

FROM THE DESK OF FR. ERIC

Dear Friends,

Let me share a Christmas tale from a many years ago that fits the moment in which we find ourselves ...

'Twas a cold, damp December evening in a tiny holler in the Smoky Mountains called Dollywood. The Paulist Fathers of Knoxville, TN, trekked over hill, dale, and interstate to attend a holiday benefit concert given by one Ms. Dolly Rebecca Parton. The concert hall in this festive little hamlet was filled with those eager to hear the sweet sounds of this precious local who had made it big.

This night, however, would be different than concerts past. You see, Ms. Parton's mother had passed away a few days before at the family home in nearby Sevierville. Ms. Parton, always the professional, did not cancel but came to sing our favorites and to raise money to stamp out illiteracy in the region - which had always been a horrible scourge, holding back diamonds in the rough like her Papa.

It couldn't have been easy for this grieving daughter. In fact, early in the concert she sang her woeful holiday tune "Hard Candy Christmas":

"Lord it's like a hard candy Christmas,
I'm barely getting through tomorrow,
But still I won't let
Sorrow bring me way down."

After this song, she brushed away a few tears from her eyes and said, "Mama wouldn't want me to stay home blubbering right now ... Get up there and sing, she'd say!" And so she did. I will always remember that special night when our favorite and most famous local showed us how to get through holiday adversity: with the Lord, one another, and a good song that touches the heart.

Christmas 2020 also will be a Hard Candy Christmas. We have to take Dolly's advice and stop blubbering, and get out there and do some good, somehow. We will need to sacrifice many of the joys of the season for the good of ourselves and those around us. That's okay ... once in a generation! God willing, this will give us an opportunity to reflect on Christmas in a more intentional way, remembering that the birth of the Savior was the dawn of new hope in a world that was darkened by fear, poverty, and oppression.

This extra time staying at home has reminded me of all the wonderful people like you who have supported the Paulists in so many ways. I can't say it too many times: **We cannot do it without you!** Please know that you and your loved ones are always in our prayers.

On the night of December 23, please join us on Facebook, YouTube or at paulist.org/Christmas for a virtual program called "A Paulist Family Christmas Card." This Christmas special will include music, reflections and much more! God-willing, it will provide us all with the gift of spiritual uplift!

And remember what Dolly had to say on the matter. It may be a "Hard Candy Christmas," but that doesn't mean it can't be sweet!

Merry Christmas!

Fr. Eric Andrews, C.S.P.
President, The Paulist Fathers

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or visit: paulist.org/give



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Join us for an evening filled with the
Joy & Spirit of the Season!

