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THE WITNESS

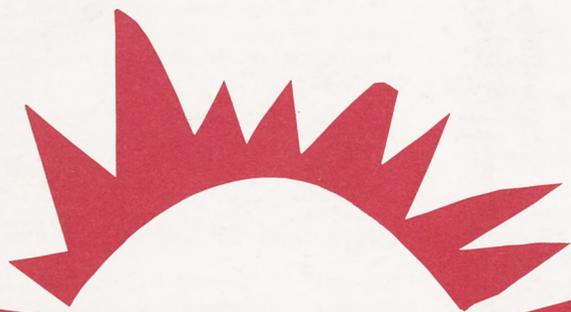
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Christmas Trilogy

Abbie Jane Wells
Richard Gillett
Franklin Winters

Liberating Liturgy

Rosemary Ellmer



DAY FOR JOY • YEAR FOR PEACE



Humanism Not the Enemy

In a recent statement to the news media, one of the so called "dissident" priests in the Los Angeles diocese defined the invasion of secular humanism into the life of the church as the issue behind the need for separation. The implications appear to be that the ordination of females to the priesthood is related to the influence of secular humanism and that humanism is intrinsically the enemy of the church. The issue, as stated, merits exploration.

The obstacles to changing the status of woman are largely psychological, not theological. In some sectors of the church there appears to be an absence of the ability to accept that all people are human beings and are entitled, therefore, to develop their potentialities in their own ways. The reality is, as considerable research has shown, that most human beings are not exclusively male or female. Inside each man and woman is a complex duality of personality traits that are recognizably masculine or feminine or an equal blend of both. This scientific fact seems to be ignored or denied by some persons in the church today.

The church also needs to become better informed concerning humanism but most Episcopalians probably have more in common with the principles of psychological or religious humanism than they do with the tenets of fundamentalistic Christianity. Many theists and humanists would agree, for instance, on free will, individual conscience, sense of morality, obligations to self and others, personal responsibility, ethical behavior, love, peace, transcending self by moving towards a good beyond the present self, to list but a few commonalities.

The facts seem to indicate that religion, as an expression of spiritual beliefs, and

humanism, as a direction-giving philosophy, are in a state of convergence. There are those who believe that the past dichotomy between religion and humanism was nothing more than an exercise based upon fear, misunderstanding and inadequate data.

Thomas Aquinas took humanistic and classical ideals and effected an impressive synthesis with revealed religion. If a more enlightened humanness is to prevail in contemporary society, then a similar synthesis of theism and humanism is imperative.

**Robert W. Renouf, Ph.D., President
Human Relations Institute, Inc.
Tustin, Cal.**

'Homosexuality Is Sin'

In re the letter from the Rev. W. Hamilton Aulenbach, ("Why a Lesbian?" September WITNESS), I call your attention specifically to the paragraph, "Today we are increasingly recognizing the homosexual (and the lesbian) has the same rights as others. That he or she is not sick or handicapped as we have previously thought."

I would like to urge you and the Rev. Aulenbach to read what the Bible has to say about homosexuality, especially in *Romans 1*, which clearly indicates that homosexuality is sin and an abomination to God. Another most enlightening book on the subject is *The Christian View of Homosexuality* by John W. Drakeford, with commentary by a Christian music director who lived a double life.

God loves the homosexual person, but abhors his sin, and because of his or her life of sin, a homosexual *does not* have the same rights as others! A homosexual should not have the right to marry or to adopt children. A homosexual should certainly not have the right to teach children. Researches agree that the homosexual usually has a desire for youthful and inexperienced partners.

Jesus was humane. He loved all kinds of people, but they were not allowed to serve with him until they had changed from their lives of sin. I urge you to seek God's leadership lest you condone the very sins that God forbade.

**Mrs. Sarah B. Welch, Librarian
First Baptist Church
Katy, Tex.**

WITNESS Conservative?

The September issue of THE WITNESS provoked thought, disturbed some illusions, and gave me hope.

It also raised for me an increasing awareness of how we have abused classic

terms like conservative, liberal, radical, in our time. Because it is fairly clear to me that the real *conservatives* in any society are people like you and me and the authors of the September issue of THE WITNESS. Most clearly does Richard Barnet represent that when he suggests that the Constitution and everything it represents come before General Motors. And it is General Motors, the multinational corporation, the oligopolies, which are foisting on this nation new and radical ideas about how human life should be lived.

After all, prophets of Israel were conservatives, men (and I suspect women, too) committed to a desert morality, to an ancient vision of the reign of God, aghast at what was happening to their ancient faith as Israel increasingly slipped into the moral evil the prophets so vividly describe — "selling the innocent for silver and the destitute for a pair of shoes." (*Amos 2:6*)

The great battle of our time has been and I think will continue to be the battle for the minds of the people. Will the people buy a distorted and corrupted version of history that makes the prophets into radicals, and the forces that would disrupt and overturn traditional values through increasing oligopoly into conservatives and defenders of the social order?

I think Christians need to take themselves far more seriously than they have for a long time and learn to speak the truth far more boldly.

**The Very Rev. J. C. Michael Allen
Christ Church Cathedral
St. Louis, Mo.**

Urge Aid to Cueto, Nemikin

The Rev. F. Sanford Cutler, convenor of the Church Persons Concerned Over Grand Jury Abuse, forwarded to THE WITNESS the following letter he wrote Sept. 22 to Bishop Quintin E. Primo, Chairman of the Church in Society Committee of the Executive Council. For text of the resolutions referred to, see November issue of THE WITNESS.

Dear Bishop Primo:

I was glad to learn that the Executive Council took action at its meeting (in September) both on the overall problem of Grand Jury Abuse, and in regard to Ms. Maria Cueto and Ms. Raisa Nemikin. Please accept the thanks of all of us for your part in this process.

In connection with the longer resolution, the National Council of Churches has recently officially accepted Church Persons Concerned Over Grand Jury Abuse as

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THE WITNESS

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A Christmas Meditation

To the Unknown God

Robert L. DeWitt

I don't know who you are, and how can I be sure you know me?

Oh, I have heard all the arguments, read many books, including "The Book." I have tried to pray. I have struggled to believe. I have attempted to have faith. I have recited the formularies of the tradition. I have received the rites of the church — baptism, the laying on of hands, the sacrament. I have sung with the faithful. I have observed the high days. But I don't really know who you are, and how can I be sure you know me?

Perhaps I have developed an alternative strategy. Not that I have given up on you, but I suspect that after all, it may be up to me. It is a lonely and earnest business, this matter of being human. It involves being weighted with the awareness of so much that is heavy. My own past: The paths taken, the choices made and the results of them. And the paths not taken, the choices rejected, and the unanswerable but tormenting question of what might have been, but now will not be. My future: Is it a hostage to my past, the inevitable product of factors already existing in my present? How really free am I? My origin and my ultimate destiny: What do I really know except that I am here, thrown into an infinitely intricate network of relationships, responsibilities and opportunities, hopes and apprehensions.

I seem to have created my own world, as lonely as yours, God, but I'm not sure I have the divinity to pull it off!

Now, that strikes a familiar note. Once upon a Christmas there was born one who did things strangely similar to what I have done, who thought things strikingly parallel to what I have thought. He, too, was part of a religious tradition. The customs, the rites and the writings — he studied them and participated in them. Yet he was always questioning

the experts, not easily satisfied with the neatness of their answers, their systems. And just as he questioned the ways of religion and of religious people, so was he dissatisfied with the ways of the world. He seemed to feel that the religious and the secular were both in his province.

He acted, at least, as though he was responsible for his own world. He decided to do this, and not to do that. He chose to face certain things, and to leave other things unaddressed. And he lived resolutely with the consequences of what he did and did not do, of what he said and did not say. At times he certainly seemed unmistakably lonely. He wept. He went off by himself. And yet at the same time he had been thrown into an intricate web of relationships, responsibilities, opportunities, hopes and apprehensions. Yes, I would say he seemed to have made his own world, and was lonely. It is interesting that he said a great deal about the divinity in himself necessary to pull it off. Was that his alternative strategy?

