

the Joyful Noise

of St. James' Episcopal Church

Mary, Mother of God: Woman or Icon?

by Peggy Hockett

I became a Catholic convert before marriage and I tried, as a young Catholic mother, to develop some kind of relationship and feeling for Mary the Queen of Heaven. I needed a model as I cared for my young children. To my chagrin I felt a deeper kinship with St Francis of Assisi than to the Madonna. The Rosary was



Mater Dolorosa

not for me. It took two very different books to help me understand my feeling (or lack of feeling) for Mary. The books were Bishop John Shelby Spong's book *Born of a Woman* and a lovely book, found in a library sale, *The World's Great Madonnas*, by Cynthia Pearl Maus. Now I see Mary in a very different light than I did as a Roman Catholic.

Bishop Spong is a strong advocate for women. He points out that Pious XII, by proclaiming the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption, took her humanity away. "She (Mary) entered the realm of the Gods as one deprived of her humanity. She was a virgin bride, a

virgin mother, a perpetual virgin and a postpartum virgin. She was immaculately conceived at birth and bodily assumed at the moment of death. Clearly she was not a real woman." She became a model of the ideal woman, an icon, to the male hierarchy. I personally prefer to think of her as a special woman; an earth mother to Jesus and representing all the brides and Mothers on this planet.

Maus's *The Great Madonnas* reveals Mary as seen by many artists, poets, writers and composers from around the world. Each writer or artist portrays mother and Child as one of his own. Pictures from every continent and most of the countries in our world show them with the physical features and dress of the artists' people. Several pictures show her as Mater Dolorosa, the sorrowful Mother, or as a tired and weary Mary on the back of a donkey, carrying a growing child in the trip across the desert to Egypt. An Italian artist, Arrighi, shows Mary with the sleeping baby in her arms with a sad face and her hands clenched. Her eyes are uplifted as if looking for guidance. Is this not a common experience shared by all mothers in every culture? Motherhood is never without anxiety and heartaches and she had more than her share. Jesus may have been born in the mid-east but He belongs to the world.

(concludes p. 4)

In This Issue

- 1 Mary, mother of God
- 2 UTO Offering
- 3 Evelyn's Epistle
Justice and Social Policy
- 4 Editor's Tiny bit
- 5 From the Treasurer
St. Nick's cookies
Vestry Notes
- 6 Anniversaries and Birthdays
Greenary Donations
- 7 Christmas Tree
Crossword
- 8 Scriptorium
- 9 Speaking of Movies
- 10 Calendar
- 11 Holy Humor
- 12 What's Happening

Editorial Information

The Joyful Noise is published monthly September through June as a ministry of St. James Episcopal Church. Submissions in accord with the Mission of St. James are encouraged. The address of the Editor is 429 Kinney Circle, Wooster, OH 44691 and you may e-mail: astolat@sssnet.com

Contributors this month include:

Gwen Bayless
John Cook
Richard Figge
Susan Figge
Damon Hickey
Peggy Hockett
Evelyn Manzella
Thelma Rinfret
Joyce Roe

Folders for the last issue were:

Shirley Buytendyk
Mary Hickey
Clara Patton



Please add your name to the sign up sheets on the bulletin board for greeters and Coffee Hour hosts/hostesses.



Astolat
Publications

United Thank Offering

Our Fall Ingathering for United Thank Offering was November 6th.



by Joyce Roe

The blue boxes and blue UTO envelopes that were brought in contained \$570.40. A check has been forwarded to the Diocesan Coordinator for UTO. Thanks to all who participated in this Outreach project.

Saint James Episcopal Church

Corner of East North and Market Streets, Wooster, OH (330) 262-4476

Parish Hall: (330) 262-4488

Web Address: <http://www.stjameswooster.org/index.html>

E-mail: saintjameswooster@earthlink.net

Holy Eucharist Services

8:00 am and 10:00 am Sunday, 7:30 am Wednesday

Staff

Rector - The Reverend Evelyn N. Manzella	(330) 262-1930
Organist - Jason Metheny	(330) 769-2867
Choir Director - Ned Brooks	(330) 264-9495
Parish Secretary - Gladys Hunter	(330) 682-0117
Pledge Secretary - Pat Watson	(330) 263-7811
Treasurer - John Cook	(330) 263-0073
Ass't Treasurer - Celia Smart	(330) 262-0299
Liz Glick - Bookkeeper	(220) 263-4048
Joyful Noise Editor - Russell T. Cross	(330) 345-1416

When there is no priest available, call Senior Warden, Liz Glick at (330) 263-4048, or Junior Warden, John Hockett, at (330) 345-7825 in case of emergency. Stuart Ling is available to make pastoral calls.

