

Notre Dame Religious Bulletin

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Study, Study, Study

Let us Pray

matt o'toole

Most forgiving Lord,

*Grant me strength to
take me through these trying months of study
Grant me wisdom to decide what
is the best answer to all questions
Grant me hope so that I do not
despair at the work ahead
Grant me a smile that I may
make this time less grim for others
O Lord, please grant me these so that
I may achieve my fullest potential;
and if I fail, let me understand that
it has happened all according to your plan.*

Amen.



CAMPUS MINISTRY

BIDS YOU

Christmas Blessings



Reflections on Advent...

...Eileen Doherty



Ever since I can remember, I've been hearing about Christmas and how it is a time of giving. Lately, I've been reflecting on Advent and what it means for me, and I'm discovering that there is another aspect of Christmas that is usually not emphasized-receiving.

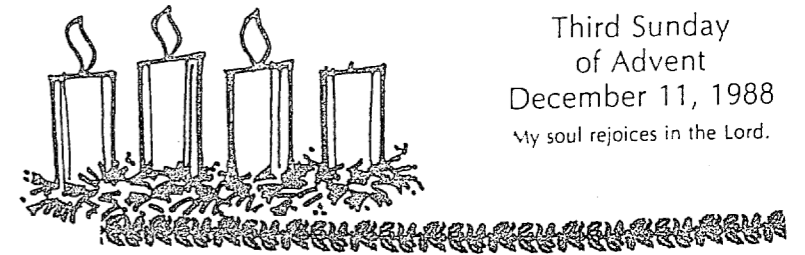
One of the best places to look for the meaning of the Incarnation is at the Eucharist. But we are not asked to give at the Eucharist, we are asked to **receive**. Take my body, take my blood, and receive my peace-this is what Christ asks of us when we come to his table. He offers us peace as pure gift; we only need to learn to receive it.

We all have a tendency to believe that we can do everything on our own; independence is a good thing, but it can be dangerous when we develop the illusion that we don't need others. It then becomes easy to shut out the world and hide our pain, but then we shut out Christ and the peace he offers us through others. We reject his offer because we are too proud to take it.

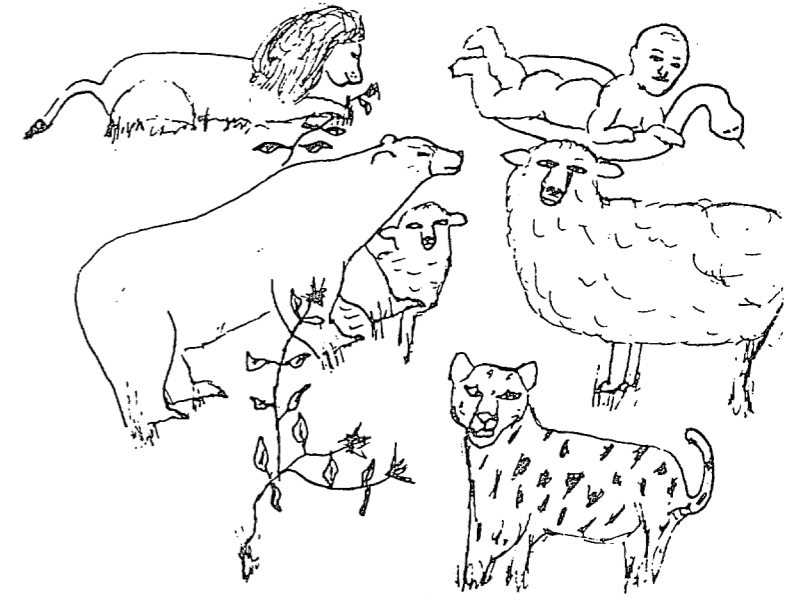
But through his life on earth, Jesus shows us that pain and weakness are not things of which to be ashamed. He is the prime example of vulnerability-in his birth as a child, his life as a rejected preacher and ultimately his death on the cross. He comes to us at the Eucharist-broken for us, and through our shared weakness with Him, our connected humanness, he offers us peace.

