

**I Saw the Madonna Today**

by REV. RALPH WEATHERLY

She was standing above her children in a little house where there is stark poverty but great self-respect, and a dignity of the righteous poor. The children were thinly dressed but they huddled together in affection. Beside them was a quiet, strong father. This man loves his wife she honors him in all his struggle to keep the family warm and fed. No money, no decorations save a little tree and some simple things,—but the riches of valiant and true hearts.

He smiled at me in natural courtesy. But her smile over her children I shall never forget. It was a flashing smile that has cheered others worse off than they. It was a smile of piety, for the little family kneels each night in prayer to the God who feeds the birds around the hills. It was a smile of strength . . . for the years ahead. Above all, it was a smile because of babies given her by God;—a proud and happy, flashing joy.

I turned away thinking of all the lovely women I owe so much to, on this, Mother's Night.

I saw the Madonna today.

**Local Boys On Kitty Hawk**

Lloyd M. Bishop, USN, and John B. Bishop, seaman, USN, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Bishop, Dallas, R. D. 2, and Robert F. Palmer, guided missileman seaman, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Palmer, 34 Grove St., Trucksville, are serving aboard the attack aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, operating with the First Fleet out of San Diego, Calif.

Commissioned last April, the Kitty Hawk is the first carrier in the world to be armed entirely with guided missiles.

To keep a small boy out of the cookie box, lock it and hide the key under a cake of soap.



THIS MAY BE the post office's biggest Christmas. The postmaster general estimates that more Christmas mail—packages and cards—will be handled in 1962 than in any previous year. With this in mind, the post office department has hired extra employees and arranged for use of extra trucks for the holiday period.

The post office is Santa Claus' good right arm. It delivers gifts and greetings throughout the world, and it will do its best to get them there by December 25—if they are mailed on time.

Much Christmas mail going overseas is handled in cooperation with the postal systems of other nations. But in the United States and its possessions, in U. S.-trusted islands in the Pacific and among U. S. servicemen in all parts of the world, delivery of holiday greetings is strictly a United States affair.

The army takes over, through its army post office, for troops serving outside the United States, be they in Germany, Korea, or somewhere on the way.

Best known special Christmas business done by any post office is that of Santa Claus, Indiana.



**HOLY GLASS** . . . This stained window is in the church of Oberndorf, Germany, where the beloved Christmas carol, "Silent Night, Holy Night," was first sung.

**THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE**

by permission of Robert Keith Leavitt

On the morning before the Christmas that fell when I was six, my father took my brother and me for a walk in the Old Colony town where we lived. Three times as we walked he stopped, and cut small balsam trees: a very tiny one, hardly more than a seedling; a small one a foot or so high; and a youthful one of perhaps four feet. So we each had a tree to bear, flag-like, back to the house. It didn't occur to us single-minded larvae that this had the least connection with Christmas. Our father was a botanist Ph.D., given to plucking all manner of specimens whenever we walked, with the offhand explanation, "A fine *Tsuga canadensis*," or whatever it was. By nightfall we had forgotten all about the walk.

For this was Christmas Eve, and we were suddenly in a panic. Where was THE TREE? On experience, we knew that it was usually delivered in the morning, that Father set it up in the afternoon, and that Mother trimmed it at night, letting us help with the ornaments before she put us to bed in a fever of anticipation. But this year we had seen no tree arrive; look where we would, we could not find one; and even Mother turned aside our questions. Would there be no tree? Would there, perhaps, be no Christmas at all for us? How we wished, now, that we had not put the cat in the milk-pail!

But after supper, Father and Mother took us into the sitting room. In a cleared corner over by the big closet stood a jar of earth. "Christmas," said Father, "is a day of miracles, to remind us of the greatest Miracle of all. Perhaps we shall see one." Then Mother led us out, closing the door on Father and the jar of earth.

"We can help," she said, "by learning this song." And she began softly, but very true, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem." We tried hard, in our shrill way. But even Mother had to admit it was only a good try. Yet when the door opened and we went again into the sitting-room, behold! A tiny Tree had appeared in the jar of earth! Hardly more than a seedling, to be sure, and not old enough yet to bear ornaments, but indubitably a Tree. Marvelling, we went out again.

This time we did better — on the words, if not the tune. And when we reentered the sitting-room, the Tree had grown — to perhaps a foot or so in height! A blaze of hope flashed upon us. We went out and tried harder on that song. And sure enough, this time the Tree was taller than either boy. Terrific! We could hardly wait to get outside and sing some more with Mother. For now hope was a rapture of certainty.

To this day, I cannot hear O Little Town of Bethlehem, from however cracked a curbside organ, without hearing through it and beyond it the clear, true voice of my mother. Nor hear that long-vanished sweetness without knowing that presently, somewhere, somehow, a great door is going to open and disclose unearthly beauty. It is more than fifty years since our sitting-room door swung back for the fourth time, that night in the Old Colony of Massachusetts. But I can still see, sharp as life, the splendor of the Tree that towered to the ceiling in its glossy dark green, sparkling with silver tinsel, glowing with candles, and half hiding in its crisp, fragrant needles, the incomparable perfection of spheres that shone like far-off other worlds, red and blue and green and gold . . .