2005 Vestry

Jean Barnes (06) New Member Ministry	(330) 345-8586
Gwen Bayless (Vestry Clerk)	(330) 264-1874
Brad Burns (07)	(330) 263-7504
Velda Cross (06) Worship	(330) 345-1416
Liz Glick (05) Senior Warden	(330) 263-4048
Sue Gorman (07)	(330) 262-0973
Ben Gard (05)	(330) 263-0540
Mary Hickey (06) Outreach	(330) 262-7059
John Hockett (05) Junior Warden	(330) 345-7825
Jim Richard (06) Hospitality / Fellowship	(330) 264-2608
Celia Smart (07)	(330) 262-0299
Tim Urang (07)	(330) 682-0118
Pat Zoller (05) Properties	(330) 264-9909

The Collect for St. James': "almighty and everlasting God, who didst move Thy servants in times past to establish and sustain this parish of St. James: Grant us grace so to follow their good example that we in our time may fulfill Thy will for us by knowing, loving, and serving Thee and Thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

The Mission of St. James Episcopal Church is to be an inclusive community of God's people, appreciative and accepting of each other's gifts, who welcome all who desire to be strengthened, and loved by our Lord through offerings of worship, spiritual growth, service, and pastoral care.

Evelyn's Epistle

My Dear Friends,



It's that time of year when catalogs starting coming in the mail in bundles and commercials try to convince us of what we all need to be happy. It's also a time when people start struggling with blank gift lists and the all too familiar phrase, "I don't know what to get him (or her) or the all popular, "He (or She) has everything." We give gifts to show our love and gratitude for the family and friends in our lives. There are two times in the year when we routinely give gifts, birthdays and Christmas. On a birthday it's a person's special day to celebrate and gifts reflect our thankfulness for his or her life. For Christmas, we give gifts to celebrate the gift God has given us in Jesus so we share out of the abundance of God's grace in our lives and give to others. Remembering why we give and receive gifts can be helpful. We can refocus rather than react to the holiday season. I have a suggestion for all of you who find you want to acknowledge people in your life with a gift but who seem to have no need of anything tangible. Why not make a donation in their honor to a charitable organization?

With all the disasters in the last year, the Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and then Rita, and the devastating earthquake in Pakistan, every charitable organization will suffer because so many people have stretched themselves to be generous to relief efforts. That's fantastic but it means less giving to the ongoing organizations that meet people's day to day needs. Almost all groups have cards you receive if you give a gift in someone's honor. Episcopal Relief and Development has an entire catalog on line entitled "Gifts for Life". Heifer International has great gift cards announcing a gift, Habitat for Humanity; even our very own People to People or Viola Startzman Free Clinic will send a letter of thanks.

This year, consider why you give gifts and whether someone you know would be more honored by a charitable donation or more stuff. In line with this, I would ask that anyone planning a gift for me this Christmas would make it a donation to your favorite organization that meets the needs of others. I have been blessed by your generosity over the years and I have been surrounded by your love every day. I do not need gifts to know I am appreciated and I am one of those people who really have not basic needs... except for

more time in a day sometimes but there is no need for more stuff. That's also true for my cats and dogs. They never go without... anything!

In my thanksgiving prayer, know that I count blessings for being able to live this Christian journey with you.

Thank you.

Evelyn

Thank you to everyone who made a donation toward Brooker's surgery. I am overwhelmed by your generosity, and your love and care. By the time you get this he will be home from OSU and the eight weeks of no activity will have begun. Thank you! Evelyn.



Justice and Social Policy

from Susan Figge



Last August, Evelyn, Peg Hockett, and Susan Figge joined some 50 members of area faith communities for a meeting of the Ecumenical Community for a Compassionate Ohio (ECCOHIO). This newly formed group represents an ecumenical initiative intended to bring together our common justice concerns with specific issues of public policy. Thomas Allio, senior director of the Diocesan Social

Action Office for the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, and Thomas Smith, legislative director of the Ohio Council of Churches, reviewed recent legislation affecting the poor in Wayne County, where 9,000 people live in poverty and 14,000 residents are without health care. Rising housing costs and continuing cuts to programs for very poor and low-income people will increase the needs. Both speakers emphasized the importance of Ohio legislators hearing from constituents whose interests in public policy are based on their concerns for the poor, the homeless and other disadvantaged groups. The ECCOHIO group plans a series of meetings with Ron Amstutz and other state lawmakers. Representatives from the Outreach Committee plan to attend and report on these meetings. For more information about the group, contact Pat O-Bryan, director of the Catholic Commission of Wayne, Ashland and Medina, at (330) 263-6176 or Gordon Shull at (330) 264-2103.

