



Knights of Columbus

MOTHER OF CONFIDENCE

COUNCIL NO. 9776

SAN DIEGO CA



NO. 020

THE CONFIDER

DEC 89



LET'S PUT CHRIST BACK IN CHRISTMAS

SILENT NIGHT

How often have you sung "Silent Night" and wondered: Who wrote it? When? Where?

Perhaps, like so many other beautiful Christmas songs, it was just taken for granted--it was always there, ever since that first Christmas in Bethlehem?

Not so. "Silent Night" was first sung publicly in the year 1818. In a little chapel in the small town of Oberndorf, which lay on the border between Austria and Germany.

Fr. Josef Mohr, the young, newly ordained priest assigned to St. Nikolaus Church, was preparing for Mass on Christmas Eve. Someone told him that mice had eaten through the bellows of the church organ. It was out of order! What to do? Christmas Mass without music? It just wouldn't.....

Then Fr. Mohr had an inspiration. He thought of the many poems he had written about the beautiful countryside in the shadow of the Alps. Perhaps one of those?

He selected one that seemed appropriate for the solemn event that had occurred on that first Christmas. Then he hurried to the house of Franz Gruber, in the nearby town of Arnsdorf. They both loved music and had become good friends.

Franz set the poem to music, and it was sung for the first time during Midnight Mass:

Silent Night, Holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant, so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

WORKING FATHERS

Stu Westdal: I hear Fr. Michel is pretty good at fixing things in the rectory.

George Uberti: Yes, Msgr O'Donoghue says everything works--except Fr. Michel.

Christmas quiz

1. The custom of having a Christmas tree originated:
 - a) in America when the first settlers were trying to clear certain areas of land on which to build their new homes.
 - b) in Germany, on the left bank of the upper Rhine River.
 - c) with Martin Luther during the Reformation.
2. Christ was actually born:
 - a) on Dec. 25.
 - b) somewhere around midnight on the night between Dec. 24 and 25, but since nobody knows the precise time of His birth, it was decided to celebrate it on the 25th because there was already another holiday celebrated on the 24th.
 - c) Nobody knows for sure when Christ was born.
3. The character of Santa Claus as part of the modern celebration of Christmas originated:
 - a) one year in Sweden, when a rotund, bearded, jolly-looking father of three children decided to dress up in a bright red costume, in order to liven up his family's festivities.
 - b) with the Feast of St. Nicholas, celebrated in Holland and other Scandinavian countries on Dec. 6.
 - c) in the last 100 years, as Christmas became increasingly commercialized, and retail store managers wanted a gimmick to draw more attention to their wares.
4. How old were Joseph and Mary when Jesus was born?
 - a) Historical records prove that Mary was 18 and Joseph was 32.
 - b) They were both about the same age, between 25 and 30 years old.
 - c) Nobody knows for sure.
5. The modern tradition of exchanging gifts at Christmas time dates back to:
 - a) the Feast of St. Nicholas, celebrated on Dec. 6.
 - b) when the three Kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar came to see the Christ child, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
 - c) the pagan custom of exchanging gifts at the end of the year.
 - d) all of the above.
6. Christmas has always been celebrated on Dec. 25.
 - a) True
 - b) False
7. The custom of eating ham with Christmas dinner originated:
 - a) because pigs were the source of protein most easily raised under European geographical and climatic conditions.
 - b) because of the pig's economic significance in previous centuries.
 - c) all of the above

(Cont. Pg. 11)

ED KUENSTER (K)NIGHT

(EFK: FGK, PGK, KCIA, BUT NOT DD)

Edmond F. Kuenster is or was: our First Grand Knight, Past Grand Knight, KofC Insurance Agent, but not District Deputy. (No, Wilbur, DD doesn't stand for Dearly Departed.)

On November 16th, we tributized Ed at an open Meeting, to which our wives et Al (whoever that may be) were invited.

Ed was eulogized, chastized, epitomized, categorized, but not quite anathematized.



Bob Warner admitted responsibility for nominating Ed to be our First Grand Knight. (He didn't go quite so far as to retract the nomination retroactively.)

Bob said that, in nominating Ed, he inadvertently proposed Ed's son, Jerry. (Thinking ahead? Keep it in the family?)

Ed brought to our new Council, Bob conceded, the leadership and experience we needed, especially during the first year of our formation.

Orville Beaver confessed he had known Ed for several years, especially as a leader. He said Ed was "always on the edge" and quoted Ed as once saying: "No risk, no fun!" Orville suggested that Ed had probably (finally) found his true niche: selling life insurance.

Orville did admit that Ed had done an excellent job of leading people, and getting our new Council off the ground. (We're still waiting for it to come back down.)

Bernie Clavet didn't exactly triturate Ed, but he didn't exactly canonize him, either. Here's what Bernie had to say:

Ed Kuenster was once very poor.

When he was a cowboy out in Arizona. He had been doing OK--until the gambling bug bit him. He'd bet on anything. And, of course, he gradually went downhill.

Someone talked him into joining the Knights of Columbus, figuring good companionship might help straighten him out.

Well, things got back to normal for awhile. Until, one night, he backslid and got into a poker game. This time, he lost everything, including his horse and saddle.

