

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

December 2004

The Altar

A true Christmas story...

Page 4

THE BISHOPS AND THE POLITICIANS

*Morality and politics may
clash, but the Church must still
speak.*

Page 8

Christmas without Christ

Life in a time of revolution

Page 12





*Cover: Nativity from a 15th
century French Book of
Hours*

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Volume 6, Number 12

The Altar

A true Christmas Story about a great New Mexican.

Page 4

The Bishops and the Politicians

Our political climate is tough to weather.

Page 8

Claiming Our Patrimony

Intrinsic and extrinsic values make the Mass a beautiful thing!

Page 10

The Value of a Mass

Several saints set the stage for the Year of the Eucharist.

Page 11

Christmas without Christ

Never does one appreciate more the good of which one has been deprived.

Page 12

The Book Fair

When Harry Potter replaces Martin Porres.

Page 14

Around the Archdiocese

Page 15

December Calendar

Page 15

Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo
Stephanie Block-editor, Carol Suhr-copy editor
Correspondence to *The Pequeños Pepper* may be addressed to:
325 Ellen St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87031
or phone: 505 866 0977 or www.lospequenos.org
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We are an Archdiocesan-wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

THE ALTAR

In Loving Memory of Enrique "Henry" Trujillo

By Clyde Archibeque

"...Santa Maria, Madre de Dios..." "...Holy Mary, Mother of God..."

Even though it was mid-December, snowfall was a rare occurrence in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1944, winter set in early. Winter, the dead of winter, was a most appropriate season for this terrible era. American boys and young men were combatants in one of the most terrible battles of World War II, the Battle of the Bulge. Snow was a common sight during this season in the Ardennes Forest but this was the most dreadfully cold winter for as long as anyone could remember. Many young men were mortally wounded or freezing to death in that horrible battle. America was deeply entrenched in the European war. Since the Normandy Invasion, hope was endemic that the war would end quickly. The Battle of the Bulge shattered that expectation. The German army attacked and all but stopped the swift Allied advance.

Back home, families gathered around the radio and fervently read newspapers for any information concerning the plight of their loved ones. They prepared for Christmas, but did so with little enthusiasm. Who could experience joy, when so many were dying. In Albuquerque the Trujillo family participated in the traditional Mexican-American celebration of "*Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe*," the Blessed Virgin Mother's apparition to Juan Diego. However, they did so with much dread, praying that their oldest son, brother, and young husband would survive.

The Trujillo's son, Enrique, was one of the many young GIs trapped in the Ardennes. This year's fiesta had special significance because many petitions, prayers, and novenas to the Virgin were offered, pleading for her intercession for their beloved Enrique.

Each family in this small, poor community built an altar in front of its home in honor of the Blessed Virgin. The Anglo community displayed lights and Santas. They found it odd that their Mexican neighbors built altars to the Virgin. The Mexican community found it even more peculiar for anyone to show reverence to a fat, old elf. Nevertheless, each neighbor residing in that small community tried to outdo the other with his altar. As a result, the combined effort was a magnificent display. For one weekend each December, the weekend closest to the actual feast day, December twelfth, the neighborhood was transformed into a paradise. It was truly a place where the Mother of God could surely reside.

This year the fiesta was celebrated late, the weekend of the sixteenth. The Germans attacked the Allies on that same day. For Enrique this day proved to be the most sacred day of his life.

The fiesta followed its normal routine. The procession wound its way through the community's streets. The parish priest led a line of children dressed as little angels and little Juan Diegos. "*Matachines*," "*Mariachis*" and parishioners followed close behind. Each altar was blessed by the procession several times that weekend.

The Trujillos gathered at their altar the evening of the sixteenth. Inexplicably,



Enrique "Henry" Trujillo

each knew the urgency of that evening. Each knew that Enrique's life depended on this vigil. Throughout that cold evening the family prayed in front of the Blessed Virgin's altar. One rosary followed another, until no one knew how many "Hail Marys" were recited. They prayed that "*La Virgen*" their protectress, would intercede with her Son to save and protect Enrique. Each "Hail Mary" was not recited in rote but with the utmost of reverence. Their plea was that Enrique not be harmed or injured. However, each one hoped that the last line was not intended for Enrique, until he lived a life well into old age.

"...ahora en la hora de nuestra muerte." "...now, and at the hour of our death."