I am not really sure. But I do find in him the single, most helpful clue to the riddle of my life. And, God, although I do not know who you are, I honor you for him, for his assuming the divinity necessary to make a go of it. Because I suspect he was revealing the divinity present in anyone who attempts to lead an authentic human life. Am I in fact made in your image? He makes me think so, and I am strengthened by the access to divinity which that implies. It gives me a grasp on eternity. It provides a basis for dignity and self-respect. It supplies a motive for ascribing that same eternity, dignity and self-respect to all my "others" who are similarly made in your image.

It is hard to manage one's world without being divine. And I have a world to manage. Noel! ■

When to Resist Authority



Charles V. Willie

"I have come to stir up a whirlwind, to set seminarians against bishops, congregations against clergy, and dioceses against their conventions . . ."

Charles V. Willie, former president of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church, received a standing ovation following his recent address [excerpted below] on Matriculation Day at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge. Dr. Willie is currently professor of education and urban studies at Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

I want to discuss with you the mission of a professional religious practitioner in training. In your courses of study you will learn about Nietzsche and Niebuhr, Bonhoeffer and Buber, Tillich and Temple. The words of these and other leading lights will be made known to you. If you remember well, you will be able to sprinkle your sermons with erudite quotations and impress your listeners that you are a learned leader. This you may do if you wish to be vain.

Others may focus on prayer and piety, public worship and church polity. This you must do if you wish to become a bishop. But I must warn you that the world is not waiting for such graduates of our seminaries.

You are in training to become professional practitioners of religion — nothing more, nothing less. How can you support and help sustain society as a religious practitioner? By interpreting that which is religious in all reality. By making that which is obscure plain, and by simplifying that which is complex. To summarize, you may become a good religious practitioner by helping others to apply the knowledge and information of religion to their everyday life.

One thing that the professional religious practitioner must have is hope (it could be called purpose) that pathology is reversible, that good may overcome evil, that death and disaster are not the end. This hope is not different from the hope that characterizes the professional physician or public administrator.

Another thing that the professional religious practitioner must have is faith (it could be called method) that there are no imponderable problems, that a solution ultimately can be found, if not today, then tomorrow. This, also, is similar to that which is held by other professional practitioners.

Finally, the professional religious practitioner must have love (it could be called justice) that is manifested as fairness. Thus all professional practitioners should seek the best solution that is obtainable in love; and the best solution that is obtainable in love is always just.

Thus, the faith, hope, and love of the religious practitioner are similar to that which characterize the way of life of other professional practitioners. Seminaries should emphasize and teach their students this fact. Such information and the understanding of it would lessen the burden of guilt that seminary students and many professional clergy carry for their arrogant affirmation that they were set aside by God to do God's work, as if others were not participants in the purpose of God.

Nation Troubled by Ism's

In the history of this nation, three great institutional sins — racism, sexism, and elitism — have troubled us, damaged the effective functioning of our institutions, and for many persons, created experiences of inequality. There is no way that the church as an institution in our society can sanction these “isms” A society does not need the church to sanction injustice and unfairness. A society can do this on its own. The reason for being for religious institutions is to enable any society to be just, merciful, and humble. When professional religious practitioners do not help people so to be, they are ineffective and the church as an institution is irrelevant and perhaps even sinister.

In years gone by, before the Civil War, the Baptist Church was racist. The record shows that it owned slaves. And even as late as this decade, the Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., split over the issue of race. The Baptist Church has committed the sin of racism.

Also the church has been found to be sexist. There are no women priests in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in 1977, and few in the Worldwide Anglican Communion. In the United States, for example, the Episcopal Church discriminates against women. It has a Presiding Bishop who has stated that he cannot accept women in the role as priests. For verbalizing this sexist remark as late as 1977, this church leader was supported by the House of Bishops, urged not to resign, and thus far has not been dismissed by a General Convention. The Episcopal Church has committed the sin of sexism.

The church also is elitist. Roman Catholics are led by a Pope. That church has declared that its highest leader is infallible, despite the fact that he is merely a man. The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope is an excellent example of elitism.

How can churches that are racist, sexist and elitist help our societies overcome sin? If by their actions we shall know them, it is clear that many institutions in our society are more kind, just, and forgiving than the church. For example, a Secretary of Agriculture was dismissed from

government for uttering a racist remark. An Attorney General would not have been approved by the Senate if he had not resigned from his racially segregated social clubs. This is what the institution of government has done.

In higher education, could you imagine what would happen if the president of Harvard should say to the Fellows and the Board of Overseers that he could not accept women in the role of professors? Rather than justify sexist actions, our colleges and universities struggle with affirmative action and are beginning to make headway.

In the economic system, business and industry rejected human infallibility when the assertion by the GM leader that what is good for General Motors is good for the United States became a national joke. The government has taken active steps against racism, while the church silently looks on. Educational institutions are battling sexism while the church silently looks on. Economic institutions have ridiculed elitism of business executives while the church silently looks on.

A book published in 1972 called *Punctured Preconceptions* by Douglass Johnson and George Cornell has helped us to understand what North American Christians think about the church. It revealed that both clergy and lay people believed that providing worship for members was a more important function of the church than helping the needy or supporting minority groups or serving as a social conscience to the community. Now I must respectfully ask: Of what benefit is public worship if it does not enable church people to free those who are oppressed and to help those who are broken-hearted. The essential role of the professional religious practitioner is to help individuals to help others. In the performance of this function they and the church are found wanting. What most professional religious practitioners have done is to aide those committed to their charge to become more self-centered and more self-righteous.

The human social system is unlike the physical system of this universe. In the physical system, the whole is sound only if its component parts are sound. This also is true of the human social system. But this is only the beginning; how to get well-functioning component parts is a more intriguing issue that is resolved in a way that is unique to the human social system. In the physical system, the parts are the foundation of the whole. In the human social system, the whole is the foundation of each part. People, of course, are the parts in the human social system. They can be helped only by other people.

In the physical system, each part is significant only if it contributes to the whole. In the human social system, the whole is significant only if it contributes to each part. Thus,

the church or any other human institution has no reason for being if it does not support and sustain individuals, all individuals, and help other institutions become more kind and gentle toward human beings and just and merciful in their relationships.

In the physical system, defective parts are disposed of and done away with. They impair the well-functioning of the whole. In the human social system, people who are less able are given care and support. Their presence and the compassion they evoke contribute to a sense of community. It has been said that "you can measure the compassion of a community by the condition of its jails." Please note that whoever was the source of this conventional wisdom did not mention the solvency and soundness of the church.

The meaning and the message of the church is in jeopardy because this institution has separated itself from the rest of society and the tempering effects of the whole. By so doing, the church has begun to live by itself and for itself. It is in danger of isolation and disintegration. The world will be the worse with its demise. These are examples of how the church has cut itself off from the rest of society:

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was for the purpose of overcoming racism in this nation. The church is exempted from its requirements.
- The Equal Rights Amendment is for the purpose of overcoming sexism in this society. There is little interest among church members for its passage. The League of Women Voters is doing a better job of mobilization.
- The freedom movement by all sorts and conditions of oppressed minorities (not racial minorities only) is for the purpose of eliminating elitism and inequality in this society. Most minorities have been denied, ignored, or opposed by the church, which has turned its back on their human rights.

The church cannot save itself. But it can be reformed by the efforts of other institutions, even as the society must be helped by the church. But a society cannot be helped by a church that sets itself apart from other institutions, denies that it is subject to community public policy, sanctions racial segregation, supports sex discrimination, and declares that one of its leaders is infallible. The world has need for religion. But the world has no need for this kind of church.