A PAULIST FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARD

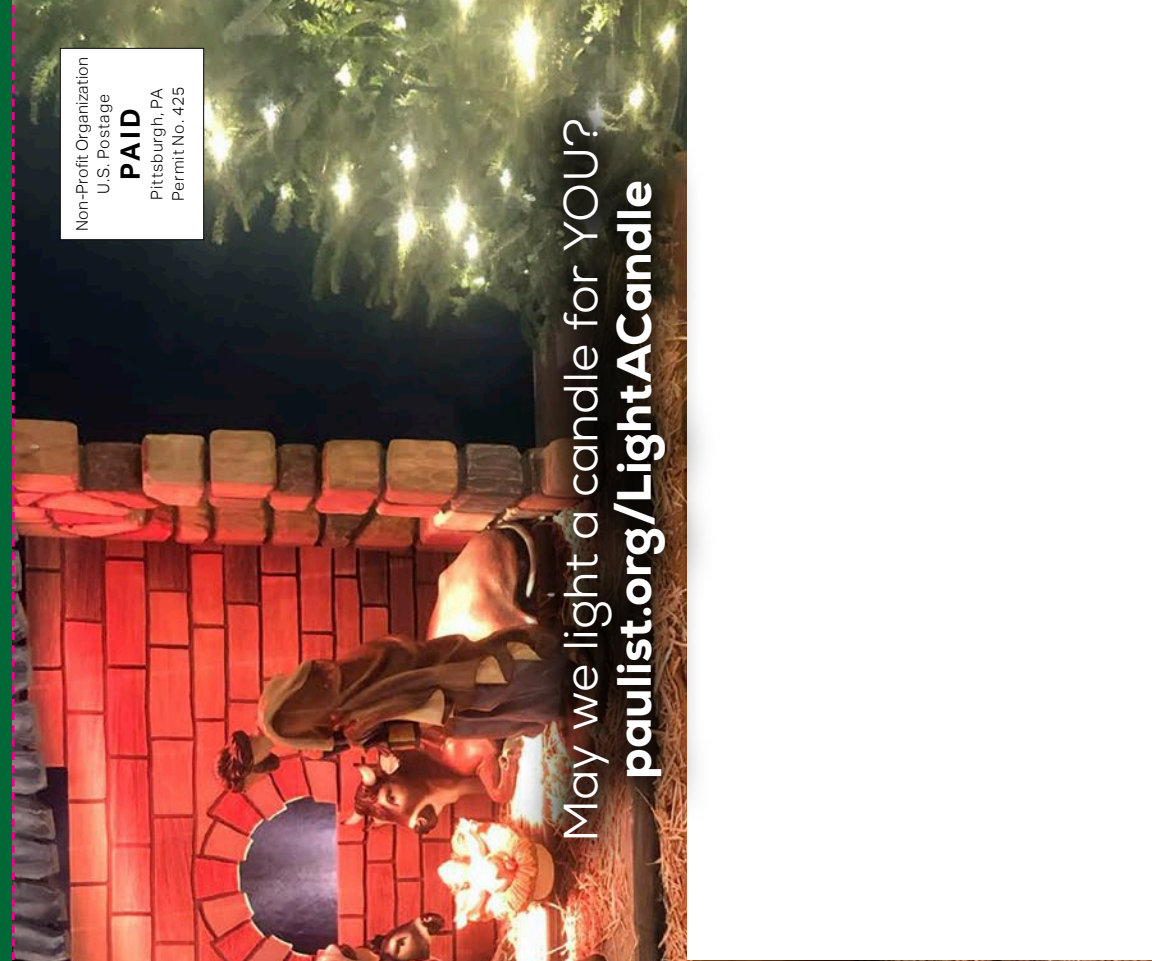
Wednesday, December 23
8:30 p.m. Eastern / 7:30 p.m. Central / 5:30 p.m. Pacific

Watch at our Facebook page, YouTube channel
or at paulist.org/Christmas



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR THE OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT?
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(212) 586-2074 paulist.org @PaulistFathers