Enrique was lost. He wandered from his company and became hopelessly disoriented in the storm. Night had fallen and he realized that unless he found his company, he would probably not survive the bitter cold of that frigid night. He survived Normandy but was deeply traumatized. He witnessed far too much death and suffering. Too many young men were slaughtered and he was sickened by it. This evening he resigned himself to the same fate of many fallen comrades. "Now at the hour of my death," he prayed. He experienced a profound despair. He knew that he would eventually fall asleep and that he would freeze. He thought, "What a horrible and lonely death."

He reminisced. He knew that this was the weekend of "*La Virgen*." He remembered the fiestas and felt a deep longing to return home and be a part of that joyful tradition. He longed for his family, especially his young wife, Helen. She was completing her ninth month and he believed that she probably had already given birth. Unfortunately, due to the escalation of the war, he had not received any mail for weeks. He could only guess if he had a son or a daughter. He began to weep and pondered how unfair it was that he would never experience a full life. Twenty years was not enough life...not nearly enough life for anyone.

He finally succumbed to the intense cold and could no longer walk. He laid down. He knew that sleep would follow and that he would die. He prayed, "Jesus, my God, save me!" and then drifted into a deep sleep.

Suddenly, a bright light flashed and Enrique bolted. He first thought that a heavy artillery shell had burst. However, as he opened his eyes, he smelled the fragrance of many roses and saw standing before him Jesus' Mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe, the same beautiful lady whose portrait was miraculously imprinted on Juan Diego's "tilma." He thought that he surely had died and had gone to heaven.

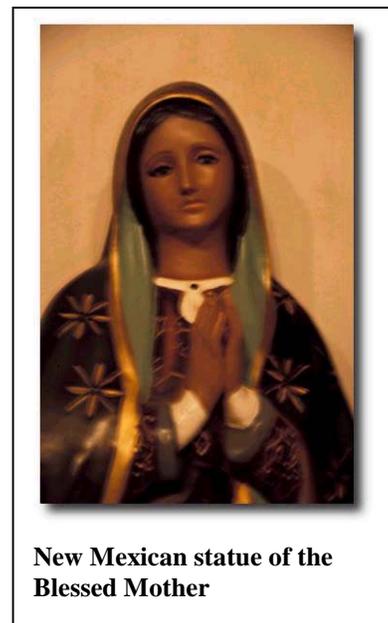
The Lady greeted him, "Enrique, wake up, rise up from that frozen ground. It is not your time to sleep."

Enrique then realized that he was not dead. The beautiful woman who stood before him was indeed real. He then cowered in fear because this apparition was much too difficult to comprehend.

"Enrique, please don't fear me. I did not come to cause any harm. I came to save your life and give you a vision."

He finally found his courage and spoke. "Why is this happening to me? Why have you appeared to me?"

"I came to save your life. You and your ancestors have worshipped my Son, your



God and Savior, and have honored me for many years and many generations. Your loved ones have prayed fervently for your safe return, I have interceded for them, and because of their prayers have been sent by my Son to honor their request.”

Suddenly, Enrique was lifted into the air. Beneath him, he saw his reclining body, still as death on the frozen ground. “Do not fear or try to understand what is happening to you. Your soul has left its body for a short while,” consoled the Virgin.

Enrique was then dazzled by a most wondrous sight. He was home! He was in the midst of a multitude of people standing solemnly before the altar to the Blessed Virgin Mother. Behind him he was astounded to see a line of thousands, a procession extending beyond the horizon.

“Am I really home? I know this is my home. . . why are there so many people?” Before the Blessed Virgin could answer, Enrique looked into the crowd and cried out, “*Mi madre! Mi padre! Dios mio! Mi esposa querida!* My beautiful wife, Helen!” He was overcome with tears of joy as he glanced down and saw that she cradled a baby, his baby, in her arms. He then pleaded, “Dear Mother, why does she not hear me?”

“Enrique, old men dream and young men have visions. Tonight you will experience both. Tonight you will see the present and the future. However no one can see either you or me. The baby is your son. His name is also Enrique, your namesake.”

