

Astronomer Pinpoints Jesus' Birth

By John Jenkins
Religion Today
"The Star of Bethlehem," by David Hughes, Picket Books, Simon & Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, N.Y., N.Y.

Washington — Does the date Tuesday, Sept. 15, 7 B.C. mean anything to you?

Then it may come as a surprise to discover that this may actually be the day on which Jesus was born.

David Hughes, an internationally acclaimed astronomer, in his definitive new book masterfully confirms one of the most disputed astronomical happenings of all time, the Star of Bethlehem.

The reality of the Christmas traditions — the magi, the shepherds in the field, the manger, the star, Mary and Joseph, the babe in swaddling clothes — are generally taken for granted by Christians.

Presented and proclaimed on the countless thousands upon thousands of Christmas cards sent each year, sung and performed around the world in likewise countless church plays and choral productions, little thought is actually given to numerous contentions which surround the miracle of "the star."

"The Star of Bethlehem" is an extraordinary book for those who are interested in the historical, biblical and non-biblical, and astronomical proofs of the star's existence. The author leaves no question unanswered, while providing an in-depth look at the life and

times surrounding the birth of the Christ.

In his introduction, the author expresses the issues succinctly:

"What was the historical sequence of events, from the wise men in their own country, looking at the sky for a sign, to the young Jesus with His family in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth?"

"When it comes to the idea of the star as just a legend or a miracle, we must ask ourselves how significant were the reported occurrences of other celestial phenomena at the birth and death of kings and gods in ancient times. Did wise men visit other rulers at that time? A great deal of our evidence comes from biblical accounts, but we must ask how accurate they are in terms of science and astronomy."

In the course of his explanations and findings, Hughes discusses such topics as the death of Herod, the identity of the wise men and where they came from, and why the Western Church celebrates Christ's birth on Dec. 25.

Hughes' scholarly approach should adequately silence the skeptic or agnostic who chooses not to believe. His proofs are thorough, his conclusion concise, and understandable for the layman.

Eight Sisters Note 25 Years

Eight Sisters of St. Joseph are celebrating 25 years as professed women religious this year. The eight are Sisters, Susanne Brasley, Elizabeth Burkhardt, Diane Edwards, Barbara Gulino, Maria Kellner, Loretta Poole, Jeannine Scheg and Frances Sweeney.

national Sisters of St. Joseph Federation Taskforce on Social Justice.

Sister Elizabeth, a native of Port Leyden, has taught in Rochester at Sacred Heart, St. Anne's, Corpus Christi and Nazareth Academy, and at St. Alphonsus, Auburn. For the past four years she has worked in the congregation's communications office.

Sister Diane, a Rochester native, has taught at Mother of Sorrows, St. Augustine's, St. Francis Xavier and St. Ambrose in Rochester; St. Jerome's, East Rochester; St. Peter and Paul, Elmira; and St. Francis de Sales, Geneva. She now teaches at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rochester.

Sister Barbara, also a Rochester native, has taught at Christ the King, Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Thomas More and Immaculate Conception, Rochester; St. Mary's, Dansville; and St. Anthony's, Elmira. She took her Clinical Pastoral Education at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1975 and 1976. She now is associate chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira.

Sister Loretta is a native of Auburn. She has taught at Corpus Christi, Rochester; Holy Trinity, Webster; and St. Elizabeth's, Selma, Ala. From 1964 to 1975, Sister Loretta served

Sister Susanne, a Rochester native, has taught at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rochester; St. Anthony's, Elmira; St. Joseph's, Wayland; and was a staff member of St. Joseph's Convent and Infirmary from 1961 to 1964. She is currently teaching at St. Mary's in Auburn.

Sister Maria was born in Friedberg, Bavaria, Germany, and immigrated with her family in 1949. She has taught biology, chemistry and freshman science at St. Agnes High School, and chemistry, physics and freshman science at Nazareth Academy. In 1979 she became a staff member of the Religious Life Resource Center at the congregation's Motherhouse. She also serves on the

First Friday

Father John V. Rosse, director for the past 22 years of Pastoral Services at St. Mary's Hospital, will celebrate Mass and speak at the luncheon following for the monthly meeting of the First Friday Luncheon Club, Jan. 2, at the Knights of Columbus clubhouse on Thurston Road. Mass begins at 11:45 a.m.



Celebrating their 25th anniversaries this year are (from upper left) Sisters Susanne, Elizabeth, Diane, Barbara, Maria, Loretta, Jeannine and Frances.

as assistant administrator and director of personnel at St. Ann's Home. From 1975 to 1979 she served on congregation's Central Administration. She is now administrator of St. Joseph's Convent and Infirmary.

Sister Jeannine, a teacher at the School of the Holy Childhood, has also taught at St. Monica's and Mother of Sorrows in Rochester. She has served as vice principal and convent superior at the former Mt. Carmel High School in Auburn, and as vice principal at Nazareth Academy.

Sister Frances, a member of the pastoral team at Immaculate Conception Parish in Rochester, has taught at St. Francis Xavier, Blessed Sacrament and St. Ambrose in Rochester; and St. John the Evangelist in Greece. From 1967 to 1969 she was assistant to the Vicar for Urban Ministry, and from 1969 to 1971 in the urban ministry program of the former St. Lucy's parish, and later at the Office of Human Development. She has also served on the executive committee of the Diocesan Sisters Council.

WOKR to Air 'God in Dock'

"God in the Dock," a drama about God being called to account for the presence of suffering in the world, will be aired by WOKR-TV, Channel 13, Saturday, Jan. 3, at 12:30 p.m.

The play, starring Richard Beymer and Della Reese, was penned by Paulist Father Elwood Kieser. The program is part of the Paulists' Insight productions, and was a project of the Catholic Communications Campaign.



The Papacy — 1980

Top row, from left: Pope John Paul II embraces one of eight new African bishops he ordained on May 4 at an open air ceremony at Kinshasa, Zaire. Thousands of Parisians and other visitors were on hand to greet the pope as he rode down the Camps Elysees with President Valery Giscard d'Estaing on May 30, the first day of the pontiff's visit to France. The pope addresses about 3,000 members of the Curia, the central governing body of the Roman Catholic Church on June 28 at the Vatican. Middle row, from left: On the eve of his departure for home from Brazil, Pope John Paul receives a cheery greeting from a little boy in Manaus on July 11. Protestant Bishop Eduard Lohse, left, chairman of the West German Protestant Church Council, gestures during a conversation with the pope on Nov. 17 at a meeting in Mainz Cathedral. Enthusiastic worshippers at Theresienwiese — the grounds where the annual Oktoberfest takes place — grapple for the pope and rough up his aide, Msgr. Virgilio Noe on Nov. 19, following a Youth Mass celebrated by the pope on the final day of his historic visit to West Germany. Bottom row, from left: During the Sunday noon blessing at the Vatican on Nov. 30, Pope John Paul announces he has issued his second encyclical, "Dives in Misericordia." The pope comforts one of thousands injured in the Italian earthquake during a Nov. 25 visit to a hospital in Potenza, Italy. Archbishop Pio Laghi, the Vatican's representative to Argentina since 1974, chats with the pope during an earlier Vatican visit. He was named the Vatican's new apostolic delegate to the United States on Dec. 10. (RNS).

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Fr. Bill Barrett, Fr. Bill Trott

Father Bill Barrett, Father Bill Trott
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