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Where Is Christmas?

Phillips Brooks was the distinguished rector of Trinity Church, Boston, one of the great preachers of his day, and sometime Bishop of Massachusetts, but he is remembered most as the author of a Christmas poem which, set to music, has become one of our best loved carols:

“O little town of Bethlehem,/how still we see thee lie!/
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep/the silent stars go by;/
yet in thy dark streets shineth/the everlasting Light;/the
hopes and fears of all the years/are met in thee tonight.”

When we think about these words we are led beyond history and geography to ask another question that has to do with “the hopes and fears of all the years.” Yes, Christ was born in Bethlehem, but where is Christmas?

A person coming from the outside without any knowledge of our culture might look around New York or Chicago and say, Christmas must be in the marketplace: more Christmas songs, decorations, symbols are there than anywhere else. To an economist Christmas might be the name we give to that great surge in retail business and the resulting fantastic increase in consumer credit. A physician will tell you that for many Christmas is the long buildup to a big letdown. My point is simply that, appearances to the contrary, the marketplace is not where Christmas is.

Some people might tell us that Christmas is where old friends are, where families gather around a festive table, and where children play happily. The theme of family and friends is an appealing one in many ways, but it reveals nothing about what we are gathering for or where the real celebration is. Brooks’s poem gently leads us to think in terms of meaning rather than activity.

“For Christ is born of Mary;/and gathered all above,/while mortals sleep, the angels keep/their watch of wondering love./O morning stars, together/proclaim the holy birth!/and praises sing to God the King,/And peace to men on earth.”

This was the everlasting light that shined in the dark streets of Bethlehem and continues to shine in this dark world. Christmas is the response of faith to God’s action in sending his Son into the world. Where is Christmas? Christmas is in the believing heart. The divine initiative comes from God’s loving heart and creates love in ours. The word is made flesh and dwells among us. It is not we who come to God but God who comes to us.

“O holy child of Bethlehem,/Descend to us we pray;/cast out our sin and enter in,/be born in us today./We hear the Christmas angels/the great glad tidings tell/O come to us, abide with us/our Lord, Emmanuel.”

Our guest columnist, the Rev. William H. Baar, is an American priest presently serving the Anglican Chapel of St. George in Venice, Italy.

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ON THE COVER

Drawing by Jean E. Snyder of Milwaukee, Wis.

LETTERS

Loving Each Other

It was a true delight to find in the November 20 issue two inspiring articles.

I echo "Thank You, Lord" for Boyd Wright's timely reminder to trust God's overwhelming grace. Travis Du Priest's reminiscence of T. S. Eliot's poetry was a special gift, and sent me scurrying back to enjoy once more some of my favorites.

But before I even finished reading the article, it occurred to me that his quote from "Ash Wednesday" speaks quite directly to the several controversies brewing in your "letters" section and elsewhere. I would choose to expand the quote somewhat: "Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood/ Teach us to care and not to care/teach us to sit still/even among these rocks/ Our peace in his will."

Without diminishing the importance of these current issues, it seems to me that if all of us were more aware and trusting of God's grace, plus willing to sit still, we might not so often "mock ourselves with falsehood" in the name of either furthering or protecting church structure. If we could come to care more deeply for each other and listen more compassionately, perhaps people once again might be able to say, "See how these Christians love each other" (Tertullian, 197 AD).

I have an inkling that when we stand before our Maker in judgment we will not be accused of ordaining women too soon or too late. Nor will our understanding of St. Mary's place among us be in question. Rather, we will stand guilty of expending energy on those issues and not having spiritually or physically fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the isolated and especially of not having loved each other.

BETSY B. KITCH

Centerville, Ohio

Withholding Names

Allow me to commend TLC's policy of withholding names of contributors to the letters column when so requested. In spite of being the object of criticism from time to time [TLC, Dec. 18], such a policy is wise, considerate and humane. One would think that within a spirit-filled body one might be able to speak the truth in love, but such is not always the case.

Reprisals from any of several sources are real and often bitter.

There are many who claim that to hide behind a wall of anonymity is cowardly. I disagree. It is never cowardly to try to protect, directly or indirectly, one's family and associates from possible recrimination. I'm sure there must be others who appreciate your sensitivity to this problem.

As for myself, I'm retired, aspiring only for heaven, and gloriously free to speak or write whatever my conscience dictates.

(The Rev.) JOHN S. ARMFIELD

Wilmington, N.C.

Cumulations of Ordinations

With some interest I have read the exchange taking place in your pages regarding the cumulative (or non-cumulative) nature of holy orders. Finally, the Rev. Canon Harold Lewis's letter [TLC, Nov. 27] prompted me to write.

My difficulty is with the notion of "cumulation." It is my understanding that the ministries of the laity and the diaconate are not cumulated upon that of the presbyterate, but are subsumed in it.

I consider that my ministry as a priest includes, by subsumption, the ministry of laypersons and that of deacons — along with some elements of the episcopate. I do not see these, however, as layers stacked on top of one another, but as blended into an alloy which is something quite different from any of these others: that alloy is a priest.

(The Rev.) DONALD A. MELVIN

St. Margaret's Church

Chicago, Ill.

The Innkeeper

He, too, had seen the brighter star ascending o'er the desert sand against the eastern sky afar and lifted high his labored hand in midnight's sheer delight for all Creation's stellar band and a barren, village midwife to whom he led one caravan.

Ray Holder



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THE LIVING CHURCH, now in the final stage of its 1988 voluntary fund drive, needs the united support of the Living Church family. Since this magazine is independent and receives no subsidy from the national church, it is vital that our goal of \$125,000 be met.

During 1988 staff members and special reporters provided in-depth coverage of both General Convention and the Lambeth Conference. In 1989 we will continue our efforts to give you prompt and unbiased news coverage each week, informative and inspirational features, the views of Episcopalians and much more. For this reason, every gift, large or small, is needed to strengthen the magazine. Your gift is a significant part in the unique ministry of communication THE LIVING CHURCH provides.

I hope all of our readers and friends will give this appeal their thoughtful consideration and will be as generous as possible. Those who give a total of \$100 or more become Living Church Associates and their names (not addresses) will be published in a special issue of the magazine in February which is dedicated to the Associates. If you have contributed earlier this year, perhaps you might consider adding to your previous contribution. Gifts are tax deductible and a coupon for your convenience is provided below or you may simply send your contribution to: The Living Church, 816 East Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

With all good wishes to you for the Christmas holy days and with sincere thanks,



(The Rev.) H. Boone Porter
Editor

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BOOKS

Richly Rewarding

BROTHERS AND FRIENDS: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis. Edited by Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead. Ballantine. Pp. xxxiii and 347. \$4.95 paper.