May we light a candle for YOU?
paulist.org/LightACandle

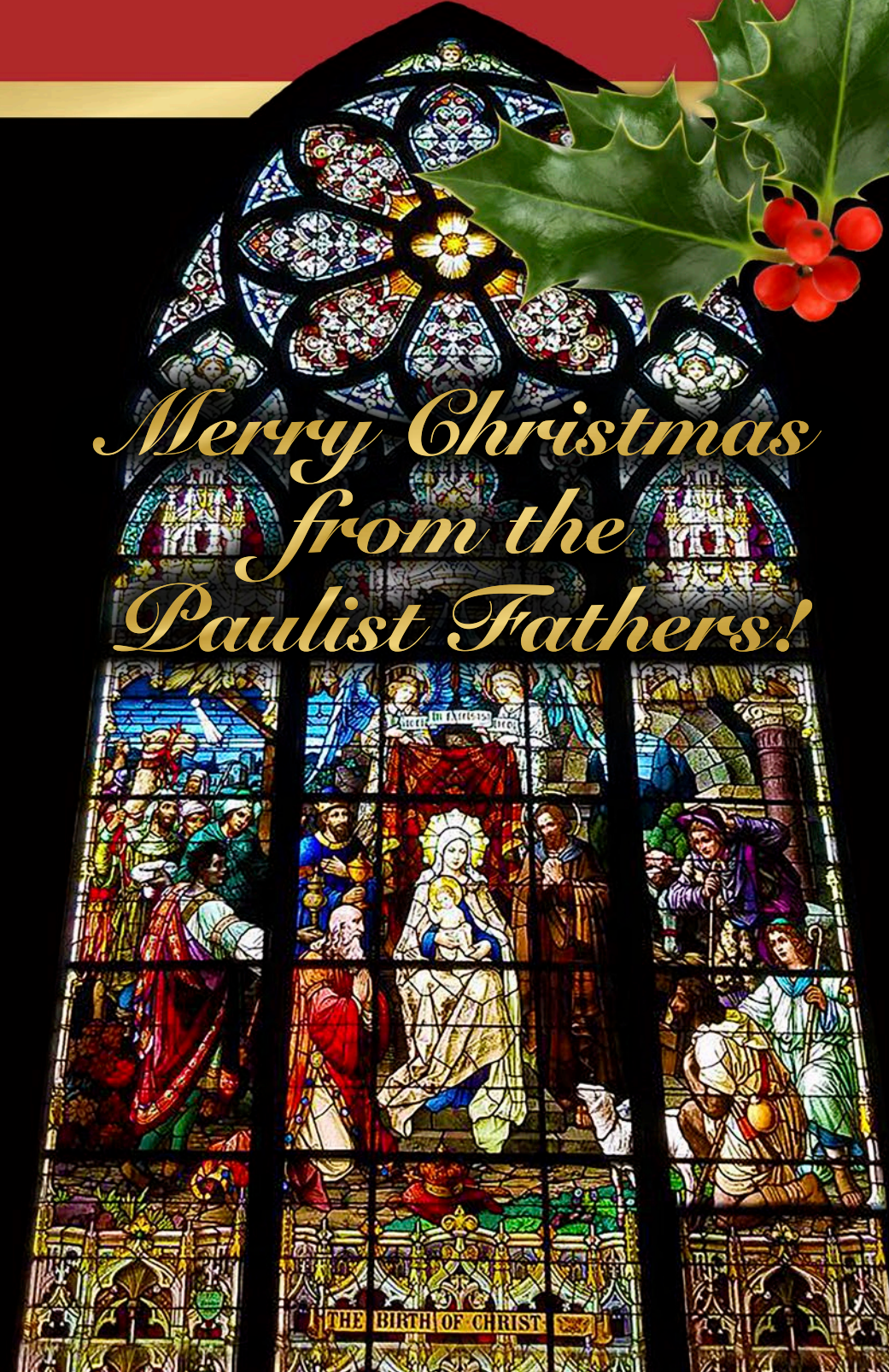


the Voice

Christmas
2020

News from The Paulist Fathers Office of Mission Advancement

*Merry Christmas
from the
Paulist Fathers!*



Story of My Father: Christmas Eve, 1951

By Fr. Bernard Campbell, C.S.P.

It was about 7: 30 p.m. on Christmas Eve, 1951, in the Bronx. At nine years of age, I was the eldest of the four children in our family and allowed to stay up on this magical evening. My three younger sisters had already fallen asleep, dreaming of the excitement of the next day.

In the last half-hour, relatives had been stopping by with all manner of gifts, passing them through our first-floor window. They were placed under and around our Christmas tree. With my modest counting skills, I counted more than fifty dolls on the sofa alone.

My mother was pacing the room. I heard her say, "Where is HE?!"

The "HE" was my father. The fullness of her question came out in bursts: "Where is he?! ... he left here at 8 o'clock this morning with over \$400 to buy presents for his children. He and Murphy left together ... where are they?!"

Just then, I could hear the scratching of a key trying to find the lock on the door. I knew what that meant. Dad was coming home, very looped.

My mother opened the door and, yep, there he was almost horizontal. Somehow he got to his favorite chair just across from the tree. As much as the lights glowed, he was brighter.

My mother stood over him saying, "Bernard, how could you?! \$400! Presents for your children! Oh, Bernard, how could you?!"

Somehow, my mother got my father to stand. She turned out his pockets, went through his favorite chair, and came up with a handful of change.

Turning to me, she said, "Bernard, here's some money. Go, buy your sisters some coloring books and some crayons, too." Off I went into the night to the corner store and returned quickly.

As I came into the apartment, I heard my mother continuing, "Oh, Bernard, how could you?!" I dropped the books and crayons by the tree and ran to my room and bed.

