

ST. ANSGAR'S



BULLETIN

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LEDREBORG: A Danish Idyll

## The Year of Saint Ansgar

Each year we hope to have the Bulletin out early and each year there are problems. This year it was a health problem that delayed operations. In any case we hope that the Bulletin will soon see the light of day.

An ongoing problem for small publications today is finding new subscribers. Some of our older members worked hard at finding them and now that effort seems to be falling away. When you receive (or have received) your renewal form, members in the United States will see a form on which they can send for a free copy for a possible subscriber. We hope that this will produce results. While we did not send this form to those outside the U.S., they are more than welcome to request that a Bulletin be sent to an interested party.

This year followed the pattern of St. Lucia celebration, St. Ansgar Mass and the picnic with the Sisters at Darien. It also included visits from the Trappistine Sisters and two priests, one of them Fr. Nielsen from the Cathedral in Copenhagen. I was away during the visit of the Sisters but it was my pleasure to be the host for Fr. Neilsen and his friend, Fr. Biallo who teaches in a Roman seminary. They were here to see the City and also to visit St. Vladimir's Seminary. That is a seminary of the Orthodox Church in America and they were interested in its collections of Eastern Church material.

The Rambusch Company has moved this fall. They graciously provide us with office and storage space. Much of their operation has been relocated to New Jersey but they now have a Manhattan office at 3 E. 28 Street, Eighth Floor New York NY 10016-7408. We wish them well in this period of change. Please address your St. Ansgar correspondence to that address.

-JEH

### PRAYER FOR SCANDINAVIA

O Jesus, our God and Savior, by the merits of Your Most Precious Blood, shed for all men, we ask You to look with special love upon the people of Scandinavia. Grant peace and holiness to Your Church in these countries. Instill zeal, courage and confidence in the hearts of their bishops, priests, religious and faithful.

Promote the work of Unity among all Christian people, giving courage and humility to seek the means of advancing this Cause for which You prayed and gave Your life. Grant to all who profess belief in You, harmony and love, as well as the grace to grow in holiness and to attain eternal salvation.

We ask these blessings through Your Virgin Mother, St. Ansgar and all the saints of these lands, for the honor and glory of Your Name, and for the welfare of Your Church. Amen.

-Father Titus Cranny, S.A., National Director of Unity Apostolate,  
Graymoot (with permission of superiors)



## THE OLDEST CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

One of the oldest feast days in the Church is the feast of the Epiphany. The word means revealing, shining forth, because the church remembers three events in the life of Jesus: when he revealed what he was. The first revelation was to the wise astrologers from the East who were led to him by a star. The second was to the Jews when he let himself be baptized by John in the River Jordan. The third was to his apostles when he performed his first miracle and changed water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Therefore the ground tone in the feast is jubilation and triumph. But in the story of Christ on Earth it is never long between triumph and persecution. After the cries of acclamation follow the laughter of scorn and the shrieks of those who would crucify him. The hymn which is sung on the festival of the Epiphany (it was written in the 500's by Caelius Sedulius) begins

*Crudelis Herodes, Deum  
Regem venire quid times?  
Non eripit mortalia  
Qui regna dat coelestia.*

(Cruel Herod why are you afraid at the coming of the King of heaven? He does not take away the mortal who gives the heavenly kingdom.) But that is what Herod thought the child king who was born in Bethlehem in Judah would do. And it is never a long time between the times Kaisers and kings, leaders and tyrants have suspected him of doing this. And so they have begun to persecute again and tried to drive him far away. The murder of the children at Bethlehem is repeated on an ever-greater scale.

Here in the North in any case, the feast of the Epiphany has been reduced to a red letter day which is

not paid much attention, Three Kings Day. (Why the wisemen from the East who are not characterized more exactly in the Gospels have been titled kings, three in number, with a procession and with their own names: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar is another story). Holy Three Kings' Day is mostly important as the end of Christmas: Christmas parties, Christmas gourmandizing and Christmas holidays. It's back to the toil and moil again. The much younger feast, which remembers the birth of Jesus, has over time taken the wind out of the older one. The festival of the birth of Christ began as a local Roman celebration observed on the same days that the heathens held an ancient folk festival. Saturnalia, the days when by tradition people were given the right to do whatever they were able to, and do things that otherwise were forbidden, while the upper classes which experimented with the higher religions celebrated the Sol Invictus, the unconquerable sun. Christians who wanted to avoid the other feasts were given their own feast of the unconquerable sun. In the liturgy he is also called the Sun of Righteousness. When Christianity came to the North, Christmas night had become one of the great festivals of the Church Year, indeed from the beginning it was considered to be the greatest. In any case it became the most important feast for people of the North. It fell in the middle of winter when the solstice had been celebrated from time immemorial with a sacrifice which would help the frozen red winter sun reclaim its strength, so that each day it could climb a little higher in the heavens and regain its life-giving warmth. Indoors there were great gatherings of relations and those who lived

close by, for each farm was a fortress besieged by evil powers who were most powerful in the dark of winter, when nothing grew and the cold embraced people and cattle.

Each of us has impressions from childhood which have formed our concepts of Christmas and its celebration, church and bell ringing, or the slushy streets with, everywhere, the light from all the Christmas displays in shop windows, blueish ski trains on the white landscape against a sun-gilt winter forest, festive Christmas gatherings or dull family dinners, the kind of food we had at home on Christmas and how the Christmas tree was decorated. We remember old family members and friends, now dead, kind persons who did not know how to do enough good things for us and the not so kind who turned up at Christmas and happily had their say about how we were being brought up.

Back of our Christmas memories lie the Christmas memories of a people, generation after generation, some going back to heathen times. Also, here in Norway for the most part our memories are good and joyful for the most part. When our people first received the faith in the White Christ, without too strong resistance, because for the most part they had grown away from their old faith, and our kings knew well that he did not take away earthly realms who gave to them the kingdom of heaven, so our fathers were faithful to Christ. On the one hand, they did many things that they knew God did not want them to do, that is true. But to fail in their faith as Christian men, lose the name of Christian, who wanted that?

And when all around the world the great falling away from Christianity began to be noticed here, it

came slowly, so quietly, that it was as if people only drifted into indifference and away from the faith. Souls were not disturbed when they heard of Christians being persecuted. We have never remembered that Herod is one of the chief persons in the Christmas story, and the small boys who were slaughtered in a little country town in the land of the Jews belong to Christmas just as do the angels and shepherds, the wise men who came with gifts and old Simon who prophesied that the child in the mother's arms was set for the fall and rise of many and for a sign that should be spoken against, and that a sword would pierce the mother's soul that the thoughts of many might be revealed. Herod has not been very important to us. Not at all. It serves no purpose to deny that now there is not a great deal of the idyll of Christmas. Millions of children in countries, calling themselves Christian, are celebrating Christmas in ruined cities. Millions who have things a little better, or much better, live in temporary replacements for homes, in buildings with too many people where it is necessary to house so many people that no one can have room or thought for Christmas parties, for seeing strangers and exchanging the routine of everyday. They have never known a Christmas tree, Christmas tidbits, Christmas feasting, these are things they have never known and perhaps never will. And they who are well enough off, in a worldly sense, so that they can buy things for Christmas or travel for the holidays, many of them only have the outer shell of Christmas. They have thrown away the content, they know no more of the taste of Christmas than do the millions of children who now grow up and will

never have the opportunity of knowing so much as the name of the child of Bethlehem. There is nothing left of the Christmas of our childhood. There is nothing left of the happy Christmas of our forefathers. Nothing is left but the eternal message which once filled the souls of men with such an unbounded joy that they could invent all these happenings and ceremonies, solemn or joyful, graceful or coarse—to express and celebrate the meaning of this day. They have disappeared little by little, soon they will all have disappeared.

