

★ The angel said, 'Do not be afraid! I proclaim

Good News to you of a **Great Joy**

which will be shared by the whole people.

Today, in The City of David, ★

a **Savior** has been born to you.

who is **Messiah and Lord.**'

(St. Luke's Gospel)

The Catholic COURIER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Journal

76th Year

ROCHESTER, N.Y., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1964

Price 15 Cents



In Communist China, it's been "The Year of the Dragon" — a year of continued hunger, oppression and a new atomic bomb. But faith is stronger than any "dragons" as this Madonna proves. Maryknoll Father James O'Halloran sent it from Hong Kong where refugees from behind the bamboo curtain tell the story that Chinese Christians keep faith alive despite the hazards, a faith that is ours in freedom.



Comfort Spans a Century

Rome—"I didn't do it," this startled three-year-old choir boy seems to be telling the photographer as he clutches a religious vessel. Age and wisdom—in the person of 92-year-old Msgr. Giuseppe Pazzaglia — comfort the boy, frightened by flash bulbs. The child, Francesco Ritrovato, marched in procession in Rome's central Piazza di Spagna to the statue of the Virgin Mary in observance of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The holy day was highlighted by a visit from Pope Paul VI who placed a wreath of flowers before the statue. Msgr. Pazzaglia, one of the oldest active Catholic priests in Italy, is attached to the St. Andrea delle Fratte church.

'All Are Brothers'

★ Pope Appeals for End To Bigotry, Poverty

Pope Paul in his Christmas message asked the people of the world at long last to hear "what Christianity has been saying for centuries — all men are brothers."

In a fervent appeal to cut weapons budgets so nations could aid the world's poor, he said, "Hunger and misery, sickness and ignorance still cry out for remedy."

He called for an end to racial bigotry which divides "the great human family" which "stamps our society so highly developed technologically and economically with the tragic mark of division and hatred."

The Pope denied that religion is a divisive factor among men. "It stands in defense of all that is sacred and unspendable in them, of their fundamental aspiration to God and their right to manifest this externally in a worthy form of worship," he said.

He spoke of religious liberty, a topic left up in the air a month ago at the Vatican Council, and said the Catholic Church promotes "respect for whatever is true and good in every religion and in every human opinion" and that the Church is opposed to efforts to "impose a faith not freely accepted."

He addressed his message "to all men of all ages, of all countries, of all beliefs, toward

whom today more than ever before we feel we owe our esteem, our affection and our united efforts."

His message was tape-recorded at the Vatican for radio and television broadcasting throughout Europe. He wore a red shoulder cape and a gold stole. Next to the microphones on his desk was an ornate crucifix. He spoke in Italian, reading the text through clear-framed glasses. The message took 23 minutes and was then translated into numerous languages.

He expressed his hope that the world would solve the problems he cited through the inspiration of Christian faith — "our ancient gospel, open today to the page of peace on earth to men of good will, has new, living words to offer to the brotherhood of man," he concluded.

Yule Joke

Question: If athletes get athlete's foot, what do astronauts get?

Answer: Missile toe.

Midnight Mass Scheduled On Radio, Television

Midnight Mass and other religious programs will be broadcast by radio and television stations for Christmas.

Midnight Mass will be telecast from St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, by Rochester's WROC-TV, Channel 8, and from the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington by WOKR-TV, Channel 13.

Midnight Mass will be broadcast by radio from four parish churches in the Rochester Diocese:

Holy Rosary Church, Rochester, Wam, beginning with a program of Christmas carols at 11:45 p.m.

St. Mary's Church, Auburn, WMBO, 12 midnight.

SS. Peter and Paul's Church, Elmira, WELM, 12 midnight.

St. Mary's Church, Elmira, WENY, beginning with a carol program at 11:30 p.m.

Midnight Mass will also be broadcast by Rochester radio station WROC from St. Gregory the Great Church, Baltimore.

Radio and television program schedules should be consulted for other Christmas Eve and Christmas Day broadcasts.

The Birth of the Saviour An Old Story Ever New

By Father Robert J. Miller

The Bethlehem story is an old one that is ever new, a familiar story that somehow never fails to fascinate the minds and hearts of young and old, and each year the Christian world eagerly waits to hear the story told again.

Perhaps the secret of its attraction lies in the simplicity of the Scripture narrative that clothes the divine mystery of the Incarnation in such ordinary words and such humble, everyday actions.

It is a story that begins with an unknown girl in an obscure little village in Galilee and it climaxes in another tiny town of Judea. But what transpired there has lifted these towns from their obscurity and made them the focal point of Christian faith, for they were the gateway through which God entered this world.

Nazareth was so unimportant it is not even mentioned in the Old Testament. Apparently it was an ancient town, a mere brand in the road, where casual structures served as dwellings for its few inhabitants.

In one of these homes lived "a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." It was to this unassuming Jewish girl, perhaps 14 years of age, that God in the fullness of time sent His angel

Gabriel to announce that she, of all Jewish maidens, had been chosen to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, made seven centuries before: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel."

Mary it seems had vowed her virginity to God. Her concern for her vow is quickly dispelled by the angel. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."

And with Mary's response, "Be it done unto me according to the word," the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

If in God's plan Mary was to fulfill one prophecy, Caesar Augustus, great Emperor, hundreds of miles away in Rome, was to help fulfill another. He decreed to know the number of people subject to him throughout the world, prompted by a command that a census be taken and it was this census that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem where according to the prophet Micah the Messiah would be born. And there, Bethlehem, Ephratha, thy little town art little among the thousands of Juda, out of thee shall come forth for me one who shall be ruler in Israel.

The Roman's oppression of the Jewish attachment to family and tradition, and their cooperation in the oppression, could be given more credit if they were to register as fathers in their place of origin, and if it was decreed that Joseph also went from Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem, which it is said, Bethlehem was the home of the house and family of David, the king of the Jews, who had been exiled to Egypt.

Bethlehem, today a little city numbering 7,500 people, six miles south of Jerusalem was in those days no more than a village of peasants and shepherds, perhaps a stopover for caravans going from Jerusalem to Egypt.

It is a good thing that the birth of the Saviour was made in a little town, for if it had been made in a great city, the world would have known of it long before it was born. It was a hidden birth, a birth that was to be hidden from the eyes of men, for the Son of God was to be born in a manger.

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'Three Little Wise Men'

New York—(RNS)—These African children are commemorating the Feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6) by re-enacting the visit of the Three Wise Men to the infant Jesus. They are members of the Maryknoll mission parish in Tanzania, formerly Tanganyika. An African — Gaspar — was one of the Three Magi who went to Bethlehem to see the new-born Christ.

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Vertical text on the left margin: "Burns 32¢", "FOWL 2.20", "98¢", "Singer", "98¢", "Singer".