Woman or Icon?

(from page 1)

Kahlil Gibran, the well known author from Spain, wrote of Mary as told by a neighbor woman. She tells of the Christ child leading a blind man across a brook to the safety of the road. The blind man asks about His parents and Jesus answered, “God is my Father and my Mother is the earth”. The blind man responded by saying, “Behold, I was led by the Son of God and the earth across the stream”. If Jesus saw His mother as of the earth, then it is much easier for me to think of this earth mother as my advocate in heaven.

The figures of Mary and the Christ child we see when we set up our nativity scenes for the Christmas season always look so peaceful and serene. However, just for a moment let’s wear Mary’s sandals and follow her path to that place in the stable. She encounters an angel who asks her to bear a special child; God’s child. Think of her fears even as she humbly says yes. She is a very young girl. To everyone, including her betrothed, it will seem as though she is having an illegitimate child. Next, during the ninth month of her pregnancy she travels by donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, with only her husband Joseph for company. Now she is in the straw of a stable birthing a child. The sweet smell of the hay is countered by the smell of the many animals in the stable. Did the village women or the innkeeper’s wife help in this ordeal? Did Joseph himself deliver Jesus? Jesus, the son of God came to us as a normal human child and so the birth had to be that of a human child. This wonderful child who came to save all of humanity had to be fed and changed. We know how often this happens with a new born, at the cost of sleep and our own comfort. Mary was just like us then and remained so while she nurtured Jesus as an infant and growing boy.

The early church portrayed Mary as humble, docile, obedient and virgin for life. They made nothing of her being a courageous, vibrant, caring, loving woman. Matthew and Luke’s accounts make it all look so simple. Perhaps it was because they were men and writing the narrative years after the event. Perhaps it was because they lived in a time and culture where women were not held in high regard. Perhaps, as men, they would not have had much exposure to the actual act of labor and birth.

Gibran’s story concludes at the cross. He portrays Mary as saying “My son, who is not my son, if this be of God, then my God, give us patience and the knowledge there

of. And if it be of man, may God forgive him evermore.” She goes on to say, “Now He is gone, the battle is over: the star has shown forth. He who once lay against my heart is now throbbing in space.” Gibran captured the essence of the woman/mother whose mind and soul struggled with the human needs of the child who was so much more than human. What Gibran caught with words, artists portrayed in the faces they painted. The anxious, the sad, the joy, the doubt, all of the emotions of a human mother, but with the extra burden of caring for one she knew to be God’s Son.

As you place Mary in the stable of your crèche this year, give a special prayer of thanks to God for choosing a brave woman as the Mother of His Son. Thank you Mary, woman and Mother of God! Since the Gospels do not dictate our relationship to her, our personal faith determines how we relate to Mary and what image gives us the most comfort. Mary, woman or icon?



The Editor’s (Tiny) Bit

This month the *Noise* is full so there is not much space for me. So I will use words with just one stress mark. This means that all you will see are short words. Some folks would say that this is a good way to write, but I find it quite hard to say what I want if I can’t use words that are long. Woe is me!

But not one to shirk from a test, I think I can pull this one off. For sure, there are lots of short words from which to choose, and if I can keep my mind on the heart of what I write, then it should be a piece of cake. Why, I am now past the ton mark in terms of words used and still on the way to a good piece of work. I can tell you that it’s hard to steer clear of words with “-ing” at the end (these all have at least two stress marks) but it can be done. I don’t think I was asked to do this by the folks in my old school, but if I were a prose coach, I would love to give this task to those in my class as a task to strain their brains and stretch their minds.

So as I reach the end of the page, I thank you for the time you have spent with me as I fight to craft text in a lean way. And just like this year, the end is here – my space is gone. I wish you all a fun Yule and a bright New Year.



Y'NOW JESUS ... I CAN REMEMBER WHEN THIS TOWN WAS SO SMALL THAT YOU COULDN'T EVEN FIND A HOTEL

Vestry Notes *from Gwen Bayless*

The following is a brief summary of items discussed and acted upon at the November 7 Vestry meeting. It should be noted that the official minutes for that meeting will be approved at the December session.

