

Christmas calendar

CONCERTS

Friday, Dec. 22: Christmas music by Madrigalia, featuring Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols;" Kilbourn Hall, Eastman School of Music, Rochester; 8 p.m.; \$10 adults, \$8 students and senior citizens; call 716/482-1273.

Saturday, Dec. 23: "Concert Under the Stars," featuring Madrigalia; St. Joseph's Park, Rochester; 5:30 p.m.; free; open to the public; in case of bad weather, concert will take place at the Michaels Stern Building, 87 N. Clinton Ave.

LITURGIES

Sunday, Dec. 24: Midnight Mass presented live on WHAM-1180AM from Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester; Bishop Matthew H. Clark, celebrant, with Father Thomas Mull concelebrating; 11:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.; includes performance by Sacred Heart Cathedral Choir; call 716/254-3221.

Sunday, Dec. 24: Midnight Mass in the tradition of the Polish *Pasterka* (Shepherd's Mass) at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, 34 St. Stanislaus St., Rochester; features hymns that have been sung at Midnight Mass in Poland for centuries; other Christmas liturgies will be family Mass at 5 p.m. Dec. 24, English-language Mass at 10 a.m. Dec. 25, and Polish-language liturgy at 11:30 a.m. Dec. 25; call 716/467-3068.

Sunday, Dec. 24: Midnight Mass at St. Catherine Church Center, 26 Mendon-Ionia Rd., Mendon; includes performance by the parish choir; call 716/624-4990.

Sunday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve family Mass; St. Joseph's Church, 206 Fremont St., Wayland; 5 p.m.; children are invited to bring bells and flashlights; call 716/728-2228.

Sunday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Mass; Chemung County Nursing Facility, Heritage Park, Elmira; Fr. Joseph M. Egan, celebrant; features soloist accompanied by organist; all family, friends, residents and staff are welcome; call 607/737-2007.

Monday, Dec. 25: Sacrament of Reconciliation and Mass in Vietnamese; Corpus Christi Church, 80 Prince St., Rochester; Fr. Joseph Hien Pham from New York City, celebrant; reconciliation at 3 p.m., followed by Mass at 4 p.m.; call Fr. Paul Tomasso, 716/328-3210, or Thang Van Nguyen, 716/723-9577.

Saturday, Jan. 6: Feast of the Three Kings; St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, 34 St. Stanislaus St., Rochester; 5 p.m.; also Sunday, Jan. 7, at 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; family breakfast will follow 10 a.m. Mass on Jan. 7; call 716/467-3068.

Sunday, Jan. 7: Twelfth Night celebration marking the conclusion of the 12 days of Christmas; St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, 34 St. Stanislaus St., Rochester; 3 p.m.; parish's English and Polish choirs



AT HEAVEN'S ALTAR — During the Christmas season, one of the chapels at Rome's Aracoeli ("Altar of Heaven") church is converted into a beautifully lit presepio, or Christmas crib.

will present a celebration of lessons and carols; call 716/467-3068.

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Friday, Dec. 22: United Ministry Church, Aurora; 7:30 p.m.; all pre-school through eighth-grade children are invited to participate; call 315/364-7413.

PLAYS

Thursday, Dec 21: Christmas musical; St. John the Evangelist School Gym, 55

Martha St., Spencerport; 7 p.m.; call 716/352-4550.

Thursday, Dec. 21: "A Christmas Carol;" GeVa Theatre, 75 Woodbury Blvd., Rochester; matinee and evening shows through Sunday, Dec. 24; call 716/232-1363 for tickets and information.

Thursday, Dec. 21: Christmas program presented by K-6 students at St. Joseph's, Wayland; school gym, 209 Fremont St., Wayland; 7 p.m.; call 716/728-2228.

Thursday, Dec. 28: "Once Upon a Puppet," a holiday show for all ages;

Christmas is salvation bursting into creation

By Father Thomas P. Mull
Guest contributor

Have you ever noticed the late dawn hours just before the sun rises? One may sit and observe as the violets turn to blue. Before long a gentle gold may trace the skyline, but all of a sudden, light seems to appear and a new day has dawned.

A friend of mine once wrote me describing the sun rising over the Atlantic Ocean. The description was poetic and powerful as he saw that powerful ball of fire take away the morning darkness, outshine the moon and stars, and begin to govern another day. With the dawn's light comes a new day, a new life and renewed hope.

The prayers of Christmas help paint a picture of such a dawn. The opening prayer of the Vigil Mass of Christmas states: "God of endless ages, we keep vigil for the dawn of salvation and the birth of your Son."

Ever-so-quickly, the Midnight Mass prayer trumpets: "Lord our God, with the birth of your Son, your glory breaks on the world. Through the night hours of the darkened earth we your people watch for the coming of your promised Son."

The Mass of Dawn heralds the prayer: "... we are filled with the new light by the coming of your Word among us. May the light of faith shine in our words and actions." The Christmas celebration has begun. The church sings the praises of the newborn Savior in her prayerful words.

These words culminate in the prayer of the Mass during Christmas Day: "God of love, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word, that we may bring your life to the waiting world."