The message of Christmas comes to us plain and shining as to the first Christians in the time of the old church, when nothing special was known about any fixed day in the middle of winter, but when each day the liturgy was in part constructed around the three great songs of praise for the birth of Jesus: his mother's who sang because her only son was born so that her soul magnified the Lord and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior; Zacharias prophesied about God's salvation and the forgiveness of sin; and finally, Simon, who sang of the sword which would reveal the secrets of many hearts. The message of Christmas comes to us just as bright shining as it did to shepherds on the hills by Bethlehem, when the glory of heaven and the host of heaven showed themselves and spoke to them in glory from on high, so that they left their camp and their flocks and ran to find a mother with a new born son, lying without earthly pomp in a barn in a country town. The Christmas message came to the wise men who studied the stars someplace in the East. Each night they followed the procession of the heavenly bodies across the vault of heaven. One night they discovered

a newly lit star and they began to pack and prepare for the long journey to find the newborn king. Thereby, among other things, they came into contact with King Herod. And ever since he also has a role in the drama of Christ on earth. The old message comes to us again: "Peace on earth to men of good will." That is the peace that Jesus himself speaks of: "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, not as the world gives I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled—" This is the peace of Christmas. *Crudelis Herodes*. "Herod, why are you afraid because the king of heaven is come? He does not take away the earthly kingdoms who gives the heavenly." But Herod is and remains afraid for his little kingdom. And we, do not we have some little kingdoms of this earth which we fear for, even when we want to receive the kingdom of Heaven? Has it not always been that way? It is just that now for a moment we see it clearly, in the glow of a burning world, where the peace that the world can give is no peace and can only be rescued when we first find the peace that not the world but Christ can give us.

— Sigrid Undset (1948)

*Permission to print requested from Aschehoug forlag.*

## THE JESUITS AND THE INCAS

The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera S.J. (1)

In 1631, an Italian Jesuit named Giovanni Anello Oliva completed his comprehensive four-volume history of the Jesuits in Peru. (2) This *magnum opus*, to which Oliva had devoted some 22 years of his life, was much more than a simple chronicle of Jesuit activities in South America. In Volume One—the only volume that still exists—Oliva also provides a history of pre-Inca and Inca Peru based on a variety of sources, including traditions of native historians. Throughout this work, Oliva harshly condemns Spanish mistreatment of Andean peoples. His original text of this chronicle contains scathing criticisms of Spanish abuses taken verbatim from Bartolomé de Las Casas' *Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (published 1552). Yet, Oliva adds a new element to Las Casas' discussion of Spanish crimes against the native Peruvians. In addition to Las Casas, he relies on the prophetic revelations of the medieval mystic, St. Birgitta, of Sweden to demonstrate the nature of European atrocities against New World pagans and in particular, to describe the punishments awaiting those who despoil the Indians and, impede their conversion. This article will examine Oliva's unusual use of the Revelations of St. Birgitta in his writings on native rights, exploring how his political views were influenced by reading the words of this medieval saint.

Oliva was born in Naples in 1574; in 1593 he entered the Jesuit house of that city. Four years later he sailed for Peru, where he spent over 30 years as a missionary. During these years he began his monumental *History of the Kingdom and Provinces of Peru and the Lives of Various Notables of the Society of Jesus*, on which he labored from 1608 to 1631. This chronicle incorporates material from personal interviews, unpublished manuscripts and published authors such as Garcilaso de la Vega and Jose de Costa.

Oliva's original manuscript, preserved in the British Library and published by Carlos Galvez Peña, includes

lengthy quotations from Las Casas criticizing Spanish mistreatment of native Americans. Chapter 6, entitled "On the Miserable State of Christianity in Peru from the Conquest until 1568" is devoted almost entirely to Las Casas' description of the savage treatment of Indians in Peru prior to the arrival of the Jesuits in 1568. This account is introduced by citing a source that is not found in Las Casas: Books 2 and 7 of the Revelations of Birgitta of Sweden.

Oliva applies two of Birgitta's mystical visions to the sufferings of the native peoples in the New World. The first reference to Birgitta emphasizes the guilt of those Christians, lay people and missionaries, who neglect their duty to evangelize native Peruvians. In this citation from Chapter 19, Book 2 of the Revelations, Oliva is not merely making an analogy between Peru and fourteenth century Naples. Rather he states that the saint's words apply directly to the New World, that Birgitta had a prophetic vision of the tragic occurrences that would take place in Peru nearly two centuries after her death. Her words, quoted by Oliva, reveal the dire fate of Christians who have not cared for the souls of the Andean peoples, but instead have oppressed the Indians with labor and have stolen their liberty:

"...it is true that all of those priests in the holy Society of Jesus show greed for the treasures and riches of Souls, so in need of instruction; this has been verified by a revelation that Christ our Lord gave to the glorious Saint Birgitta who, favored by her divine Spouse, deserved to be given part of his sentiments against those who having the obligation of winning souls and putting them on the path to salvation, not only do not do so, but impede the Indians' conversion to the faith. The Saint herself, refers to this unfortunate situation in Chapter 19 of the Second Book of her

Revelations in the following words,

"I tell you (here the Lord speaks to the Saint) that those sheep ought to be those who carry the cross, whom I put in the ultimate ends of the earth... But they themselves fight against me because they neither care for souls, nor do they have mercy on the bodies of those who are leaving their errors for the Catholic faith and for me. Instead they oppress them with work, they deprive them of the sacraments and send them to hell with greater suffering than if they were still in their ancient paganism... But the time will come when their teeth will be broken, their right hand cut off and their right foot withered, so that they will live and know themselves (for what they are)."

This is the revelation that the Incarnate Wisdom of the Eternal Word made to the Saint, which well describes the miserable state of Christianity in Peru when the Jesuits arrived in 1568."<sup>(3)</sup>

Furthermore, in Chapter 6, before his lengthy section from Las Casas, Oliva quotes from Chapter 28, Book 7 of Birgitta's Revelations. In the vision, the Virgin Mary speaks to the saint about the terrible offenses against God that are committed in Naples. Two kinds of sin are particularly disturbing to the Virgin: first the purchase of pagans as slaves (in this case Mohammedans), who are given no instruction in Christianity and forced into immorality such as prostitution; and secondly the verbal and physical abuse of these pagan servants. These same crimes against God, described so vividly by Saint Birgitta, Oliva states, are being repeated in his own time against the Indians in every city and town in Peru. (4)

Oliva's use of Birgitta's mystical revelation in defense of the native peoples is unusual. Las Casas, for exam-

ple, employs philosophical sources in the Aristotelian and Thomist traditions, and not the writings of medieval visionaries, to argue for the just treatment of native peoples. In fact, there seems to be no other colonial-era writer who applies Birgitta's Revelations to the Spanish treatment of natives in the New World. Blas Valera, for example, a Peruvian Jesuit chronicler contemporary with Anello Oliva, criticized Spanish abuses from an Augustinian perspective without (as far as we know) recourse to the medieval prophetic tradition. 5

It is likely that there were several reasons for Oliva's interest in Birgitta and for his belief that she foresaw the mistreatment of native Peruvians. As a Neapolitan, Oliva probably would have been aware of Birgitta through her writings about the city as well as the continuing presence of Bridgettines there. Additionally the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw a flurry of Bridgettine communities established in Spain even as the convents in Northern Europe were suppressed. Concurrent with this change in geography, new editions of Birgitta's Revelations were published in Spain and Italy; for example a major edition of her work was published in Rome in 1556. Significantly, editions contemporary with the work of Oliva were published in Rome by Consalvo Durante in 1606 and 1628.

Moreover, Birgitta forms only one aspect of Oliva's much broader preoccupation with mysticism. Repeatedly in his text, one sees a concern for what he calls "the most secret gifts of the spirit and sweetnesses of the soul" (Oliva, p.3). This is evident in the remaining fragments of his biographies of holy Jesuits. For example, his account of Jose de Arriaga praises Arriaga's great austerities, which included sleeping at night tied to a tree, standing up. Oliva tells us that Arriaga enjoyed numerous spiritual gifts, among which were revelations from the Virgin and the mystical ability to know the most hidden thoughts of others (Oliva, p. 281). In another passage that was later crossed out by Jesuit censors, Oliva advocates a quietist ap-

proach to the Jesuit spiritual exercises, one that would lead lay people, including Indians, to a mystical union with God beyond words (Oliva, p. 245). (It is important to remember that he wrote this at a time when it was still hotly debated whether Indians and *mestizos*, i.e. children of Spaniards and Indian mothers, should even be allowed to receive all the sacraments).