There is no justice in a church that persecutes women. There is no mercy in a church that persecutes women. There is no mercy in a church that excludes minorities. There is no humility in a church whose leaders believe that they are called by God in a way that is special and different from the calling of other workers.

What Seminarians Can Do

If this is the situation as it exists today, what can a seminarian do? To paraphrase scripture, I have come to stir up a whirlwind, to set seminarians against bishops, congregations against clergy, and dioceses against their conventions.

First, no seminarian ever should submit to the authority of a bishop when that authority is unjust, unmerciful, and arrogant. Such authority does not fulfill the requirements of the Lord and does not deserve to be obeyed. Freedom is an essential condition in human society and is necessary for the growth of loving relationships. Arbitrary authority is wrong whether exercised by priests and bishops or presidents and business executives.

Seminarians must resist capricious ecclesiastical authority. They must cease cooperating in their own oppression. No human has the right to rule another. How can this institution help set at liberty those who are oppressed in the world while keeping seminarians in captivity in the church? If you cannot answer this question, you are on your way to freedom. May the Lord have mercy on you and your bishop. "The peace of God, it is no peace; but strife closed in the sod." Seminarians should ask for but one thing — the marvelous peace of God.

I call upon the seminarians to help free the church so that the church can help free society. The prison-like church is incapable of serving, set in stone and separated as it is from the rest of society. Seminarians would be doing their duty to God if in addition to saying their prayers and exhibiting good form at public worship they would shake up the hierarchy that is stifling the church and seize sufficient power to renew it, first by calling the church to repentance for its haughty and arrogant ways, second, by teaching church members how to forgive and to be merciful to those who are disabled, and third, by helping the church to be loving and just, helping the church to be fair.

I do not approach this subject lightly, encouraging seminarians to resist the admonition to obey their bishop. The issue with which I am dealing is simple. The issue is *simple freedom*, a necessary condition for any loving relationship. Where there is not freedom, there is not love. If the church is concerned about love, the church must be concerned about freedom. The demand of obedience to the bishop as a condition for admission to the office of priest in the church is coercive and incompatible with the concept of freedom. Where there is not freedom, there is not love.

In the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer* service for the ordination of a priest, the bishop says to the ordinand:

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Catholic Woman Finds New Way To Affirm Ministry

Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist is the term used in the Roman Catholic Church which designates those few lay persons who are allowed to distribute communion to people unable to attend Mass, such as patients in hospitals. That term exploded into new meaning recently when Rosemary Ellmer, a senior in the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, conducted a service of "affirmation of ministry" — the affirmation of her own ministry. Present were students and faculty of the seminary, a host of friends, and some relatives. At the climax of the service when Ms. Ellmer was vested with a stole by a member of the community, spontaneous applause broke out.

But a deeper current ran throughout the service. Despite the absence of bishop or priest, the other traditional elements of ordination were observed: The young woman whose ministry was being affirmed read a statement of faith; several friends who knew her well attested to her qualifications for ministry; a score of persons came forward for the laying on of hands; and the congregation joined in a celebration of the Eucharist. The words of institution were sung by another seminarian; creating the feeling that the whole congregation was consecrating the elements.

The usual questions of regularity and validity seemed somehow out of place. The people of God were responding to God's initiative as has always been true in the designating of one of their number as a minister. The question of "validity" seemed eclipsed by authenticity.

Was this just a Protestant gesture of non-conformity briefly surfacing in the Roman Church? What led up to this event? Robert L. DeWitt, editor of THE WITNESS, was present at the service, and had an opportunity to discuss it afterward with Rosemary Ellmer. The interview follows.



Rosemary Ellmer

Rosemary, had you had thoughts about ordination when you came to seminary, or is that something which just wouldn't even cross a woman's consciousness in the Roman Catholic Church?

Since grammar school, given my personality and religious experience, the job description of a priest was what most excited me. The pastoral dimensions, a position that enables speaking out about larger concerns in the world, celebrating people's experience in community, and identifying the transcendence of that experience — these things have always vitalized me.

You must, then, have thought a great deal about the position of the Catholic Church on the ordination of women?

I have to question with all sincerity whether the hierarchy within the church practices obedience to the Spirit. I do not

claim to make a judgment but I cannot see how a community which does not encourage the expression of people's gifts, the exploration and validation of those gifts, can with integrity be called a community. There is something lacking, and I think what is lacking is fidelity to the Spirit, fidelity to the authority of the Spirit.

What do you think is going to happen regarding the ordination of women in the Catholic Church?

I don't know. I see the church as being very, very resistant to the ordination of women.

Are not the women religious in the Catholic Church creating quite a bit of pressure?

Yes, they are, in a way. Certain groups are working for change, mostly by verbal and written appeal through the official channels. Demanding change involves a tactical as well as a spiritual discernment process, and I don't think

there is a definitive way which is right or wrong to go about it. But if the nuns in this country alone completely organized, boycotted, and protested the institutional church's injustice, then you would see some profound changes. I think that ultimately the Catholic Church is going to be faced with a pastoral need due to the lack of men going into the ordained ministry. It has already caused the church powers to move to the point of allowing women to be extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, because they needed personnel. The ordination of deaconesses also came about because there were not sufficient numbers of men. When the shoe pinches, people will change the shoe, and I feel that is what will happen.

Have you done much thinking about the relationship of this vocational frustration of women in the church to other ways in which people are closed off from their fulfillment, other struggles that are going on?

I think there is an important political connection to all forms of oppression. It's a power situation where one group has access to "goods," if you will, to which another group does not have access.

The question of the ordination of women is a question of justice. We learned from the Civil Rights struggle that "separate but equal" does not hold water. That's the same kind of distinction the church is trying to make — "different but equal." But it's not true. Unless people are given the same access to all ways of expressing themselves, and are not pre-socialized into desiring certain things and have full freedom to choose the best way to lead their lives, then there is not real freedom.

Have you ever been involved in some of those other struggles?

Yes, I was active in the anti-war protest, particularly throughout college.

I grew up in New Jersey in a town bordering on the ghetto of Newark, and that profoundly influenced me. I was personally involved in the riot in Newark in 1967, because I was working there while in high school. I can remember while on the job that a message came over the loud-speaker saying that the city was being sacked and that we had better get out immediately. And I also remember the terrifying experience of riding home in a bus with bottles being thrown through the windows. When I arrived home a national guardsman was standing on the corner with a gun and a helmet. These realities of oppression and class struggle have been something that I have grown up with. I could not avoid asking myself questions about equality and justice.

My family is a middle-class family, very religious in the sense of participating in the institutional church. They have

incarnated the Gospel in their own lives, and that has been an influence on me. They are people who have thought for themselves. I am sure my early growing-up experiences have had a profound effect on who I am now. Those were fertile times — Martin Luther King was in Newark, Newark elected its first Black mayor, Msgr. Fox's program of "Summer in the City" — these were things that were going on throughout my high school years.

Were you a part of a consciousness-raising group of women in college or seminary?

Sure. My friends are my C.R. group! I think it would be very difficult for anyone to maintain the kind of lifestyle I have without a support group. I know I am asking questions which are threatening to the whole traditional way of looking at things. This is threatening to the whole authority system within the culture and, in this particular case, the church. One needs support to ask those questions, because it is a very lonely position to be in.

Where have you found a community that provides that kind of support?

At seminary, I found support from other women who needed to ask such fearful questions as: Does God really love, value, and respect men more than women? Who is the Church? Where does authority for the ministry truly lie?

People who realized they had a responsibility to answer these questions for themselves gravitated together. Since I have been involved in theology for a number of years, such questions were easier for me than for other people. I began helping them to articulate some of these things and to realize the connection between their sense of personal alienation and the way the institutional church responds to these questions. Many people feel alienated and don't know why. They haven't had access to the tools with which to do good theology and spiritual reflection.

How do you feel about your service of affirmation being publicized?

