



Moment of Rest

Ahmal, played by Joseph Borelli, sleeps while his mother (Christine Del Vecchio) pauses from her work to rest. The scene is from the Lively Arts production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" to play at St. Anthony's parish hall, starting at 8:30 p.m. December 18 and 19. Christmas carols precede the show.

The Music Bag

Real Live 'Tin Soldiers'

By THE MISSION SINGERS

One Tin Soldier is the theme song of Billy Jack, and the original cast that sings the song for the movie calls itself Coven.

The movie parallels the song almost exactly. Both are stories of idealistic societies being destroyed. Which seems to go to show that if you stick your head above the crowd, the crowd will bring you back to their level not by trying to drag you down by the feet but by cutting off your head.

That is true in both movie and song. In Billy Jack it's a freedom school in a small desert-area town that's causing the hassle. Instead of trying to close the school on issues like health or fire regulations, some of the townsfolk almost succeed in making the leaders of the school compromise their ideals of pacifism, patience and positive thought. They struck at the head.

Both Billy Jack and One Tin Soldier remain relatively "safe" as long as they remain fairy tales. But there is a remarkable real-life story about a mountain and a valley people that makes the message hit home with a devastating force.

By coincidence, the story is about a hill in Vietnam that American and Viet Cong forces were fighting over. We say "by coincidence" because it's not our intention to make this an anti-American tirade. The whole point of this true story is that some men of any nationality are "mountain people" and other men — again, they can be of any nation — are truly bad, stupid, ugly, evil valley people.

The story was told by an American sergeant. It happened less than three years ago. The Americans were defending a hill against Viet Cong attackers. The Americans were being driven down the hill just as the sergeant was wounded in the shoulders, the ribs and the eye.

He dove into the nearest bunker, only to find himself sharing a room with a Viet Cong soldier.

The Viet Cong soldier raised his rifle to shoot, but stopped when he saw the sergeant was wounded. Putting down his rifle, he took the sergeant's first-aid kit, tended to the sergeant's wounded eye — he can see today because of that — and bandaged the shoulder and ribs.

While all this was going on, the Americans re-captured the hill. Realizing this, the Viet Cong soldier tried to get back to his own army. The American sergeant was conscious enough to know they were surrounded, so he held the soldier back. The Viet Cong seemed to understand.

When the shooting stopped, the Viet Cong soldier picked up the sergeant and carried him to the American medics. A day or two later, back in a safe hospital, the sergeant received a visit from the commanding colonel who awarded him the Purple

Four Churches Slate Lectures On Doctrine

A special series of lectures in Catholic doctrine is slated to begin Monday, Jan. 10.

The lectures are designed to "provide opportunity for those who wish to learn basic Catholic teaching . . . and to allow those who are married to Catholics to become better acquainted with the faith of their spouses," according to Father James MacLoughlin, assistant pastor of St. Thomas More.

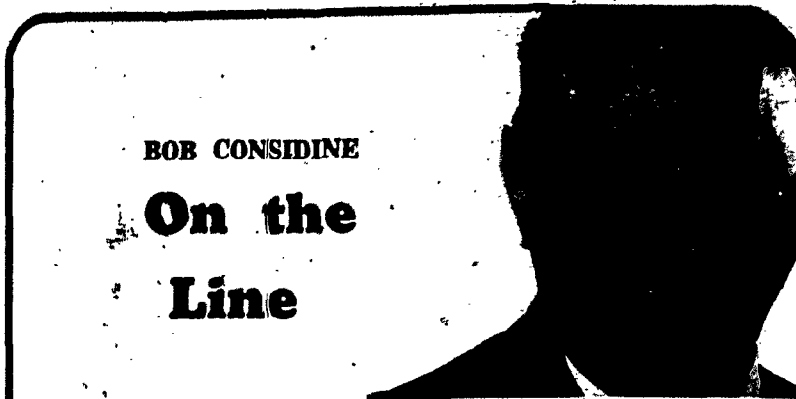
All the lectures will be held at St. Thomas More, every Monday evening at 8 p.m. through Feb. 21.

