



Sunday, December 1, 1991

No. 273

# BALLINEASPAIG BULLETIN

First Sunday in Advent.



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,  
DEENHYS CROSS, CO. KERRY



FROM OUR  
**PARISH  
TEAM**

*Fr. John writes*

## The Stable Revisited.

Last Christmas, Jesus lost a finger. The sacristan was putting the final touches to the sky when a star fell and cut clean through Jesus' right index finger. Other happenings were also reported. One of the shepherds lost his staff, a sheep went missing and the money box was stolen. The empty money box was the only item recovered.

The entire Crib affair was referred to the Liturgy Commission. It didn't feel competent to deal with the affair as there were no formal directives from Rome. Instead, the Commission set up a Crib Committee to investigate every angle of the matter.

A new money box was ordered from Cork Safe Makers. This time the box was secured with two bolts to the floor. It was given a trial run at the November Novena and seemed to be doing the job, until the sacristan apprehended a thief fishing for money with line and chewing gum. The box is being redesigned.

Mary and Joseph, two shepherds and a wise man looked particularly shabby. It cost £500 to dress them in new coats of paint.

The Crib Committee, in its zeal, took to investigating the biblical account of the birth of Jesus. It felt the crib has been unchanged since St. Francis's time and it wanted to incorporate new insights. There was need for historical updating, the group felt, now that the Second Vatican Council seemed to have gone in that direction. A thorough investigation was carried out. Research indicated that inns in those days were not like our hotels or B&Bs. They were just large upstairs rooms, into which about thirty travellers would squeeze, glad to get a roof over their heads. They would sleep on bed-rolls on the floor. They were usually noisy and unruly places. It was no place for giving birth.



In Luke's gospel it says there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. One researcher suggested we understand this to mean there was no room in the living space upstairs for Mary to have her baby. She had to go away from the crowd.

Mary had her baby in the stable of an inn where the travellers' donkeys were tied up for the night. It was quiet



there and she could be alone. "Imagine that, the Son of God born in the midst of donkeys!" said one surprised Crib Committee member. "Was there no ox in the stable so?" questioned another who was getting a little uneasy with the findings. "An ox with long horns would be a danger to the donkeys", suggested a farming member of the committee. "The presence of the ox and donkey in the crib was probably inspired by the prophet Isaiah's remark 'the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib'." offered the P.P., which seemed to settle the matter. One member felt the clean straw wasn't giving the right impression. Animals are dirty things and the appalling circumstances of Jesus birth should be brought home to people.

"What are swaddling clothes? Is that the little dress on Jesus?" Nobody seemed to know what swaddling clothes looked like. The feeling of the group was that they were meant to keep the child Jesus warm. The little dress seemed completely inadequate in a cold December's night.

In addition to dressing Jesus in swaddling clothes, Mary lays him in a manger. The first resting place for Mary's child is a feeding trough. His head rests where cattle have fed, in a rough trough. The Committee were struck by the irony of the situation; Jesus lying helpless in the place of food will offer himself as food for eternal life to all who receive him.

The crib is going up again this Christmas, but we haven't finally decided on the modifications. It's hard to change. It's hard to see the eternal in the ordinary.

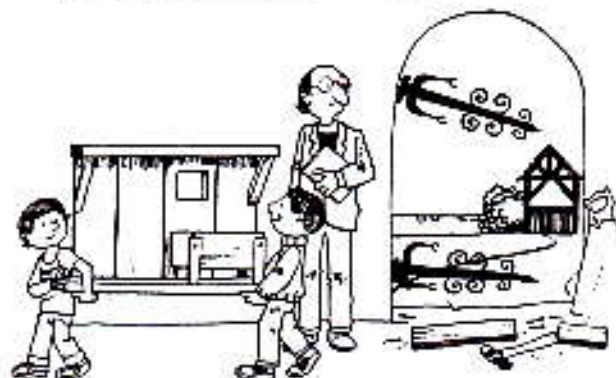
## Parish News

### REPORT ON PASTORAL COUNCIL

"Very down to earth", "A man with a vision", "Great talker", were some of the enthusiastic comments after Bishop Murphy's visit to the Council last Monday evening. He congratulated the newly elected members and praised the people of the parish who are taking a lead in building a more united and friendly parish in Cork.