Most readers will choose this book to learn more about C.S. Lewis. Perhaps they were not yet Lewis fans when it was published in hardback at \$15.95 in 1982, or perhaps they did not want it that much! Both groups will welcome this inexpensive paperback edition.

Reading the book simply for new C.S. Lewis information and insight, however, misses its purpose. Warren Lewis, less famous than his younger brother, was a fine writer who deserves to be read as such. He wrote to record his life and his brother's, to share with his brother at the time, and also for enjoyment in later years of reminiscence. He used it, too, for reviewing his attitudes and behavior periodically, with purpose of amendment. But he wrote with care of one who values the diary as a literary form.

Those who choose the book as a help in understanding C.S. Lewis better will be richly rewarded, especially with respect to the relationships of C.S. Lewis with his father, Mrs. Moore, his wife and his moving relationship with his brother.

HELEN HOBBS
Salem, Ind.

Lively Portrait

JACK: C.S. Lewis and His Times. By George Sayer. Harper & Row. Pp. x and 278. \$19.95.

At last! Here is the biography of C.S. Lewis his friends and readers have been waiting for. Jack Lewis comes alive in this biography by former pupil, colleague and friend, George Sayer. Sayer, who knew Lewis and those he knew, had access to letters, personal papers and, above all, to his own personal reminiscences. He has created a warm, lively portrait of the man whose writings had an impact on so many lives.

This is a very personal picture of a life. Because the youthful years are often the most interesting, he had concentrated most fully on the early years of Lewis. He takes as a point of depar-

ture Lewis's own *Surprised by Joy* (his spiritual autobiography), building, enlarging and amplifying Lewis's own words. We learn the history and background of Lewis's family — Welsh farmers, who gave Jack his roots, his closeness to the soil. We learn more about his school days at Malvern, which he disliked as he hated all his schools (Sayer himself went from Oxford to Malvern, to become head of the English department until his retirement).

This book examines, from the point of view of a friend who knows from the inside, two areas of the private life of Lewis — the most private, secret of men: his relationship with Mrs. Moore, and his marriage to the American Jewish divorcee, Joy Davidman Gresham. Earlier biographers have

portrayed Mrs. Moore as jealous, possessive, ignorant, small-minded — the prototype of the terrible mother of the Patient in *The Screwtape Letters*: one who made Lewis's life miserable with her domestic demands on him. Sayer gives a much more balanced portrayal of a woman who bestowed real gifts of warmth, hospitality, fun and domestic stability upon her "adopted" son.

Of Joy, Sayer gives a fascinating portrait of the woman whose intellectual gifts and wit matched Lewis's own. He reveals her contribution to *Till We Have Faces* and *The Four Loves*: contributions amounting almost to collaboration.

How fortunate the Lewis world is to have such a gift!

DOREEN ANDERSON WOOD
Sand Springs, Okla.

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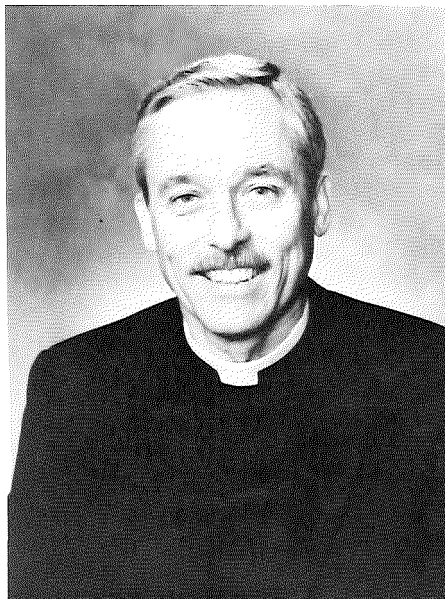
Two Bishops Elected

Two dioceses elected bishops recently. The Rev. Robert Hodges Johnson, rector of Holy Innocents Church, Atlanta, Ga., was elected Bishop Coadjutor of Western North Carolina at a special convention held at the Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, N.C. on November 19. And on November 5, the Rev. Canon Robert Deane Rowley, Jr., canon to the Bishop of Bethlehem, was elected bishop coadjutor in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, during its convention at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Erie [see p. 7].

Fr. Johnson, 54, won the necessary majority in the lay order on the second ballot and the third ballot provided the clergy majority. His consecration is planned for March 11 in Asheville, N.C. The Rt. Rev. William Weinbauer, diocesan bishop since 1975, has announced he will retire early in 1989.

In addition to Fr. Johnson, the nominating committee presented the names of five priests for the special convention: the Rev. Grahame Butler-Nixon, rector of Grace Church, Camden, S.C.; the Rev. William Glover Edwards, rector of Grace Church in Asheville, N.C.; the Rev. Melford Elias Holland, Jr., rector of St. James Church, Collegeville, Pa.; the Rev. George Price, rector of St. Gregory's Church in Boca Raton, Fla.; and the Rev. G. Kerry Robb, rector of St. Mark's Church in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Fr. Johnson has served for 16 years at Holy Innocents and is a member of



Fr. Johnson

the General Board of Examining Chaplains and a member of the board of trustees of the Virginia Theological Seminary, serving on its executive committee.

He has been a clerical deputy to the last five General Conventions, and has served on the ministry committee of the House of Deputies.

Before going to Atlanta, Fr. Johnson served as senior canon, canon pastor and canon precentor of St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Fla. He began his ministry serving the yoked parish of Our Merciful Savior in New Berlin, Fla., and St. George in Fort George Island, Fla. During this time he started the new parish of St. Martin-in-the-Highlands, Jacksonville. He re-

ceived degrees from the University of Florida in 1956 and Virginia Theological Seminary in 1963. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1964.

Fr. Johnson has been married to his wife, Julie, since 1962 and they have a son and a daughter.

• • •

In Northwestern Pennsylvania, Canon Rowley's election was achieved on the second ballot.

Other nominees for the position included the Rev. Keith L. Ackerman, rector of St. Mary's Church in Charle-roi, Pa.; the Rev. John R. Coble, Jr., rector of Trinity Church, Bethlehem, Pa.; the Rev. Richard L. Fenn, rector of St. Luke's Church, Jamestown, N.Y.; the Ven. Henry H. Hoover, II, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Minnesota; and the Rev. John W. Kline, rector of the Church of the Ascension, Bradford, Pa.

Canon Rowley, 47, is the holder of law degrees from the University of Pittsburgh (1965) and George Washington University (1970). The bishop-elect also earned a Master of Divinity Degree from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, in 1977. He was ordained to the priesthood the following year.

