

# Wealthy

Continued from page 16.

customed to our good fortune that we regard it simply as a matter of right and of ingenuity rather than of grace and of luck.

We look upon those less well-endowed as if their situation were in most instances self-induced — the result of laziness, malice, avoidable incompetence, or any combination thereof.

Jesus' words — the words of that innocent child in the manger, that Prince of Peace — echo down the corridors of history: "For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25).

It is the rich and powerful people of El Salvador, the kind who sing carols at Christmas about the poverty of the manger; who have their babies baptized in private by their bishop; who lavish gifts on the hierarchy; who donate stained-glass windows in memory of their parents. It is these people who are directly or at least indirectly responsible for the savagery and the carnage.

It is in their interests, after all, that the social and economic orders not be disturbed, for the status quo makes it possible for them to maintain their wealth and their style of life in all its luxury and grandeur.

To preach and to teach about human rights in a place like El Salvador is, of course, a subversive act. It encourages the poor to think that they have as much claim to human dignity as those who make their profits off their backs.

To preach and to teach about human rights is, of course, a revolutionary act. It

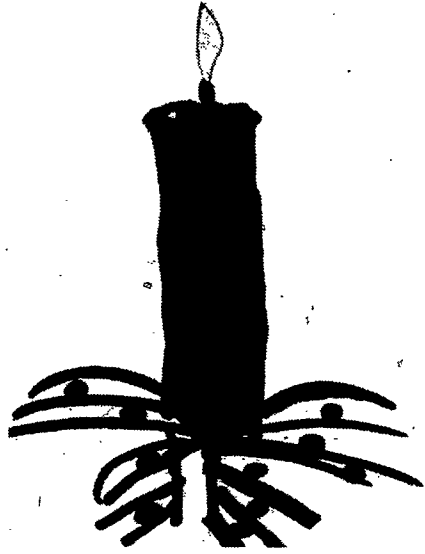
encourages simple laborers to think that they have as much right to establish free and effective trade unions as their employers have to establish their corporate cartels.

To preach and to teach about human rights is, alas, a dangerous act. It can get you killed in a country like El Salvador, where the gap between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, is scandalously wide.

Preaching and teaching about human rights led to the rape and murder of Sisters Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel Ita Ford, and lay woman Jean Donovan.

# Cards

Continued from page 6



"Candle," by Jan Bansbach

Preaching and teaching about human rights led to the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, during the very celebration of the Eucharist. Preaching and teaching about human rights led to the brutal executions of Fathers Ignacio Elacuria, Ignacio Martin-Baro, Amando Lopez, Segundo Montes, and Juan Ramon Moreno.

Their faces were shot off and their brains scooped out. An act of "lavish barbarity," their Jesuit provincial described it.

One tires, therefore, of fellow Catholics — especially during this season of the year — who speak of their Catholic faith as if it

is more interested in another kind of four-footed creature. "I love to draw horses," she said. "I'm really good at horses ... Horses are pretty animals."

More mundane matters sparked Shirley Palmateer's idea to create a showery Christmas tree in her design. Claiming she didn't "really know" why she chose her design, she speculated it might have something to do with her long weekend afternoons. "I've got a hundred coloring books, but I need more," she said. "I've got nothing else to do when my dad watches football."

Dina Dowling, who drew a snowman for one card, may best have summed up the



"Santa and Reindeer," by Melanie Coon

were simply a matter of selective loyalty to the pope on doctrinal and moral teachings that don't exact any personal cost at all from such Catholics.

I say "selective" loyalty because these Catholics conveniently ignore or ingeniously reinterpret the prophetic teachings of Pope John Paul II and his predecessors on social justice and human rights.

We shall sing of grace once again this Christmas, but will it be the "costly grace" of the Gospel, or the "cheap grace" of self-satisfied religiosity?

Would that we could ask the martyrs of El Salvador.

students' reasons for entering the drawing contest. "Drawing makes you happy," she said.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Holy Childhood Christmas cards are available at the following stores: The Village Green Bookstore, East Avenue Gift Shop, The Christmas Cove, The Parkleigh, and all Scrantom's stores. Cards are also available at the school, 100 Groton Pkwy. Call the development office, 716/359-3710, for information.

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