Then Enrique realized what was happening. The endless procession was his future. This was his vision. As the multitude passed before the altar, he witnessed the important events of his future life. He saw his daughters, Helen the middle child and Fran the baby of the family. He witnessed each child carried by his wife and his future self to the altar. He saw a long line of friends, neighbors and family. He saw “mariachis,” “matachines,” little angels and Juan Diegos. He saw his children grow, mature and participate in the traditions of the feast. He was pleased to see how his children revered the Blessed Lady. He saw his sons and daughters-in-law and his many grandchildren all honoring her and her Divine Son. He saw the future generations of little angels and Juan Diegos. The traditions were passed on to his grandchildren. The procession represented decades of his life. He was overcome with a great joy because he knew that his life was long, happy and blessed.

And then, the procession paused. The weather was ominous. The wind blew a bitter chill and no one stood before the altar.

“Why has the procession stopped?” Enrique fearfully asked.

The Blessed Mother responded with much regret, “This year your beloved wife died. I led her home to meet my Son. She is with her Savior.”

Enrique wept bitterly and pleaded, “Why did you show me this great sorrow? I should be left alone to freeze in the Ardennes.”

The Blessed Mother consoled him. “*Mi’jo*, my son, your life is filled with many blessings and much happiness. However, you will also experience sorrow. Such is your destiny, the destiny of all good men, until all return to my Son.”

“Then, when will I die?”

“You will be reunited with your good wife, however, a few years will pass before I lead you to your eternal home. There will still be much purpose to your life. You will become very ill and you will become so frail that your children will have to take you into their homes to care for you. Many times you will think that my Son and I have abandoned you. However, your purpose in life in your waning years is to teach your children and grandchildren how a good Christian man lives and dies. You will teach them how to be



Home altar, 1995, designed to resemble a church

compassionate. You will instruct them in the ways of humility and charity. Each benevolent act of love that they demonstrate towards you is also demonstrated towards my Son. When they honor and love you, they also honor and love my Son and their lives will be blessed.

“You will also briefly experience death in your last days. It will happen a few days before my feast. Your heart will stop for a short while and you will have a glimpse of heaven and your beloved Helen. Afterwards, one last fiesta will be celebrated with your children and grandchildren. However, they will know that your days are numbered and they will prepare for the inevitable. When you die, they will grieve deeply for you and also their long deceased, beloved mother. Because you loved them unconditionally, their grief will subside and I will fill their thoughts with many sweet memories. They are the generation that will carry on the faith and traditions of your ancestors. Your great love for them will prevail. As my Son has allowed me to protect you, so will they be protected.”

*“...Take care of your father when he is old;
grieve him not as long as he lives...
For kindness to a father will not be forgotten...”
(Sirach 3: 12 & 14)*

And then, as suddenly as Enrique returned home, he returned to the Ardennes Forest. “*Virgen*, I thought you came to save me. Why did you bring me back?”

“*Mi’jo*, I gave you a vision and I did promise to save you. However, you still must live your life. Unfortunately, you will have to endure this terrible war. Many will be spared from death and much suffering because of your courage and heroism.”

“How will I survive this cold night?”

“I will cover you with Juan Diego’s ‘tilma’ and you will not freeze.” She then covered Enrique, tucking him in as a mother does her precious child. Enrique fell fast asleep.



Again a bright light shined on Enrique’s eyes, but now, it was the morning sun. He was roused from his slumber by a soldier’s voice.

“Hey, Enrique, wake up! You were lost. How come you did not freeze to death?”

“My Blessed Mother kept me warm.”

“What are you talking about, Enrique?”

“You see, I had this dream...this vision...Awww...never mind, you’d never believe me.”

Enrique stood up and shook the snow from his coat. He then walked back into the raging battle and vowed: “Dear Mother of God, I am going home and I will build the best altar ever this time next year!” ❄



A procession of little Juan Diegos



A choir of Christmas angles

THE BISHOPS AND THE POLITICIANS:

Wolves and Sheep's Clothing

--Marie P. Loehr @ 2004

Nowadays... the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.

-- John XXIII, Opening Address, Vatican II, 11 October 1962

Abortion is the murder of an innocent human life. The fetus, from the moment of conception, is *human* by the presence of its individual, unique DNA. He or she is *alive* by the presence of internal activity and growth, while still only a few cells in size. Since both realities – life and humanity – are present in the zygote, deliberate destruction, for its mother's convenience or its medical exploitation, is profoundly unjust. Therefore, abortion is always and everywhere intrinsically evil. Christ says bluntly: "...it is not the will of your Father in heaven that a single one of these little ones should perish." [Matthew 18:14]

Nevertheless, politicians who claim to be Catholics in good standing vote for policies that support abortion and other pro-death activities, including *In Vitro Fertilization*, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and an entire range of reproductive technologies that end in the destruction of minute babies.