Beginning his service in the Diocese of Hawaii in 1977, as diocesan youth minister and dean of students and chaplain of St. Andrew's Priory School, Honolulu, Fr. Rowley was subsequently appointed canon of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Honolulu.

He was rector of St. Timothy's Church in Aiea, Hawaii, from 1981-1983 before being called to the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Fr. Rowley has been married to his wife, Nancy, since 1964. They have two children.

A consecration date has not been set.

(The Ven.) DANIEL L. SELVAGE

Western North Carolina Election

C=Clergy
L=Lay

BALLOT NUMBER	1		2		3	
	C	L	C	L	C	L
Nominees						
Butler-Nixon, Grahame	28	35	32	40	31	39
Edwards, William G.	21	25	18	21	9	10
Holland, Melford E.	9	10	2	1	0	0
Johnson, Robert H.	26	50	37	69	49	83
Price, George	3	6	0	0	0	0
Robb, G. Kerry	1	4	0	0	0	0

Bishop Kerr Dies

The Rt. Rev. Robert Shaw Kerr, retired Bishop of Vermont, died suddenly November 18 at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont at the age of 71.

An active participant in church life, he spent the day prior to his death making his usual round of hospital

calls at the Medical Center Hospital in Burlington.

He was a native of Newport, R.I. and a graduate of Trinity College and General Theological seminary, both of which awarded him honorary doctorates. He was assistant of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City from 1943 to 1946, and began his ministry in Vermont in 1946 at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Barre.

From 1949 to 1961 he was rector of Immanuel Church, Bellows Falls, and during that time he also served as chaplain to the Vermont Academy in

Saxtons River.

In 1961 he went to St. Paul's, Burlington as rector, becoming the first dean of newly designated St. Paul's Cathedral in 1966. He was elected bishop coadjutor of the diocese in 1974 and became diocesan bishop later the same year, a position he served in until his retirement in 1987.

In 1983 he was elected a trustee of General Theological Seminary. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn, a son, a daughter and four grandchildren.

A burial service was held November 21 at St. Paul's Cathedral.

(The Rev. Canon) MICHAEL DUGAN

BRIEFLY...

When Sunday school student Jennifer Gad of St. George's Church in HELLERTOWN, Pa., released a message balloon along with the rest of her class last year, she never knew it would be sent back over a year later from Shanghai, China. Miss Gad received the card, which a local science instructor estimates traveled 9,900 miles by balloon, covered with Chinese characters. When she went to a local Chinese restaurant to have it translated she found the self-addressed card had been sent back by Kang-Xiao Lu (Morning Dew) of Shanghai.

CONVENTIONS

The convention of the **Diocese of Kansas** was the last to be presided over by the Rt. Rev. Richard F. Grein, diocesan. Elected just seven years ago, Bishop Grein will leave in January to become Bishop Coadjutor of New York. A new bishop is expected to be elected at a special convention planned by June 15, 1989.

The convention was hosted by Grace Cathedral in Topeka, but held in the Holiday Inn October 28-29. Delegates first heard eight deputies review the many issues and actions of General Convention. Three women's Triennial delegates followed.

A videotape of the Lambeth Conference prepared by the diocesan communications committee was previewed. This video, which includes an interview with the Rt. Rev. Onell Soto, Bishop of Venezuela (Kansas companion diocese), will start the celebration of the "Year of Anglicanism."

Workshops showed ways for parishes to observe the "Year of Anglicanism" and presented training in environmental stewardship, spiritual development, and combating chemical dependency.

Following the convention Eucharist, Bishop Grein gave his final convention banquet address, stressing the continued importance of outreach, social concerns and shared leadership. He presented gifts honoring the attendance and the approaching 50th wedding anniversary of the Rt. Rev. Edward C. Turner, retired Bishop of Kansas, and his wife, now of Colorado Springs.

In other actions, the convention endorsed General Convention's statement that "Stewardship is the Main Work of the Church"; accepted a budget of \$1,025,064; created an Episcopal Social Service organization for the Kansas City area, similar to an existing one in Wichita; authorized expense payments for two alternate clergy and lay deputies to future General Conventions; adopted guidelines for use of alcohol at church functions and expanded existing diocesan policy on alcoholism and drug use; and retained the rule limiting vestryperson terms to three years.

SANDRA WIECHERT

The **Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania** held its convention November 4-5 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Erie. The Rt. Rev. Donald J. Davis, diocesan, presided.

Convention approved a budget of \$524,310 and passed a number of resolutions relating to the financial support of the clergy. Various other resolutions were considered concerning canonical and constitutional matters.

In other significant action, the convention elected the Rev. Canon Robert Deane Rowley, Jr., to the position of Bishop Coadjutor [see adjacent story].

Special recognition was given to Lawrence G. Wilkinson, retiring president of the board of St. Barnabas House Retreat and Conference Center in North East, Pa. In addition, all clergy and convention delegates received a commemorative gift depicting the seal of the diocese.

(The Ven.) DANIEL L. SELVAGE

The **South American Missionary Society** has elected four new members to its board of trustees. Newly elected are Cynthia Conger of Malvern, Pa., Dr. Charles T. Clemons, San Anselmo, Calif., the Rev. Noel D. Rich of Madison, Ind., and the Rev. John Harvard of Morgantown, Pa. SAMS, based in Ambridge, Pa., was founded in 1976 and was patterned after SAMS-UK, which has been sending missionaries to Latin America for 150 years. The last two named were among the first SAMS missionaries sent from the U.S.

While America commemorated the death of President Kennedy in November, the 25th anniversary of the death of **C.S. Lewis** on the same day has been remembered by many. In Tulsa, Okla., the C.S. Lewis Society sponsored a program that included scholarly discussions by Prof. Joseph Christopher of Tarleton State College and others, a British high tea (complete with cucumber sandwiches), choral Evensong in Trinity Church and a birthday party (Lewis would have been 90 on November 29) at the nearby community of Sand Springs.

The Queen of England joined more than 1,500 people in November to celebrate the dedication of the **renovated south transept of York Minster Cathedral**. The transept's 15th century ceiling was heavily damaged by fire four years ago.

I'll Be Home for Christmas

“And all went
to be enrolled,
each to his own city”

(St. Luke 2:3).



By RICHARD WENTZ

They went because of a decree — each to his own city. A decree from the powers that be. “A decree went out from Caesar Augustus [august old Caesar] that all the world should be enrolled.” Now, that’s a tall order; but they did it — “all went to be enrolled, each to his own city.”

