



## The Archbishop's Christmas letter

TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY  
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Greetings:  
Today as we prepared to write our annual Christmas letter to you, the sense of how fitting it was that we should be doing so on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. For there is a relation between the Feast of today and that of Christmas, and Mary is the connecting link.

Today, we celebrate her sinlessness; on Christmas, her motherhood of God. There are those who would deny to Mary the honor due on both counts. We find them even among those who profess to believe in the Divinity of Christ. But when one places the Incarnate Word of God into the arms of the Blessed Virgin, everything else falls logically into place. Even had Mary never been mentioned in the Scriptures, and had she remained completely in obscurity, if we accept the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God and His entrance into the world as a babe, we would have to picture the Mother who bore Him as God's chosen handmaid filled with grace and fitted by Him for the great mission that was hers. The woman whom God chose to bring His only Begotten Son into the world, by every sense of propriety must be the most perfect, in whom sin could have no part. We know that God did send His only Begotten Son into the world, and it has been made known to us that the woman He chose for His Mother was the Blessed Virgin Mary. "Full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." Luke 1, 28. That was the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel as he announced the privilege that was to be hers.

Within a few days we shall kneel in spirit with Mary in the Stable of Bethlehem. In our meditation there, our thoughts will be preoccupied with the great mystery that Christmas presents to us. What great love prompted God to come at all? And when He did come, why did He choose to come in the form of an humble babe?

He might have come with might and power in the manifestation of His glory, or there are a thousand and one other ways that He might have made His entry into the world. Yet, He chose to come as the humble Virgin Mary's Child, born amid the squalid surroundings of the stable. We do not know why God chose to do so, but now that it has happened, we can think of so many wonderful blessings that have come from it, that we would not wish the advent of the Savior in any other way.

Just to think that through this mystery, Christ becomes our brother and Mary our mother, is sufficient to send us hurrying head-long to the crib to thank Eternal Wisdom, Who has so ordained. By her humble acquiescence in her answer to the startling announcement of the Archangel Gabriel, "May it be done to me according to Thy word," Mary gave to us Jesus as our brother, and in turn, by His solemn bequest from the cross to St. John, "Son behold thy Mother," Jesus gave to us Mary as our Mother.

May the thought of this sublime relationship be the source of real joy to you as you visit Bethlehem in spirit on Christmas Day. We are told that the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the new-born Christ. Undoubtedly, these gifts were placed in the safe keeping of Mary and passed on through her hands to the Divine Infant as "the Child grew, and was strengthened in spirit." Luke 1, 80.

Bring your gifts too, and like the Wise Men, make them worthy of the Infant you would honor. Place into Mary's hands for Him, first and above all, your frankincense and myrrh—your own souls cleansed and refurbished with the saving grace of penance; then your gold—to relieve the wants of your brothers in Christ, both young and old, to which your Christmas offering is dedicated. "To Jesus through Mary"—especially at Christmas time; it is impossible to separate the two.

Begging the Christ Child to bless you most bountifully, we remain in the Service of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother,

Faithfully yours,  
*+ Paul C. Scherer*  
Archbishop of Indianapolis

### Expect Council call on Christmas Day

VATICAN CITY—Rome's four great basilicas made ready for Christmas Day ceremonies convening the Second Vatican Council before any official announcement that the council would be convoked then.

His Holiness Pope John XXIII himself told Vatican prelates at the end of a recent retreat that the bull of convocation would probably be read on Christmas.

### Pope congratulates UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—The Holy See and international Catholic organizations have sent congratulations to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on its fifth anniversary.

Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, Papal Secretary of State, said in a message to UNICEF: "On this anniversary His Holiness (Pope John XXIII) is pleased to acknowledge the work done by UNICEF during many years on behalf of underprivileged children and congratulates its executive director (Maurice Pate), and asks Providence to bestow divine blessings on this noble task."

### Archbishop Binz given St. Paul See

WASHINGTON — His Holiness Pope John XXIII has transferred the Most Rev. Leo Binz from the Archbishopric of Dubuque to that of St. Paul.

The action of the Holy Father was announced here by Archbishop on Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate in the United States.

The See of St. Paul has been vacant since the death of Archbishop William O. Brady in Rome last October.

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## Sacrifice the nonessentials for unity, Cardinal urges

### Uniformity seen 'hiding' true Church

STRASBOURG, France — Cardinal Bernard Alfrink suggested here that the time has come for the Catholic Church to sacrifice non-essential elements of her life that tend to confuse non-Catholics about the true nature of her unity.

While unity of Faith is essential and indivisible, said the Archbishop of Utrecht, the ways in which the Faith can be practiced are variable. Cardinal Alfrink said that in the course of history, the Church of Rome's ways of doing things spread throughout the West with a rigid uniformity. He said Protestants must be made able to see that what is Roman about the Church is not necessarily essential to her unity.