Cynics say that miracles are all man-made — contrived, like a Christmas tree hidden in a closet and flashed upon wondering kids. That even the Christmas spirit is only a spell we work up to bemuse one another — and then fall for, ourselves, like so many simple children.

What of it? So much the better! If mankind, by its own devoted labor, can induce in itself—if only for a day — an all-pervading spirit of friendship and cheer and good will and loving kindness, that alone is a very great miracle. It is the kind of miracle that must please above all others Him who knows how miracles are wrought.

Thank you, Mr. Leavitt, for writing such a beautiful thing, and for giving me permission to use it. It has been several years since I received the Christmas card. I hope you have not forgotten! hix

**New Lighting Rules In State For All Slow Vehicles**

State Secretary of Revenue Charles M. Dougherty has announced adoption of new lighting regulations for slow-moving vehicles such as horse-drawn buggies, farm tractors, and boat trailers traveling Pennsylvania's highways after dark.

The regulations were drawn up in compliance with a 1961 State law authorizing the Secretary to "adopt lighting standards . . . where such standards did not previously exist."

The new requirements — all of which are presently in effect — apply to animal-drawn vehicles, wagons, tractors, and agricultural machinery as well as non-farm construction equipment, boat and utility trailers, and miniature automobiles.

Commenting on the lighting regulations, Commissioner of Traffic Safety O. D. Shipley said:

"The danger of unlighted or inadequately lighted vehicles of odd types, shapes, or sizes moving over our roads after dark has long been recognized. The new standards will help protect the lives and property of farmers and other operators of such vehicles as well as the lives of motorists."

A key provision of the new regulations states that every required lamp must be lighted by electricity supplied by a wet-cell storage battery or by an electrical generating system, or both.

"Careful testing and research has shown that over the long run a wet-cell battery is the most reliable and least costly power source for vehicle lighting purposes, when a regular generating system is not available," Commissioner Shipley stated.

The new standards require that buggies and other animal-drawn vehicles be equipped with reflectors and lamps which signal a turn and can flash simultaneously as a hazard warning. A double-faced hazard light located on each side of the vehicle can be substituted for the two pairs of front and rear lamps.

Self-propelled vehicles such as tractors must also have hazard warning lamps as well as head and tail lights and reflectors. A boat, utility, or other non-commercial trailer or semi-trailer drawn by a motor vehicle must be equipped with reflectors, tail lights, and turn signal lights on the rear.

**Xmas Tourists Come To State**

More out-of-state residents will spend the 1961 Christmas season in Pennsylvania than ever before, the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce says.

The reasons they come are many. First, Pennsylvania is the home of Bethlehem, America's Christmas city, with its huge star of Bethlehem, its glittering Christmas lights, the putz displays and Moravian caroling.

Pennsylvania is the spot (Washington Crossing) from which George Washington on Christmas Eve crossed the Delaware River and also the site (Valley Forge) where he and his tiny army spent the winter of 1777-78.

It's the home of Indiana, "Christmas Tree Capitol of the Nation," and its colorful "Santa Claus Boulevard." It's the home of Berwick, noted for its fetching array of Christmas displays and decorations.

It's the home of the Christmastown Railroad in Pittsburgh's Buhl Planetarium where 10 trains speed through a miniature countryside, portraying "American Heritage." The amazing display, built by one man, fills the entire South Gallery of the Planetarium.

It's the home of Smethport, far to the north in the "land of 10,000 mountains," and the Johnson Christmas displays — each hand-crafted, hand-painted, life-size, and many motorized.

It's the home of Philadelphia, America's birthplace, which attracts Christmas visitors to its multitude of Yule displays, lights and seasonal recreation, plus theater. Many visitors stay on through New Year's Day to watch Philadelphia's answer to the New Orleans Mardi Gras — the gala, flamboyant Mummers' Parade.

Every Pennsylvania community, however small, welcomes the visitor at Christmas time.

The trouble with doing nothing is that you can't stop and rest.

General Ulysses S. Grant in New York City.

**Swedish Students Here For Weekend**

Karin Gidlund, Rotary exchange student from Simrishamn, Sweden, where Maryalice Knecht is now studying as exchange student from Dallas Rotary Club, spent a recent weekend with Mr. and Mrs. James Knecht of Harveys Lake, to supplement Maryalice's letters with personal descriptions of the school where the Knecht daughter is now enrolled, and of the community in

which she is living. While Karin was in this area, she attended Ice Follies at Hershey with Mrs. Knecht, who with a group from banks of the Wyoming Valley made up three busloads. Judy Searfoss, of Dallas Branch, Miners National Bank, is vice chairman of the Women's Committee, A. I. B.

The Linotype machine was invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler. It was first used in 1886 by the New York Tribune.



We hope that all your dreams of a joyous holiday come true and that many more happy occasions will come your way in the days to follow.