Memorable parish events that took place in October included the lovely choral Morning Prayer led by Ned Brooks and the Choir, the impressive brass accompaniment at the November 6 service, the already large amount of money that has been donated for Ton of Love purchases and the wonderful Brown Bag organ recital of original works by Jason.

Accepted the treasurer's report after John Cook again reported disappointing revenues. On the positive side, he commended vestry and staff for holding down expenses but urged the parish to consider ways of increasing funds for the general operating account.

Approved the motion to support the Bishop's request for help in funding the Nigerian Sunday School project. St. James will contribute the loose plate offering on Sunday, December 4 to this effort as well as 15% of the profits from the Talent and Service Auction.

Outreach reported that St. James is scheduled to ring bells for the Salvation Army on December 10. Sign up slots for bell ringing are still open.

John Hockett, Properties Committee chair, announced that bids for the exterior painting have been received. After review, the project was awarded to Drew Pack. Estimates on the roof work at the office are still being collected. Some minor work on the office boiler is underway and McClintock Electric has been contacted to present an estimate for lighting improvements in the Church.

Evelyn thanked the Stewardship Committee for its hard work. She concluded the meeting by giving a report of her experience at the CREDO Conference. She said that it was very powerful and truly transformational. At this point, she indicated that she needs to reevaluate her sabbatical time and may take a true three-month leave. However, she stressed that she still needs to work this through.

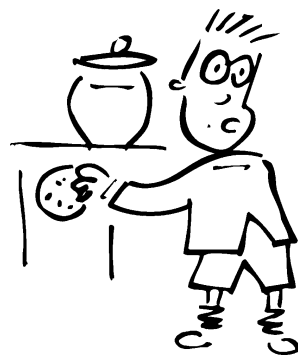
After adjournment, Mary Hickey led Compline.

From the Treasurer *John Cook*

For the ten months ended October 31 our operating receipts are \$2,006 or 1.4 percent lower this year than last. This is obviously a disappointment and a worry. The parish has worked hard to control operating expenses and, for the ten months ended October 31, 2005, they are virtually the same as last year. At the last annual meeting we presented a projection/budget that had a deficit. Without a significant increase in receipts the actual 2005 deficit will be larger than our earlier projection.

St. Nick's Cookies *from Ruth Brown*

If you like to bake, make dough, ice or just have a fun time with friends, you are more than welcome to join in. St. Nicholas Sunday is December 4th and he will be visiting the services and passing out cookies to everyone. The cookies need to be made the week prior and so we need your help.



Thurs. Dec 1 10:00 am Bake Cookies at my house
 Thurs. Dec 1 7:00 pm Ice Cookies in the Parish Hall
 Fri. Dec 2 10:00 am Bag cookies in the Parish Hall

Also, this is my 5th year to do this and I am looking for someone to take it over. It is a very easy project. Thanks for your help.

December Birthdays

- 3 Tim Peterson
Matthew Blanchard
- 7 Elizabeth Allis
- 9 Jane Buxton
- 11 Laura Timothy
- 14 Jamie Watkins
- 15 Celeste LaScala
- 17 Stewart Fitz Gibbon
- 23 Bob Varga
- 25 Carol Kienzle
- 28 Carl Smith
- 30 Carol LaScala



In past years some parishioners have included gifts to individuals (e.g. the rector, the organist, etc.) in the offering. Such gifts are not gifts to St.

James and are not designated gifts to charitable organizations such as People to People, United Thank Offering, Habitat for Humanity, etc. Parishioners who plan to make such gifts should make them directly to the individuals and not via the offering. Please contact John Cook if there are any questions on this matter.



I wish to thank all my friends at St. James for the lovely birthday cake and all the beautiful cards that were sent to m.

Also the dinner for the College of Wooster students was delicious. I was grateful to be invited. St. James is a very special church.

Sincerely,
Thelma Rinfret.