In fact, Oliva explained in highly mystical terms his need to write this history. In his Prologue, he tells us that he personally knew many of the Jesuits mentioned in his account, and that he had an intimate familiarity with not only their exterior selves, "things exterior and open to the eyes of many", but also with the secrets of their souls, "secrets that are revealed only to a few" (Oliva, p. 12). He then describes his desire to reveal the hidden gifts of these men by referring to the story of St. Hildegard of Bingen. Hildegard, he writes, refused to write about her mystical experiences out of modesty; however the Lord punished her with a grave illness until she finally allowed her revelations to be committed to paper. Likewise, Oliva continues, other saints such as St. Birgitta, St. Gertrude and the "glorious" Mother Teresa of Avila were commanded by God to publish their experiences. Their example, Oliva narrates, has motivated him to write this history, in which he will describe "to the world the excellent virtues that the noted men of the Society (of Jesus) held cloaked and hidden by the veil of Humility" (Oliva, p.13). Oliva's prologue situates his text within a line of medieval mystical writers, all of whom shared a divine compulsion to reveal the truth of their experiences. Part of this truth, for Oliva, includes condemning those who abused the native Andeans before the arrival of the Jesuits in Peru.

In conclusion, we see in Oliva's defense of the native Americans the coming together of different intellectual traditions—the Thomism of the Dominican Las Casas combined with the prophecies of the medieval contemplative St. Birgitta of Sweden. It is important to note how distinct his mysticism is from that of the early Francis-



cans in the New World. Whereas the Franciscans in Mexico were inspired by the millennial visions of the twelfth century Abbot, Joachim of Fiore, and viewed the natives in this light as exemplars of the primitive Church, Oliva is in the tradition of female mystics from Hildegard to Teresa of Avila. For Oliva, the native Peruvians were comparable to the Mohammedan captives in fourteenth century Naples, who deserved to be well-treated and instructed in Christianity, as Birgitta so strongly advocated.

Nonetheless, despite the many years Oliva devoted to his four-volume history, his efforts were in vain. Galvez Peña has shown how Oliva's Jesuit superiors in Peru heavily censored his word, crossing out all his citations from Las Casas (although they kept the material from Birgitta). Numerous other passages were excised as well, and apparently an entire chapter on Arriaga was ripped out of the text. The censored manuscript was then sent to Rome to receive General Vitelleschi's approval for printing. But this approval never came. In 1634, the Jesuit General refused to allow Oliva's history to be published for reasons that are not entirely clear. At the time of his death eight years later, his four volume work still languished with no idea of publication. It was in 1998, some 356 years after his death that Oliva's full criticisms of Spanish policy in the Andes and this defense of the rights of the native peoples finally appeared in print.

## A LETTER FROM SISTER JEZL

*Notes:*

1 An earlier version of this article was presented at the First International Symposium of Peruvianists, Harvard University, April 30, 1999.

2 Giovanni Anello Oliva, S.J. (Ed. Carlos M. Gálvez Peña) *Historia del Reino y Provincias del Peru y vidas de varones insignes de la compañía de Jesus*. Lima. Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, 1998.

3 *Ibid.*, pp.179-180.

4 *Ibid.*, pp.181-183.

5 See Sabine P. Hyland, *Incas, Gods and Khipus: the Life and Times of Padre Blas Valera S.J.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

*I met Sister Jezl several years ago in Helsingborg at the Episcopal Ordination. She is at the parish in Tampere/Tammerfors where she leads a very active life. Following are parts of her Christmas letter.*

-JEH

I am the chairperson of the women's division of the Finnish Ecumenical Council. In May I was able to attend an ecumenical meeting in St. Petersburg. There were Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox teachers from newly established colleges and seminaries; Catholic Sisters from a community that was founded and existed in Communist times; a Sister from Siberia who works in a home for street children; a Catholic laywoman, who helped found an ecumenical women's group that tries to "save" their sons and fathers from the dehumanizing influence of the Russian army; a member of an Orthodox charitable lay organization that tries to build trust with local state hospitals and prisons, so that they can help patients and prison-

ers.

Father Peter, our parish priest, has been on sabbatical in Rome since June. He will return in mid December. His substitute has been Father Zenon, a young Polish priest who had studied in Ireland. He denies any knowledge of the Blarney Stone, but his Irishisms tell otherwise.

I have been in panel discussions for the past two years at Prometheus camps. They are organized for agnostic youth. The directors invite representatives from the different religions and philosophies on one designated afternoon to talk to the young people. It is the most frustrating thing that I do. Try imagining one two hour class in which five or six or more religions and philosophies are talked about. One might as well read an encyclopedia. The only advantage is that the young people see live ones, somewhat like having an exotic zoo come to one's camp. I've learned what a colorful group free-thinkers are.

St. Lucia Day—2002:  
List of Prizes won by out-of-towners

Jute table cover-Henry Magno, Staten Island NY  
 Swedish wooden candle holder-Robert McGowan, Scarsdale NY  
 Norwegian mouse pad-Sr. Barbara Arnesen, C.N.D., Ridgefield CT  
 Tray Hanger-Eric P. Nielsen C.P.A., Valley Stream NY  
 Swedish Christmas tablecloth-B. Cosmides, Babylon NY  
 Norwegian calendar-Rev. Boniface L. Wittenbrink, Belleville IL  
 Kristen Lavransdatter-Cara Rison, Rowayton CT  
 Finnish candleholders-Rev. Robert Anderson S.J., New Orleans LA  
 Grand prize (\$100.00)- Angela Dalessandro, Atlanta GA  
 Sauna towel-Frank Corden, Lynn NC  
 Dish towels-John A Hyland, Staten Island, NY

## THE TRAPPESTINES VISIT NEW YORK

Early in April, Mother Gail, Sister Columba, Sister Kathleen and Sister Hanne-Marie o.c.s.o visited New York on a fund raising trip to benefit the Trappistine monastery in Iowa, Our Lady of the Mississippi (a monastery in which our recently deceased long time member, Mary Ellen Evans, was very interested, and to which she left a bequest), and also their daughter house near Trondheim at Tautra, Mariakloster. Mother Gail is the Abbess at Our Lady of the Mississippi, Sister Columba is the Bursar and Sister Kathleen is in charge of the fund raising effort. Sister Hanne-Marie is from Mount St. Mary's Abbey in Wrentham, Mass. but is a native Norwegian and one of the foundresses of Tautra. Your president and her husband met her when she first came from Norway to enter that house and were her guests at her final profession there in November 1999. Our readers may remember the pictures of both occasions in the Bulletins of 1994 and 2000. She has been in Iowa for the past year but will be returning to Norway in November.

Mother Gail, Sister Kathleen and Sister Hanne-Marie joined Astrid for midday Mass at Fordham University at Lincoln Center on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, and had lunch with us afterwards. Mother Gail had just returned from Norway and had to go on to Iowa Saturday morning, but the others stayed until the weekend and so were able to join Viggo Bech Rambusch and Astrid for lunch on Saturday. They showed us the plans for the monastery in Nor-

way that they hope to begin building, at least in part, within the next year. At present they are living in two old farmhouses and their chapel is so tiny that there is no room for guests, of whom they have many, Lutherans included. Vespers sometimes has to be prayed in the open near the ruins of the old monastery, built by Cistercians

American Scandinavian Foundation, a kind Norwegian friend took the picture.