It is ancient Church practice to deny the Eucharist to obstinate public sinners. Canon Law still mandates this action. Canon 915 states: "Those upon whom the penalty of excommunication or interdict has been imposed or declared, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin, are not to be admitted to Holy Communion." As Fr. Neuhaus explains in the August/September 2004 issue of *First Things* (p. 89): "It is a grave sin to knowingly, publicly, and persistently reject and encourage others to reject the moral law that it is intrinsically evil, always and everywhere wrong, to deliberately take innocent human life. This, bishops must more effectively communicate, is not a 'sectarian' Catholic teaching but a moral law obliging all."

Those politicians who want to be Catholic to ensure Catholic votes, and pro-death to ensure secular votes, have already excommunicated themselves from the Church. They are visibly obstinate, even reprobate, public sinners, shouting their participation in sin throughout the media. Refusing the Eucharist to them is merely explicit recognition of their implicit state of personally chosen excommunication.

The two influences which appear to have silenced so many bishops, and enabled the hypocrisy of so many allegedly Catholic politicians, are the "spirit of Vatican II" and the "seamless garment" or consistent ethic of life theory.

The chimeric "spirit of Vatican II" has been invoked by liberals and modernists in the Church and in politics to cover a multitude of sins, abuses, and deviations from the magisterial teaching of the Church. John XXIII preached mercy, not severity. That's true. He wanted the Church to reveal Truth by persuasion, love, and example. Perhaps this



idea motivates so many bishops to permit de facto fallen-away Catholic politicians to support pro-death policies, and still receive the Life of our life, Christ, in the Eucharist. (Although often this must be like matter and anti-matter colliding!) Yes, John XXIII reminded us of the merciful generosity of Christ to sinners. But merciful generosity does not mean tolerating evil – or in this case, a slaughter of the innocents. Christ IS generous, but He is not “nice,” as so many confused post-conciliar Catholics claim. He calls the Pharisees “vipers,” “whited sepulchres,” and blind guides of blind fools, leading their followers into the pit, *i.e.*, hell. He is merciful, but He does not shrink from judgment. Too many bishops and cardinals, influenced by false ideas of divine mercy as mere human kindness, misunderstand the strict union of justice and mercy, truth and love. Thus, they shrink from obeying the Church’s unequivocal Law.

The other problem that has distorted or silenced true teaching in these matters is the “seamless garment” ethic. The September issue of *The People of God* (Archdiocese of Santa Fe monthly newspaper, pp. 12-13), to take a concrete example, presents a statement from the USCCB citing, in turn, a Vatican statement (without giving a proper title or date) that reminds us to not isolate one element of Catholic doctrine, since “a political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church’s social doctrine does not exhaust our responsibility towards the common good.”

The USCCB notwithstanding, what also was not said was that Church teaching recognizes a hierarchy of issues, determined by urgency, necessity, and magnitude. Abortion and abortive reproductive technologies are by their very nature and end intrinsically evil. As Fr. Neuhaus explains, in the above-cited issue of *First Things* (p. 88): “What is truly troubling is that some bishops are fudging the Church’s teaching by suggesting...that there is a moral equivalence between abortion, capital punishment, the war in Iraq, and a host of other disputed questions. That is false, as anybody knows who has read with care the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the November 2002 doctrinal note from Rome on participation in political life, or the U.S. bishops’ own statement *Living the Gospel of Life*, issued in 1998.”

The suggestion that abortion is only one among many issues involving social justice and the good of all the “little ones” of the world is untrue. What good is the entire spectrum of social and political human rights, if the most basic right of LIFE is denied? The relativism of the “seamless garment” is incontrovertibly deadly and was not even posited by its originator, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

In fact, the only authentically “seamless garment” we are obliged to consider is the seamless garment of the Trinity. Only a conscience informed in the basic doctrines of the Church is prepared to sort through the overwhelming mountain of issues to determine their relative claims on our attention and response.

What have we been taught to sing? “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto me...” The hymn, and Christ’s warning, doesn’t only mean that the good we do to the least of our fellow humans, we do unto Christ. It also means that the evil we do, we do unto Christ. Who are more little and least than the zygote, the embryo, the fetus, the neonate, the handicapped, the elderly, the undesirable, the imperfect, and all the other persons threatened in the shadow of the politics of death? Scary, and cautionary, reality! ✱

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- Thomas Verny, M.D. with John Kelly, *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*. Dell Publishing: New York, 1981.