I have been very hesitant to do anything about press releases because I wanted to be sure that people understood what the service was about. I was careful not to use words like "ordination" and "priest" because I think such terms are culturally loaded and carry with them centuries of tradition.

So it was important for me to talk about my service in terms of an affirmation of ministry, an affirmation of gifts. And affirming not only *my* gifts, for the question of ordination to the ministry leads to the question of who is the church. And in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal traditions the concept of church has been contained in a very elite group of people. I believe that the commission for ministry was given to the entire people of God, united in

THERE DOES NOT EXIST AMONG YOU
JEW OR GREEK
SLAVE OR FREE
MALE OR FEMALE
ALL ARE ONE
IN JESUS CHRIST.
GAL. 3:28



faith. That is what I tried to capture in the service.

If anything in the process touched people, I think it was because they began, consciously or unconsciously, to realize that *they* are the church. And they began to see that indeed the authority for ministry comes from a gift which the Spirit gives, and to see themselves as community, and also therefore as gifted people. One of the things that people keep saying to me since the service is: I'm realizing I have gifts. I had never thought about my gifts until you publicly said what you thought *other* people's gifts were."

That service represented the culmination of a great deal of experiences and reflection, then?

My own life process led me to that service. The service was born out of a deep longing within me to celebrate publicly my thanksgiving and commitment to the community and to God. I could not be myself with integrity and not do that service. And I imagine that I cannot be myself with integrity and not deal with the ramifications of that service, whatever they may be.

Where do you think your life will lead you in the future?

I haven't planned out my life. I respond to my life through the people that enter my life, through the things that happen to me, and through prayerful discernment within this process. The question that consumes my interest is: what does it mean to be a whole, human person? I feel that in many ways the liturgical forms within the church, the God-language in the church, really prevent people from recognizing their own religious experience, and from an awareness of the gifts they have been given by God. I think therefore there is much brokenness within individual people in the church, and within the community as a whole.

If anyone is minister, if anyone is called to be Christian, it

is a calling to minister to that brokenness in whatever form it presents itself. People have entered my life in the past six or seven years who are crying in pain from this brokenness. They have come to me with their needs, and have said to me: we see you as someone who has something to say to our brokenness. In the way you minister to us, and with us, and let us minister to you, you have spoken to some of our needs. We have come more alive by our relationship with you. There is a vitality in what you are doing amongst us, and we want you to minister to us more.

How do you expect to be able to sustain this ministry of yours?

I'm not sure. I have been trained in theology, psychology, and also in medical ethics. I have consciously tried to educate myself with marketable skills with which to find employment. I have never counted on getting a salary from the institutional church.

With an enlarged meaning, then, you perhaps see yourself as "extraordinary minister of the Eucharist?"

Minister of the Eucharist, yes. Extraordinary, no. That is one of the reasons I refused to use that term "ordination," because I don't believe myself to be one set apart. I believe ordination is open to all people. We all have different gifts, and the community of the church will become whole only when everyone's gift is utilized.

It would seem that your theology of the church would almost make it a matter of indifference to you whether or not women are recognized for regular ordination to the priesthood.

I cannot be indifferent when there is a real question of justice involved. I myself at this time do not choose to enter into and perhaps perpetuate the hierarchical, authoritarian structure. I believe that at my service the community validated the authority for ministry granted by God.

And if at some time the Roman Catholic Church authenticated the ordination of women, would you desire that ordination?

I think we always have to act on our discernment of what is the most loving, Christian thing to do. If I feel that having a ceremony would acknowledge my relationship to a larger community — if I felt that was the most loving, Christian thing to do, I would do it. But I think the Catholic Church has a great amount of work to do around defining what ordination really means. ■

[Rosemary Ellmer is currently working with the Department of Pastoral Care at Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital in California].

Theotokos: Mother of God

"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

—Luke 1:38-45

Wondering: With M

by Abbie Jane

I often think of what Elizabeth's spontaneous response must have meant to Mary and Joseph. Here was one more person besides themselves who *knew* — and *they* hadn't told her.

It had to be true, then, and not a figment of their imagination. For there must have been times, at the first, when they sort of had doubts themselves — like maybe it was just a dream. It always helps loads if just one more person is "with you" — the proof needed. For when only one or two know, people might think it is something they dreamed up between them. But if a third person also knows — and they didn't tell 'em — then it is more than just something they dreamed up.

I once asked my husband, "You know what I think Joseph's first thought was when he saw Mary returning from her three months with Elizabeth?" He said, "No." And I said, "I bet he thought, 'Oh, God, I didn't know she would look so pregnant! Conceived of the spirit — I thought it would be like spirit and not like flesh — and here she looks just as pregnant as any woman.'"

Who Was Th

by Richard W.

I didn't notice him and his two small boys at first; I was too absorbed in my task. When I did look up, I realized that all three had been watching me for several minutes while I struggled with the cumbersome, rented chain saw. A tree in my front yard had collapsed during a rainstorm.

"*Quiere ayuda, señor?*" Do you want some help? And so for the next two hours, the Mexican man expertly wielded the saw with hands familiar with the outdoors. He spoke little, but when he did it was with warmth reflected from a face that had seen many seasons of Aztec sun and wind. My oldest boy, a bilingual "gringo" teenager, had developed a casual friendship with his small children and perhaps this present kindness was a result.

He had come to Pasadena the year before from the province of Jalisco in Mexico, he said, bringing six of his nine children.

Things were desperate there. "*Muchas familias estan saliendo,*" he said. Many families are leaving. Inflation is



n Mary and Joseph

ie Jane Wells

For Mary probably had a bit of a waddle to her walk, and maybe was already showing a bit. I have had friends who had a bit of a pot belly at two months . . .

I have often thought of Mary and Joseph talking about the coming baby: "And who do you suppose it will look like? Mother or Father, or a combination?" (You know, as prospective parents do). And Mary and Joseph wondering if the baby looked like his Father, would they be able even to stand to look at it, as they remembered the stories from the Old Testament of how one cannot gaze right at God. Would they be able to take the *sight* of the Son of God? Fortunately, the Son looked more like his Mother than like his Father. But there was no way for Mary and Joseph to know that before he was born.

And they must have been worried about such things as "Will we be able to handle the Child? Are we competent to raise this Child?" And stuff like that. There was no book on "The Proper Care and Feeding of the Son of God" for them to bone up on.

I almost knew by heart the "Better Homes and Gardens Baby Book" by the time my Brian was born. I was so afraid I wouldn't know the right thing to do with this baby when I got it, and it must have been much worse for Mary than for me. She knew she was just an ordinary woman, having an Extraordinary Child — and she must have wondered if she was woman enough, and if Joseph was man enough, to be up to it.

People talk of praying for what they want. Well, I am quite sure that what Mary got wasn't in answer to her prayer! A woman would have to be out of her mind to pray, "Oh, Lord, conceive of me Thy only Son . . ." Perhaps some did who didn't have the foggiest notion of what they were asking for — or all that would be entailed in getting what they prayed for.

I have listened to people who pray for everything in the book — parking spots, clear weather for picnics — anything and everything, and when they get what they want they

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s That Man?

ard W. Gillett

rampant; agriculture is mechanizing; jobs are scarce. And he spoke before the drastic devaluation of the peso in October.

Yet here in Pasadena life was only a little better. As a carpenter/gardener, he had skills, but no stock of tools. The family apartment was tiny and the graffiti of neighborhood gangs defaced its front walls. "How can I repay you?" I asked when he'd finished the tree — now neatly converted to firewood (and my whole day salvaged). "*No es nada.*" It is nothing; a man helps his neighbor wherever he may be.

Wanting to be helpful myself, I ventured a hope: "Maybe you're eligible for food stamps." He seemed grateful for the inquiry. I later checked the rules; as an "illegal alien," he was not.