On Sunday, Sister Kathleen spoke about her life and work to the children and parents at St. Thomas More. The parish made a contribution to the monastery. Sister Hanne-Marie and Astrid met for early Mass and then went to



*The Trappistine Sisters with Astrid O'Brien and Viggo Rambusch.*

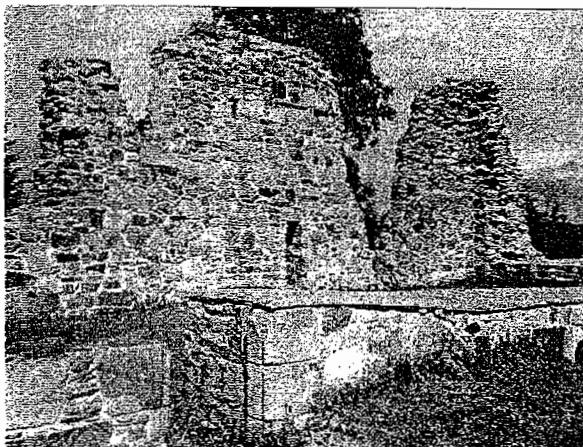
monks from France in the eleventh century and closed in 1537 at the time of the reformation. In cold or rainy weather this is difficult!

We gave them two gifts for the new monastery: a small monetary one and a stone from Nidaros Cathedral that Viggo F.X. Rambusch had asked for when the chapel at Kennedy Airport was constructed. They had requested stones from churches around the world, but the stone from Nidaros arrived too late to be used there. The sisters were very touched by the latter. It will go back with Sister Hanne-Marie, and the sisters hope to use it in the chapel, maybe even as the cornerstone. How very symbolic that would be, and meaningful to Lutherans as well as Catholics! Then Viggo and Astrid took them to lunch at the café in the lovely new headquarters of the

King Olav's Church, the Norwegian (Lutheran) Seamen's church for the Sunday service.

Pastor Hans Erik Rudd had arranged for Sister to speak in his place after the Liturgy of the Word. She was received very warmly, after the service many spoke to her, expressing their appreciation and saying that they would like to visit the monastery the next time they are in Trondheim. Sister had brought samples of the monastery's products-soap and candles-to show how the monastery supports itself. She hadn't expected to sell them, but people wanted to buy them and did. These, we hope, will soon be available from the monastery in Iowa. If any of our members would like to make a contribution to the Tautra monastery the address is Tautra Mariakloster/N-7633 Frosta, Norway.

If you are going to Norway and would like to visit the monastery, call ahead to get their schedule: 011 47 74 80 85 51. -Astrid O'Brien



*The Medieval Monastery Ruins at Tautra.*

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN VISBY, A WORLD HERITAGE CITY, EXPANDS

In 1982, Bishop Hubertus Brandenburg dedicated Kristi Lekamens kyrka, Corpus Christi Church in Visby. This church received a great deal of attention from the very beginning because it was built on the foundation, incorporating the stone walls and floor, of a medieval warehouse that had been newly discovered. Some art experts

of the local parishioners and visitors.

One of the reasons Corpus Christi Church is so well visited is not only because it is an active congregation with daily Mass, but Vespers are also sung Monday through Saturday as a church service. When the church's local parishioners are away, those who have summer homes on the island as

Confession etc. in several languages.

The church has marked an increased social responsibility for the people who, for many reasons, turn to the church when they are visiting.

Far from all expectations can be met. But even though we are a little parish we have grasped at the opportunity to build on the last bit of land that can be built upon. One finds oneself on truly historical land. The church currently stands besides what was once the medieval bishop's house where the well known Bishop Nicolaus Hermanni of Linköping gave the official assignment to take the initiative needed to get Birgitta Birgersdotter, Saint Birgitta of Vadstena, canonized.

The cost for the church expansion is approximately USD 220,000. That is an expense that such a young and small parish with such large responsibilities for so many can not bear itself. Therefore we must ask for financial support. Every donation is valuable in ensuring the completion of the badly needed expansion. With this expansion, Corpus Christi Church has, for the first time, a baptismal font. A stone well from the Middle Ages that existed in the area that the church expanded into, has been incorporated into the sanctuary.

The Diocesan Bishop, Anders Arborelius OCD, dedicated the new sanctuary 22 December 2001. The sanctuary was too small that day for all the



*Corpus Christi Church in Visby  
Photo: Hans Petter Larsson*

consider it the most interesting church built in Sweden during the 1900s using architecture that gives the best example of how medieval and present day can together be used in a public building.

Since the Middle Ages, Corpus Christi is the first Catholic Church to be built on Gotland, an island in the Baltic Sea. Of the 110 churches that were built on Gotland hundreds of years ago, 92 are Lutheran today while others were deserted in the sixteenth century.

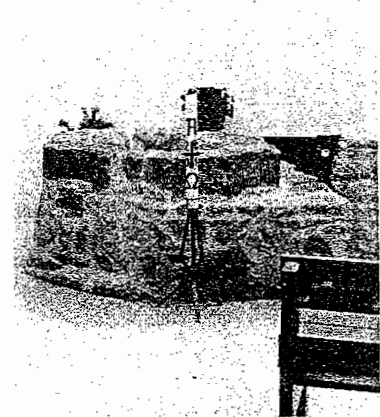
Situated in the middle of Visby, a hanseatic city, Corpus Christi was originally designed for the approximately 50 Catholics living on the island twenty years ago. Today the number of Catholics has more than quadrupled. The church hall was originally built as an integral part of the church. A freestanding hall was later purchased to provide more rooms in the nave. But the nave was, notwithstanding, many times too small for all

well as many tourists who visit the island each year attend the church. The number of visitors from the United States and Canada has increased greatly during the most recent years.

Being added to UNESCO's World Heritage list is one of the many contributing factors for the increased number of visitors to Visby. The entire island with its fascinating nature and culture make Gotland one of Sweden's largest tourist attractions.

Visby has a recently enlarged college, an author and translating center, a school for the arts, a music school and other institutions that make Gotland an ideal meeting place for people from all around the world. The new political situation around the Baltic Sea has therefore created an obvious increase in regional cooperation in many areas.

Together, all of the growth on the island has influenced the role of the Catholic Church on Gotland, increasing the need for Mass, counseling,



*The new baptismal font in Visby  
Photo: Hans Petter Larsson*



Children participating in the Mass at Visby  
Photo: Hans Petter Larson

parishioners and visitors that wanted to come; therefore the parish also planned several extra services of different types during the Christmas season aimed at including those who aren't Catholic but would like to see the expansion in its finished state and to be a part of the celebration.

Those who would like to donate to the church building can send their contributions to the Catholic Church, S:t Hansgatan 60, SE-621 56 Visby Sweden. Make a deposit in the parish post giro account 757022-9 or Handelsbanken account number 268 213 682 (clearing number 6631).

#### Facts

Gotland is 3.140 square kilometers in area. The population is approximately 57,000. Only 6% of the population are not Swedish citizens. Approximately 750,000 tourists visit the island yearly.

Gotland, once built up through trade, was in former times extremely wealthy. That explains why, today, there are so many churches remaining from the middle ages. Sculptures and altars from the 1200s and forward are preserved both in Gotland churches and in museums in Visby and Stockholm. Because at that time Gotland

was composed of marshland and forest there was a need for many churches in the countryside. Visby, the island's only city, had a number of parishes under the Bishop of Linköping. There were in addition Knights, Dominicans and Franciscans in the city. The Teutonic order and the Dominican Order were established because of the pope's expansion policy in the East and Northeast region of the Baltic Sea area to hinder the Eastern Church from expanding westward. The Cistercian monks had built a monastery in the middle of the island for the same purpose.

In 1527 the church in Gotland was broken away from the Universal/Catholic Church and became a part of the Danish National and Lutheran Church. Those who tried to remain Catholic were soon banned from Gotland and lost their right of inheritance. The same situation arose again in 1645 when, at the peace treaty in Brömsebro, the church in Gotland became part of the Swedish Lutheran Church. First in 1873, Swedish law allowed Swedish citizens to become Catholic. Even then the law held many discriminating paragraphs.