Ed decided to seek help from a KofC friend who lived nearby. He started walking. And it started to rain. Poor Ed got soaked--again.

Pretty soon, he came upon a stray St. Bernard dog. He looked it over, then decided: "What the heck, it beats walking!" So he climbed aboard.

When Ed arrived at his friend's house, soaking wet and miserable, his friend's wife refused to let him in.

Then Ed's friend came to the door. He took one look at Ed and said to his wife: "We just can't put a Knight out on a dog like this!"

Several years later, Ed met Anna. She straightened him out in short order. He even got back into the KofC.

When Ed agreed to become the first Grand Knight of our newly formed Council, Anna asked him: "Why you?" "Well," said Ed, "someone has to do it."

Anna threw up--her hands--and said: "Dumkopf! You'll never be home! You'll spend all day at work, then you'll spend all night working on the new Council. When will I get a chance to talk to you?"

Ed just grinned.

Well, Ed spent all day at work, then at night he worked at getting the new Council formed.

And, in spite of a lot of help from a lot of other knights--many of whom didn't even know each other before joining the new Council--Ed must have done a pretty good job of it.

At least, the nominations committee must have thought so--five months ago, they asked him to continue as Geek for the 1989-90 Columbian year.

But Ed turned them down! He announced to the Council that he had been asked--and had agreed--to become the KofC insurance agent for this district. And all Ed knew about insurance was that it was something you took out when you were going on a flying trip.

And what did Anna have to say?

"Dumkopf! You'll never be home! When will I get a chance to talk to you?"

And Ed just grinned.

Our Chaplain, Msgr. O'Donoghue, thanked Ed for what he did last year. (We assumed he was referring to Ed's task of midwifing our new Council.)

Msgr. said that "starting a new Council, any new organization, was very difficult...It was interesting to watch Ed conduct a meeting--he followed the rules and was very patient: he let everyone have his say." (His say, Wilbur, not his way.)

Chaplain O'Donoghue opined that "it was something special to see these men in action...this is the future of the Church...the K of C has always been a leader in Church organization, always there at the first. The Church needs cells, groups of people, to develop, grow in the knowledge of the Church.

"Here, we saw a group of men, structured, listening to what the Church is all about.

"So we thank our Worthy Past Grand Knight, and we are glad to be a part of this celebration."

Grand Knight Jim Hammond (no Dumkopf, he) then gave Ed an opportunity to rebut. Most of what he had to say is printable, even acceptable, in a family newspaper. (We don't have to be that circumspect--The Confider is not likely to be confused with a family newspaper.)

Ed began: "You should never give me a podium." Then he went on to expound, in a multiplicity of words: "For once, I am kind of short of words."

After hesitating for two milliseconds, he continued: "Bob mentioned that he'd nominated my son, Jerry. You should have elected him...Orville said that I am always on the edge...He's too modest. He's a great team leader himself, always there when you need him--you could always depend on him.

"Bernie, you were right--I was poor, and I was always a gambler. But, in the army, I quit gambling after I lost two boxes of matches and a pack of cigarettes.

"But I've visited Las Vegas a few times. I even go back occasionally, to visit my money. I never get it back--they say they need it more than I do.

"Anna has always called me Dumkopf. So I'm used to it. And, any occupation I take up, I seem to find a way to stay out of the house.

"I would like to be DD. But that job involves only three Councils--not enough stress. So I took on the insurance job--that gives me 12 Councils to work with.

"Without Msgr. O'Donoghue's support, we would not have our Council. Others have started, but, without their Chaplain's support, they failed. So we thank you, Msgr., with all our hearts."

GK Jim Hammond then presented Ed with a plaque. It featured a small gavel (hardly big enough to get Anna's attention).

Jim then presented a corsage to Anna and told her how grateful we were for sharing so much of her husband's time with us.

We next enjoyed a pizza repast--and Tom Burke didn't tell an Irish story.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Earl Gray: Do you know what are the last words of a bachelor?

Tom Burke: Yes, I do.

MEMORARE--EVERY MONTH

During December, we commemorate the following feasts of Our Blessed Mother:

- 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- 10 Transfer of the Holy House of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Loreto, Italy
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 18 Expectation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On March 25, 1858 (Feast of the Annunciation), Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes. It was one of many such apparitions, beginning on February 11th.

Bernadette asked her: "Madame, will you be so good as to tell me who you are?"

Mary was silent. Then, after Bernadette asked her the third time, Mary said, in the native dialect of the region:

"Que soy era Immaculade Conception--I am the Immaculate Conception."

It was Mary's way of confirming the solemn declaration, on December 8, 1854, of the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of Faith.

On that day, Pope Pius IX, "surrounded by a vast retinue of cardinals and bishops, with infallible apostolic authority, defined, pronounced, and solemnly sanctioned that the doctrine which holds that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first moment of her conception, was, by a singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved from all stain of original sin, is revealed by God and therefore to be firmly and resolutely believed by all the faithful."

In 1846, the bishops of the U.S. had dedicated the nation and its people to Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception.

On September 23, 1920, James Cardinal Gibbons laid the cornerstone of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.