Time passed. Christmas was upon us. The pace of church activity was frenzied. Ah yes, I thought; look in on the family of my neighbor. So, the Tuesday night before

Christmas, two of my children and I did that.

Anita, his pretty oldest daughter (just 20) was there. She works in a Pasadena nursing home at minimum wage. She has to be a mother now — for Pepito, the little one; for Jorgito and Maribel, ages 7 and 8; and for Paco, 17; and she is household head for her father. Another, older brother had run off with a married woman since they had come to the States. "I feel sorry for him; he is so stupid and mixed up," Anita said.

She filled me in with more details of the family. They had all left Jalisco last year when their mother had died. Another young child had also died that year. Anita sends money home to the three children who stayed behind in Jalisco and live with a friend.

Next day, Wednesday, I took Anita to the welfare office. "Is her family eligible for any form of assistance?" I asked the supervisor. The answer was polite, but very clear: if

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proudly proclaim how God answered their prayer.

And then the day comes, and it always comes, when what they are praying for is a matter of life and death and they don't get it, then they wonder what is wrong with them and what is wrong with God that He didn't answer this prayer like He did the others. Like they *thought* He answered the others. So they doubt themselves and doubt God . . .

I wonder how much shunning Mary and Joseph got in Nazareth? After all, they weren't married yet, and Mary was pregnant. I wonder how much company they had, or if they had any, from their religious community and from family and old friends?

I wonder if, by the time they went to Bethlehem, Joseph was all Mary had left. I wonder if she had gradually learned how to be alone with Joseph as people turned away — first one and then another — so that she was used to being alone months before she got to Egypt.

Perhaps Egypt was not so bad after all, for there she did not have to see people who had turned and left her. Maybe she was ready to be alone in Egypt because she had learned how to be alone in Nazareth.

Perhaps Joseph *had* to take her to Bethlehem in those last stages of pregnancy. I wonder if all the men who went to Bethlehem, or anywhere else, to be enrolled for taxes also had their wives along if they were pregnant, just like Joseph did, because there was no one to leave her with in Nazareth who would care for her like he would? I have always

wondered about Mary's mother and father. Who would let their daughter go off on this trip without seeing that there was someone to take care of the birthing? If Joseph couldn't afford to take a midwife, I would think her relatives would see to it — or if they couldn't afford it either, that they and their friends would take up a collection or one of them would go along. What happened to all Mary's women relatives and women friends? Was this of no concern to them?

Perhaps Egypt was a pleasant change for Mary — for there she would not have to see people who no longer spoke to her or had anything to do with her because they didn't believe her like Joseph did — because they said, "She sure can't pull the wool over *our* eyes like she did over Joseph's — she can't con us as she did Joseph, and Joseph can't con us either."

If a woman today were to give birth to the Daughter of God, and that is a possibility, if not a probability (I don't think God is satisfied only to be the Father of a Son and not of a Daughter), I wonder how much support she would get during her pregnancy from her church community? From her family? Friends? Town? Country?

What if a woman alone — without a man like Joseph she was betrothed to — were to be the woman God picked to bear his Daughter? I wonder if she could go it alone from start to finish? I doubt if I could, even with an unearned income like I have to pay the costs of it all. I guess a woman could if she had to, but it sure would help if she had a man

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none of the children were born here, and if you don't have green cards from Immigration, you are eligible for nothing.

"*Pues, no perdimos nada,*" said Anita cheerfully afterward. "We lost nothing by asking."

That night, I visited the family again. Cheer and graciousness prevailed. The little kids tumbled about the living room. I gave them Christmas money from the church, but it was a feeble gesture compared to the natural friendliness of a man who had helped his neighbor with a tree.

Back in Mexico, I reflected, in the father's neighboring state of Sinaloa, the peasants were marching. They were angry about the huge unemployment in Mexico, about inflation, and about so little land being theirs to farm. Even the big city newspapers in the U.S. were writing about it. Diplomats in Washington and Mexico City were keeping a close watch: a possible trouble spot.

And in our country a new law had just been passed: "Illegal aliens" will now be deported back to Mexico in greater numbers. The quirks of history, I thought; this land was theirs long before it became ours.

And what of my neighbor family? One is reminded of many biblical images: Of Abraham, looking for the promised land. Of Mary and Joseph, looking for room at the inn; of a parable told by Jesus. "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you drink?" And our Lord answers the righteous: "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me."

Who was it that September morning that stepped forth and lent me a hand with a fallen tree? I remember; he'd said he was a carpenter. ■

The Rev. Richard W. Gillett is director of social concerns and Christian education, All Saints Church, Pasadena, Cal. The above first ran in the All Saints parish bulletin last Christmas.

They Wrote the Songs

by Franklin Winters

In the history of Christmas carols, there is nothing on record to match how two organists, exactly 50 Yule seasons apart, came to the rescue of their pastors who had written the words of beautiful poems but lacked music to make them hymns.

On Christmas Eve more than a century and a half ago, the assistant pastor of a little church in Austria returned to the rectory with a joy he could not keep to himself. Father Joseph Mohr had visited a peasant home where a baby boy had been born, and the happiness of the parents seemed to reflect all the rapture of the season. The humble priest was so carried away by his feelings that he was inspired to write some verses.

His poem began *Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!* ("Silent Night! Holy Night!"). As he thought of it, Father Mohr became certain that it would make an appropriate carol for the Christmas Eve Mass in his Oberndorf church. However, he had to find somebody to write a melody.

Why not Franz Gruber, the church organist, he thought? Franz was a gifted young musician, and could rearrange scores with no trouble at all. Father Mohr went to him.

"Good Franz, you must help me out. Here's a carol that we can sing on Christmas Eve, if you will only write music for it."

Franz Gruber shook his head. He was not used to composing original tunes, and even if he had been, this was such short notice. Yet he wanted to please his young pastor. He took the lines home, promising to have a try at it.

The next morning he was back with a score, and the two men rehearsed the carol together. Mice had eaten away the bellows of the church organ, so they had to be satisfied with guitar accompaniment.

The carol "Silent Night" was first sung in 1818 at St. Nicholas church, Oberndorf, at the Christmas Eve Mass. Father Mohr sang tenor, and Franz Gruber sang bass. The worshippers seemed delighted. Both author and composer would have been surprised had they known that tens of thousands would some day come to know and love their simple carol.

A man who happened to be present carried the words and music back to his home town in the Austrian Tyrol. There

four little children picked it up and sang it at the big trade fair in Leipzig. It wasn't long before "Silent Night" was known all over Austria and Germany.

When emigrants struck out for America, they carried the carol along with them as part of the Christmas tradition of their homeland. Soon it captured world-wide popularity, and was loved in the English version as well as in the original German.

Fifty years after Father Mohr dashed off his verses, just before Christmas, another clergyman took his pen in hand. At Philadelphia's church of the Holy Trinity where Phillips Brooks was rector, a special children's service had been planned for Christmas Sunday.

Only three years before, Brooks had been spending the holiday season in the Holy Land. Now, as he looked back to that time, he remembered how he had seen the ancient city of Bethlehem as it lay bathed in quiet starlight on Christmas Eve.

It was a haunting memory, and the rector was inspired to write a poem about it. When he had finished, he happened to think about the Christmas service for the Sunday School. He was sure the boys and girls would be glad to sing these stanzas — if only the right music could be provided.

But who could do it? Then Brooks remembered Lewis Redner — the Sunday school superintendent, choir director and organist, all rolled into one. He should not mind doing a job of composing on the side.

"Lewis," said the rector when he delivered the verses, "if you will write a tune for these, we'll call it 'St. Louis!'" (The name by which the carol tune is known to this day!)

Redner took the lines home and went to bed feeling quite discouraged. He had tried all evening, but had made no progress. But in the middle of the night he woke up with a beautiful melody ringing in his mind. He put the notes down on paper, and had the score ready for the children's rehearsal the next morning.