Sven-Erik Pernler

### CARITAS OF ST. MARY'S PARISH: AN UNCOMPLICATED WAY TO HELP

The Caritas of St. Mary was started seven years ago. Participating in it does not require registration and no membership dues are collected. "Caritas expects commitment to love of neighbor and Jesus Christ, not to an organization", comments Jan Krook, the contact person for the congregation. Rector Kazimierz Lewandowski SCJ of the parish thinks that in a way all members of the congregation are also members of Caritas.

Members in helping organizations frequently discover that they are overwhelmed by work, but here in St. Mary's Caritas everybody who is willing may participate on a grassroots level according to their skills, strengths and opportunities. All Catholics, as a matter of fact all persons willing to take part in helping the needy, are welcome at the monthly

planning sessions where bureaucratic meeting procedures are replaced by casual and friendly atmosphere. On the agenda may be collecting funds for an orphanage in Estonia, bringing Christmas cheer to the shut-ins, or sorting, packing and distributing clothes donations. Aid has been made available for recipients in homeland as well as in nearby regions. Sometimes at meetings there are experts explaining, for example, how to be of help to depressed people, or other special cases. Participants may suggest other ways or people and groups needing help.

Kodasema in Estonia, a hundred year old former cloister building, owned by the Catholic church, is gradually being renovated as an operations center. Since 1996 the Caritas of Finland and the office for the collaborative development of

neighboring regions of the Foreign Ministry of Finland have supported this project.

However the Foreign Ministry has now announced that because of budgetary constraints, Caritas will not receive the 3500 euros for this project this year.

The architect, John Methuen, in his application reports that the quality of drinking water in the building is being threatened because of a leak from an old sewage pipe nearby. The architect points out that these works are necessary for health reasons.

Caritas of Finland is trying to raise funds for this project. Donations can be made to Suomen Caritas ry and deposited to Sampo (bank) account 800012-70154504, reference number 2419.

## TRIP TO LINDSBORG

There were two reasons to go to Lindsborg, Kansas this summer. One was the reunion of the Augustana Lutheran Synod (Church) which held its biennial meeting there. The other was to see the little Catholic Church that bears the proud name of St. Birgitta of Sweden.

Lindsborg is the product of a land agency that decided the Smoky Valley should become a Swedish settlement. Although there had been Swedes living in that area, it was a group of colonists who arrived in 1869 that gave this area its lasting ethos. They were led by their pastor, Olaf Olsson. Olsson was a fascinating and at times contradictory person who later became the President of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. For our purposes he is interesting because of his defense of infant baptism and the atonement in a time when these were challenged.

To understand the background of his actions, we must return to the Church of Sweden. In 1870, a Church of Sweden clergyman named P.P. Waldenstrom heard someone say that God was atoned and Waldenstrom replied "Where is it written?" He was to develop a theology in which it is not God who needs to be atoned but rather the world needs to be atoned to God. This is done not by some offering made to God but by the love of God who sent his son. Atonement is accomplished when man accepts this love. This is, of course, a replay of the theology of Abelard in the middle ages.

Very few theologians are able to write intelligently but Olsson could. His book, *Vid Korset*, (at the cross) was a defense of the traditional theology of the church. Written for laymen, I often wish that it would be more commonly read. Olsson went on to refuse the pulpit of the church in Lindsborg to a boyhood friend and a follower of Waldenstrom. This action was one of the sources of what became the Covenant Church in America. Olsson himself later was suspected of heresy and spent several years in Europe.

He wrote a description of this trip called (in Swedish) *To Rome and*

*Home Again*. The book shares the protestant anti-Catholic hysteria of the time, especially in his jeremiads over Marianism. But Olsson was an unpredictable man and towards the end of his travels he had some second thoughts when he stood on the roof of the Vatican. He wrote, "It is possible for poor sinners to find and recognize the Savior in this Church." In a more perceptive declaration he said, "We want to send our thanksgiving to the Pope from the roof of St. Peter's. We honestly thank him because he did not put apocryphal books in the New Testament. We have the same New Testament as the Catholics. So we read, pray and hope."

It occurs to me that the Swedish Lutheran pioneers faced many of the same problems as did Newman. The Biblicism of the American frontier had separated the Bible from the Church. How were they to be reunited? The ecumenical movement was largely a revivalistic movement having little or no use for the sacraments. One of the first problems the pioneers had to face was the real presence in the sacrament and the sacrament as the cause of unity in Christians. The new theories of the atonement were a by-product of dependence on emotionalism as opposed to objective dogma. Some form of order in the liturgy was a primary concern as was the preservation of tradi-

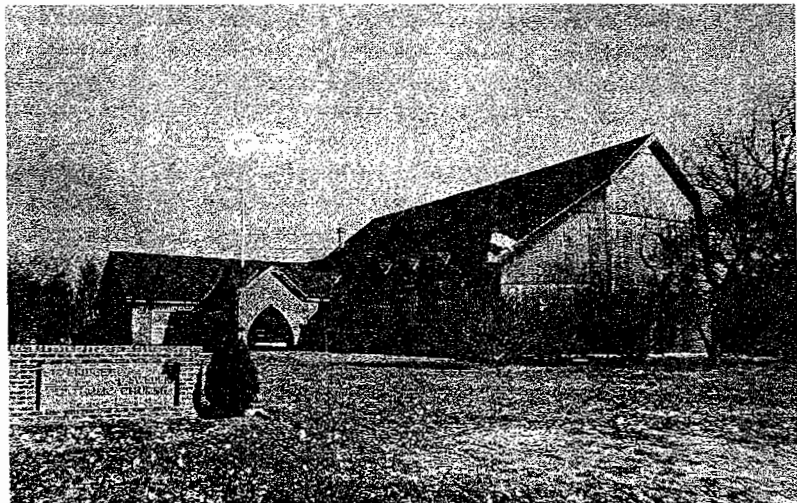
tional music in the liturgy. The answers they gave were not those of Newman but the problems were the same.

We described the beginnings of St. Birgitta of Sweden Church in last year's Bulletin. The parish church is very attractive but relatively small, seating not much over 100. At times the church is overcrowded. The parish is now beginning to plan for a new and larger church to be attached to the present complex. I owe a great deal of gratitude to various members of the Opat family who were generous hosts, chauffeurs and care givers. I am also grateful to Father Oberney, the parish priest who comes over to say Mass from his own church in McPherson.

I said Mass on Sunday and also on Midsummer Day. I also gave a talk on the Catholic Church in Sweden. Many people in this parish have Polish roots and I found myself more conscious than ever that the Church in Sweden has strong ties to Poland going back to the time of John III and his son, Sigismund.

If you ever travel through Kansas, I recommend a stop at the Swedish American village of Lindsborg. Home of Bethany College, it is a cultural center in the midst of the Great Plains.

JEH



*St. Bridget of Sweden Church, Lindsborg, Kansas*

## PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE NORDIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON MEDICAL CARE AT THE FINAL STAGES OF LIFE

Life is a precious gift. Throughout the centuries this conviction has been the inspiration for many to defend and protect the weakest members of society. This is especially the case in the field of healthcare where Christians have found a meaningful way to assist their neighbor and to bear witness to the love God has for all his people.

In the Nordic countries we have an advanced medical care system that meets our requirements for medical treatment. However the expectations of society for even better care and quality of life, as well as the astounding achievements made in the field of medical science, present us with new challenges. This is especially the case regarding medical care at the final stages of life and also regarding the issue of euthanasia. These questions are and will continue to become increasingly topical. We, the Catholic bishops of the Nordic countries, would like to shed light upon these issues based on the message of the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

In this letter we will first of all unfold and analyze the situation today in society and in healthcare. Subsequently the answers given by Revelation to the eternal questions will be presented. We will go on to develop a theological analysis of the situation by expounding the teaching of the

Church on these questions. Finally a number of suggestions will be presented, which hopefully can promote respect for the sick and the dying in our Nordic countries.