"A brilliant company of some 6000 persons was present, with the Knights of Columbus filling an active and distinguished role. Members of the 4th Degree escorted his eminence to the scene of the ceremony, stood by as he performed the historic rite, and marched beside him as he left the premises." (Russell Shaw, Columbia, November 1959)

(Info for this article extrapolated from the files of Eleanore F. Clavet)

DECEMBER CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5	<u>1st Deg</u> St. Michael's 9590, 7:00 PM Info: Pete McKissick, 258-9250
6	<u>1st Deg</u> Holy Family 8609, 7:00 PM Info: Henry Robideau, 749-1503
7	<u>OMC 9776 Business Meeting</u> , 7:30 PM
8	<u>2nd Deg</u> Mater Dei 4936, 7:00 PM Info: Bob Lair, 442-5329
21	<u>OMC 9776 Meeting</u> : Cancelled due to Xmas
	<u>Chapter Meeting</u> : Bye

CHRISTMAS (C)RIBS

These yule-tied bundles of joy reduced their parents' budgets to bedrock--and almost precipitated a boy-cot(t) of Christmas:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>
8	Tony Miragetc.	47
16	Fred Thibeault	62
19	Charles Eckery	58
23	Ron Frazier	35

MEETING OF THE GRINDS

Realist: I may be old, and I may have only two teeth. But, thank God, they meet.

"GIVE, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN..."

One day, on the Island of Palawan in the Philippines, an American journalist, watching a missionary Sister cleaning the gangrenous sores of lepers, said to her: "I wouldn't do that for all the money in the world."

Without so much as a moment's pause, the Sister replied: "Neither would I."

Perhaps the best-kept secret of the Mission Church today is the fact that 95 percent of all our missionary personnel receive no salary whatever for their efforts in behalf of the poor whom they serve.

How does one explain that kind of sacrifice?

Obviously, those who have earned the title of "missionary" recall only too well the words of Christ, when He said: "This is my commandment, that you should love one another, as I have loved you."

So often we promise God to give something for those in need, if only He will answer our prayers and respond to our need. That is the human way of bargaining, not the Divine.

Did Our Lord not say: "Give, and it shall be given to you."

Giving creates an emptiness within and therefore makes it possible for God to fill us with His blessings.

If ever you are in doubt about where to give, remember these words of Mother Teresa:

"Charity to the Missions exceeds all other charity."

(From a thank-you letter sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, San Diego Diocese, 1989)

PIE-EYED PLATITUDES

Too much Christmas food goes to waist.

8. The earliest record of a feast celebrating the birth of Jesus is:
 - a) in Rome, the first year immediately following Christ's death.
 - b) in Germany, 98 years after Christ's death.
 - c) in Egypt, early in the 3rd century, where it was celebrated on May 20.
9. Which one of the following saints is not associated with Christmas?
 - a) St. Cecilia
 - b) The Holy Innocents
 - c) St. Ann
10. What great pagan feast was celebrated around the same time that we celebrate Christmas today?
 - a) The Dionesian Festival
 - b) The feast of the winter solstice
 - c) The feast of the autumnal equinox

Answers

1. b) in Germany, on the left bank of the upper Rhine River. In Medieval Germany, religious dramas, called mystery plays, were presented in the town hall. A popular theme was the biblical story of the Christmas tree started out as the Tree of Life in Paradise, but when mystery plays were eventually suppressed, the tree was moved into the private home as a symbol of the coming Savior, and decorated with apples and communion wafers.
2. c) Nobody knows for sure when Christ was born. Western Christians celebrate Christ's birthdate on Dec. 25, and eastern Christians celebrate it on Jan. 6. The exact year of Christ's birth is not even known, but it is generally thought to be between 7 and 4 B.C.
3. b) with the Feast of St. Nicholas, celebrated in Holland and other Scandinavian countries on Dec. 6. Tradition has it that St. Nicholas gave gifts to the poor, specifically in the form of money to poor girls who would have been prevented from marrying for lack of a dowry.
4. c) Nobody knows for sure. Nonetheless, Mary has often been portrayed as being quite young and Joseph as being considerably older than her.
5. d) All of the above. See answer to number 3 for more information about the Feast of St. Nicholas.
6. b) False. Christmas has been celebrated at times in the past on all of the following days: Dec. 25, Dec. 26, May 20 and March 28.
7. c) All of the above.
8. c) in Egypt, early in the 3rd century, according to the Rev. Robert Kress, a theology professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.
9. a) St. Cecilia St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music. The Holy Innocents were all of the babies that were killed by Herod's decree after Jesus was born. St. Ann was the mother of Christ's mother, Mary.
10. b) The feast of the winter solstice. This was an ancient celebration of the continuing and renewed strength of the sun, as the days began to grow longer. Some opinion has it that Christians chose to celebrate Christmas in late December in order to compete with the pagan feast.

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
FROM THE EDITORS:
BERNIE CLAVET
TOM WALTERS

**The First
Christmas Crib**

Tradition has it that on Christmas Eve, 1223, Saint Francis of Assisi arranged the first Crib with the Bambino lying on the hay in a manger between a live ox and ass.