It goes without saying that the carol pleased the entire congregation. From Philadelphia it traveled to many cities until it became a great favorite all over the country. Today it is more popular than ever, for no Christmas season comes along without thousands joining in to sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" — words by Phillips Brooks and music by Lewis Redner.

Again, an organist had helped to make a carol immortal!

Franklin Winters is a free lance writer living in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Tierra Amarilla:

Missing Pedro, But Moving On

by Mary Lou Suhor

I had left Santa Fe more than two hours earlier, and now, near Tierra Amarilla, I had somehow taken a wrong turn. In my best textbook Spanish, I hailed a young woman walking along the road.

"Por favor, señorita, donde esta la clinica de la cooperacion del Pueblo?"

She smiled and replied, "The clinic is just down the road; turn at the grocery store. You can't miss it. But if you do, ask anyone. *Todo el mundo* around here *sabe* where is the clinic."

A marvelous mixture of Spanish and English frequently flows through conversations in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, where more than 80% of the residents have Spanish surnames. I was on my way to the home of Pedro Archuleta, one of the early members of the Episcopal Church's National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, who is in jail in Chicago since June 30 for refusing to testify before a Grand Jury investigating the FALN bombings.

The NCHA had given a grant to set up a maternity wing at the clinic, which is part of a cluster of services developed by the Chicano community under a self-help program called "La Cooperacion del Pueblo." Also included are family counseling and law offices, an agricultural co-op, an art shop, a garage. But it was the low cost, "parallel health system" which the clinic represented that especially interested THE WITNESS. Given the fact that Pedro was both coordinator of the clinic and its ambulance driver, trained in emergency procedures, how was the community reacting to his absence?

I walked past a waiting room filled with men, women, children and headed for the receptionist.

"Oh, yes. Beronice, Pedro's wife, is expecting you, and so is Valentina Tijerina. They will be here shortly. It's a shame Maria Varela is not here today. Perhaps you would like to read this early history she wrote."

I took a seat and leafed through the pages.

"La Clinica del Pueblo de Rio Arriba was started because people had to travel 70 miles to see a doctor. Besides the problem of distance, if a family wanted good health care it would have to go into debt to get it . . ."

"In 1966, Tierra Amarilla had a doctor who belonged to the New Mexico National Guard. In 1967, the Guard was activated

and sent to Vietnam and Tierra Amarilla's doctor went with it. The summer of 1969 was especially rough. Two people bled to death on the highway waiting for an ambulance and health care had become a major concern.

"In 1969, also, 15 families formed La Cooperativa Agricola, to farm the land and work on the land grant problem. When our doctor came back in 1969, and let it be known that he was going to sell the clinic, La Cooperativa decided to buy. The people hoped it would be a start toward everyone helping each other. In September the clinic was set on fire and the entire north end was gutted. It was pretty common knowledge that certain ranchers had put the money up to have this done. But there were no prosecutions. The police investigation never got any further than saying it was definitely arson.

"We had insurance, but it was December before the company would settle. Then we were told as soon as we were given the insurance money, the bank was going to call in our mortgage even though we were two or three months ahead of our payments. With a lot of hard work and help from some friends we convinced agencies within the Presbyterian Church to lend us money so we could buy the mortgage.

"We knew that the politicians, ranchers and bankers wanted us out of the way. That is why our board made the policy that they would not take government money, loans, or second mortgages . . . We decided to look for private money to help



Valentina Tijerina

us get on our feet. We wanted to approach foundations, churches and wealthy individuals . . ."

Maria's account hinted at the struggle that had gone on in the community between Sheriff Emilio Naranjo and those who were against his "patron" system of politics. Naranjo, head of the Democratic Party for more than 20 years, set the full weight of his police and political power against La Cooperacion in 1975 after a chapter of La Raza, a Chicano activist party, had developed in the area. People at La Cooperacion worked for the election of its candidates, including Moises Morales, who opposed Naranjo for sheriff.

"Hi, I'm sorry to keep you waiting," said Valentina Tijerina. "Beronice will be here in a few minutes. I see you've found some reading material."

I asked Valentina about the patient load at the clinic. "Beronice can tell you that better than I. I'm wearing two hats now but that isn't one of them. I'm involved in overall administration and the family counseling program."

What is the nature of the family program?

"Well, we found a number of problems in our community to be interrelated. It's a vicious circle. Many health problems are caused by improper diet, and that, in turn is the result of our families' not being able to get food stamps, or to get on welfare. Then some families might have a crippled or retarded child, and may not know how to go about getting help. We couldn't offer health care solely and leave the rest for the people to cope with. For example, we have more than 600 families enrolled in La Clinica. Of these, only 100 are on medicaid. But we know that more than 350 are eligible."

"We also hope our program will eventually change, either through direct action by the people, or through court suits, the way welfare and food stamps are administered in the county. A group from the community who have worked with La Clinica on the food stamp problems may eventually evolve into a welfare rights organization."

When Beronice arrived, the conversation switched to Pedro. She and her two children, Beverly, 12, and Pedrocito, 10, had just returned from a visit with him in the Chicago jail — 2,000 miles away from home.



Maria Sanchez

"He's in good spirits," she said. "Seeing him made me strong. The children and I had agreed beforehand: 'No crying,' because we didn't want to make him sad. Pedro had a long talk with them before he left about what he was going to do, and its consequences, and they are old enough to understand. So, they are very proud of him."

Beronice suggested a walking tour of the facilities to get a sense of what the complex housed. In the Taller Grafico we met Philo Martinez, who was in charge of filling orders for calendars and stationery designed and silk screened on the premises. Then we roamed through large meeting and conference rooms where community events take place. Beronice explained that the Oficina de Ley, a legal assistance corporation, was used by members of the community who felt they had been fired unjustly by public agencies or beaten and jailed illegally. The offices of La Clinica, La Cooperacion and La Oficina de Ley were all broken into by the Sheriff's men after dynamite exploded in 1975 in a bar some three miles from Tierra Amarilla. As Maria Varela's history tells it:

"Residents were shocked. Although this valley has struggled for some 50 or 60 years over the land grants and although some county residents had publicly denounced the brutality and corruption of Naranjo, the struggles in this area had never been characterized by the use of explosives. Hours after, several arrests occurred, the first designed to link dissidents with the bombing. No charges have ever been brought. Other arrests followed designed to link activists with marijuana and possession of arms . . ."

"Close on the heels of these arrests, four families had their homes raided before dawn and the offices of La Clinica, La Cooperacion and La Oficina de Ley were illegally broken into by the Sheriff's men. A civil suit for damages was then filed against the Sheriff's department."

"Three weeks after these events, a man claiming to be from the town of Espanola came on the grounds and approached Moises Morales, who was then candidate for sheriff, about buying a case of dynamite. Moises chased the man and immediately informed his attorneys . . ."

Upshot of all this was that in January, 1977, former Sheriff Emilio Naranjo was forced to settle with La Clinica and other plaintiffs for \$8,000. Naranjo is now State Senator. Prior to that he had the County establish the office of "law enforcement coordinator" with a salary of \$14,000 a year. Then he resigned as sheriff to take up the new post.

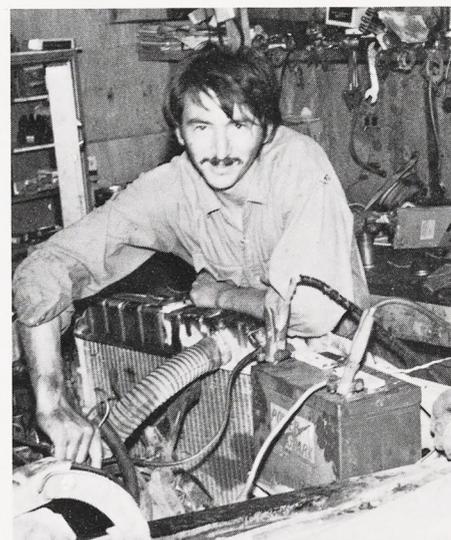
I asked Beronice about Moises, who had been subpoenaed to Chicago also, but released after providing exemplars — fingerprints and voice samples. "Would you like to meet him? He's working in the garage."