Claiming Our Patrimony

By Marie Therese Hall

I am of that certain age now, like many Catholic women of my generation, with a few years spent wondering how it came to be that some of my children do not seem to have the appreciation for the Catholic Faith that I do. There are obviously many factors involved, not the least among them the influence of modern culture. Recently, I came across an article by Fr. Chad Ripperger FFSP discussing the “Merit of the Mass” and the things he said in the article rang true.

The article briefly delineates intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the Mass and compares the merit of its rituals as they were traditionally executed in the Latin Rite with the more commonly performed *Novus Ordo*. Of course, the *intrinsic* merit of both, according to Fr. Ripperger, “is infinite, since it is Christ, Who is infinite, Who is offered.” It is in their *extrinsic* and limited (limited because man is a finite creature) elements that they differ.

Among the extrinsic elements that will effect the merit of the Mass are the holiness of the faithful and the clergy. Explaining this, Fr. Ripperger said: “Given the current scandals in the Church among the clergy and bishops, we can begin to see why the faithful are suffering spiritually. The same can be said for mankind as a whole, since the fruits of the Mass can also be applied to those who are not Catholics. The moral and spiritual depravity of this moment in history has greatly affected this aspect of merit in the Church. This is why the pope and bishops have a grave responsibility for moral reform of the clergy and laity.”

Another extrinsic characteristic that brings merit to a Mass is the *decora*. *Decora* refers to the ‘fittingness’ and the aesthetics of the vestments and other liturgical objects used in the Mass. Simplicity, he points out, is not the same as ugliness and there is no excuse for using items made from less than the noblest materials. Further, the *decora* should be appropriate to the Mass that is being offered.

The prayers and gestures themselves are extrinsic characteristics affecting the merit of a Mass. I have never appreciated the way that the ‘Kiss of Peace’ took on a life of its own (with Mass attendees practically running into the street to shake hands) and the gratuitous hand-holding during the ‘Our Father.’ Even worse, is the practice in some parishes to applaud the choir after a hymn, or of ushers to shake hands with people as they leave the pew to receive Holy Communion! Fr. Ripperger’s words were a comfort to me: “While activity can draw our focus since motion by nature draws our faculties, nevertheless the attention is drawn to the motion, not to God. This is why a ritual should not be activist in nature.” To that, I sigh ‘Amen’.

Is the old rite more meritorious than the new? The old rite is obviously more ordered to God and less ordered to the people. The priest in the reformed rite says the Mass prayers “toward the people, rather than offered back to God by facing God the Son, Who shall rise in the East.” In the old rite, there is less attention given to the priest, offering him less temptation to ‘perform’ or amuse his ‘audience’ with spontaneous embellishments.

Whatever the answer, the old Latin Rite Mass clearly holds great benefit for both the faithful and the priests. I hope that there will be a growing movement in our Church to authorize the ready availability of the Latin Rite Mass throughout the Catholic Church. It would be a tragedy to abandon the solemnity and devotional beauty of the time-tested Latin Mass. ✽

The Rev. Chad Ripperger, professor of moral theology at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Lincoln, NE, spoke in Albuquerque this past October about our spiritual patrimony.



In the Year of the Eucharist, we consider...

The Value of a Mass

St. John Damascene is attributed with saying:

If anyone wishes to know how the bread is changed into the Body of Jesus Christ, I will tell him. The Holy Ghost overshadows the priest and acts on him as He acted on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Bonaventure assures us that:

God, when He descends upon the altar, does no less than He did when He became man the first time in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

St. Alphonsus states:

Even God Himself could do nothing holier, better, or greater than the Mass.

St. Timothy gives one of the greatest accolades when he says:

The World would have been destroyed long ago because of the sins of men, had it not been for the Mass. There is nothing that obtains for us so many blessings as the Mass.

The fruits obtained from the Mass are a cornucopia of graces through the Sacrifice on the Altar and prayers. We specifically obtain the grace of Forgiveness for venial sins for all those who are not in mortal sin; and we receive Remission of sin regarding the temporal penalty due to sin. All we need do is remember the Good Thief whose sins Christ forgave instantly on the Cross. He does the same for us.

