



May the radiance of  
the light, the joy, the peace  
of Christ illumine us all!  
Christmas 1974

Mount Saviour Pine City, N.Y. 14871

Chronicle



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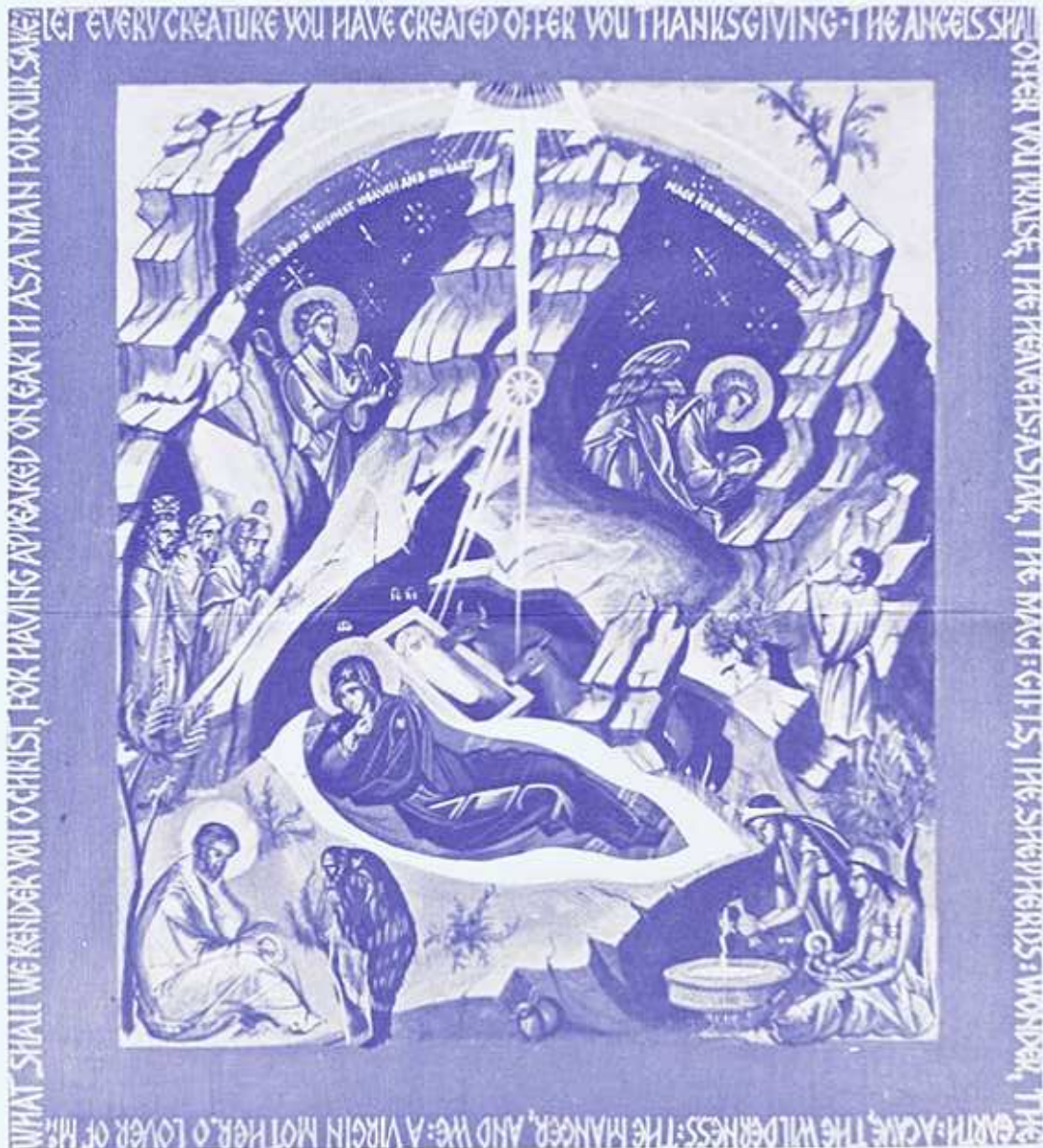
Guests who have visited with us have sometimes commented on the number of icons which we have about the monastery, part of the heritage Father Damasus brought to Mount Saviour. For many, icons are simply a reminder of a long-past stage in Christian Tradition, colorful antiques, perhaps, but little more. Yet interestingly-enough icons are still being painted today and for an increasing number of Christians - Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant - they speak in a unique manner of our life in Christ. Furthermore they elicit a response which little of the art currently found in our homes or sanctuaries manages to provoke, despite its best intentions.