It happens all the time. Every year Caesar makes his decree: “It is hereby proclaimed that everyone shall go home for Christmas, each to his own city.” Ask your local travel agent if it isn’t so. Call the airlines. No doubt about it. All the world checks in at home — each to his own city. Why, the highways and air lanes get so crowded, you’ve got to make plans two, three months in advance. The decree from the powers that be is a powerful one.

Every year, along about the first of November, my students begin coming up to me: “Sir! Sir, I know we’re not supposed to do this, but I have flight reservations for the 12th of December, and our final’s not until the 15th. Is there any chance I can take mine early? It’s the only flight I could get; and my folks expect me that weekend.” Each to his own city. Why there are those who can’t stand their relatives,

The Rev. Richard E. Wentz is professor of religious studies at Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz., and the author of numerous publications. He was recently elected as editor of the Anglican Theological Review.

those for whom even Mom and Pop are a source of pain — always expecting you to do things you don’t want to do. It doesn’t seem to matter — at this time of year everybody goes up to be enrolled, each to his own city. “I’ll be home for Christmas; you can count on me. There’ll be snow and mistletoe, and a present on the tree!”

Who decrees it? Who says so? Caesar! The powers that be. It’s just something you don’t question. I remember Christmas. It seems it always snowed when I was a boy. There was always ice on the dam, and on the Pohopoco, the Big Creek. Sledding. Ice skating. Fires — bonfires along the Pohopoco, to keep you warm. A place to sit down on a log, take off your skates and warm your feet. We were poor. Dad had never held a job for very long. But Mother worked — Cohen’s Department Store. And we always had a tree. I had a windup Lionel, a streamliner — Union Pacific Lines. We always had dinner at Mammy and Pappy’s place, about a quarter of a mile away. There were more presents, from my uncles and Aunt Pearl.

I can always smell chocolates at Christmas. Chocolate and ginger. Cinnamon. But I guess most of all, I remember the church. Old Jacob’s Church. Weeks of choir rehearsals. Candlelight services. Caroling — riding an old truck loaded with hay. And then we went back to the church into the early morning hours, back for hot chocolate and cookies. Some of my happiest childhood memories are tied up with Christmas at old Jacob’s Church.

The sights, the smells, the sounds of Christmas. Do you remember Rat and Mole, the two good friends in Kenneth

Grahame’s *Wind in the Willows*? They’d been on an outing, away from home for a long time. And then it was mid-December, close to Christmas. They looked in at the windows of villagers and watched the crackling firesides. They plodded on. “Once beyond the village, where the cottages ceased abruptly, on either side of the road they could smell through the darkness the friendly fields again; and they braced themselves for the last long stretch, the home stretch, the stretch that we know is bound to end, some time, in the rattle of the door latch, the sudden firelight, and the sight of familiar things greeting us. . . .”

Then came a call, a mysterious call out of the darkness. It reached Mole, “making him tingle through and through with its very familiar appeal.” What were they — those appeals? What did he sense? “Home! That was what they meant. . . . why, it must be close by him at that moment, his old home that he had hurriedly forsaken and never sought again. . . . now it was sending out its scouts and messengers to capture him and bring him in.”

It was like a decree, from an authority no one can resist. The sights and smells and sounds of Christmas are a call from home — scouts and messengers set out to bring us home, “Each to his own city.” Why do people go home for Christmas? Because Christmas has an authority most of us don’t understand. It sends mysterious calls and appeals. It reaches all of our senses — ginger cookies, plum pudding, and the Christmas goose. The twinkle of tiny lights, the caress of the fireside and the soft lines of snow on the hemlock. The scent of pine. Make no mistake about

it, it isn't just a decree from Caesar that gets us out. There is a greater authority at work. A message hunts us down and beckons us with the promise of home.

Home. All of life is really a journey homeward, a search for home. Home. We go home on Christmas. We go in person, or we go in spirit. Why? Because, realize it or not, Christmas is home. We have been away. We have been about our business, making money, spending it, running churches, taking care of babies, attending workshops, going to aerobic sessions, partying, attending classes at the university. We have been very busy. But tonight there is a mysterious call, a curious appeal in the air. Together we will go home, home to Christmas.

Because, you see, Christmas is home. Christmas is from where we have come. Christmas is the beginning. The beginning of everything. Something to come home from out of the big, wide, sophisticated world that calls itself reality. You have nothing to prove here. No stress. No pretense. No deadlines. Just sit back, take off your shoes, and wiggle your toes by the fire. This is really real. This is home. Christmas is home because on this day you learn who you really are — a child of the Child of Christmas. This is the day when you learn that the Heart of the Universe beats with a love so great that it burst forth into new life in spite of the world's attempt to stifle the birth. This is not just a day of sentiment about peace on earth. No, this is home.

"For to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" Sooner or later you must come home to this. You — each to his own city. Sometimes we neglect the trip; we don't make it home and that's too bad. It's terrible. Rat tried to persuade Mole that they were too busy, too much in a hurry, to follow the smells of home. And Mole fell into a terrible grief about it all. "I smelled it suddenly," he cried, "when I called and you wouldn't listen, Rat — and everything came back to me with a rush — and I wanted it. Oh dear! Oh dear! — and when you wouldn't turn back, Ratty, and I had to leave it, though I was smelling it all the time — I thought my heart would break . . . but you wouldn't turn back, Ratty, you wouldn't turn back." Ah my friend, don't be dissuaded. If you catch the smells of Christmas, return, return. Come home to Christmas.

No Idiot's Tale

By GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM

I have often wondered what Christmas is like in Australia. Think of it: 90 degrees and swimming! A summertime Christmas: no jingle-bells, no snow scenes, no Santas in heavy winter gear. Alas for the poor reindeer: they would have to haul a carriage.

The nearest thing to this that I have experienced was a Christmas on a troopship headed out of San Francisco for combat stations in the South Pacific. It was warm and rainy. On board were perhaps a thousand Marines, most of them seasick, and all of them homesick. Over the intercom came the voice of good old Bing crooning, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." Well, the song was all right once, maybe even twice, but after the third or fourth time most of us were ready to jump overboard.

Little did I realize that just one year later some of us would be observing Christmas in the huge frame assembly hall of a former Japanese military school in Kumamoto, Japan. The Marines had decked the place with fir trees and other greens, and the room was packed. We had the choir of a Japanese Lutheran school to lead the singing. The special offering of this group was a Christmas anthem sung in Japanese to a tune from an Italian opera! A Japanese Methodist minister preached the sermon (not in Japanese), and a little Japanese boy, dressed in a flaming red kimono, concluded the ceremony by singing, "Merry Christmas to You!" to the traditional birthday melody. The Marines surged forward, picked up the little boy and carried him out on tall shoulders, chanting, "Merry Christmas to you!"