### 1. Social background

#### 1.1 Demographic development

During the last hundred years great advances have been made in improving and prolonging human life. As a result of this scientific and technical revolution, the advances made in medical science, the mastering and control of many dangerous illnesses, better hygiene and food, the average life expectancy has increased. Towards the end of the 19th century a citizen of our countries had an expected lifespan of 50 years. Today we have an average life expectancy of about 78 years, statistically among the highest in the world.

Higher standards of living have also led to lower birth rates. While fewer children are being born and individuals live longer, the populations of our societies are becoming older. The percentage of the population of the Nordic countries over the age of 65 is now 15 percent and is expected to rise continually. In fifty years as much as 45 percent of the Nordic population could be older than 65 years. Certainly, developments in medical science, especially in preventive medicine, genetics, surgery and cancer research will lead to even longer life. But since death is an inevitable fact in human life, questions regarding medical care at the final stages of life will increase in importance and topicality.

#### 1.2 The changed attitude within society towards death

During the course of history the attitude of our Nordic

societies towards death has changed. In the past death was seen as a natural part of life and always close at hand due to the risk of dying while giving birth, infant mortality, accidents at work and many epidemic illnesses. In most cases the sick were taken care of at home. They were a part of a social network that generally was responsible for human care and dignity. When people died there were rites, symbols and actions, especially funerals, that belonged to the culture. Death was a part of life and the dead were honored.

With the advances and improvements in modern medicine the moment of death is no longer seen to coincide with the moment the heart ceases to beat. Modern intensive care has made it possible to prolong life in a way that in the past has been seen as insurmountable. The process of dying has thus been prolonged and can to a great extent be controlled. In the past illnesses and diseases which led to death within a short period of time can now many times be treated. Moreover, today with the help of heart and lung machines or artificial organs life can be sustained in a mechanical way. These possibilities bring the following questions to a head: What is life? What is the meaning of suffering? What is death and when exactly does one die? Even other difficult questions are brought to the fore: Are we always obliged to sustain life as long as possible? Or is it sometimes allowed to discontinue medical treatment to allow a patient to die? Are we allowed to ease a patient's severe pain and accept that his life will thus be shortened? When intensive care was developed during the 1960's it was a clear and obvious fact that the first priority of medical care was to save life. Patients received intensive treatment with an abundance of technical apparatus that certainly sustained life but which also often entailed that a patient's spiritual and psychological needs were not seen as important. Death became institutionalized and individualized, i.e. moved from the home to the more anonymous environment of a hospital where a patient often awaited death without the presence or help of relatives. This resulted in that death, for many, became an unknown reality. Even today various studies show that only one in ten people aged twenty-five have experienced the death of someone close to them. Death is becoming an abstraction, something that does not exist and thus something we need not concern ourselves with. One speaks even about the genesis of history first free-from-death generation.. It is only when accidents and catastrophes occur that death receives greater attention.

In recent years the intensive technical treatment of the incurably sick and of dying patients, which characterized medical care at the end of the 1900's, has been questioned. We have seen that questions regarding the quality of life are just as important - and in some cases more important—for patients than access to effective medical treatment. The same studies, as mentioned above, show that an increasing

number of people die at home, in old people's homes or other specific forms of housing. The same studies show that relatively few people die alone. There is a positive and increased awareness that death is an important and difficult process in a person's life in which one needs other people's support and human warmth.

But since many elderly people live alone and death for many is a long process, these people are still very vulnerable. During the last few years it has become clear that the national health system does not always give elderly people the care they need.

### 1.3 The changed task of medical care

Modern medicine began with the Greek Hippocrates of Kos (c. 460-377 BC). Traditionally it has been distinguished by three characteristics: 1) it is free from political and religious affiliations, 2) it is founded on scientifically proven methods, 3) the work of doctors is regulated by independent professional ethics, consisting of firm obligations and prohibitions. According to Hippocratic ethics, a doctor has a personal responsibility, if possible, to cure, often to relieve but always to console his patient, but also to refrain from dangerous, harmful or lethal forms of treatment like abortion or euthanasia, even if the patient himself requests it.

Modern medical care challenges this view regarding the roll of the doctor and the purpose of medicine. The close proximity, which existed in earlier times between doctor and patient, is being in many ways replaced by a developed and sophisticated technocracy and bureaucracy. Certainly the patient generally receives appropriate care but the existential and ethical questions, which may arise in relation to his treatment, are seldom given sufficient attention. Due to the demands made for greater efficiency and the priority given to economic issues within the healthcare system medical care workers are often forced to work at a high tempo and thus find it difficult to view patients as fellow human beings. When the distance between doctor and patient increases, the different and varied fields of application given to medicine are on the increase and when the general public gains clearer insights into how the healthcare system is run, there is a risk that medical care can become an ideology, i.e. the risk that it becomes an instrument in fostering fixed individual, social or political goals.

In our multicultural context it can be difficult to agree on how we together can resolve ethical issues. However, we may never be content with accepting the lowest common denominator as a norm and delegating to each individual the right to rule over life itself. When we in our society wish to have a moral foundation, we must learn from the experience and wisdom, which are conveyed by the traditions that from the beginning contributed to strengthen and secure the fundamental values of society. Thus, this letter is not just meant for the Catholic Christians of the Nordic countries. We will also explain to other Christians and to all those of good will how our own tradition wrestles with questions of life and death and how it in theory and praxis

can contribute to defend and protect the inviolability of human life.

## 2. The testimony of the Bible

The biblical view of life has as its starting point that God created life and finds joy in it. It is this that gives life its value and dignity.

### 2.1 The Old Testament

Man is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27). But his awareness of being related to God developed rather slowly throughout the history of Israel. At the beginning of his long journey in faith, man becomes very soon aware that he is alive and that this physical existence is in itself of great dignity. In many ways the Bible speaks about the eternal value of life and of man's gratitude to God for the great gift he has been given. He rejoices that he is not dead and that he can praise God. His continued existence is seen by him as proof of God's blessing. Death entails that the service of worship which life is, is broken. He passes into a meaningless shadowy existence, Scheol, where he no longer can praise God. Therefore the psalmist cries:

*What profit would my death be, my going to the grave?  
Can dust give you praise or proclaim your truth?*

(Ps 30:10)

This insight that man is called to a life with God comes successively. If Israel fears God and keeps his laws and commandments long life is promised to coming generations (Deut 6:2). Man is exhorted to make a fundamental moral standpoint: See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil (Deut 30:15).

Life and goodness belong together. Without life there are no prerequisites for goodness and for all the other positive values of life, how unpretentious they may be. However, as we all are well aware, life is not always happiness and bliss. Due to the transitoriness of human life we come into contact with its imperfection, which is especially expressed in sickness, suffering and death. The Bible bears witness to the constant experience of the suffering person. Holy Writ does not paint a pretty picture of human existence. Instead it reminds us that misfortune indiscriminately befalls the believer as well as the non-believer, the virtuous as well as evildoers. Job, God's virtuous and faithful servant, experienced his due share of misfortune and sorrow. The Book of Job portrays suffering in a rich and succinct manner. In one passage Job says:

*Why is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they find the grave? Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, whom God has hedged in? For my sighing comes as my bread, and my*

groanings are poured out like water. For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest; but trouble comes.

(Job 3:20-26)

Even in the abyss of suffering, man can find God. In his vulnerability he becomes aware that he cannot save himself. He needs help from somewhere else. Slowly Israel deepens her insight that the covenant she entered into with the Lord is not meant to secure the people's political success. Instead Israel is to bear witness to salvation in a deeper way for other lands and peoples. Through the prophets the people of God learn to understand that temporary setbacks, suffering and even death do not mean that God has abandoned them. God, who is almighty and merciful, will, in the end, defeat death. Yes, there is hope. Nothing is lost in God's plan of salvation. Not even death is an obstacle for God. Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For thy

dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall (Is 26:19).

## 2.2 The New Testament

Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, fulfills God's promise of a new creation. He is truly the One who is life itself and the light of all men (Joh 1:4). By becoming man God wished to show us how our lives should be. When Jesus Christ dies and rises again death is annihilated and through baptism we are partakers in this mystery and are part of his life.