The series is sponsored by four suburban parishes: St. Joseph's Penfield; St. Thomas More, Brighton; Holy Spirit, Penfield; and Assumption, Fairport.

Among the speakers slated are: Father Benedict Ehmann, pastor of St. Michael's Church; Father MacLoughlin; Father Leonard Kelly, pastor of Assumption Church; and Father Francis Pegnam, pastor of St. Thomas More.

MEMENTOES STOLEN

Bergamo, Italy — (RNS) — Thieves broke into a museum housing mementoes of Pope John XXIII at his birthplace in Sotto Il Monte, near here, and took a number of them. Police said thieves took the late Pope's pectoral cross, gold and silver medallions, gold chains, a gold key, and two silver crucifixes.



BOB CONSIDINE

On the Line

A couple of journalists named Washington Irving and Thomas Nast, and a writer of letters to the editor, Dr. Clement Clarke Moore, made Christmas what it is today. My authority is a Christmas buff named Bill Anderson, vice president of RCA's consumer electronics division.

It was in 1809 that Washington Irving described Santa as a jolly Dutchman who looked very much like Father Knickerbocker. Irving, who had also dreamed up the Headless Horseman, concocted the idea of a miniature sleigh with eight tiny reindeer who could fly — about a century before the idea occurred to the Wright Bros. The airborne sleigh accounted for how the gift-giver was able to move so fast from house to house.

Seventeen years later, Dr. Moore wrote a note to the editor of the Troy, N.Y. Sentinel, enclosing an interesting little rhyme which began:

"'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house,

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse . . ."

Dr. Moore incorporated Irving's idea of the flying reindeer-drawn sleigh. He explained to the editor that he had written the words to please his children, but felt perhaps that it should be shared with other kids.

Nast, the most influential cartoonist in our history, conceived of St. Nicholas — pronounced San Nee-claus by the early colonists — as a big-bellied elfin in a red satin suit, black boots and smothered in a white beard.

(Nast also gave us the elephant as a symbol of the Republican Party, the donkey as the emblem of the Democrats, and the tiger as representing Tammany Hall. His pen quite sharp by then, he stabbed Tammany's corrupt leader Boss Tweed, and left him for dead.)

The origins of those thou-

sands of Santas now ringing bells on street corners, waiting for a beer break, reach deep in man's history. The bloke with his white beard askew, and stamping his feet against the cold pavement, is a kind of lineal descendant of the Bishop of Myra, Asla Minor, who became a saint after his death on Dec. 6, 343 (A.D.) in a Roman dungeon.

Greek manuscripts in the Zion monastery in Lycia describe him as the son of wealthy parents. He became attracted to the church in the course of a near-shipwreck while visiting the Holy Land as a youth. He is credited with a number of miracles and was known for his kindness and graciousness. He got in trouble by refusing to worship the statues of the twin-rulers of Rome, Diocletian and Maximilian.

Anderson's RCA computer swears:

"It is claimed by many European writers that St. Nicholas has more churches named for him than any other Christian. In Belgium alone there are more than 100. He is the patron saint of Russia (he's been having a bit of trouble there since the Kerensky government fell), Greece and the cities of Naples, Liege and Lucerne — not to mention bankers, scholars, maidens, thieves, sailors and pawn brokers.

"For centuries, Europeans exchange gifts on the anniversary of his death, rather than on the day Christ, his boss, was born. Young children overseas are still told that the kindly ghost of St. Nick ascetic in a manner and white of beard, brought the unexpected or wished-for toy. If he leaves a bundle of switches, that means the child has been too naughty and must reform.

"The Dutch brought him to Nieu Amsterdam and named their first church in the New World in his honor. And Christmas, in time, superseded Dec. 6 as the children's day of days."



K of C Benefit

Donald Burke (right) accepts \$1,000 check on behalf of the Al Sigl Day Care Center from representatives of K of C Trinity Council. The gift included a matching donation of \$1,000 from the Rochester Council. Making the presentation was deputy grand knight Cornelius Murphy.