Christmas is Christmas no matter

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where it is, no matter what the circumstances.

And why is this? What is it, for instance, that makes Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* so powerful? Well it's the old story, isn't it? Christmas carries immense power simply because it deals with that which is fundamental in the entire creation: and that fundamental item is love.

It has long been my contention that basic happiness — that characteristic which is sometimes called "equanimity" — is really impossible to attain unless somewhere in the back of one's mind is the assurance that the human race in general, and oneself in particular, are loved.

Indeed, it is when that assurance, conscious or unconscious, is not there, that people become unstable, unpredictable, and, like Scrooge, generally ready to grasp whatever may appear to offer immediate gratification. Hence our weaknesses for popularity, for pleasure, for prestige, for pots of gold, for power. The creature becomes desperate, lest life come and go without some form of satisfaction, without some thrill, without some return on one's investment, such as that may be.

And the plain fact is that there is nothing — absolutely nothing — which can give us happiness: only the assurance of love.

But Christmas, praises be, tells us that we are loved, that the entire creation is the result of that love, that "God so loved the world." Hence it sets off a veritable tumult of joy: an explosion of primary excitement. Christmas announces that our life is not merely a passing incident in the apparent infinitude of space and of time, as so many of us fear that it may be.

It was Macbeth who said, "Life's but a walking shadow . . . it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. . . ." Perhaps our deepest dread springs from

the suspicion that Macbeth just might have been right.

Hence the power of Christmas. For Christmas, whether in Australia, or in the gloom of a rolling ship, or under the strangest of circumstances in a foreign land, is the exuberant proclamation that life is not simply “a walking shadow” and certainly not “a tale told by an idiot.” In fact, the tale told by St. Matthew and St. Luke is, on the contrary, the exact opposite of these. It is the electrifying declaration that Christ’s coming into the world signifies the reality of everything which the heart could desire, namely, the assurance of love: “Peace on earth, good will toward men.”

But is it true? The answer to this rather crucial question lies, of course, in the rest of the story, and the rest of the story speaks for itself. If the rest of the New Testament had not done this and carried conviction to millions of minds over the centuries, I doubt whether Christmas would even be observed, let alone observed with the fervor which, obviously, it inspires to this day.

There is something cosmic about Christmas. Even nonbelievers rise to it. Personally, I think that the cosmic something has to do with a hidden assurance which taps on every heart, Christian or non-Christian. That assurance, actually, is the Spirit of God himself, God who is not far from any one of us, and whom we recognize, instinctively, in Jesus of Nazareth.

“Joy to the world: the Lord is come!”

Word From Our Sponsor

Somewhere within this long unwrapping day — between the ribbons, boxes, bows and envelopes — let’s call a truce, “Time Out” enough to look beyond the giving and the getting to the giver of it all and to the simplest, richest, freest gift was ever sent, no ribbons, strings or bows attached, just life wrapped in the bundled form that lies in Bethlehem’s manger.

J. Barrie Shepherd

The Lost Second

Some thoughts about families

By MARY ROELOFS STOTT

On New Year’s Eve at midnight, the clocks round the world stopped and a second was dropped from the net of time, a black pinhole of silence, and I felt as if my mind were looking down from that motionless dot of void. I saw glimpses of the Christmas lights circling this hard year of my children grown and leaving, and my heart’s wondering what of me and my dear hopes were they taking in the bottom of their baggage.

Just before Christmas I had taken a trip, and on a snow-swept mountain slope there was a house — weathered and half-crumpled by the years and the poverty. I remember passing it, on an icy dip down through West Virginia, and shivering at the desolation, bleak and unremitting in the patch of old garden and forlorn meadow cleared from the pines. But somebody with infinite patience had outlined every gaunt angle in a blaze of Christmas bulbs, green and red and white, twinkling in the wind — a pride and glory of welcome for one coming home; and I thought it might be a child now grown, pausing, turning back from a faraway year to the certainty of the waiting light. And I remember David’s cry in the night, thanking God who “setteth the solitary in families.”

Over the years I had watched children rush out of the scampering days when Christmas was a flowering wonder confidently expected, blooming in

the snow and hush of year’s ending, and the months in between were a toilsome wait. Advent calendars hung by the cot were tiny windows of promise, opening one by one, letting the sunlight glitter small dreams inching closer to the door on the manger, where a baby laughed in a flood of light from a star, like the one shining all year on one’s own bed, if one only woke up to see.

And then, sure as the summons of fate, came the church pageant with the bells ringing across the night fields, and candles twinkling in holly, and the organ pealing out carols from all the crossbars in the ceiling shadows, while from a stirring of whispers and bobbing feet, pint-size costumes in magnificence, galloped through the Christmas story . . . Herod, crumpled in royal velvet, pointing a stony finger for, “Go! search diligently the young child,” the kings swooping in their draping robes round the aisles, dragging recalcitrant



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camels and old cigar boxes gleaming in smudgily pasted sequins, for gifts beyond telling.

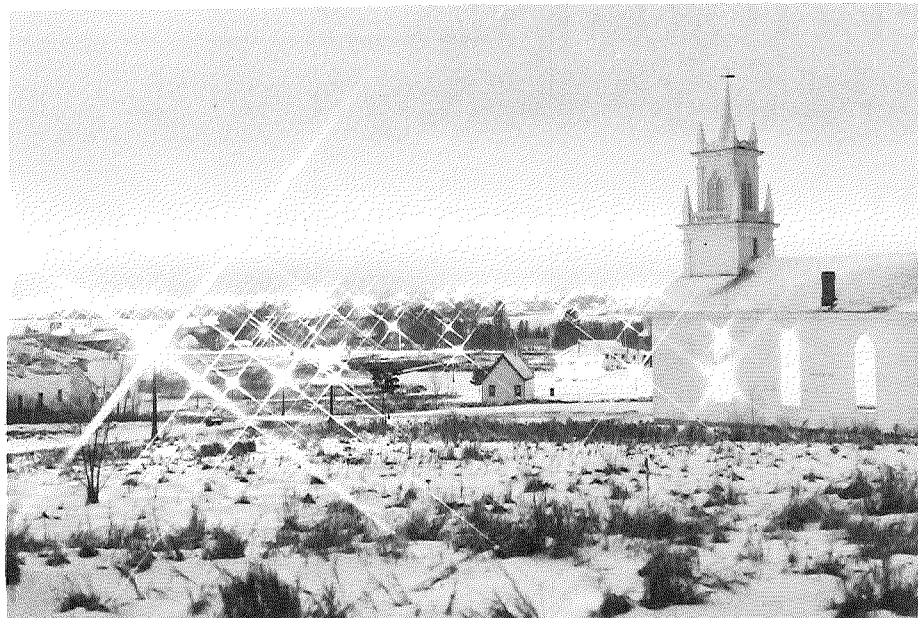
In a dead heat they dropped before a Mary, blissfully beautiful, dangling a Jesus doll by the elbow, while Joseph stood stiffly in the background, dour and useless, as though saying, "I will not be happy just because it is Christmas" — for whoever wanted the part of Joseph!