The proof that our prayers are heard in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass comes from the very fact that Jesus Himself prays for us.

The fruits of attending Mass worthily and in the state of grace are that He not only answers our heartfelt prayers, but that we gain even more of the merits of Christ for our souls as well as gaining temporal blessings. All who participate in the Mass, both here on earth and in Purgatory, reap the general fruits since the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for everyone. This not only includes all who are present or who assist, especially the priest who acts as an *alter Christus*, but also the person for whom it is being offered, as well as the souls in Purgatory -The Church Suffering.

The value of the Mass is infinite because it is the renewal of Christ's death.

St. Augustine reaffirmed this continuous belief of Christians when he wrote:

Our Lord held Himself in His Own hands, when He gave His Body to the disciples.



Christmas without Christ

By Catherine Doherty

I was barely 21 when I found out the change. Mother had sent me to see if I could buy some food somewhere. It was early evening. I walked the familiar streets without fear. I loved them, even then when they were dark (the electrical power was off in the city, due to the revolution).

Then I stumbled over something. And when I bent down to see what it was, it was a dead woman with a knife in her back, and blood all over the pavement. That was the beginning of the change on my streets.

Then the edict went out that anyone found worshipping God in any church could be arrested or shot on sight. And my streets became jungles to be crossed carefully, slowly, hiddenly, hugging the walls of buildings so as to melt with their shadows in the early morning when going to Mass.

As soon as the edict went out, church services became the center of all life. How long would it be before there would be no Mass? People asked themselves that question, and the thought froze all Christian hearts. For what is life without Mass, without the sacraments? Men, women, and youth arose and went to Mass daily. So did I.

We all went. But we first blessed ourselves in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, because we all knew that maybe this was the last time we might walk the familiar yet now unfamiliar streets.

We walked as native people in America must have walked when stalking their prey – soft-footed, alert, listening for any loud footsteps. Only communists walked loudly through the fearsome streets.

We walked in human fear, in trembling, but we had to go where we were going. To church! To Mass! Because without it, we would not be able to face another day of wondering, fearing that it would be our last day.

This is another fact about revolutions: they bring eternity into every hour of every day. You peel potatoes in your kitchen and-hark! There are heavy footsteps on the stairs. Are they for you? Or for those you love?

No. They passed your door. With a trembling hand, you go on peeling potatoes, listening, listening, and wondering about life and death. God is very near then. In fact, *God alone matters*, and so does the Mass.

So we went at dawn, like the Christians of old, softly, hugging walls, watching, now melting with the shadows, now moving, inch by inch, into a dark church.

One day, it happened! It happened in church. It was an old church with a cold stone floor—without lights, except for the tabernacle light and two slender candles.

It happened right after the Consecration, while the priest's hands were still raised high to allow us all, who were living under a "sentence of death" as it were, to behold Him Who died for love of us, and to give us courage if the need arose, to try to die as gallantly for the love of Him.

White were the hands of the priest. White was the Host, shining white were the candles—dark and dim the church—when suddenly the side door opened with a bang, and rough voices shouted, "Stand still!" The priest froze with the Host still lifted high. We became statues of immobility lost in the dimness of the church. Soldiers!—for that is who they were. Red Army soldiers.

One of them slowly lifted his rifle and slowly took aim. One shot rang out. Only one. The priest quivered, swayed, and fell sideways. The consecrated Host rolled down, down the steps, onto the floor, coming to rest, still and white, on the



Catherine de Hueck Doherty

dark floor by the altar railing—in two pieces.

Silence took over, only to be broken and shattered by the rhythmic steps of the hobnailed boots of the soldiers walking toward the tabernacle, then vaulting over the railing. Triumphant their voices suddenly rang out while one of them crushed the consecrated Host under his heel: “There is no God! We have crushed him.”

Silence wrapped up his voice and killed it. Silence. The silence of Golgotha entered the church. It hung—even like Christ on the cross—only to be broken again by the thin, reedy voice of an old, old man who spoke from the intense shadows of the church. “Father, forgive them, even if they know what they do.”

The silence came back once more—a new silence of mercy and pardon. The Red Army shivered a little and slowly slunk away through the sacristy. Their hobnailed boots made dragging sounds that were like a dirge. A door slammed in the back. A moan went through the church—our moan of pain and horror.

