

What Do You Think

***** Conducted by NEI *****

AMIDST a world of political crises, economic problems, and racing armaments, the month of December opens the door which lets in the rush of Christmas festivity.

Christmas is a rich page read and turned; it spills its riches across the years through the bleak December days, and brightens the sunless season with tidings of "peace on earth to men of good will."

Some men obscure its spiritual beauty by making the whole season a "shopping orgy", and trying to enjoy it the way the advertisements promise they should. When a person gives a friend a gift and the friend fails to reciprocate, what happens psychologically? The true worth of Christmas is being exploited by our commercial impulses. Men are sunk in their own petty material affairs. Do we call the whole system a holiday or an allergy or both? When we think of Christmas as only as a matter of outward activity, however grand, we are "preparing the Inn and



Romeo Lavin

neglecting the Manger. We are decking the Inn and crowding it so full of festivity and merriment that there will be no room for the real meaning to be born", and we destroy its spirit by our selfish desires of gift-possession.

Christmas is something symbolic and historic reminding us of our human frailties. It belongs to the domain of the spirit. Being of the spirit, it emanates from within ourselves and partakes of the Divine. It liberates itself from the confines of matter.

What do you think of Him then who was born in a despised area? What do you think of Him coming into the world and being born in a stable instead of in a cozy bed in a palace? Why did He leave the imperishable majesty and glory of heaven?

These are big and proper questions for each one of us to weigh. It matters little what the world thinks important. For the proud Inn which seemed so important that night has vanished, while the Manger has remained and stood sturdy for centuries the fair test of time. And applying this to ourselves, the Inn which symbolizes the body crumbles to pieces, while the Manger which represents the soul survives and lives forever. The meaning of the Nativity of Christ

(Note: When the second issue of the "C" came out of the press, this staff member had a hard time finding a topic fit for this column for the Christmas number. Christmas, so they say, has been the subject of similar columns in other school publications year in and year out. Partly believing them, I would have changed the topic had it not occurred to me, that Christmas, no matter how trite a subject it is, is still the best for the best season of the year. Its broadness and beauty as a subject can never be described in a thousand and one secular terms or in countless issues of school publications. However, the contributors were given freedom as to the particular aspect of Christmas they would like to write about. So here we come up with another dossier of opinions about the happiest time of the year!)

is as simple as the Peace, Love, and Goodwill that He brings and as complicated as the Animosity, Hatred, and Greed that men harbor. His coming into the world marks the inauguration of a new era, and the "fountainhead of man's hope."

If all men would only be guided by the true meaning of Christmas, selfishness, avarice, and pride would die a natural death.

"War, with all its horrors, its brutality, its devilishness, would be an utter impossibility. Peace on earth would become a glorious reality."

ROMEO LAVIN, *Liberal Arts*



C. Olarte

CHRISTMAS is a season which can mean nostalgia to the stoic, a reason for rejoicing to the depressed, and surcease to a poor man's destitution. It is the strongest bond that makes the world feel as one—without the use of force. It is that time when we re-create in our minds the coming of a "Man" who was to suffer for man — Jesus Christ. And I believe that it is most appropriate then that we give due tribute to Christ. Centuries back, the symbol of Christ's coming, a crib with a child in it, was a *sine qua non*; now, it is a contingency. Every Christmas, I am inclined to be-

lieve that we are getting more and more un-Christian in our mode of celebrating it. Each time, I am bewildered by the merry-making, I gape flabbergasted at such effronteries as we, Christians, indulge in and gloat over with bacchanalian satisfaction. We are consumedly obsessed by the craving to make merry.

And if, perhaps, we were asked by a well-meaning stranger why we are rejoicing, we'd suddenly feel like the centipede who forgot how to walk because he could not tell which foot to move first. Today's popular concept of the cause for such maudlin joys seems to be an opulent, reindeer-drawn sledding, gift-showing, bearded old man from the poles—Santa Claus.

If I must use a "Clan" member's way of putting it, I think today's beat generation is getting more "ring-a-ding", which is a word for anything puzzling, hard to find but somehow amusing. Maybe the way it celebrates Christmas is its escape from its terribly sick condition. But what a pusillanimous and sacreligious escape!

CONCEPCION OLARTE, *Education*



Tommy Metela

AS CHRISTMAS hangs around the corner, pervading thoughts of the exemplary virtues of our Lord, Jesus Christ, come to my mind—the virtues of sim-

k About Christmas?