In Christ we are no longer subject to the realms of death. During his earthly existence Jesus defended and supported life in many ways. He heals the sick, he forgives sinners, he consoles the grieved and even gives life to many who have died. Furthermore, he teaches his disciples to dissociate themselves from violence and to treat all people equally, no matter their origin, faith or way of life. He is always in the service of life and shows in his actions what he promised in words: he has come that we may have

## REMEMBERING ALESSIO BATTILANA 1930 - 2001

To me he was a gifted, hard-driving, good family father, dear brother and friend.

He will be missed by his devoted wife Anja, their three children, as well as brother Paolo and his family in Turku.

I remember the day he was born. Father kept checking his watch and Paolo, Helena, Aurelio and I were all waiting for mother, who finally arrived with the new bundle. I remember the many times mother took us to the park by the Aura-river when we were children. Father had just opened his first ice cream parlor in Turku. Later he had a restaurant. The house we used to live in is now protected as a historical landmark.

The time came when we had to leave home for school. We attended a Catholic boarding school in Helsinki. I was five years older than Alessio. Mother died in 1939 and left a big gap in our lives. We were at school, but not for long, because then the Winter War broke out. The Dutch sisters that cared for us left for Holland, and the school was closed. We returned to Turku. Alessio was immediately sent to the islands where our mother was born to stay with aunt Alma and her family. Later father and Helena-sister joined

them to escape the war. Paolo and I stayed in Turku. Paolo was working for Hotel Seurahuone, and I went to work for Hotel Maakunta until the bombing started again. At one point I was buried under broken glass. After that incident Paolo demanded that it was time for me too to go to Aunt Alma's. There we used to ski with Alessio. We had snow fatigues made of sheets. When we heard the enemy planes we hid under the pine trees and I held Alessio in my arms to comfort him, and also myself.

We went back to Turku when peace came, but that did not last very long. I was working for a German firm as a business correspondent. The bombings started again and I could not bear the agony. I quit the job and took another as an accountant for a bicycle firm.

After the war ended Alessio returned to Helsinki, but dropped out of school, and went to work for Kesko. There he stayed all of his working life, and was eventually promoted and became a TV-director. I invited Alessio to Italy when I was studying there and got him into filming for the RAI-TV in Milano. He was filming the races in Monza. Kesko they gave him his own movie theater. His first color film for advertising was made with his wife and

a friend.

When Alessio retired he and his wife stayed with me in New York and the Catskills for three weeks. That was the last time I saw him. I can no longer travel to Finland, the trip is too exhausting, but we exchange letters with Alessio's wife and daughter.

The church was a familiar place for Alessio and so was Stella Maris - for me also a place of many memories. I thank God for being brought up in the care of nuns and priests. Sofia was the name of the best loved Sister. And then there was brother Erik. They were both Finns who had converted to Catholicism. I remember tugging Sister Sofia's skirt crying about something or other little matter, and her comforting me by saying: "Save your tears, you will need them out in the world."

When Alessio met old friends at Stella Maris last summer, I remembered many of them too. Alessio and Anja reached their golden anniversary, which was celebrated at their home in Espoo. There their children grew up and went to school. Now they return there with their families to celebrate Christmas.

— Olavi Battilana

life, and have it more abundantly (Joh 10:10).

Even though Jesus was God, he does not act as if he were superior, but as a fellow human being. He can rid the world of calamity, illness and death but, instead, he subjects himself to these conditions in order to share our humanity. As it is written about Christ in the letter to the Hebrews: For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted (Heb 2:18). By his suffering and death he voluntarily took upon himself the whole of humanity's individual and collective failures and weaknesses. On the Cross, Jesus came to know man's experience of hopelessness when he exclaimed: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (cf Ps 22:2; Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34). He is there with all those who suffer. The Cross reveals God's love and care. Hopelessness and death do not have the last word. By his resurrection on the third day Jesus unveiled for us the victory of life and the meaning and goal of human life. Man is not meant for the grave but called to share in the glory of God for all eternity.

Jesus wanted to continue his work on earth. Therefore he called his disciples and gave them the role of leadership among believers. Jesus gave them this exhortation: Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay (Matt 10:8). In the Acts of the Apostles we read how the disciples after Jesus' death and resurrection, heal the sick as a sign of salvation through him.

Man is not at the mercy of blind fate, but is called to enter into a new relationship with God where bodily and spiritual health is a sign of the coming of the kingdom of God. In Christ the whole of creation finds itself in a state of transformation where death and corruption constantly are pushed aside in order to make room for a new creation. Therefore Paul writes: For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? (1 Cor 15:53-55). In summary: the Bible teaches us that life is something good and desirable that God has given to us as a gift and over which he alone rules. Human life is thus inviolable. At the same time we also learn to hope for something better that will come. We are called to eternal life. Our biological existence here on earth is thus not an absolute good. Life need not be prolonged at all costs and it can be given as a gift for the benefit of others. Jesus cured many but he himself died for us on the Cross in order to win for us the Kingdom of God and to prepare a place for us in the embrace of the Father. The disciples continue in the name of Christ to assist the sick and the weak but they themselves are prepared to die in order to bear witness to life after death.

### 3. The Christian view of medical care

The Church has always preached about works of mercy as a way for the faithful to imitate Christ and to show Christian love in concrete actions. By giving food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, dwelling to the stranger and care to the sick we bear witness, just as the first Christians did, that God loves all people and that his kingdom is among us. But since we meet Christ in the needy and the suffering, we who help are not better than those who receive help. He who takes care of a fellow human being is a disciple of Christ who said: I was sick and you visited me (Matt 25:36).

Care of the sick must therefore be seen as a meeting of equal persons where both he who administers care and he who receives care enrich each other. In this meeting spontaneous reactions arise which we all recognize as an expression of our natural tendency to help people in need and our natural reaction to trust the sense of responsibility of other people and their professional competence. When these positive and spontaneous reactions or manifestations of life take place mutual trust and confidence between the people concerned arise and it is this which is the foundation of medical care.

#### 3.1 The dignity of the patient

A patient may never be seen only as a case or be reduced to a body that must be treated. Because every individual has an inherent dignity, a patient is first of all a fellow human being. Therefore the patient, if it is possible, or his relations, must be informed and consulted before any treatment involving him commences or is discontinued and also when medical tests are to be taken. A patient must be seen as the vulnerable human being he is and thus receive help in the difficult situation in which he finds himself when he becomes seriously ill. Medical treatment must be seen from an holistic perspective which embraces the personal needs of the patient.

#### 3.2 The dignity and vocation of medical care workers

Doctors and nurses may never be regarded only as a means to be used by someone else. They are not just professional and skilled workers placed at the disposal of society or individual patients. According to the Christian position these people have a special vocation and are entrusted with the great responsibility of caring for ill people. Included in this responsibility is an ethical form well tried by experience - the Hippocratic tradition - that strengthens them in their commitment to the service of human life. This ethical tradition within the medical profession must be respected. Doctors and nurses have a grave and clear obligation to oppose any actions that are contrary to the ethical tradition within medical care by conscientious objection, especially abortion and euthanasia. We appreciate the initiatives which have been taken in many of our dioceses to found associations and networks of Catholic doctors. These associations and networks can give our doctors an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences, to gain further education in ethics and to enter more deeply into their Christian

identity in the service of life.

### 3.3 Other concerned parties

Finally, it is part of the Christian position regarding medical care to also take into consideration any other concerned parties. Medical care is not an isolated reality that only touches the life of the patient and the medical staff. It is also a part of a greater context. After the patient himself, those who bear the main responsibility for the well being of the patient are his relatives. It is important that these people are given the opportunity to get all necessary help from society when they need it in order to care for their relative at home. If this is not possible, then hospitals and medical care establishments must implement measures allowing relatives the opportunity of visiting as often as is possible for them and, if they so wish, allowing them to actively partake in the medical care given to the patient.