And then the organ came crashing in with "Hark! the herald angels sing," as a sheeted Gabriel lead a band of strenuous nightgowns over the whole mob of wiggling bodies that was eager to burst out into the night.

They scattered to the turkey back home, in gold crust and chestnut dressing, and the tree shimmering in tinsel and ruby lights over a mound of shivering tissue and ribbons and just plain brown boxes bearing bicycles and trucks, flat and unrecognizable except to a dad's despairing eye.

Oh! how they ran, children grabbing delights — up, up the ladder of the years, so eager were they for the adult world stretching out ahead. I have watched the magic and the astonishment leave their faces — little by little the round baby look becomes taut and lean with the problems of self, and the impatience for old strictures and patterns imposed. Sometimes they jumped the rungs too soon, skipping those last hard steps of enforced study before experience. But always they leave — one by one, anxious for the freedom from bonds, not quite realizing there are routines waiting with their own built-in demands, and values do not disappear for being ignored or forgotten, but continue precious and adamant. Trouble and pain cannot be escaped, and the loneliness of being tied to no one is a permanence without loyalty, and the heart withers on its own selfishness. Love and hearth waiting warm at night are the only bright promise against the unknown coming to all of us. . . .

Ah, so much to know, before one can even know, and I thought of a boy born with stars in his face; and the stars have dimmed before a stubborn intelligence and driving resolve in competition and assessment. And I thought him gone until I felt his hand reaching out to me, and I crossed out of the lost second with his warm, sure grasp. Welcome, son, welcome — and, O World out there from where he stepped back, be gentle with his tender heart and young spirit.



RNS

A Passing of the Peace

By WENDALYN NICHOLS

The little stone church up the street sits two blocks from Papa's disapproval, and has for as long as he's been in the valley. Behind its arched red doors the Eucharist would be celebrated this Christmas Eve, in reverent remembrance of the miraculous Advent, and with joyful recognition of the upheaval it has wrought on our complacency. According to my grandfather, midnight services are only slightly less ridiculous than believing that the holy elements are more than consecrated, that they "transmute or some such nonsense" into a corporal reality. "Transubstantiate, Papa," I correct him, impatient. "The blood and body of our living Lord."

He shakes his head. "T'ain't sense," he mutters, with a rueful tone that tells me he's more baffled by my departure from our family's church than by any mysteries of the eucharistic doctrine. Dear Papa, he loves his church fiercely, and his children equally so; no wonder he is harsh when the one rejects the other. Tread-

ing softly upon his bewilderment, I told him I would go to the service that night, and my mother with me.

"Well, do watcha want," he said, "never been there but what I come out with less than I went in."

The powder cold brought relief from the stifling stuffiness as my mother and I stepped out onto the icy walk, she leaning on my arm to keep from slipping. The doors of the church seemed to smile in good natured amusement as we two refugees from hostile territory were welcomed into the warmth. The little sanctuary bespoke that marriage of the immutable with the individual that I have come to love so in the catholic faith. All about me were the familiar furnishings of my own church 600 miles away: the high altar with its candles and familiar fittings, the red prayer books and padded kneeling benches. Yet this rustic Montana church was paneled in pine, and its servants were relaxed in their reverence. The acolytes scurried to a door fully visible to the parishioners and emerged minutes later, adjusting their vestments; the rest wore snowboots; the lector was a cowboy.

Wendalyn Nichols, of Seattle, Wash., is a student at New College, Oxford, England.

(Continued on page 14)

Our Greeting

We rejoice to send Christmas greetings to all of our readers, young and old, wherever they may be. For the entire Living Church Family, may this be a time of true joy and gratitude. May it be a time when prayers are answered, when good memories are revived, when friendships are reaffirmed, when hopes for the future are kindled, and when the Lord is praised. May we be conscious of the fellowship of our Lord's holy mother and of all the saints and angels, and of our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world. May we remember the poor and unfortunate and actively help them. Finally, may we know the blessing of that peace which passes understanding which Jesus bestows on those who love him.

Christmas Thoughts on Lambeth

As we come to the end of 1988, among the most memorable events of the year for members of the Episcopal Church, and of all the other Anglican churches, was the Lambeth Conference, when bishops from the entire Anglican Communion met in Canterbury during the middle of the summer.

In his Christmas message to church members all over the world, the Most Rev. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, sends his greetings to all of us and then speaks of Lambeth.

"One of the most heartening experiences of recent months has been the post-Lambeth mailbag. From flooded Bangladesh, hurricane-torn Jamaica and Mexico, politically turbulent Burma, famine-stricken Sudan, as well as more settled and comfortable parts of the world, the same message has come through — the bishops returned home renewed in hope and refreshed by grace received at Lambeth. The depth and strength of our fellowship almost took us by surprise. A conference which allocated three hours each morning to worship, prayer, Bible study and discussion sounds like a leisurely religious experience. But it was this priority which created the quality of our fellowship and helped us glimpse the vision of God. This experience of Communion has made a deep impression, and as the bishops returned home with their Lambeth memories, I am sure many of them viewed our differences and disagreements in a new perspective."

Others speaking from less exalted positions also have found that Lambeth made a difference, that a new sense of cooperation and mutual responsibility has been kindled. Thanks be to God if this is indeed so, and may such a spirit prevail in the months and years ahead.

The Old and the New

When people use the words "old" and "new," they are sometimes referring either to what is worn out, or what is up-to-date. "My auto is old," means it doesn't work well anymore: I must get a "new" one, a more recent model year, up-to-date.

Then there is another sense in which the words are



used. That which is "old" is that which lasts. The thing has value because it is old, it has stood the test of time. And that which is new (by contrast) is the unfamiliar, the untested, the passing fad.

At Christmastide, we speak of the old and the new; and we mean old as that which has lasted, and new as the very much up-to-date. Christmas evokes memories — great traditions of the past, thoughts reaching back over the years. But at the same time, new birth — as up-to-date as the new birth of God's love in our hearts today. New, because the birth of Christ brought new hope to the world, and provides new hope now.