These prayers not only set a focus for our gathered prayer on Christmas Day, they also give us an understanding of how we should approach this Feast of Light.

Christmas is the dawn of salvation bursting into creation. Our Advent days have become immersed in the violets and blues of early morning and are clearly outshone by the Christmas event. Thousands of years of waiting seem capsulized into a moment once the ancient story of Jesus' birth is retold. Women and men of the centuries seem mere shadows before the bril-

liance of the Messiah. The Christ has come and the world is reborn.

There is a danger in watching a sunrise. The watchers can become mesmerized and want to freeze the moment. They may not want to continue through the day.

The same danger exists with the Feast of Christ. Its joy, its holiness, its peace, its tranquility can become so powerful that the believer simply wants to stop and gaze.

Jesus, bursting into the world of human life, was not one to be watched. He made it clear that his work was also to be the work of his followers. The feast of Christmas, as lovely as it is, must be viewed in the light of Jesus' resurrection and his commission to his followers to be, his witnesses throughout the world.

Because Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, Christmas has meaning and our lives are deepened. So marvelous is this wonder that "Your eternal Word has taken immortal value" (Christmas Preface). Having been thus transformed, we proclaim the Good News.

This Christmas, remember that it is not simply Christmas trees, decorated windows, family rooms, and church sanc-

Charlotte Public Library, 3615 Lake Ave., Rochester; 2:30 p.m.; call 716/663-5433.

PRAYER SERVICES

Thursday, Dec. 21: "How God Prepared the World for Christmas," a communal folk service; St. John the Evangelist Church, 2400 Ridge Rd. W., Greece; 7 p.m.; call 716/225-8980.

Thursday, Dec. 21: St. Michael's Church, 312 Liberty St., Penn Yan; 10:30 a.m.; call 315/536-7459.

SOCIALS

Thursday, Dec. 21: evening of traditional and modern Christmas music, sponsored by widowed support group in Palmyra; First United Methodist Church, 109 Church St., Palmyra; 7:30-9:30 p.m.; call 315/597-4272 or 597-5577.

Thursday, Dec. 21: Christmas party; Our Mother of Sorrows School, 1777 Latta Rd., Rochester; call 716/663-1100.

Wednesday, Dec. 27: Holiday craft program for children in kindergarten through third grade; Seymour Public Library, 49 State St., Brockport; 10 a.m.; pre-register by calling 716/637-4140.

Thursday, Dec. 28: Christmas story time for ages 3-5; Seymour Public Library, 49 State St., Brockport; 10:30 a.m.; preregister by calling 716/637-4140.

Thursday, Dec. 28: make New Year's Eve noisemakers for children ages 6-12; Highland Public Library, 971 South Ave., Rochester; 2 p.m.; call 716/271-3840.

Friday, Dec. 29: New Year's Eve party; 700 North Street Senior Center, Rochester; 11 a.m.; \$1.50; call 716/428-6606.

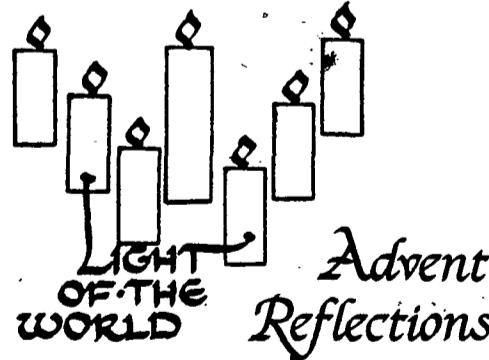
Friday, Dec. 29: TGIF social hour; sponsored by single adult ministry group at St. Louis Church, Pittsford; Richardson's Canal House, Bushnell's Basin; 5-8 p.m.; call 716/223-2157 or 924-7377.

Sunday, Dec. 31: "Carnevale;" St. John of Rochester Parish Center, 18 Wickford Way, Fairport; 5:30 p.m. Mass; 7 p.m. cocktail party followed by dinner and dancing; continental breakfast after midnight; \$25 per person; call 716/377-2110 for reservations.

Sunday, Dec. 31: annual New Year's Eve party sponsored by St. Francis of Assisi Athletic Association, Auburn; 8:30 p.m. dinner; \$15; features live music; call 315/252-8245 for reservations.

Sunday, Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Mass and party concluding 75th anniversary celebration at St. John the Evangelist Church, 549 Humboldt St., Rochester; 7 p.m. Mass followed by reception in church hall; past and present parishioners and friends are welcome; call 716/482-6211.

Sunday, Dec. 31: sixth-annual New Year's Eve party for singles; sponsored by Finger Lakes region S/D/W groups; Saw Dust Cafe, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, North Street, Geneva; 8 p.m.; call 315/536-3629 or 789-2686.



tuaries that have been transformed to speak the Good News. It is our very selves, shouting out the love of our God and the eternal presence of his Beloved.

We are part of the dawn and our light can burst the darkness of human longing and grief. May the Christ of Christmas bless you!

Notice to readers

As is our custom, the *Catholic Courier* will not publish an issue on Dec. 28, the Thursday between Christmas and New Year's Day. Our next edition will be published on Jan. 4, 1990.