Bishop Murphy warned about a growing privatization of religion - myself and God. "It is a religion but not Christianity", he said, "Christianity is a community faith." The Bishop went on to say that the Pastoral Council is not an end in itself. It is a mechanism for recognising and affirming the faith that exists already in the parish. Inspired by that faith, it will seek to promote genuine human co-operation for the good of all, but especially for those who are weak and vulnerable.

The Council felt the Bishop's visit was very encouraging and gave a great insight into what a community church was all about.



'It's a lovely crib, boys, but ...'



**LIBRARY**



READING FOR ADVENT

Try the Parish Library. For those who have not discovered the Parish Library (in the C.P. Centre) it may come as a surprise to find what a varied selection of books are available.

We have quite an extensive Bible section. There are biographies which include Mother Teresa, Pope John XXIII, and our present Pope. Among the books classified under "Personal Growth" are two by John Powell, S.J. which are all about personal communication. These are entitled "Will the Real Me Please Stand Up" and "Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?".

Books by Jack Dominion include "The Capacity to Love" and others on sex and marriage. A book called "Wellsprings" by Anthony de Mello, S.J. is a gentle

and thoughtful book of spiritual exercises.

The subject of Prayer is well covered in the library and there is a whole section for those who are "Searching for God" - and who isn't?

Opening Hours are as follows:  
Mon - Fri: 10.30 to 12.00 noon.  
Saturday: After Evening Mass.  
Sunday: After 9, 10 and 11 Masses.

Try the Book Rack. Again in the spirit of Advent, there are booklets here on devotions to The Sacred Heart and Our Lady. In the "Caring" series, there are helpful words for new mothers, people who are disabled, the depressed, etc. "Friendships Endure in Heaven" is a little book of consolation for those who are mourning. All these and others are on the bookrack just inside the church doors.



The Gramophone Circle

We thank all of you who supported the splendid afternoon we enjoyed with Dan Murphy.

A note for the diary: On Wednesday afternoon, 18th December, Rita Shaw and Jerry O'Callaghan will co-present another splendid music recital. Did you know that as Rita Lynch, she was one of Ireland's greatest sopranos? Be there.

Friendship Club

On Monday, 25th November, in the C.P. Centre, Fr. Newman celebrated Mass for the deceased members of the Friendship Club. All those present found it an enriching experience.

**IN SYMPATHY**

We extend sincere sympathy to MARY SPILLANE of Farranlea Grove, on the death of her brother Martin Commons in Greystones.





First Friday

Next Friday, 6th, is the First Friday of the month. Calls to the sick and housebound on the usual days. Confessions on Thursday night at 8 p.m.

St. Joseph's Young Priests' Society

Monthly meeting will take place next Thursday, 5th December, in the C.P. Centre at 8 p.m.

**St. Vincent  
de Paul  
Society**



St. Vincent de Paul

The monthly collection will take place at all Masses next Sunday, 8th December.

We have received the following appeal from the local Conference: "The recent inclement weather has put severe strains on our Coal Fund as calls for help flood in. We again appeal to your generosity for funds. Our sincere thanks to all who have helped in the past."

Prayers of the Faithful Readers

The new revised Rota is now available. Please collect your copy from the sanctuary rail.

Altar Servers

The new teams of altar servers have been drawn up. Please collect your copy in the sacristy.

Pastoral Council

Notes on the meeting with Bishop Murphy are available in the C.P. Centre for collection.



Retired Peoples Network

Social and Cabaret in the Grand Parade Hotel on today Sunday, 1st December, from 3 to 5.30 p.m. Spot prizes and refreshments. All retired people and senior citizens are welcome. Telephone 966939 for further details.

Sale of Work

At St. John's Training Centre, Our Lady's Hospital, Friday 6th December, 2.00 - 4.30 p.m. All types of crafts, paintings, Christmas decorations, etc.

Highfield R.F.C. Tennis Section

Keep Monday, 9th December free for Gala Cooking Demonstration/Cheese and Wine Evening in the Club pavilion. Presented by Paul McNamee, award winning Chef, Imperial Hotel. Starts 8 sharp. Come early - tickets £5 limited. All welcome.

Christmas Bazaar

This annual event will be held in the S.M.A. Centre on Sunday, 8th December, beginning at 2 p.m. Bargains galore, wheels of fortune, etc. All welcome.

**CELEBRATING?... DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY**  
**Keep drink out of the driving seat!**