December Anniversaries

- 6/52 Lowell and Nancy Reynolds
- 23/76 Jack and Betty Martin
- 27/47 Bill and Peg Martin
- 27/75 Jim and Marcy Richard



The cost for flowers is \$40 plus tax for two arrangements. You are welcome to share dates with another family. If you wish to donate, please sign the calendar in the North Street Entrance. Flowers are ordered by Connie Cook or Velda Cross, altar guild directors, from *Com-Patt-ibles*, who sends a bill to the parishioner. If you have special instructions, please indicate it on the calendar or give Connie or Velda a call on (330) 345-1416. The flowers are yours to take after the 10:00 service

- Dec. 4 Cameron Maneese in honor of those who have died
- Dec. 11 Stuart and Terry Ling in celebration of the birthday of their daughter, Kris
- Dec. 18 Open
- Dec. 25 Christmas flowers

The 2006 flower calendar is posted in the North Street entrance, if you would like to provide flowers for the Sunday services.

If you would like to make donations to People to People or for Christmas flowers/Greenery to decorate the church, please fill out the form below and return it to the office no later than December 11.

Given By _____
for: _____

In thanksgiving

In memory of: _____

Amount: \$ _____

People to People _____ **Flowers/Greenery** _____

The Christmas Tree Crossword

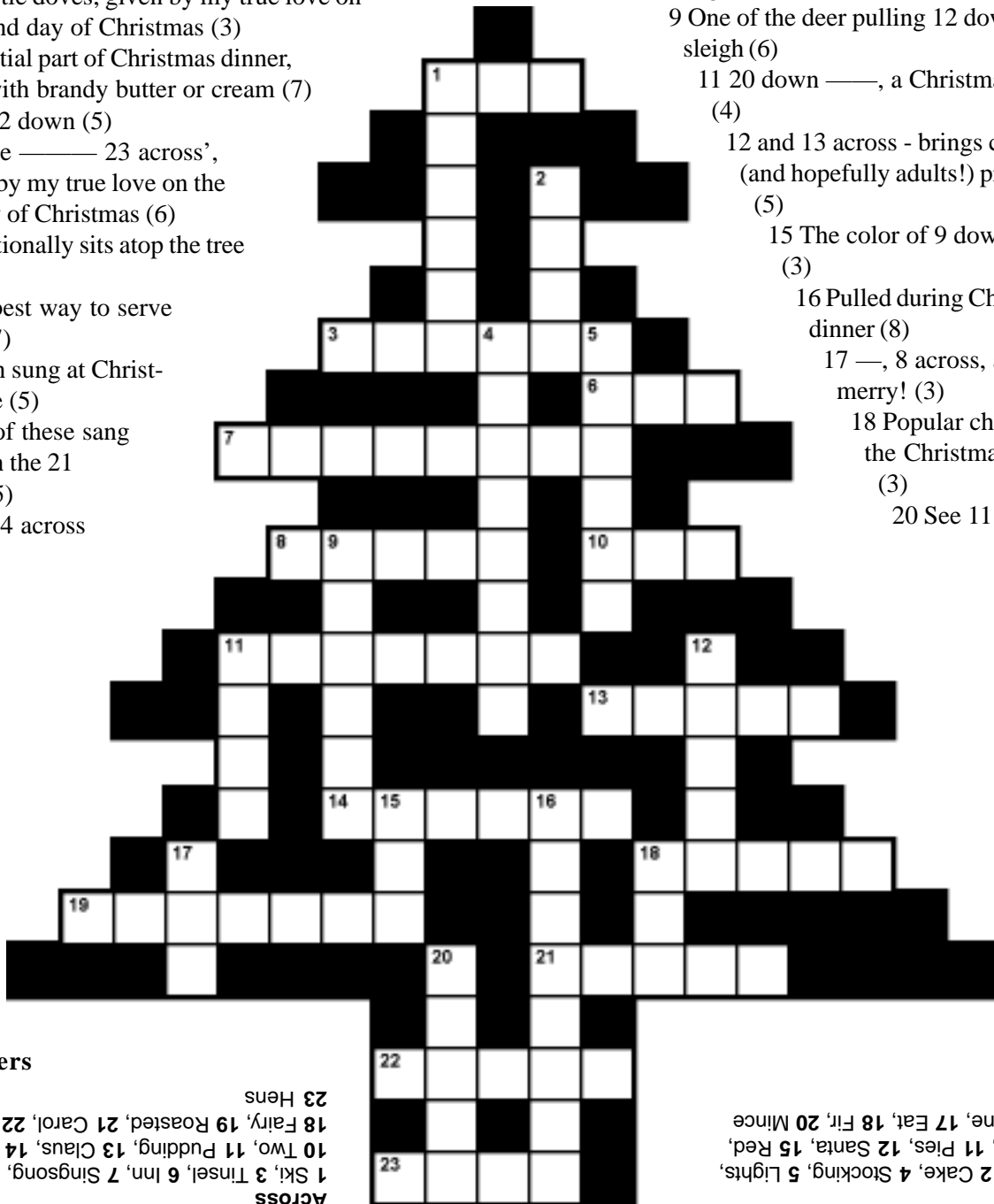
Unable to move from your chair after a surfeit of turkey? Feeling like anchor following an overdose of Christmas pudding? Well here's a simple crossword, with a slightly English flavor, to take your mind of an expanded waistline. Grab a pen, sit back, and give those brain cells a shake.