These days, in church life as on the national scene, there are things that seem new, in a less than positive sense of the word; also, of old in the sense of needing re-direction. But there is also so much that is old — meaning tried and true, tested, denoting stability, order, frame of reference, tradition; some things that are new in that they bespeak an unfolding of God's purpose, a contemporaneity and spontaneity of faith.

Christmastide, celebrating an incarnational faith, can be a time of reflecting with gratitude upon the things which have lasted, and at the same time of sorting and sifting between new stirrings of the Holy Spirit and the following of fad. We believe that Christ is present in our world, but not necessarily that his presence is reflected in every wind of doctrine, either religious or political.

May Christmastide this year be old in splendid memory of things past, and may it be bright with new meaning in the realization of God's peace and purpose in our hearts. May we find true joy in giving because God gave his Son, and because it is the Savior who gives true hope today.

Christmas – 1988

The Presiding Bishop's Message

What is Christmas without Joseph?

How often the obedient and patient carpenter is omitted from our recollection of events surrounding the birth of our blessed Lord. The iconography of Christmas usually has Joseph unobtrusively in the background, leaning on his staff or leading the heavy-laden donkey into Egypt. Yet, God called Joseph, and through him guided the Holy Family through the dangers of our Lord's infancy.

When Mary was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit and Joseph considered terminating their betrothal, an angel appeared to him in a dream. The angel revealed to Joseph the working of the Holy Spirit, and told him not to be afraid to take Mary into his house. And the angel named the child Jesus. Joseph was obedient to God's messenger.

When Herod, having heard of the birth of Jesus, set out to kill the infant, again an angel appeared to Joseph. God's messenger told him to take the family into Egypt until Herod's death. Again, Joseph was obedient and took the Holy Family into the safety of exile.

In Egypt an angel appeared to Joseph and told him of Herod's death, but warned him to avoid the region of Judea and to settle in a town called Nazareth. Joseph, ever God's obedient servant, did as he was told.

Holy, as in "Holy Family," does not mean "stress-free." The brief account of Joseph in the New Testament does not leave us with a record of a trouble-free family. Joseph was called by God to do what was socially unacceptable in taking a pregnant Mary into his house; he was unable to find a suitable place for her to give birth; he led his family into exile; he had to begin a new life in Nazareth. And when Jesus eluded his parents at the age of 12 in the temple, the account does not suggest a doting parent or a compliant child. The story of Joseph is unique, but it is also the story of many of us.

Christmas is one of the most sacred times in our culture. Joseph is an important part of our understanding of the Incarnation because he helps remind us that God entered into the very core of our humanity. Joseph reminds us that God often calls the most lowly and the most unlikely to be instruments of salvation. Joseph reminds us that our relationships may not always be trouble-free or happy, but they can be holy.

May you have a blessed Christmas; a Christmas observed with the awareness that God can work in and through you; a Christmas celebrated with the awareness that God makes all life holy.

The Most Rev. EDMOND L. BROWNING
Presiding Bishop

Lullaby

Lullay, my babe, my precious child,
Softly croons sweet Mary mild;
Child of my heart, Thou tiny boy,
God's own gift, my soul's true joy.

Brightly beams a star above,
To mark Thy birthing place, my love;
To mark a poor and shabby stall,
The treasure of heaven, made known to all.

Sleep now sweet Jesu, born for mankind,
Named from the womb, through God's Spirit Divine;
To save us from sin and eternal dying,
Thou Savior of all, in a manger lying.
My soul, indeed magnifies the Lord,
For he chose me to bear His Incarnate Word,
Though I understand little of this, I know
His goodness shall follow where'er I go.

Lullay, Lullay, sleep on in peace,
Shepherds adore Thee on bended knees,
Heavenly choirs of angels sing,
Kings from afar their gifts shall bring.

We too would share in Thine adoration,
As Thou comest once more for our salvation.
Holiest child e're born on earth,
Exult we now in Thy glorious Birth.

Martha Webb Dale

Christmas Query

When

you saw the star
that blazed the sky
heard heaven's song
and earth's reply

Were

you the shepherd
come to adore
or innkeeper
who shut the door?

B.J. Bramhall

December 24

She stands by the fire
near the corner of the warehouse
red-striped knitted hat pulled over her ears
stained gray coat too tight
she leans on a wooden brown cane
rubs her mittened hands over the heat
mumbles to herself
In the distance . . . "Silent Night"

Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr.

Passing the Peace

(Continued from page 11)

There were perhaps 40 minutes of special music before the service, and I smiled at the resemblance of this performance to concerts in the church I grew up in, for the choir was unpracticed, and the mother-daughter duet, the hit-and-miss soloists were far removed from the trained singers of the cathedral in my own diocese. But this unabashed informality merely underscored the sincerity of the people, and the bells of the faithful as we all sang the hymns rang more lustily than ever does the sounding brass of some self-conscious performers who prance about Christendom in these days. No display of the most beautiful voices, no competition with the next church for the greatest choir, no rivalry for the latest musical could be found here. I heard only the voices of the joyful, infused with the wonder of the miraculous.

This was what I had left my own tradition to find: a sense of wonder — of history — of something greater than myself. This reverence, I thought, was what my fundamentalist church had lost. With all the fervor of an expatriate embracing her adopted country, I saw only the shortcomings of my former faith, and of its more frenetic adherents who, like Papa, misunderstand those who would call their priest a celebrant, a mere catalyst in the union of the single soul with the many and with the One.

Yet that night — the night when we

celebrate the arrival of this One, this great Leveler whom we all share in common — that night I realized that my own severity in dismissing my old beliefs pushed me dangerously close to being Papa's counterpart in attempting to be his counterbalance. For it was not my church, but I who had lost that sense of wonder, and if I now found it in an older tradition, it was one no less subject to error and iniquity; else why, this night, would the rector have spoken on peace?

His homily was quite simple: no talk of international discord nor of ecclesiastical infighting, but of inner apprehension, of our myopic fixation of quotidian anxieties. Peace, for our restlessness; "il s'agit de n'être pas si agité." Peace, for our fear: this craning to see who's coming, tripping from ahead, slipping from behind, beside, in paranoiac preoccupation. Peace, for our possessiveness: our confederate desires to win a thing, a thought, a person. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

My mother and I stepped out into snowlight in the first tentative minutes of Christmas day, and carried with us back to the house the taste of Christ's blood-wine, the scent of balsam and burning candles. The family was much as we had left them: watching television and eating their own continuous version of "reveillon."

"So yer back," grumbled Papa, "git anathin' out of it?"

