Viehbock, the agency's president.

Dr. Viehbock reported on the company's activities during the blessing of a special car for the Catholic mission handicraft school on the island of Timor in Indonesia. Funds for the cars were donated by the boys and girls of the Catholic Children's Organization of Catholic Action here.

Rome Students Turn Workmen

Rome — (NC) — Priests and nuns, members of the order, congregation of the Immaculate Seminars studying at the founded in 1850 in Belgium by Hears of Mary, spent their Pontifical Gregorian University Father Werenfried van Straen weekly day of doing manual here leave their books half a ten, O. Praem, work without work.

They are helping to build the motherhouse of the Tra Noi came to Rome and began work site, not far from St. Peter's (Among Ourselves) movement, on the motherhouse. When situated in the Gregorian University, they decided to pitch in.

FATHER PLUTINO, faced The first group, Father Peter afternoon, contribute their labor with a lack of money, called on Guerts and six students of the building order for assistance, all members of the Con-



May peace be your gift
at Christmas... and
its joys abide with you
throughout the year