Christmas morning came with great glee. My sisters were ecstatic. I was happy. And, my parents, after the previous evening, seemed subdued and peaceful. It was a very merry Christmas, after all!

Over time, I forgot that Christmas Eve.

Then came the end of June, 1971. I was a young priest based in Minnesota who had flown home a few days earlier to bury my father.

After the funeral, my mother asked me to collect my father's clothes and take them down to the Paulists to distribute to the poor.

"And," she added, "go through the suits to see if there are any papers or (possibly) money in the pockets." I did just that and found a letter. Just one.

The envelope showed it to be from the St. Charles Home for Children in Brooklyn and the Sisters of Mercy. I took a letter out of the envelope, dated December 26, 1951.

"Dear Mr. Campbell," the letter began, "All the sisters and the children were thrilled by your and Mr. Murphy's wonderful presence with us on Christmas Eve. Mr. Murphy, dressed as Santa, and you as an Irish leprechaun entertained us thoroughly. And the gifts for each of the children were so great a blessing. The sisters and I hope you and Santa found the bottle of scotch we left in your car to warm both of you."

I folded the letter, put it in my pocket, and laughed and cried for some time.

In the years that have followed, I have never forgotten Christmas Eve, 1951. No wonder he was glowing! 🍷

Paulist Fr. Bernard Campbell lives at the Paulist Fathers' motherhouse in New York City. He has served at parishes and campus ministry centers around the United States.



We Cannot Do It Without YOU!

As 2020 comes to a close, we pray in thanksgiving for our many friends and benefactors who have supported us this past year and over the course of our 162-year history.

When you make a financial gift to the Paulist Fathers, here are the areas you support:

To make a gift, please use the enclosed envelope or visit: paulist.org/give

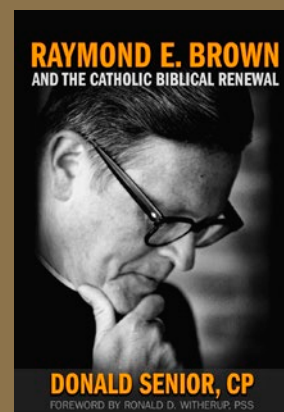


From Paulist Press

"Trail of the Magi"

Fr. Raymond E. Brown, a late Sulpician Father, reflects on the account of Jesus' birth found in the Gospel of Matthew:

"There are preachers who are uneasy about the popularity of this story, feeling it serves as a palliative for true Gospel. But this is to neglect the fact that the infancy narrative contains both the cross and the God-given triumph. Herod stalks the trail of the magi, a menacing reminder that, while the star of the newborn King shone forth in purity and simplicity, there are those who seek to blot out that light. If the infancy story is an attractive drama that catches the imagination, it is also a substantial proclamation of the coming of the kingdom and its possible rejection. The dramatis personae may be exotically costumed as Eastern potentates and as a Jewish king and priests, and for that reason they are not easily forgotten. But beneath the robes one can recognize the believers of Matthew's time and their opponents. And, indeed, a perceptive reader may even recognize some of the drama of the Christian proclamation and its fate in all times."



— from the 2018 Paulist Press book "Raymond E. Brown and the Catholic Biblical Renewal" by Passionist Fr. Donald Senior. Please visit paulistpress.com for details.

Comprehensive Campaign Update



We are grateful to everyone who has contributed in 2020 to our comprehensive fundraising campaign, "Hope for the Future."

The campaign will be fully operational in 2021 with direct outreach in many of the parishes and centers we serve.

For campaign details and updates, please visit: paulist.org/Future.

The cornerstone of "Hope for the Future" is the construction of the new Paulist House of Mission and Studies in Washington, D.C., for which ground was broken on October 16, 2020. (Pictured here are our seminarians, novices and the Paulist Fathers who live in Washington, D.C.)

For details and updates on this new, right-sized seminary building, please visit: paulist.org/NewSeminary.

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Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year 2021
from the Paulist Fathers
Office of Mission Advancement!

Kami Mary Pat Ellie
Fr. Eric Paul Brett Linda

On the cover: A stained-glass window at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Grand Rapids, MI, which has been served by Paulist Fathers since 2008.