In the words of St. John, our theme is the 'word of life'. This life was made visible. What we have seen and heard we declare to you so that together we may share a common life, that life which we share with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.



This 'word of life' which the Christmas mystery celebrates in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, fills all things; it is 'alive and active', in St. Paul's words, renewing and confronting every generation. So great is its 'breadth and length, its height and depth' that the Church discerns it speaking to us not simply through the Scriptures but through the whole gamut of human experience as this unfolds through life, and especially as celebrated in the Liturgy. The icon too finds its place in this context. It is the Spirit, the Tradition in the most profound sense who has brought forth the unceasing multiplicity of man's attempts to express in poem and song, in rite and image, the Mystery of 'Christ in us, our hope of glory'.

The icon of the Nativity illustrates well this mystery. Unlike western portrayals of the Mother deep in adoration of her Son, the icon portrays the Mother of God looking away from Jesus towards us. It is in each of us that God has chosen to be born anew.





'The Nativity', says St. John Chrysostom, 'already embraces Christ's baptism, death and resurrection and gift of the Spirit.' When Isaiah exclaimed: 'Why do you not rend the heavens and come down?' he had summed up mankind's thirst for God's Spirit, and to Mary his plea was answered: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you!' A people who lived in darkness has seen a great light: Christ, born in the shadow of death: a humanity divided against itself and separated from God. This is starkly portrayed by the gaping black cave which will be seen again in the icon portraying the glorious 'descent into hell' when this separation is ended. Then, Christ the New Man, forcefully wrests Adam and Eve (man and woman) from the mouth of the darkness of desolation, drawing them into the fulness of life with his Father.

Jesus is not revealed as an 'infant meek and mild'. He is born to grow in fidelity to his Father's love for man, even to death on the cross. He is the servant 'whom we despised and held of no account'. The swaddling bands, the stone manger, the still body, all herald his death and burial, while the Magi with their gifts anticipate the devoted women with their spices at the tomb. The apocryphal midwives bathing the infant (proclaiming he is truly man) evoke St. Paul's words: If we have been baptised into a death like his...

The brilliant star, embodying the unity of the Father, Son and Spirit pierces the darkness and seems to blaze from within the mountains (and God saw that it was good...) Here the painful mystery of evil - the coexistence of light and darkness - is portrayed. Yet this light is the light of men. The light shines on in the dark and the darkness has never mastered it... Christ's light creates the space in which to live, gives form and relief to life and enables each of us to see one another, to live with and towards others.

In Joseph, sitting apart, troubled and bewildered, we have the figure of our humanity, so prone to despair of God's love and still more of this love as revealed in and through man. The apocryphal figure before him whispers this despair in his heart and his words are only countered by the voices echoing across the mountains: 'This day is born to you a Saviour!' Mary's compassionate gaze rests on Joseph and mirrors the com-passionate suffering of God who patiently awaits the free gift of ourselves.

Much more might be drawn from the wealth of this Christmas icon; the Magi embodying the love of God which transcends the boundaries of race and culture and even cultic structures; the shepherd heralding the shepherd who would lay down his life for the lives of his flock. But these lines must come to a close and rest content in the hope that our life in Christ which the icon mirrors may deepen during this Christmas season: 'Happy are your eyes because they see; many prophets and saints, I tell you, desired to see what you see yet never saw it!'

Text and icons by Br. Aelred.





Dear Friends,

I am happily back at Mount Saviour, going three times a week to the hospital for physiotherapy. There seems to be real progress. While I shall not attempt to send personal cards at Christmas, I want you all to know that you are much in my thoughts and prayers. Many thanks for yours and for the letters and cards I have received.

A most blessed and joyful Christmas.

Devotedly in Christ,

*Gregory Burgetti*



Our thanks for a successful Fall Festival. Many events fascinated the kids and interested nearly 17,000 people.

Congratulations to  
the prize winners.

- 1- Miss Marion Swickard, Columbus, OH
- 2- Mrs. Ethel Wolff, Big Flats, NY
- 3- Mrs. Mary Schneider, Corning, NY
- 4- Mr. Rocco Picarazzi, Elmira, NY
- 5- Dr. R. Q. Crotty, Omaha, Nebr.
- 6- Mr. Harold McClure, Elmira, NY
- 7- Mrs. Vivian Laube, Ithaca, NY
- 8- Mr. T. Owczarczak, Cheektowaga, NY
- 9- Mr. James J. John, Ithaca, NY
- 10- Miss Rose T. Darcangelo, Corning, NY
- 11- Mr. John Desimone, Binghamton, NY

#### MASS STIPENDS

We are grateful for Mass Stipends since they help us meet expenses of the Chapel and Monastery. These days the usual stipend is \$ 5.00..