Moises was busily engaged under the hood of a truck. On top of other problems, he was also personally burdened by the recent death of his daughter, so we did not tarry except for a photo.

Beronice and I had now circled the grounds, and entered the clinic where Maria Sanchez, assistant in OB, joined us for a briefing. The clinic staff includes two doctors and a physicians assistant from the National Health Service Corps, two



*Beronice Archuleta and her mother-in-law...
Collecting signatures.*



Moises Morales

dentists, three nurses, a manager and two receptionists, as well as those who work in patient outreach. Prenatal classes are held on Wednesday mornings, and deliveries in the maternity ward are running two to six a month. Everyone except the doctors is on a salary of \$350 a month. Someone is on call around the clock, in case of emergency.

Was it difficult to build the current case load?

"Very" said Beronice. "People at first were slow in coming, so we decided we would go out to the people. For example, we went to the local grammar and high schools and offered to examine and clean the kids' teeth free. If our dentist found cavities, he would send a note home to the parents so they could make an appointment."

Beronice and two other TA residents had gone to California for training in vital signs and lab work, and after 81 hours of emergency training and passing an exam, are now licensed by the New Mexico Health and Social Services department. They do outreach work in the community, taking blood pressure, urging pap tests, checking for diabetes, doing follow through work, etc.

How does Pedro's absence affect La Clinica?

"Terribly," said Valentina. "We feel the whole community is being punished by Pedro's being in jail. We're collecting signatures now to send with a delegation to Attorney General Griffin Bell to ask for his release." (As THE WITNESS went to press, the community had collected some 1,500 signatures and had planned to send a delegation, including Beronice, by bus to visit Attorney General Bell and legislators



FOR ANDRES VALDEZ

TIERRA AMARILLA, N.M.

on the Hill to plead for Pedro's release, during the week of November 14).

Now it was late and I wanted to meet Pedro's parents, so Beronice and I took off to visit Mr. and Mrs. Pete Archuleta. Pedro's mother told us that her husband was off looking for a stray cow. She proudly showed Beronice a list of names she had completed to send to Washington. She showed me pictures of Pedro's two brothers and two sisters, and a nephew raised with them. "I have faith in God and know my son is going to come back," she said. "I can't understand why he is being punished for doing good things."

The Archuleta family is close, and most supportive of Pedro. He calls home once a week and all his family have given him instructions to call collect.

Saying adios at the Archuletas, we headed for a visit to Beronice's parents' home in Placita Blanca, where her mother was watching the children. Beronice has six sisters and three brothers. She and Pedro met in high school and have been married 13 years. At Beronice's home, the conversation is totally in Spanish.

Then we swing by Pedro and Beronice's home in La Puente. "I want to show you how Pedro was fixing up the place. He had started a porch and a bathroom, and he

was digging a well. Right now we must still get water from the neighbor. And notice we do *not* have a basement. The sheriff's deputies broke in at 7:30 one morning with a search warrant which said to seize the marijuana kept in a large cardboard box in a basement beneath the living room,' if you can believe that."

Pedro and Beronice live in a simple home in the rural area. In the back, the young couple grow corn, pumpkins, beans, and potatoes. Now all the work is left to Beronice, including wood chopping in winter. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that she had an operation recently for varicose veins and was in bed for six weeks.

"Now you can see how Pedro jokes about the jail being a 'country club.' He has air conditioning and central heating, indoor plumbing, meals. He calls it his 'vacation.' But of course he misses home."

The atmosphere was heavy as we drove back to the clinic and my car. It was sunset in Tierra Amarilla as I said goodbye to my Chicano hosts. On the long drive back to Santa Fe it struck me that some of the people whom the government has jailed in a "terrorist" investigation may be just people who have been "struggling with the system and probing alternatives."

SEEK FUNDS FOR FAMILIES

Nine men and women -- all from minority groups and all of whom were connected in some way to the Episcopal Church's National Commission on Hispanic Affairs -- will be spending Christmas, 1977 in jail for refusing to testify before Grand Juries in New York and Chicago.

The families of these prisoners need financial help.

In jail since early March in New York are Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin. Three Puerto Rican brothers, Andres, Julio and Luis Rosado, joined them Aug. 22.

In Chicago are Pedro Archuleta, Jose Lopez, and Roberto Caldero. Most recently jailed there was Ricardo Romero of Alamosa, Colo., a Chicano who represented the Crusade for Justice on the NCHA. The father of six children, he was imprisoned Nov. 9.

All of those jailed have no other source of income except what their families are able to provide. The Board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company joins THE WITNESS in suggesting that contributions for assistance to the families of those imprisoned for their principled stance be sent to: New York Committee Against Grand Jury Repression, Box 268, 161 E. Houston St., New York, N.Y. 10002. Make checks payable to the Committee, earmark "Survivors' Fund."

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like Joseph around to give her a hand. I wonder if Mary would have been able to get the Baby to Egypt without Joseph? I doubt she could have made it. Even today, with unearned income, it would be almost impossible without someone to help, without someone to believe as Joseph believed, in you and what you were doing for God . . .

And I wonder if Joseph ever got around to enrolling for the census before they left Bethlehem in a hurry. With all he had to do, it is easy to see where getting enrolled for taxes might not have been Number 1 on his list — especially after the Baby was born — for here was a Baby that Joseph *knew* was special, even if nobody else in Bethlehem did, save Mary.

I have been thinking about Joseph and all he had on his mind during that trip to Egypt — not the least of which would be traveling with those Christmas gifts — gold, frankincense, myrrh — and worrying about getting robbed in the desert. Then there was the daily grind of providing food and shelter — not only shelter at night but from the midday heat. That was sure no “pleasure trip” for any of ‘em.

Much later, I recall that two of the apostles tried, with the help of their Mom, to reserve the two seats of honor at the table in heaven for themselves. Well I think those seats were reserved at the Conception by God for Mary and Joseph. And if I am right, that must be the shocker of heaven for many, many men and women — a WOMAN yet, in one of them; and Joseph, yet, not one of the apostles in the other. Well, just on seniority alone, Mary and Joseph put in more time in living with Jesus. And Joseph had to live with him in



his trade, too, answering questions about any of his business practices. Imagine *any* business man having to do that today! Even in a one-man business, it wouldn't be easy if you wanted to make a buck or two extra on the bottom line.

Jesus on the Payroll?

A prophet like Jesus on the payroll would cut down on the profits, I would imagine. No business man in his right mind would want Jesus on his premises, much less as right hand man. But Joseph put in a good many years at his carpenter's bench with Jesus right there asking questions.

I think Joseph is the example for the laity of “living with Jesus.” Perhaps the apostles are the examples for the priestly ones. But Joseph is the example par excellence for those of us who live and deal in the world's market place.

Well, I see Mary and Joseph as the “new Eve and new Adam” and I see Mary and Joseph in the honor seats of heaven's banquet table — and I see it all starting with the Conception rather than the Resurrection. As I see it the Conception is proof that God is reconciled to his earthly kids. The Conception is the vehicle of Reconciliation between God and Mankind. We have now learned the hard way that having a baby rarely ever reconciles estranged man and woman. We have learned the hard way that having a baby won't hardly ever save a marriage. But I think God knew that all the time — 2,000 years more or less, before humanity found it out. I think God had to be reconciled to Creation in order to have a child by one of them — for that's about the only way having a child works out well or successfully.

A baby, conceived of love, won't keep the love a going concern, either. Estrangement can come even after you have a baby together with love. It looks like maybe that is what has happened between God and Creation lots of times.

Well, anyway, these are just my suppositions, and my nose won't be out of joint if I happen to be completely wrong. ■

Abbie Jane Wells is a free-lancer who from time to time provides THE WITNESS with meditations (like the above) written in her kitchen in Juneau, Alaska.