SON LAROSA *****

plivity, humility, refinement, kindness, forgiveness, love and thoughtfulness. These were the virtues which made him great. Our Lord was never arrogant, God the Son as He was, and was born in a manger with the animals. He never wore the hypocrite's mask. Generosity was his mark—He helped those who needed His help. The passion for revenge never found room in His Heart—to those who threw stone at Him, He threw bread in return. Christ did everything for our sake because He loves us—He saved us from death as a consequence of sin by His crucifixion.

But how many of us follow the Divine example set by our Saviour? Many of us, I'm sure, have completely deviated from the virtues He has set and are busy to pave our way to hell. But with the advent of His coming, only a few days from now, we may look forward again to the pleasure of seeing most of us start to wake up from the lethargy of our glaring defects and change for the better.

TOMMY MATELA, *Commerce*

WE HAVE great reason to be in deep gratitude to political and religious leaders centuries before us, for their advocacy of the commemoration of the Nativity of Jesus of Nazareth with a special feastday. For Christmas is one time of the year when we awaken to the truth that no prize is more rewarding and valuable for the struggles against temptations while we're on earth than heaven itself, as Christ said in one of the eight Beatitudes "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This was not only an empty promise. God translated his words into action when He gave his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to us. Christ is the greatest gift from Heaven.



E. Talled

He dwelt with us, as man, as God, because He loves us infinitely. Nothing is nobler than to spend Christmas in the spirit of love of Jesus and His mother.

Let's flock to Him once more and ask His forgiveness for the sins we have committed and offer Him our love because only by so doing shall we come to realize the true meaning of Christmas.

ERLINDA TALAID, *Liberal Arts*

CHRISTMAS is Christ's birthday. To my mind, it is a sacred occasion for it is the coming of our own Redeemer who had to give Himself up for our sins. And I believe it should be religiously, spiritually observed. By that I mean we should celebrate Christmas in accordance with its meaning of peace, love, and goodwill. Unfortunately, as it is now, Christmas has become a red-letter day for fanfare and extravagance; for ostentation, and even debauchery. Actually, I don't think we make ourselves happy during Christmastime; I doubt if we know at heart what the coming of Christ really means—until today, we don't. Rather we go deliriously wild, so wild that policemen have to stand vigil at the clock. To be merry, we do not have to be extravagant nor undisciplined. It would be better if we were to think this over seriously.

AGAPITO MANLANGIT, *Commerce*



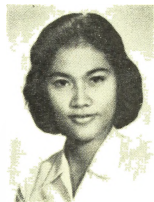
A. Manlangit

"PEACE on earth to men of good will!" —to all of us, this phrase, no matter how short it is, expresses the real meaning and spirit of Christmas. But it is a sad thing to note that this no longer holds true in this world these days. For we live in an era of crass materialism, and mankind is becoming more materialistic each day. Man grabs with greedy shrewdness—money, other worldly possessions, anything he can lay his hands on—while the grabbing is still good. However, the decent man should not despair about materialistic man's distorted sense of morality which brings him down to the level of the brutes.

The very coming of the Son of God

paints a blue ray of hope on man's horizon. It offers him the best chances to reform and to devote his life to the service of God. This is made possible through the spirit of Christmas. This spirit burns everywhere and finds its way into the hearts of men already softened by the coming of Christ. It fosters Christian charity where charity is due, in places where it is unheard of. The spirit of Christmas is too great for the power of man—invincible, unquenchable. Let any man try to deny it or even stamp it out from the consciousness of other men and he'll wind up in utter defeat. This only proves, once and for all, the existence and the power of an Almighty Being, without a beginning and without an end.

JANET GO, *Secretarial Dept.*



Janet Go

IN MY CASE, I will talk about a particular aspect of the way Christmas is celebrated in the Philippines.

This age-old custom always plays a great part in the Christmas celebration every year. It is made popular through the activities of people, particularly in the towns and barrios.

A very beautiful custom, caroling has also been a constant source of honest income for poor families. As long as the little something—money or anything—is received in good faith, everything goes fine with it. However, there are those who think that the money given to them is what really matters. If only a small amount is given in exchange for the little trouble they have in singing, they grumble under their breaths. What's more, they call the owner of the house names, vandalize his things, cart them away if chance allows.

It is my hope that this abuse of the custom of caroling among some of us, gets corrected this coming Christmas.

GLORIA PRESNO, *Education*

STUDENTS go home to their families during the Christmas season. Christmas is a time of togetherness: the joy in a parent's eyes at the sight of his children, and vice-versa.

Yes, I will go home also. But father is dead. I do not know how I shall feel on my first Christmas without him.

FED ANTO, *Liberal Arts*