We often reject this offer because we are too busy, too hassled or too proud. "We ignore the peace that is offered to us in the beauty of the day or the smile of a friend. We don't take the time to really listen to another, or to share ourselves more fully with the people who are close to us. When we refuse to make ourselves vulnerable to these things, we reject Christ's offer of peace.

For me, Advent means taking the time to be more aware of the Christ that is in me, but also to realize that Christ is very alive in others, and that they, too, have a gift to offer me.



Third Sunday
of Advent
December 11, 1988
My soul rejoices in the Lord.



**"The wolf lives with the lamb,
the panther lies down with the kid,
calf and lion cub feed together
with a little boy to lead them.**

**"The cow and the bear make friends,
their young lie down together.
The lion eats straw like the ox.
The infant plays over the cobra's hole;
into the viper's lair the young puts his
hand.**

They do no hurt, no harm..."

Some Thoughts on Thomas Merton
Alphonso G. Aguilar, sophomore

Thomas Merton is an important figure of the Catholic Church in the United States. His thoughts and ideas, expressed in his numerous writings, influence all types of people throughout the world. Merton, a Trappist monk, defended social rights and criticized many global political issues. Through his constant appeal for justice and peace, he stressed the importance of being in touch with the problems that affect society. Even though this is very important, Merton stepped too far. Active participation in activities of social concern is not essential if a person wants to be a good Christian.

Social issues, as his book Faith and Violence sets forth, are problems every individual must make his or her own. Social and political involvement, Merton thought, was an integral part of being Catholic. Two points make this idea fundamentally wrong. First, a priest, especially a contemplative monk, should not take a political stand or participate in any type of social activism. A clergyman's mission is not to do the job of a politician, but rather the work of the Church. Secondly, not every person has the potential or necessity of knowing every current social issue to be a good person and a devout Catholic. Some people's vocation is just to do good works in environments that are completely detached from the problems of tyranny and oppression.

Regardless of Merton's thoughts on this matter, his work still enlighten readers everywhere. Thomas Merton has the ability to make a person think, and questions himself or herself about his role in our society. Maybe this is why even people who disagree with him, also consider themselves "guilty bystanders" in a world tired of social injustice. (Reactions to Al's thoughts are welcome.)

Merry
Christmas



Note: The Notre Dame Religious Bulletin is published weekly to inform and inspire the members of the ND Christian Community about religious activities and growth in the spiritual life. You are welcome to contribute prayers, articles, information, etc. Contact: NDRB at Campus Ministry in Badin Hall. Let us hear from you.

**'AND YOU,
WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?"
Advent is a time to answer
Jesus.**

Pete Morgan, a Junior, answers

A few weeks ago I attended Mass at Sacred Heart to celebrate the feast of Christ the King. The service was indeed fit for royalty: incense, bells, a score of white-robed priests and servers in procession, led by a cross of gold. The congregation, too, was high stock, all of us packed in tightly and smugly wearing our Sunday best.

I think the Gospel spoke strongly to us that day. The story recounted was of Pilate asking Jesus whether he was a king: Christ's reply was, "It is you who say I am a king. I came to testify to the truth. My kingdom is not of this world." All his life in the very essence of his life—Christ rejected the temptation to be lifted up by human beings of this world. Instead, he chose to move downward, to the lowliest and most downtrodden member of his society. In doing so, he upset those who wanted a Messiah who would rule over them in earthly splendor, and it was these people who finally did raise him up—nailed to a cross.

How many times I try to make Christ king of my existence today. If he would only stay in that, his logical place in our society, then I could also stay comfortably in mine. But he rejects that kind of kingship today, just as he did 2000 years ago, and he calls me to follow. His kingship is one lived with the suffering, one that still defies my earthly comfort. How many times today do we all still seek to raise him up where he does not choose to go, though today our crosses are made of gold.