Cardinal Alfrink, head of the Dutch Hierarchy and a member of the Central Preparatory Commission for the coming ecumenical seminar here on the topic "Unity and Diversity in the Church."

"OBVIOUSLY, the Church could never accept a pluralism of truth," he said. "Truth is one. Thus the Church must give her all to protect the unity of revealed truth. On the other hand, she ought not to be afraid of pluralism in the practice of this unique faith in a precise period. This pluralism can aid in laying bare the essential characteristics of the Church."

"It is felt to think that a certain uniformity can hide the true unity of the Church from view, and that the very fact of a positive diversity in the practice of the Faith can on the contrary make the nature of this unity stand out more effectively . . ."

"Could it not be," he continued, that love for the Church and solicitude for non-Catholics require, in our ecumenical era, that we sacrifice certain non-essential things—however dear they are to us and however precious they might be for the Church—because they stand in the way of a clear vision of the true Church?"

"Would one be a less faithful son of the Church if he is ready to sacrifice a little of this uniformity in behalf of interests of the Church that in our age could be more important?"

"IN OUR DAY, in effect, it is the essential that is despised and endangered. That is why we ought not waste our time and energy trying to protect and preserve the family's less important possessions when the whole house is in danger of burning to the ground. Without disregarding the contributions of history and the riches accumulated through the development of Christian civilization, without discarding the flowering of spirituality in the course of the centuries, we ought to go back more fervently to our origins, as we have been advised to do in a clear-sighted wisdom."

Cardinal Alfrink said that Catholics and other Christians must together seek the truth—the whole truth. But he said that the fact of joining together in seeking to discover the will (Continued on page 8)



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No Criterion on December 29  
No issue of The Criterion will be published for December 29 to permit our hard-working staff an extra-long holiday at Christmas and to give the paper a few days to handle some year-end administrative details. The next issue will appear on January 5, 1962.

## Says internationalism is a Catholic ideal

CINCINNATI — The Holy See has said "yes" to the movement toward world community, but some Catholics say "no."

This is a "surprising" state of affairs, according to Edward J. Kircelmer, who represents Pax Romana—international organization of Catholic student and cultural groups—at the United Nations.

Speaking to the Cincinnati Medivalists, ex-Naval officer Kircelmer declared: "Catholics should be world-minded . . . internationalism as an idea is certainly Catholic."

Despite the "strong affirmation" given by Pope Pius XII to the world community movement, "often individual Catholics have been severe critics of the world view," Kircelmer said, "maintaining a negative and isolationist attitude."

"THE WORLD is being united into a world community whether we like it or not," he went on. "If we deliberately withdraw from international organizations and international life, we who possess the truth are contributing to the consequences—a materialistic and communistic community."

Kircelmer emphasized that the "world-minded" citizen is completely free to criticize the operation of manner of organization of the world community.

"But some don't even accept the international idea itself, and thus they are opposed to the Church's position," he said.

The Holy See as an institution participates formally in the movement toward world unity. Kircelmer said, "the establishing—as it has—official relations with United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labor Organization, and others."

He also noted that "some 10 Catholic organizations including Pax Romana, are accredited to the U.N. Economic and Social Council."

"THERE ARE SOME 200 international, non-governmental organizations accredited to the U.N.," he continued, "including about 10 that are Catholic." Kircelmer is secretary of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council.

It recalled that when many Catholics opposed the Holy (Continued on page 8)

## Peace Corps won't sign pacts with church units

WASHINGTON — Peace Corps director R. Sargent Shriver, in a sudden reversal of previous policy, has announced that the Corps will sign no contracts with church-related agencies.

Bishop Edward E. Swannstrom, chairman of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies, immediately expressed "resentment" at the declaration.

Shriver, announcing the policy, said it would be a "mistake" for the Peace Corps to sponsor projects conducted by church-related groups.

He disclosed the policy, which he described as an "operational judgment," during a day-long workshop here conducted for voluntary agencies by the Peace Corps.

Bishop Swannstrom, an Auxiliary Bishop of New York, protested strongly.

He said in a statement that

member organizations of the Council of Voluntary Agencies will continue to give "whole-hearted support and cooperation" to the Peace Corps. But, he added, they feel "regret and even resentment" at any Peace Corps ban on cooperation with church-related groups.

SHRIVER'S stand appeared to be an about-face from previously announced Peace Corps policy, which had been to cooperate with church-related agencies in welfare projects.

Shriver himself reaffirmed this policy during an appearance last June 22 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In April the Peace Corps issued a guide book dealing specifically with the question of its relations with church-related agencies.

The guide book, which was approved by Shriver, said in part: "A project which meets Peace (Continued on page 8)