Across

- 1 Participate in a winter sport (3)
- 3 Christmas tree decoration (6)
- 6 'No room at the —' (3)
- 7 Family gathering around the piano (8)
- 8 See 17 down (5)
- 10 — turtle doves, given by my true love on the second day of Christmas (3)
- 11 Essential part of Christmas dinner, served with brandy butter or cream (7)
- 13 See 12 down (5)
- 14 'Three — 23 across', brought by my true love on the third day of Christmas (6)
- 18 Traditionally sits atop the tree (5)
- 19 The best way to serve turkey (7)
- 21 Hymn sung at Christmas time (5)
- 22 One of these sang 'Hark' in the 21 across (5)
- 23 See 14 across (4)

Down

- 1 The Festive —, Christmas time (6)
- 2 Served at tea time on Christmas day, covered with marzipan and icing (4)
- 4 What 12 down will fill with presents, if you've been good! (8)
- 5 Bright decorations for the tree (6)
- 9 One of the deer pulling 12 down's sleigh (6)
- 11 20 down —, a Christmas treat (4)
- 12 and 13 across - brings children (and hopefully adults!) presents (5)
- 15 The color of 9 down's nose (3)
- 16 Pulled during Christmas dinner (8)
- 17 —, 8 across, and be merry! (3)
- 18 Popular choice for the Christmas tree (3)
- 20 See 11 down



Answers

Across
 1 Ski, 3 Tinsel, 6 Inn, 7 Sing-song, 8 Drink, 10 Two, 11 Pudding, 13 Claus, 14 French, 18 Fairy, 19 Roasted, 21 Carol, 22 Angel, 23 Hens

Down
 1 Season, 2 Cake, 4 Stocking, 5 Lights, 9 Rudolph, 11 Pies, 12 Santa, 15 Red, 16 Wishbone, 17 Eat, 18 Fir, 20 Mince

Anne Rice, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, Knopf, 2005, 322 pages, \$25.95.

It's an understatement to say that the life of Jesus is endlessly fascinating to believers, non-believers, historians, biblical scholars, musicians, filmmakers, poets, and novelists. Ever since the early Christian era, people have wondered about his early life. Were the gospel accounts of his miraculous birth—the shepherds, the wise men, the angels—true, or merely legends? What happened after the Holy Family returned to Nazareth from their exile in Egypt? The gospels tell us about their visit to the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve, but otherwise they say only that he “grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” Our only other early sources are collections of fanciful and far-fetched stories.

But instead of helping us learn more about the Jesus of the gospels, much of biblical scholarship has cast doubt on what we thought we knew already. Even some prominent churchmen have dismissed the gospel stories as fabrications by a later generation who embellished authentic fragments of oral tradition about the historical Jesus with legends designed to prove that he was the promised messiah of Israel. Their conclusion—that we can trust very little of what the gospels tell us—does nothing to satisfy our need to learn more about Jesus. And so, when a novelist such as Dan Brown offers us modern fabrications about Jesus in *The Da Vinci Code*, we seize on them in order to fill the gaps in our knowledge left by scholars who have tried to discredit the gospel stories. Ironically, we're more willing to believe that he was married to Mary Magdalene than we are to believe that angels announced his birth.

Now Anne Rice has written a novel of the early life of Jesus—not the Jesus of the “Jesus Seminar,” but the Jesus of the gospels. In her “Author's Note” she says, “Anybody could write about a liberal Jesus, a married Jesus, a gay Jesus, a Jesus who was a rebel....The true challenge was to take the Jesus of the Gospels...and try

to get inside him and imagine what he felt.” Among the scholars whom Rice acknowledges, N. T. (Tom) Wright, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, and the late John A. T. Robinson, Anglican Bishop of Woolwich, feature prominently.

