



NEAL TRAMA

A Drug Store Santa Claus

By JOHN DASH

With a little help from his friends, Neal Trama figures he can play Santa Claus to about 250 kids from St. Bridget's School this year.

Trama, St. Thomas More parishioner and father of seven, stands behind the cash register at Heath Drug Store at 121 East Ave., and depends on his regular customers and friends to chip in toward a party for underprivileged kids in the city. He's been doing this for 10 years. And his friends have been forking over a little change for just as long.

There's one couple, he says, that are so faithful that even this year, when one of them is dying of cancer, they've contributed to brighten Christmas for a child.

Trama's love for St. Bridget's started some time around 1942 when he graduated from the school. Trama's love for kids started earlier and he pinpoints his attraction to the idea of helping moneyless kids at Christmas to the time during the Depression when a Sister of St. Joseph gave him a free ticket to a party for 5-year-olds at St. Francis' Church. He says he got an orange at that party and the memory of the incident stuck deep down in his memory.

Trama is especially thankful for the help of fellow drug salesman Bob Pauley over the years to pull the party off; and he mentions various merchants who contribute party supplies, too.

Van Etten Parish Sets Celebration

Van Etten — A dish-to-pass dinner at 12:30 will launch a Christmas party Sunday afternoon, Dec. 17, for St. Pius parishioners, their pastor, Father Bernard Kuchman, announced.

The children will receive gifts from Santa Claus and his helpers, Ann Sullivan, Chris Martin, Helen Berkley, Anita Norton, Muriel App and Melba Lakin, all religion teachers. The Youth Club dance will follow, at 4:30. Mr. and Mrs. John McPherson are chairmen of the dinner committee.

Courier-Journal

Pope Paul's Theme: Advent

Vatican City (RNS) — Scoring what he called "religious indifference" and "religious denial," Pope Paul VI urged Christians to use the time of Advent to "rekindle" their interest in, and desire and hope for, mankind's "meeting with God in Christ. Who is coming."

"Religious indifference," he said at his customary Wednesday general audience here, "which expresses an attitude of intellectual laziness that simply ignores the question of God, is neither intelligent nor human."

"Man," he emphasized, "is made to know God and to love and serve God in this life, and to enjoy a direct and immediate vision of God, in the next."

Pope Paul Calls for Unity Among Catholics in Poland

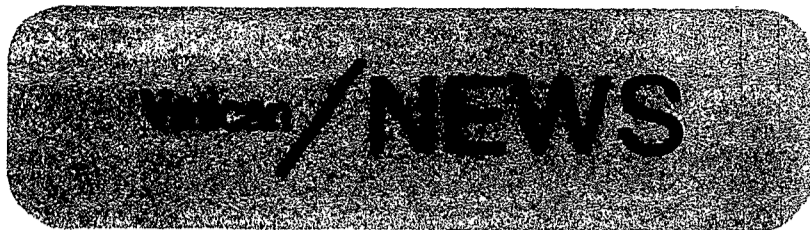
Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul took a daring step in the diplomatic field when he called on Catholics of Communist-run Poland to present a unified front to the government there. He made the statement during a private meeting with a group of bishops from Poland.

The Pope's recommendation possibly could be interpreted by the Communist bosses in Warsaw as a papal call for a Catholic confrontation with the dictatorial government, some experts warned. However, others doubted this.

Relations between the Holy See and the government of Poland have warmed markedly in recent years, and it was felt that the pontiff was well aware that his words would not have a rupturing effect on the easing of tensions.

The bishops came to Rome to thank Pope Paul for formally recognizing Warsaw's claim over areas Poland took from Germany at the close of World War II. Pope Paul had also named Polish bishops to rule for the Church in the areas which formerly had been the Oder-Neisse territories.

The pontiff called on the Catholics of Poland to "be thou ever united, with unity among priests in the study of plans for pastoral work, in action, in the applica-



As for contemporary "religious denial," or "atheism," the Pope went on, "it can be described as speculative and existential emptiness."

Charging that atheism is deficient in "critical reason," the pontiff declared that it has never yet offered a viable reason for the existence of anything, let alone man.

He said that in the context of modern indifference and denial, "man seems to have lost himself

and is like someone who runs about madly, not knowing where he is going."

On the other hand, he affirmed, it is the Church, which is often accused of obscurantism and of sacrificing reason to faith, that "vindicates the law and validity of reason."

It is the Church, he added, that gives man a reasoned answer to human, existential, questionings.

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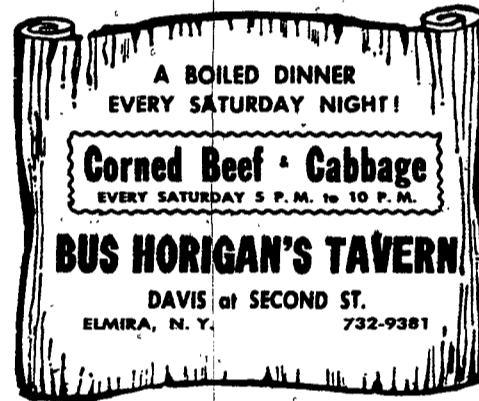
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