

**Editorial**

## How Luke Covered The Good News

The significance of Christmas is so splendid and overpowering that it may seem to defy capture by the small corals of worldly description. And surely it would appear that dry and objective journalese could not even approach depicting the shattering grandeur of the Birth of Christ.

But that is wrong. It is precisely because good journalism shuns the tricks of hyperbole that it is most suited to describing the happenings of that long ago day. For leaving the explanations to others, the event itself was starkly simple. A humble couple. A stable. A baby. And yet the world was transformed.

And it is more than just coincidence that the occurrence should be described for all of us for all time in the chiseled, economic words of the journalist. Who could improve on these words of Good News as put down by Luke:

"Now it came to pass in those days, that a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world be taken . . . all were going each to his own town to register."

The words by now are familiar and because of that may have lost some of their sharpness. But it is journalese! Who, what, when, where and why.

"And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn."

Unembellished reporting. No interpretation. No placing the literary capabilities of the writer between the event and the reader. Luke is merely the conduit. He uses a mere handful of paragraphs to recount what ranks with the Creation and the Resurrection as one of the three greatest events of all history.

The excerpts we use, we hope will serve to whet your appetite to look afresh at this remarkable news story. Whether you have children at home or not, on this night of nights, take out your Bible and turn to Luke 2:1-20. Read aloud those words unencumbered by trappings as they sing in their simplicity. The names, the places, and even the liveliness of quote:

"And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid for today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord.'"

Think of all the music, drama and art devoted to this event by the finest minds, hearts and hands of all time and then rejoice in the fact that none can surpass the effect of Luke's simplicity — "And when they had seen, they understood what had been told them concerning the child."

And despite, or maybe because of, the lack of frills, the words evoke a mysterious atmosphere. Read them aloud but softly. Tonight when the spirituality of this holy time is at peak. Disdain musical background or other distraction.

With this passage you do not need the modern things about Christmas. For the words, like throbbing bricks, provide the foundation for understanding the meaning of the birth of the greatest life of all time. And they contain lessons within lessons to sustain us in our own lives.

## Christmas Wish

One of the privileges of the newspaper business is that it affords its workers the opportunity to meet, talk with and share thoughts and experiences with many and diverse persons. That is a fringe benefit not to be taken lightly.

Another benefit is that it provides us the space, our most precious commodity, to send all our readers this Christmas wish — May the peace of the Lord be with each and every one of you not only now but for all time.

## Opinion

### Father Erb Sends Greetings

Editor:

Christmas is a wonderful time, not just for the kids, but for us all, don't you think so? May the true spirit of Christ's birthday, the spirit of involvement and concern, of joyous giving and sharing, reign in your hearts and homes!

My holy Masses on Christmas day especially but throughout the season will include particular prayers for all of you who have supported me so faithfully and generously through the years: during my seminary and teaching days in the States; during my Army career in Alaska and Europe; and especially during the last 28 years of my missionary assignment in Ghana. I am very grateful and I want to thank you sincerely again during this holy and happy season.

Some of you have not written to me in a long time. I wish you would drop me a line or two and tell me about yourself and your family and bring me up to date. Okay?

On the feast of my patron, St. Charles, Nov. 4 last, I became semi-retired. They had a party for me here and nice things were said about me at that party by various speakers, including our Bishop Andoh, as well as Father Hilary Senoo, secretary general of the National Catholic Secretariat of the hierarchy of Ghana. They exaggerated, of course, and I was disappointed because they didn't give me a watch! I'm joking.

Even so, I'll be busy in the months ahead: I am in charge of our Catholic Stand at the International Trade Fair, Feb. 1-15, 1976; a TV Life of Christ series through the Christmas and Lenten seasons; and my parish work at Kotobabi which I like very much—the people are wonderful, really, and respond gratefully to whatever requests we make of them.

There is much in the news every day to depress and sadden one, but the good news doesn't make the headlines anywhere, does it? I hope the Good News of Christmas will rejoice your hearts again this year. When He came 2,000 years ago, Christ was the Great Hope of the World. He is still its one Great Hope, if people would only open their hearts to Him. Mary, our dear Mother, will be showing her Divine Son again to us from cribs all over the world—may we take Him to ourselves in loving embrace this Christmas 1975 and keep Him close to our hearts throughout the entire New Year 1976