"Peace be always with you, Papa," I said.

Thanks be to God.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Retirements

The Rev. **Philip Clarke**, as rector of Trinity Church, Abbeville, S.C.

The Rev. **Cannon McCreary**, as rector of St. Andrew's, Greenville, S.C.

Renunciations

On June 8 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Peoria, Ill., the Rt. Rev. Edward H. MacBurney, Bishop of Quincy, accepted the renunciation of the ministry of **Robert William Faull, Jr.**

Honorary Degrees

At its annual Founders' Day convocation, the University of the South awarded the following honorary degrees: Doctor of Divinity to the Rt. Rev. **Onell Soto**, Bishop of Venezuela and former mission information officer for World Mission at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City, and Doctor of Civil Law to **Arthur Ben Chitty**, sometime president of the Association of Episcopal Colleges and for 20 years director of Associated Alumni of Sewanee, and **Elizabeth Chitty**, who with her husband is historiographer of the University of the South and collaborator on numerous books and articles about Sewanee.

Deaths

The Rev. **Gilbert Ballou Ayres**, deacon of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Midland Park, N.J., died of pneumonia at the age of 78 on November 6.

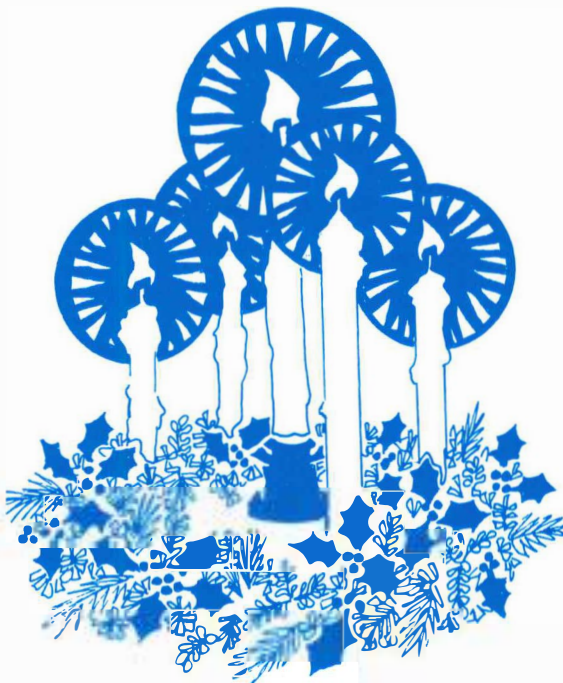
A native of Rhode Island, Deacon Ayres held the S.B. and Ph.D. degrees from M.I.T. He was ordained deacon in 1973 and had been at Good Shepherd since 1974. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte, and five children.

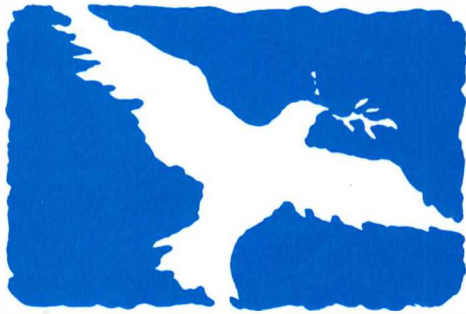
The Rev. **Russell Manney**, provost of the Cathedral of St. Paul, Detroit, died on October 20 at the age of 55.

Ordained priest in 1983, Fr. Manney was a graduate of the Univ. of Detroit and attended Seabury-Western Seminary. From 1982 to 1984 he was vicar of St. Matthew's, Flat Rock, Mich. He had been at the cathedral in Detroit since 1984.

The Rev. **Gene Thomas White**, a communications officer of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief and a leader in refugee and migration ministries, died of cancer on November 12 at the age of 40.

A graduate of Hobart College and General Theological Seminary, Fr. White was ordained priest in 1973 and was curate of Redeemer, Pittsburgh, from 1974 to 1975. He later joined the staff of the Episcopal Church Center when then Presiding Bishop John Allin appointed him a communications officer. Since seminary he has been associated with St. Luke's-in-the-Fields, New York City, and was a non-stipendiary priest there. He was also a longtime member of the Union of Black Episcopalians. He is survived by his mother, Louise White.





BENEDICTION

The author, the Rev. Raymond E. Abbitt, resides in Denton, Texas.

During World War II, I was held by the Japanese for 37 months. We were moved to many places until we were interned behind barbed wire on the outskirts of the city of Davao on the Philippine Island of Mindanao. Here we were, for almost two years, enduring the inhuman indignities, the intellectual degradation, the most base humiliation, and starvation in the hellish conditions.

Two days before Christmas Eve, 1943, we were told we were going to be taken to Manila to the Santos Tomas Prison Camp. Some of us were jubilant, not realizing we were going to a starvation camp already housing over 4,000 prisoners. On Christmas Eve we were put in the hole of a Japanese troop ship in the harbor of Davao. We were told the trip would take ten days and since there were American submarines in the waters, we might be torpedoed at any time.

The Japanese closed the hatch over us and the place was pitch black. The only sound was the labored breathing of the 250 people and, here and there, a muffled, stifled sob.

We were depressed and in the depths of despair, thinking of home on Christmas Eve, of our families and our friends, wondering what they were doing and if they were thinking of us, for they had no news of us since Pearl Harbor Day. Depressed, dispirited, down-hearted, everyone was silent.

Then, very softly, out of the bleakness and blackness of the night, a lady with a beautiful voice began to sing tenderly, almost timidly, "Silent night, holy night," and as she continued, one by one, others joined in until all of us were singing in rich harmony as we offered our thoughts and prayers to the Christ Child on that Christmas Eve from the black hole of the troop ship.

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KEY — Light face type denotes AM, black face PM; add, address; anno, announced; A-C, Ante-Communion; appt, appointment; B, Benediction; C, Confessions; Cho, Choral; Ch S, Church School; c, curate; d, deacon, d.r.e., director of religious education; EP, Evening Prayer; Eu, Eucharist; Ev, Evensong; EYC, Episcopal Young Churchmen; ex, except; 1S, 1st Sunday; hol, holiday; HC, Holy Communion; HD, Holy Days; HH, Holy Hour; HS, Healing Service; HU, Holy Unction; Instr, Instructions; Int, Intercessions; LOH, Laying On of Hands; Lit, Litany; Mat, Matins; MP, Morning Prayer; MW, Morning Worship; P, Penance; r, rector; r-em, rector emeritus; Ser, Sermon; SM, Service of Music; Sol, Solemn; Sta, Stations; V, Vespers; v, vicar; YPF, Young People's Fellowship.