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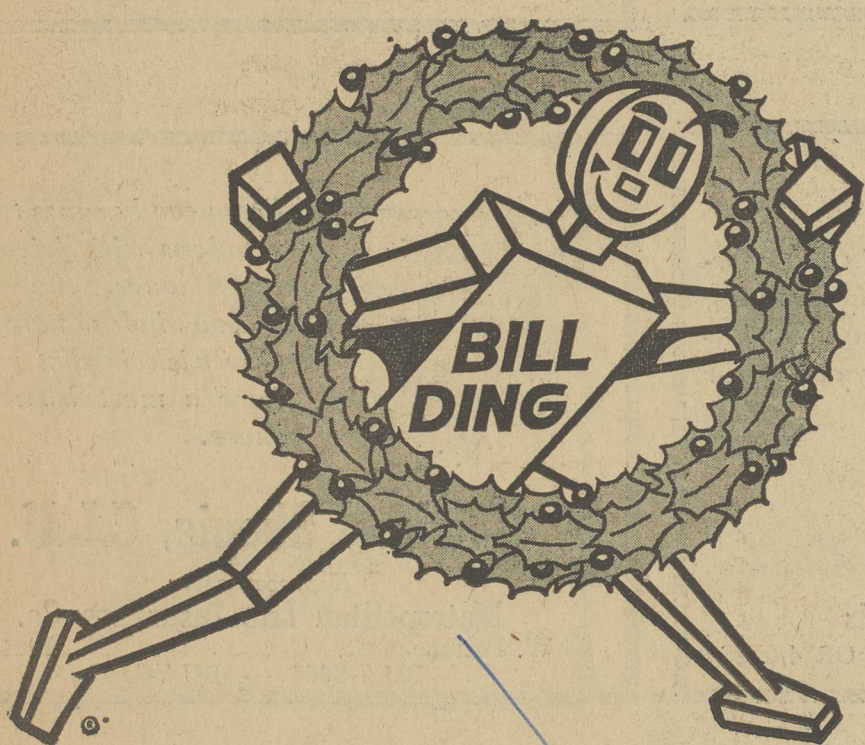
May every heart and home in the land be brightened with the promise of this our Holy season.



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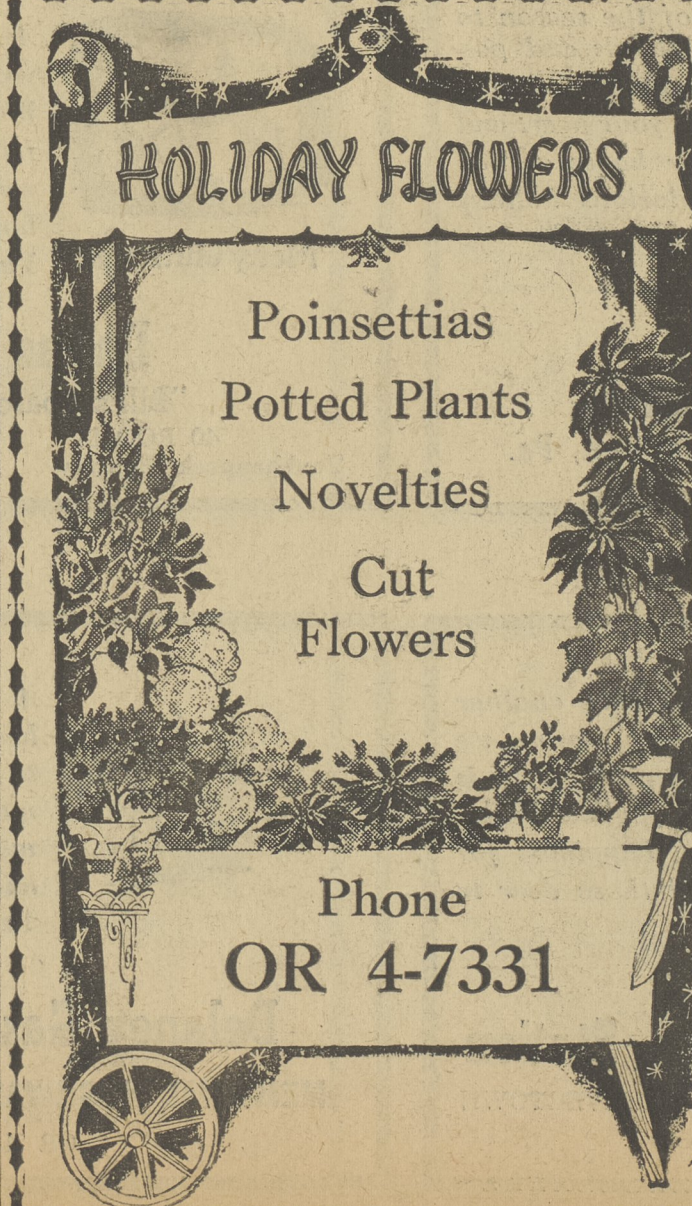
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We want to wish all our good friends and neighbors a Very Merry Christmas . . . one that will linger long in your memories. We hope, too, the New Year will bring all of us peace and prosperity.



May Your Christmas be Merry and Your New Year bright as a dancer's delight



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