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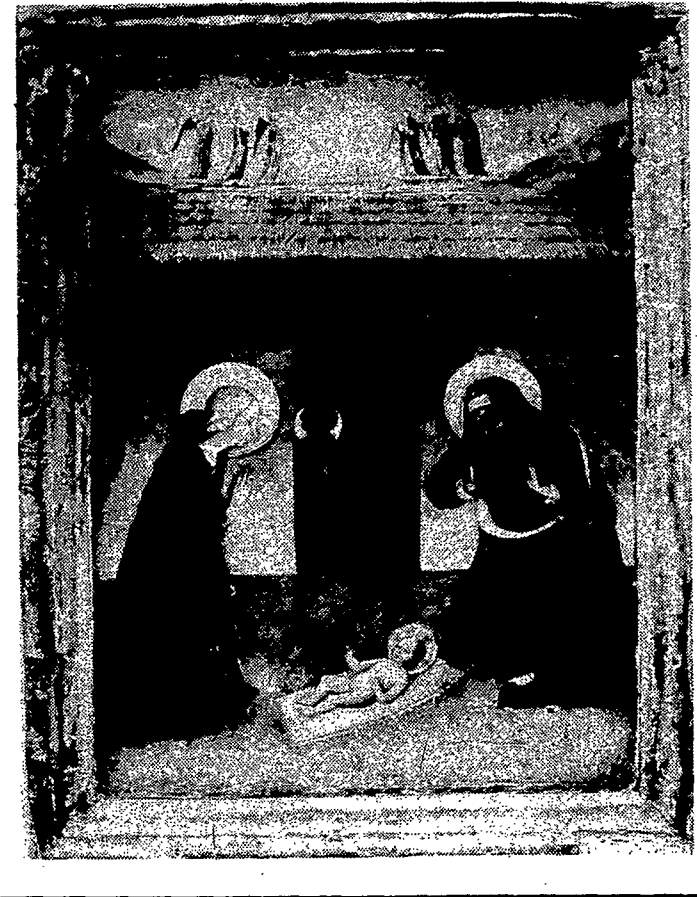
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The Nativity by Fra Angelico (1387-1455)

### Cemetery Complaint

Editor:

During a recent field trip to Holy Sepulchre Cemetery we found ourselves both deeply concerned and annoyed with the conditions of some of the gravesites and grounds of the cemetery. Leaves covered most of the graves and many stones were covered with overgrown grass and weeds. Beer bottles and other debris were seen lying on the ground. Many of the grave stones either fell or were knocked over. Graves have sunk in. The parts of the cemetery which were in the worse condition were the sisters' and the soldiers' section.

The sisters' plots are humble but, even the most humble person deserves an honorable and dignified resting place. Is this any way to treat those who served in our Catholic diocese for so many years? The soldiers' plots were just as inadequately cared for. Is this the way we honor and thank those who fought for our country?

We feel that everybody should show consideration for those who have died and are buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. We are sure there are others equally disturbed by these conditions and would like to suggest that something be done.

Senior Theology Class—  
Nazareth Academy  
Kathy Knobel  
Anita Pecoraro  
JoAnne Panzarella  
Lou Pfaff  
Mary Schultz  
Sonia Cruz  
Mary Lukowskyj  
Susanna Messina  
Janice Thape  
Marlene DeConinck  
Therese Mulee  
Joan Marie Marchesoni  
Lorraine Cancelmi  
Kathy Vane  
Mary Jane Tasciotti  
Linda J. Radtke

Editor's Note: The above signed also submitted photographs with their letter. However, on Dec. 17, two Courier-Journal reporters toured Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, paying close attention to the areas mentioned in the letter, and could find no reason to agree with the complaint.

### Modesty A Necessity

Editor:

Modesty of dress is one of the

most fundamental and elevating virtues of Christianity. The decline in observing this discipline began long ago leading to a very porcine contemporary age.

The Church is too preoccupied with ecclesiastical structure and liturgical renewal and is remiss in not remonstrating against the pernicious elements in our materialistic society. It is more influenced than influential, more fearful than courageous, more prone to creating dissent than unity, and just recently more apt to lose for church attendance almost as many communicants as it attracts. While people are losing all sense of personal dignity and self-respect, both the lay and the clerical components remain silent and derelict, failing to inculcate on the faithful a better meaning of Christian living.

The Church should champion the cause of virtue over sensuality, of higher instincts over lower ones. It should carry out the real purpose for which it was instituted — the exaltation and salvation of souls. The Immaculate Conception should be our model and inspiration, and not once in the 18 apparitions at Lourdes was there any compromise given to mundane values. The Church has defaulted in militantly promoting purity, chastity, and modesty of which the Blessed Virgin is so richly emblematic.

If the Catholic schools cannot engender a more Christian-like appearance than what some students have shown, the Catholic schools have no right to exist.

Modesty of dress must be the practice of all believers in Christ — both sexes and all ages at all times.

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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.