But why Anne Rice, the author of *Conversations with the Vampire* and nineteen other novels about lost souls? The answer is that this book (and the sequels that will undoubtedly follow) grew out of her own faith journey, her lifelong struggle to understand the fundamental truths about herself and humankind. Having forsaken the Catholic Church of her childhood, become a skeptic, and married an atheist, she herself had felt like a lost soul, and her earlier fiction mirrored her inner despair. That fiction has always been compelling because it was infused by her own spirit and surrounded by convincing

historical detail from the immense ongoing research she has done for every book she has written. It was the research she began to do for this book that led her back to the church. When her artist-husband was diagnosed with brain cancer, from which he died four months later, he was transformed by his illness and became a believer too.

Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt is a novel of the life of Jesus unlike any other. Rice took the huge risk of writing it in the first person, from the perspective of Jesus himself. What if you were a seemingly ordinary Jewish boy who discovered you had powers that other children didn't have? What if your parents, aunts, uncles, and older cousins all shared secrets about your birth that they wouldn't tell you? What if you'd always lived in Egypt and then at the age of seven had to go “home” to a home you'd never

seen, only to discover yourself in the middle of an insurgency against a foreign occupation, with revolution and reprisals swirling all around you? How would you feel growing up in a community where people still whispered about the irregularity of your parentage? What if you learned that the former king had tried to kill you when you were a baby? What if you started having visions



(cont. page 11)

Good Night, and Good Luck.: The Year's Most Important Film

Edward R. Murrow's CBS radio broadcasts covering the Blitz in London during the Battle of Britain in 1940 brought home to Americans the urgency of international events and, in an era of American isolationism, a sense of a destiny shared with Great Britain. The broadcasts established Murrow as a legendary reporter, and in the 1940's and 50's he became the most respected newsman of his era.

Murrow saw radio and television as potentially the greatest tools in the service of an informed and enlightened public, an immeasurable service to our democracy. His broadcasts for *See It Now* and *CBS Reports* addressed controversial issues, from the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East to atomic testing and the plight of migrant workers. He had little patience with corporate timidity in making television an instrument of public awareness and not merely a source of amusement and escape from the realities of the world. Above all, he had faith in the capacity of the American people to consider uncomfortable but vital issues. He said, "[T]he premise upon which our pluralistic society rests, as I understand it, is that if the people are given sufficient undiluted information, they will then somehow, even after long, sober second thoughts, reach the right decision."

George Clooney's **Good Night, and Good Luck.** is a beautifully crafted reconstruction of Murrow's famous confrontation with the redbaiting Senator Joseph McCarthy. Between October 1953 and April 1954, Murrow devoted a number of programs on *See It Now* to the senator and his methods of destroying careers and lives through lies and intimidation. In taking on McCarthy at a time when politicians and the rest of the media all seemed cowed, Murrow knew that McCarthy would attempt to destroy him. Having taken his stand, Murrow offered McCarthy screen time to offer rebuttal. McCarthy appeared, offering no dispute of Murrow's facts and making wild allegations that Murrow was a Soviet agent and member of the I.W.W. It was the beginning of the end for the demagogue who had sought to put the label of traitor on anyone who opposed him.

At least the outlines of the story are familiar to anyone who lived during that time or who has looked at the history of the 1950's. Since we know the outcome, then, how can we account for the absolutely gripping experience of this film?

The reasons are many. First there is the wisdom of the Clooney and Grant Heslov, his co-writer on the screenplay, in believing that the facts and historical words were sufficiently dramatic that there need not be any

invented romance and subplot. The story, presented without melodramatic thrills and music, is enough to command our best attention, especially given the resonance it finds in our country 50 years later. Secondly there is the riveting performance of the versatile and subtle David Strathairn as Murrow. Strathairn does not look particularly

like Murrow, but he has captured the voice and the rhythms and cadences of Murrow's speech to an astonishing degree, along with the gestures and facial expressions so familiar to those who knew him. This is not to say that Strathairn has gone only for the surface characteristics. He communicates as well a palpable, fierce intelligence at work, the dignity, gravity, and decency, as well as the quick, dry wit and flashes of humor. Clooney himself portrays Fred Friendly, Murrow's partner at CBS News, and it is a pleasure to see these two quite different personalities play off of each other. Likewise, Frank Langella is remarkable as William Paley, the formidable CBS chairman of the board, a man who often disagreed with Murrow's ideas and decisions but also supported and defended him in difficult and challenging times.