CREDITS

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"And will you, in accordance with the canons of the Church obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?" The Episcopal Church does not have faith that a free person called by God to be a priest of the church will know how to answer this. So the authors of the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer* suggested an answer — a ringing affirmation of the authority of the bishop and the subordination of the priest. The person who is to be ordained should surrender his or her God-given freedom and say, "I am willing and ready to do so," which means, "I am willing and ready to obey my bishop."

Deep down in their hearts, the authors of the *Book of Common Prayer* recognized the incompatibility between a requirement of obedience and the requirements of love. In the marriage rite, for example, both the wife and the husband are asked if they will promise to love, comfort, and honor each other, but not to *obey* one another. Where there is not freedom, there is not love. If the church is concerned about love and justice, which is a requirement of God, according to the Prophet Micah, then the church and its people, including the church and its priests, must be free.

If you will pursue these goals and pursue them diligently during the course of your study, the controversy over the new versus the old prayerbook will fade as insignificant. The debate over the validity of men versus women priests will be reserved for small talk during the silly season and discussed, if at all, for comic relief. Fear of your bishop's authority will subside in direct proportion to your capacity for compassion for a church leader who, you recognize, is also afraid. If you will pursue this course of action during your course of study, the people will call you wise. You may be able to renew the church. ■

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a working group of the Council. As part of the activities of this group, a mailing was sent to all diocesan bishops of the Episcopal Church and to the equivalent middle judicatories of the other member bodies of the Council asking for names of contact persons in their dioceses or jurisdictions. Returns are only just beginning to come in, but there does seem to be considerable support. The resulting network will enable the working group to carry out an educational campaign similar to that envisioned by the resolution, not only within PECUSA but in all churches affiliated with the Council. Each member denomination has also been invited to name an official representative to the working group and this too seems to be succeeding.

At our recent meeting, the group was concerned as to how the Second Resolution would be implemented; specifically, how the "physical aid" would be provided. The first whereas clause seems to eliminate the confusion that occasionally had been expressed as to whether the two women were indeed "engaged in the work of the Church and its ministry to Hispanic people," and would seem to clearly indicate a responsibility for the payment of legal fees and, hopefully, the restoration of their salaries. We would, therefore, be most appreciative of hearing from you as to the way in which this will be carried out.

Again, thank you very much for helping in this matter.

The Rev. F. Sanford Cutler
Morristown, N.J.

Understood September

That September issue of THE WITNESS was a real honey.

Your "Need for an Urban Theology" was absolutely the very best thing you've done, thus far, for the book. Tom Hinsberg's "Ashes or Hope" piece was a beautiful, glorious job of work. Can't really express how solidly they both delivered important messages.

On top of all that, I found — somewhat uniquely — that I could understand what each of you was saying!

Charles F. Moore, Jr.
Orleans, Mass.

Need to Pray, Cry, Laugh

Richard Shaull laments that he has allowed the religious institutions of church and seminary to legitimate a dehumanizing society and "to socialize each new generation of students into the order that

is 'passing away' — in church and society" (June WITNESS). Creative non-conformity, or just plain non-conformity is stifled, at the cost of leaving the contemporary order of existence unchallenged and unresisted. Professor Shaull then proceeds to state some specific tasks that he can pursue as a seminary professor.

One can look at the processes Shaull describes and recognize how overwhelming are the forces against which the individual or the "messianic community" must contend. One can see, as William Stringfellow does, in his article "Living With Defeat" (May WITNESS) that defeat in the battle against these powers of legitimization and socialization is an act we must learn to expect, even to anticipate.

This does not prompt our withdrawal, however. From this type of experience we learn, hopefully, with the apostle, to be "strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11). Our victory is not the victory of arms and the Psalmist is continually reminding us not to put our strength and trust in horses, in the very powers of the opposition. We may be Easter people, as the celebrative slogans go, but our life always winds its way before the Cross and through Good Friday.

The unfaithful people and the faithful prophet — that is the perennial story. But the story is only perennial when the faithful ones know how to turn to the Lord and to unburden their tears and their laughter often in spite of the conditions about them.

So what? So we in our attempts to change institutions subservient to corporate wealth, the principalities of mammon and the intellect need to house a heart more readily available to turn to tears and laughter. Perhaps as Jacques Ellul reminds us, we try every imaginable political, economic and pragmatic method and technique because we have not yet learned to pray, to cry and to laugh in the community of the faithful.

The Rev. Roland M. Kawano
So. Pasadena, Cal.

No Turning Back

I am a teacher and writer but consider my potential unfulfilled, my promises not kept. Even after years of psychiatry I don't know exactly why I failed, but I have a good idea; and women's liberation is a wonderful thing in my eyes as is the admission of women to the priesthood. Especially that last.

I grew up in an Episcopalian home, and when my brother, who was much younger,

became a crucifer, I wondered why I couldn't have been one. When he went later to theological school and became a priest, I no longer wondered. I knew then that I was inferior in the eyes of everyone, including God.

This letter, prompted by the deep and continuing division in the church over the ordination of women, is a letter of gratitude. The past is past. The future will be different for all of us.

Betty Phillips
New York, N.Y.

How to Save \$105,000/Week

The time has come for a clarion call for Episcopalians to get back to the fundamentals of Christianity. The symbol of our faith is the crucified Christ. He did not get on that cross by accident; he was executed as a criminal by the State because he was dangerous — a person who got involved — a person who was a trouble-maker because he reminded the common people that they were important persons with a God-given right to freedom, justice and dignity.

The Episcopal Church today is spending money, time and energy on secondary issues relating to liturgical finesse, theological hair-splitting, and clerical sexuality. When are we going to take seriously our Lord's teaching in *Matt. 25*? Notice the conclusion of that lesson: Compassion for the hungry, the alien, the needy, the sick, the prisoner is not a secondary concern of the church after it has solved its liturgical and theological problems; Our Lord said that our eternal salvation depends on it!

Take on specific example of ecclesiastical myopia — altar flowers. I have no specific statistics, but would you say a fair estimate is that the average parish pays \$15 per Sunday for altar flowers? There are approximately 7,000 parishes in this country. Our church spends roughly \$105,000 per Sunday for altar flowers. I don't need to elaborate as to the amount of help this would mean in strategic areas of human need.

The Rev. Eldred Johnston
Columbus, Ohio

COMING UP IN THE WITNESS:

Roy Larson reports on the Urban Coalition Hearings in Chicago; James Cone and Howard Dodson on Black Theology; Helen Seager on Abortion...

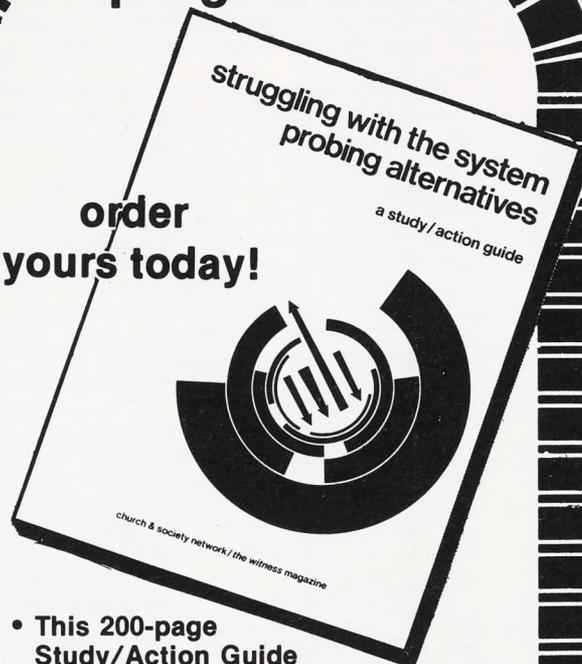
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