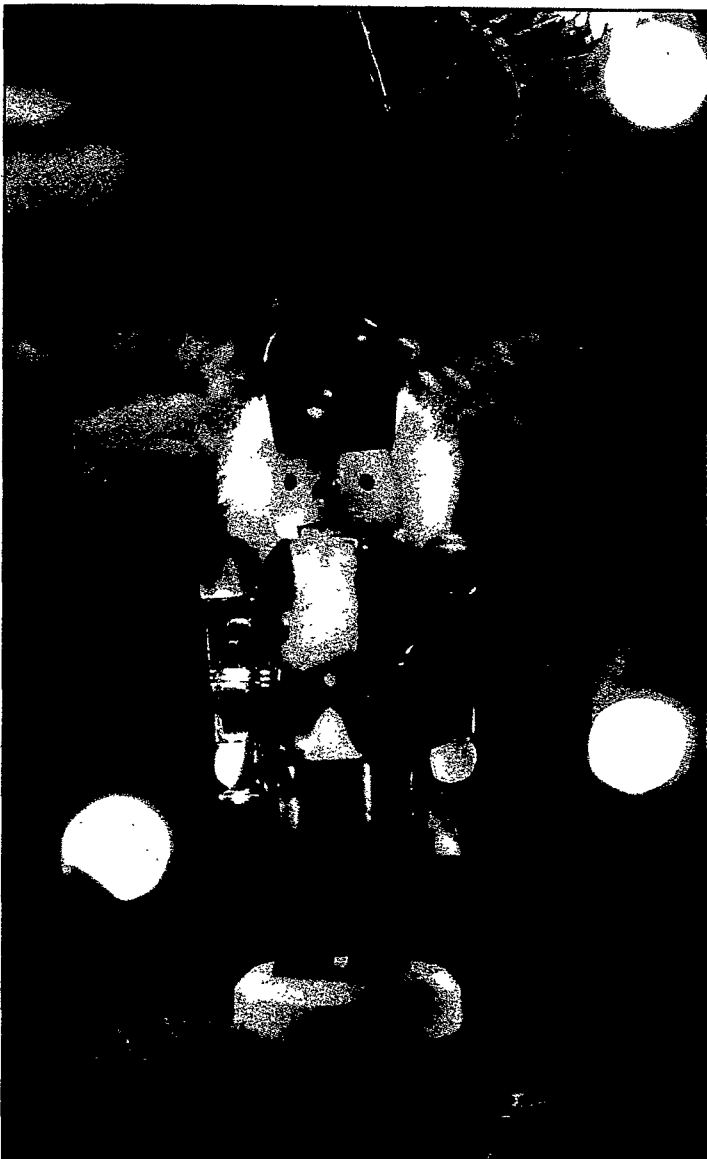


Media fans holiday anxiety



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

names, the box has to be given at least the possibility of being that of "James, the brother of our Lord." The article seemed to downplay the importance of the find, and one has to wonder if that had any relation to the inscription. James is in fact referred to as "James, the brother of our Lord" in Galatians 1:19. Not "a" brother "in" the Lord, not "one of the brethren," but "the" brother "of" our Lord. And so he was. Proof of that familial relationship only furthers

the cause of truth, without in any way diluting the fact that Jesus is God Incarnate.

The Church is not a fragile house of cards. It's well able to withstand the peeling away of centuries of myth, allowing Apostolic truth to shine more brightly and stand more firmly. I do hope there's an attempt made to trace the history of the ossuary, rather than consign it to the archaeological dustbin for fear of its implications.

Sandra Dunn
Sheridan Street, Auburn

I had a great Thanksgiving. I relaxed at the home of some wonderful friends. We had a great meal, laughed a lot and the whole thing left me feeling terrific. The next day, Friday, I didn't have to go to work and was gleeful about that. Wanting to continue my relaxation mode, and looking for a way to celebrate the arrival of the holiday season, I looked around for something different to do early that morning. As would be fitting for a day of leisure, I thought I'd watch a little early morning television.

Of course, the only program on at that hour was the news. Still, I thought it could continue my happy theme for the day because the program seemed to focus mostly on human interest features, weather and some tips for travel that day.

Here's what greeted me: First, the announcer told us that the Christmas shopping season would be shorter this year than usual. I couldn't figure out how that could be the case, since it's always 364 days from Christmas to Christmas. But the announcer seemed certain that we were somehow short this year.

Following this bit of bad news was a feature educating viewers about how to shop at malls and in particular how to transport purchases safely to the car without having them robbed. This included a report actually taped in a local parking lot demonstrating the safest way to try such a trek.

The reporter was even more anxious about how



Patricia Schoelles, SSJ

The Moral Life

shoppers should get into their cars. He urged viewers to search the interior of the vehicle visually before entering it to make sure no one was inside. Even before that, he encouraged shoppers to kneel down next to the vehicle in order to search for a thief who might be lurking underneath.

By the time I finished watching all this, my relaxed mode was gone. I felt agitated and distressed. Instead of luxuriating in the mellowness of Thanksgiving, I had become distraught about a shopping season cruelly cut short for reasons beyond my understanding. I felt rushed and unsure about the possibility of getting so much done in so short a time.

My level of insecurity had increased as well. Not only was I unlikely to make it from the store to my car without being robbed, but I learned that significant dangers waited for me near and under the car as well.

My efforts to know something about myself have convinced me that if I don't have anything real to worry about, I'll concoct something. I think maybe the entire culture is this way. I'm not trying to say that we don't experience something of a sense of being rushed

at holiday time. I'm not trying to imply that people aren't victimized by robberies or that we ought to ignore common-sense precautions regarding our own safety.

I am saying, though, that for most people watching that broadcast last week, some of what we were told to fear was exaggerated by fear-inspiring media features. After all, it is primarily an enormous privilege on this planet to be able to "go shopping" at all. It is just plain wonderful to have access to an automobile, with so many of us able to move around to anywhere we please at anytime we need to be there. Sometimes we let the very blessings of our existence become unnecessary sources of anxiety and fear. We should try to stop that.

You will be sorry to learn that after the news broadcast I turned to a channel featuring tips for holiday decorating. The woman showed us how to paint glue on a pine cone and shower it with glitter. It wasn't until she admonished us to create "professional-looking" pine cones that my earlier nervousness intensified. On top of fear-mongering for the holidays, we are also bombarded with all sorts of silly expectations about how they ought to be observed. I have learned one thing: There are probably better ways to relax during the holidays than trying to catch a little TV early in the morning.

Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

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