Slowly, the old man arose. He was a patriarchal figure, with a long white beard and flowing hair. Reverently he gathered the crushed pieces of the consecrated Host. Slowly he bade us to come forward and to receive them in our last Communion. Maybe our viaticum. We did.

Then we got holy water and scrubbed the floor. And we stayed on, to pray in reparation. We buried the priest secretly. He was the last priest in town; there would be no more Mass, no sacraments.

The familiar streets were still filled with danger and death for us. We didn’t mind them anymore, because we ourselves were filled with such desolation, a desolation that no one knows in countries where there are so many churches and so many priests.

All this happened just before Christmas. And so it was a Christmas without Christ in the tabernacle—without Mass—without confession—without communion.

Just the same, it was my most memorable Christmas. Since they had closed all the doors against his coming, he chose the humble stables of our pain-filled hearts in which to be born anew that strange, lonely, cold Christmas of the first year of the communist Russian Revolution in 1917.

Sometimes it seems to me to have been the most blessed Christmas of all because, from that day on, I knew that, when all the rest had been taken away from me, nothing mattered but his inner presence in my heart.

I wish—oh, how I wish—that I really could tell all this to the youth in North America. To so many of them, going to Mass on Sundays seems, at times, too dull and hard. Mass on Sunday? Oh, my friends, go to Mass *every day*—while you can!

Yes, we would have crawled on our knees that Christmas—through the strange and fearsome streets, filled with dangers and death—if only we could have participated in just one more Mass.

Thank God each day that, as yet, your most memorable Christmas is not without Christ in all the tabernacles of your many churches. ✱

Catherine Doherty’s life brought her through two World Wars, the Russian Revolution, and the Great Depression. She knew the privileged life of an aristocratic, experienced being a refugee, knew the pain of a broken marriage and the struggles of single parenthood. Through it all, her faith in God and love for Him remained intact and lead her to work with the poor in small, humble ways, forsaking material comforts in order to do so.

Her work in social justice in both Canada and the United States lead to the establishment of Friendship House and also a community called Madonna House, which is an apostolate of lay men, women and priests. Since Catherine’s death in 1985, Madonna House has grown to number more than 200 members, with 23 field houses throughout the world, including one in Winslow, Arizona. In addition, more than 125 priests, deacons and bishops are associates of Madonna House. Preliminary preparations are now underway to request that Catherine Doherty be publicly declared a canonized saint of the Catholic Church.



Russian Holy Supper on Christmas Eve

The Book Fair

By Peter Palumbo

“Dad, can we go to the book fair?” Mikey said with anticipation.

I said “Okay” halfheartedly, remembering that last year the fair was a collection of books from Scholastic, a corporation whose collection seemed slanted towards the fright genre, full of witches, warlocks, and the trappings of the occult.

As we entered, the former nun who now runs the library asked Mike where he went to school.

“I’m home schooled” Mike said with the pride he usually exhibits when fielding that question.

“Oh, I thought you were,” she said smiling in return.

As I walked around, I saw that this year was no exception. The racks were filled with books that would take children whose Catholic formation was not yet complete on some pretty strange journeys. I couldn’t help but wonder, when the members of the great WWII generation were growing up, is this the sort of stuff in which they immersed their young minds, preparing them for the great sacrifices they would be called upon to make? I searched in vain for books that would edify and strengthen a young child in the Catholic approach to life’s challenges, but could find none.

Should I say something to those in charge, or would that fall on deaf ears as it did when we were once enrolled in this diocesan school?

When a volunteer mom told Mike the book he was holding was available across the room in English as well as Spanish, I made eye contact with her and asked, “Anything on the lives of the saints?”

Pause.

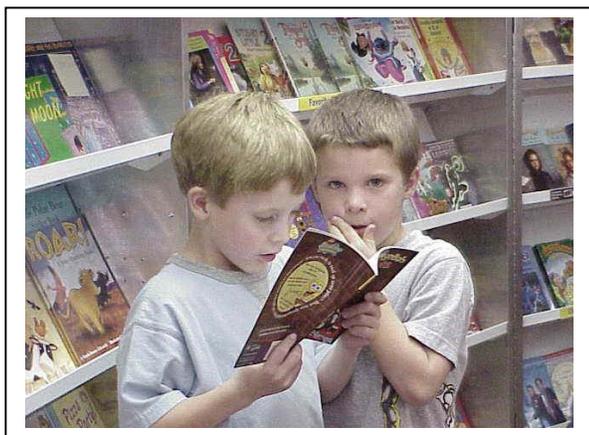
The ex-nun, looking nervous, said, “No, we don’t have anything like that.”