It is another happy stroke that Clooney decided not to have an actor impersonate Senator McCarthy but to use existing kinescope recordings of McCarthy himself in Senate hearings and on *See It Now*.

Robert Elswit's black and white photography and Stephen Mirrone's editing capture a proper period feel of the newsroom drama, and by limiting the depicted spaces to the CBS newsroom and offices and a bar where the news team gathered after hours, the director



Speaking of Movies

(from p.9)

sustains the compression chamber atmosphere of this story.

Finally, and most urgently, Clooney's film is charged with a resonance with our own age when dissenting voices are increasingly looked upon as traitorous in a time of terrorism. Let us make it clear: Murrow believed that in the Cold War the United States was fighting for its life; communism was not a phantom threat. Likewise, no one is suggesting that the threat of terrorism should be dismissed. The concern here is with those for whom the external threat provides a path to power and/or profit through the exploitation of fear.

In words that speak as directly to our time as to his own, Murrow said, "We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof, and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine, and remember that we are not descended from fearful men*not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes that were, for the moment, unpopular."

The narrative of the film is bracketed by excerpts from Edward R. Murrow's great keynote address to the Radio-Television News Directors Association in October 1958. The entire text is accessible on the Web and makes for absorbing reading:

<http://www.rtnda.org/resources/speeches/murrow.shtml>

In that speech he said, "Our history will be what we make it. And if there are any historians about fifty or a hundred years from now, and there should be preserved the kinescopes for one week of all three networks, they will there find recorded in black and white, or color, evidence of decadence, escapism and insulation from the realities of the world in which we live."

What, we may wonder, would Murrow say now, 50 years later, of the state of the networks and of a press corps all but cowed by the Bush White House?

The title of the film derives from Murrow's signature signoff at the end of his broadcasts. It may not be stretching things too much to consider that Good Night might be an exclamation and Good Luck a fervent and

sobering expression of concern for our own era, which looks in vain for the likes of this still inspiring figure and the standards he set.

Scriptorium

(from p. 8)

and sensing that you had a mysterious destiny to fulfill? Anne Rice gets us inside this boy as no other writer has.

Christ the Lord also succeeds in an extraordinary way in helping us grasp what it must have been like to live in a world torn by civil strife, revolution, and warfare fueled by deep religious passions. The Romans, of course, were not Americans, and the Jews were not Iraqis, but I couldn't help seeing parallels between the Holy Land then and Iraq today: an occupying army welcomed by some but hated by others, lawless men carrying on a violent insurrection and undermining civil order for their own purposes, religious fanatics willing to sacrifice themselves and the innocent in order to drive out the "infidels," profiteers growing rich from the chaos, and local authorities torn between pleasing the occupiers, governing the people, and just staying alive. In such an environment, being a "special" child around whom legends developed could be life-threatening. We wonder today how someone as obviously blessed and wonderful as Jesus could have been crucified. But we're thinking of Jesus as a twenty-first-century white American, not Jesus as a first-century Palestinian Jew. Reading Rice's book, you come to realize that only a special providence could have kept this strange boy, mysterious to himself as well as to others, alive until adulthood.

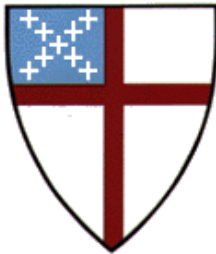
Rice has tried to help us hear the "old, old story" as though for the first time. She succeeded with me, and I hope she does with you too.

(As of this writing, *Christ the Lord* is in its first week on *The New York Times* Bestseller List, at #4, making it available at significant discounts from many booksellers. By the time this review appears, it should be available from public libraries also.)

Holy Humor

You know what would have happened if there had been three wise women instead of three wise men, don't you? They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and brought disposable diapers as gifts!

The Episcopal Church



St. James Episcopal Church
127 West North Street
Wooster, OH 44691

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No.77
Wooster, OH

Forwarding
Service
Requested

Sent with a prayer to:



What's Happening at St. James

- 1st Dec **Brown Bag Concert, 12:05 pm**
- 2nd Dec **Downtown Church Walk, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**
- 4th Dec **Lunch and Auction, 11:00 am**
- 8th Dec **Brown bag Concert, 12:05 pm**
- 10th Dec **Salvation Army Bell Ringing**
- 24th Dec **Holy Eucharist, 7:00 pm**
Christmas music and Midnight Mass, 10:30 pm
- 25th Dec **Holy Eucharist, 10:00 am**

December, 2005

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January, 2006

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				