

# World, Nation, People . . . in Brief

## World

Provided by NC News Service

### Priests and Alcoholism

Madison, Wis. -- The rate of alcoholism among priests is no higher than that of the general population, an alcoholism treatment expert told Madison clergymen. The myth that clergy are more susceptible to alcoholism than others is not true, said Howard W. Thompson, director of education and patient relations for Guest House, an alcoholism treatment program with facilities in Lake Orion, Mich., and Rochester, Minn.

### Young Deaths Preventable

United Nations -- An estimated 15 million children in Third World countries die each year, and at least half of those deaths can be prevented, according to a UNICEF report released Dec. 8. The report documents four low-cost breakthroughs which it says could bring about a "children's revolution" and save the lives of half of those who now die. The survival depends on: oral dehydration therapy, to prevent or cure dehydration caused by diarrhea, the largest single cause of child deaths; promotion of present knowledge about the advantages of breast-feeding and the dangers of bottle feeding; immunization against the six main "immunizable" diseases of childhood; and monitoring a child's growth.

### Pope to Visit Agca

Rome -- Pope John Paul II will visit Rome's Rebibbia prison Dec. 27 and probably will meet Mehmet Ali Agca, the man convicted of shooting him in 1981, an Italian Justice Ministry spokesman said Dec. 14. Plans call for the pope to make a 10 a.m. trip to the top-security prison, where he will be accompanied by Justice Ministry and prison officials.

## Nation

### Meese Statement Shocking

Washington -- Catholic officials dealing first-hand with the nation's hungry expressed shock at comments by White House counselor Edwin Meese III that some people line up at soup kitchens not because they are hungry but because the food is free. Words such as "outrageous," "scandalous," and "an insult to the poor" were used in reaction to Meese's remarks, in which he also said he had never seen "any authoritative figures that there are hungry children in America." Meese made the remarks in a Dec. 8 interview with the Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters. More details, Page 5.

### Vatican Ties Seen Problem

New York -- Establishing U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican raises church-state issues that require further examination, the new president of the National Council of Churches said Dec. 9. African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Philip Cousin of Birmingham, Ala., indicated that he had no intention of launching a campaign against proposals of the Reagan administration to upgrade relations with the Holy See. But reflecting traditional NCC opposition, he said the possible dangers to church-state separation should receive further discussion before action is taken. Bishop Cousin succeeds United Methodist Bishop James Armstrong, who resigned as NCC president Nov. 15.

### Salvador Report Classified

Washington -- A new report on the investigation into the 1980 murders of four American churchwomen in El Salvador has been marked "classified," a State Department spokesman said Dec. 13. The spokesman, Alan Romberg, said the report commissioned earlier this year by the department is being kept secret because its release could jeopardize the pending trials of five ex-Salvadoran National Guardsmen being held in the case. Critics of the investigation have charged that U.S. and Salvadoran authorities have not pursued evidence that the murders of Maryknoll Sisters Ita Ford and Maura Clarke, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and lay worker Jean Donovan might have been ordered by higher Salvadoran authorities.

### Lithuanian Sentenced

New York -- A priest sentenced in December to six years in a Soviet labor camp was a well-known Lithuanian clergyman who opposed government restrictions on religion, according to the Lithuanian Information Center, which monitors religious affairs in Lithuania. The center said the priest, Father Sisitas Tamkevicius, was one of five priests who in 1978 announced the formation of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights. The Soviet news agency Tass said Dec. 7 that Father Tamkevicius had been sentenced after conviction on charges of anti-Soviet activity.

# Focus on Today's World



At St. Louis Church in Batesville, Ind., more than 100 children, between grades 4 and 8, climb a five-tiered wood and evergreen pyramid to form a living, singing, Christmas tree and welcome the arrival of the baby Jesus.



In Hollywood, actress Melissa Gilbert is presented with the personal cross of the late Jean Donovan by the late missionary's brother, Michael Donovan. Miss Donovan, 27, was killed with three nuns in El Salvador three years ago. Miss Gilbert played the role of the missionary in an NBC movie, "Choices of the Heart" and Donovan found the film so moving that he wanted the actress to have the cross in memory of his sister. (NC Photo)



Mike Waddington, a junior at Loyola University of New Orleans, plays Santa on the phone to children in the New Orleans area. The "Santa Calling" project was the idea of one student and involved volunteers calling children to wish them a Merry Christmas direct from Santa. (NC News)

## the Saints *by Luke*

**B**ORN IN 383, MELANIA WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A ROMAN SENATOR, WHO FORCED HER TO MARRY A COUSIN AT 14.

AFTER TWO CHILDREN DIED IN INFANCY, MELANIA'S HUSBAND AGREED TO RESPECT HER DESIRE TO DEVOTE HER LIFE TO GOD. WHEN HER FATHER DIED ABOUT 405, SHE INHERITED HIS ENORMOUS WEALTH AND ENCOUNTERED FAMILY OPPOSITION TO SELLING SOME OF THE PROPERTY FOR CHARITY AND CONVERTING HER HOUSE INTO A HOSTEL FOR PILGRIMS.

SHE ENDOWED MONASTERIES IN EGYPT, SYRIA AND PALESTINE, HELPING CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES IN EUROPE, AIDING THE POOR, SICK, CAPTIVES, PILGRIMS AND FREEING SLAVES.

IN 406, SHE AND HER FOLLOWERS WERE FORCED TO FLEE THE INVADING GOTHs. ABOUT 410 AT TAGASTE, SHE FOUNDED A MONASTERY FOR MEN AND ANOTHER FOR WOMEN, WHERE SHE TOOK UP RESIDENCE.

SHE MADE A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND IN 417 AND VISITED EGYPTIAN MONKS. SHE ALSO MET ST. JEROME, WHO BECAME HER FRIEND. WHEN MELANIA'S MOTHER AND HUSBAND DIED IN JERUSALEM 14 YEARS LATER, SHE BUILT A CELL NEAR THEIR TOMBS. AFTER SOME TIME, SHE ATTRACTED DISCIPLES, BUILT A CONVENT FOR THEM ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AND REMAINED THERE AS ABBESS UNTIL HER DEATH DEC. 31, 439.

MELANIA HAS BEEN VENERATED IN THE EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CENTURIES. HER FEAST IS DEC. 31.



### On the Inside

At Your Parish.....	8
Bishop Clark.....	3
Child.....	18
Christmas Fund.....	5
Classified.....	23
Cuddy.....	20
Deaths.....	17
Editorial.....	19
Hohman.....	7
Holy Year.....	10-11
Liturgy.....	22
Opinion.....	19, 20
RapAround.....	14-15
Shamon.....	17

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