I put my hands on Mike’s shoulder and headed him towards the exit. In my best Peter Faulk/ ‘Colombo’ impression I said, “Hmmm - nothing on the lives of the saints, but we have the entire Harry Potter collection right out front.”

“The Harry Potter comes with the book fair and...”

“Thank you,” I said, interrupting her as Mikey and I walked away at a brisk pace, not wanting to even hear the non-excuse, the empty reasons why there was be no discernment about the selection of these books, but just a wide-open acceptance of whatever Scholastic had in mind for our children.

One aspect of the problem is the syncretism young Catholic teachers pick up in graduate school, the unfortunate compromises they mold to alleviate the tension between the faith of their youth and the agenda of their atheistic professors. If Catholic Schools have become so infused with these Marxist-Leninist, Secular Humanist, and New Age world views, where is the hope of a new generation that will proclaim the truths of the Gospel, the Judeo-Christian world view as defended by the Church for over 2000 years of Western Civilization? ✱



Bill Huebsch & Whole Community Catechesis

In September, **Bill Huebsch** presented his Whole Community Catechesis program to Archdiocesan parish staff, RCIA leaders and catechists. Also offered at the April National Conference for Catechetical Leadership that met in Albuquerque, Huebsch's new catechetical model – with plenty of expensive materials – is the very latest.

Huebsch is an author, workshop presenter, and publishing professional, having been editorial advisor to the Benzinger Publishing Company and Vice President of Tabor [RCL/Resources for Christian Living] Publishing. He is also the founder of the Vatican II Center in Allen, Texas, a now defunct division of RCL. While still in operation, the Vatican II Center regularly provided workshops for *Call to Action* members and sent speakers to *Call to Action* conferences.

According to *Call to Action's* March 1997 publication of *ChurchWatch*, Center materials included a CD-ROM titled "Vatican II: The Faithful Revolution," which can still be purchased as a 5-volume video (\$59.95). For those who want to get the kids while they're young, RCL sells a set of high school blackline masters for the series (\$19.95). Video I speaks of how Vatican II would "affect the evolution of the Church." Video III offers the bit of revisionist history that "If it weren't for Vatican II...the Church would not have found its calling to work among the poor and oppressed in modern society." Video V asks if Pope John Paul II was "...a man of the council? Or did he slow down the council's reforms?" One 20-minute segment on this video highlights the liberationism of the Chiapas, Mexico diocese, presented as an exemplar of the "vision of Vatican II."

Huebsch, who has stumped for the series, occasionally gives a talk by the same title. In it, he questions such things as mandatory celibacy for priests and Church authority.

What about his catechesis program? The laudable goal of involving parents in their children's instruction and providing adult religious education (hence *whole community* catechesis) is attractive.

However, when Huebsch proposes "a new language in which to talk about these ancient truths," he steps into quicksand. An examination of whole community catechesis materials reveals that this "new language" involves more "faith sharing" than doctrinal study; more encounters of Christ in one's neighbor than experience of worship; more good feelings than solid knowledge.

St. Charles Borromeo parish of Albuquerque is offering liturgical dancing practice for Advent and Christmas (September 12, 2004 Sunday bulletin).

This seems to challenge the 1975 Vatican document usually known as "Dance in the Liturgy", issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In the introduction by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, the document is presented as "an authoritative point of reference for every discussion on the matter" of liturgical dance.

Despite positive comments about "religious" dance in some cultures, it is unequivocal about the place of dance in Christian worship:

If the proposal of the religious dance in the West is really to be made welcome, care will have to be taken that in its regard a place be found outside of the Liturgy, in assembly areas which are not strictly liturgical.

December Calendar

Friday, December 10, 2004:
LPC monthly meeting.
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.
All members welcome.

Study Circle
All "other" Fridays: 7-9 PM
Please join us for extended study and discussion concerning Tradition and Liturgy
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:
8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Join Fr. Pio O'Conner for prayer
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
For other times, call (505) 286-1655

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Please consider donating to Los Pequeños. Guest speakers and special projects - such as the extraordinarily moving November Pepper - are expensive.



Bill Huebsch