Everything that takes place in our hospitals and medical care establishments also concerns many other people, both directly and indirectly. For example, the general public's trust and confidence in medical care are jeopardized when immoral treatments are accepted and if one cannot trust that doctors and nurses always put the well being of the patient first. It is also important to be reminded that the resources given to medical care are limited and that there are also other areas which are of importance for the com-

mon good of society, e.g. schools, social work, aid to developing countries, research, culture, care of the handicapped and care of the elderly. Health must, therefore, be seen as one of the many values that society must promote. It is not the only one.

One must ask oneself if it is acceptable from a Christian perspective that more and more money is invested in order to meet our growing demands for better health and quality of life when other people in our world lack even the most basic necessities of life. The Church presupposes a holistic view regarding medical care. One should not only care for the patient's physical well being but also his psychological and spiritual needs. Man is not just a body and does not live on bread alone (Matt 4:4). Man is a person. Freedom and self fulfillment are values that must be protected. This implies that neither patient nor doctor and medical care workers are to be subjected to political pressure or undue scientific ambitions. They may not be lead into acting unethically by subjecting either the sick or the healthy to oppression. One has always to view the issue of health from a perspective that proceeds from respect for and love of every human being.

### 4. Questions in connection to medical care at the final stages of life

According to the Christian faith death is not the end of

## AHVENANMAA/ÅLAND - THE REAL DIASPORA

There are about 22 partially or fully Catholic families in Ahvenanmaa (Åland) with a total of 41 congregational members. A great variety of nationalities are represented: native Vietnamese, Filipinos, Polish, American, German, Austrian, Norwegian, Ecuadorian, Venezuelan and Irish. At least one Finnish member also lives on the islands.

Initially the word diaspora meant a Christian congregation that existed like an island in the sea of pagans. If taken in its most limited sense all of the Catholics in Finland would be living in a diaspora, but if understood in its wider, more ecumenical sense, then we are not in a diaspora since Finland is a Christian country.

Ahvenanmaa is part of the Turku (Åbo) parish of St. Birgitta and Blessed Hemming. Their trip to their church is so long and difficult that it is presumed they would not be able to attend ser-

vices, or participate in the life of the congregation in other ways. Therefore a priest of the parish visits Ahvenanmaa, or more specifically Maarianhamina (Mariehamn), approximately every six weeks to celebrate holy Mass. In this manner even the most distant members of the congregation have an opportunity for confession, participation in Mass and communion, and meeting with a Catholic priest.

Father Zenon Strykowski SCJ made that trip in February. The trip takes about 5 hours by boat. The church, St. Mårtens, is about half an hour's drive from the harbor. Up till the 1950's and 60's the place was still called Sabbatbrott. Now there is a new beautiful church. The church building is actually a multi-activity center. There is an assembly room, sacristy, kitchen and club rooms, one also for children.

There are hardly any amenities for the visiting priest. Father Zenon arrived

after midnight and had to spend the rest of the night in the cold cellar of the church on a sofa

The church nave is light and spacious. The altar is situated so that the priest faces the congregation as is now customary in the Catholic Church. There is space in the church for about 150 people. The mass is said in Swedish. Seventeen persons attended the mass with Father Zenon, 10 of them children. Even in Ahvenanmaa it is not customary to see as many children in the Lutheran Church, but Catholic families there consider it important to bring their children to mass.

Perhaps in fifty years or so the Catholics of Ahvenanmaa will have their own parish, their own church, and the most fitting name for that parish would be the parish of St. Ansgar, after the apostle for the north.

Nils-Åke Toivonen.

existence but a transition to a new form of life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (Joh 3:16). Therefore all those who die in Christ can look forward to seeing God face to face. None the less the process of dying, just as the process of being born, can be very painful. The dying person can experience fear and anxiety since he is faced with an unknown reality and begins to lose his ability to breathe, to perceive and to exist in space and time. Therefore it is important that a dying person is surrounded by human warmth and care, that he is given all necessary spiritual guidance and comfort and has qualified medical treatment at hand, especially for the alleviation of pain. In the Sacrament of the Sick the Church offers unsurpassed grace and comfort. This sacrament is not only meant for those who are at the brink of death but can also be received by those who are seriously ill, or those who feel weak due to the advancement of years. Its principal grace is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age; (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1520). It is important to give the sick members of our parishes the possibility of receiving the sacraments of reconciliation, communion and anointing of the sick. The responsibility of spiritually accompanying and comforting the dying is not just that of the priest. Relatives, friends, medical staff and other fellow human beings can by their very presence at the side of the sick and, e.g. reading passages from Sacred Scripture, be a source of great comfort.

#### 4.1 Alleviation of pain

Human life is transitory and therefore, unavoidably, involves a certain amount of pain and suffering. God does not desire that we should suffer; therefore we are not to consciously look for physical or psychological trials. None the less, when such trials occur they are given meaning in the life of a Christian. Through our trials we can be united with Christ who suffered for us and who in a mysterious way still suffers together with his Church. Therefore the apostle Paul could write: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church (Col 1:24). He who suffers can thus offer up his discomfort or afflictions for the sake of someone else and by his prayers be united with and pray for other people who are being tested. Therefore a patient can of his own accord refrain from accepting treatment for the alleviation of pain. However one may never come to the conclusion that every ill patient would make this choice. Severe pain can weaken a person's courage, weaken his life of prayer and in other ways be an obstacle in receiving appropriate care at the final stages of life. Therefore the Church teaches that doctors are to provide a high standard of treatment for the alleviation of pain and assume that patients who cannot give their consent would request this treatment. It is true that treatment of patients with analgesic drugs can in rare

cases shorten their lives. This risk can be tolerated under the condition that the prescribed doses are within the limits for what is seen as a high standard of medical praxis and that the intention is no other than the alleviation of pain.

We hereby wish to emphasize the importance of a high standard of palliative care at the final stages of life. This care, which aims to alleviate the pains of illness and to integrate the patient's physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs, ought to be an obvious element in medical treatment, given to all those who need it, started at the appropriate time and pursued until the patient passes away. No patient who suffers from an incurable illness is to be seen as fully treated from a medical point of view.

#### 4.2 Termination of intensive medical treatment

There are other situations where a patient receives intensive care and his life is maintained mechanically, e.g. respirators. The question then arises if it is morally acceptable to discontinue intensive treatment and allow the patient to die if his health cannot be restored.

According to the tradition and teaching of the Church, a balance must always be achieved between the proposed method of treatment and its benefits and the possible negative consequences, including all medical risks, pain or fear. According to this teaching a patient is in principle obliged to allow himself be receive treatment and a doctor obliged to provide the treatment - if the treatment has a reasonable chance of restoring the patient's health and does not entail all to many negative factors. However a doctor is not simply morally obliged to begin or continue treatment if the medical benefits are negligible in proportion to other pains or difficulties, and if therapy only prolongs the process of death. The decision to possibly terminate a life sustaining treatment obviously must be taken only after consultation with the patient, with his relations if he is not conscious and if necessary with other specialists. Irrespective of the choice made, the regular care of the patient must continue. To terminate medical treatment in these or similar cases is not a form of passive euthanasia or mercy killing.

#### 4.3 Euthanasia

Even when a patient is irrevocably in the process of dying and there is no possibility of saving his life, a doctor is the protector and servant of life. This also applies to those close to the patient. However, there are many voices in society which advocate that a doctor ought to be allowed to intentionally kill a patient if the patient requests it or gives his permission.

In the strict sense of the word, euthanasia means an action or omission which of itself and by intention causes death, with the purpose of eliminating all suffering. Euthanasia's terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used. A request for mercy killing is often grounded in the need for dialogue, in depression, in a state of anxiety when faced with death or the fear of being an overwhelming encumbrance to the medical system or a burden for relatives. These fears and

apprehensions must naturally be taken seriously. Medical care workers must therefore be close to the suffering patient and by loving care give support both to the patient himself and his family. The position of palliative care must therefore be strengthened so that medical care workers become more qualified in this field and thus be of benefit to the patient. However, not all patients who need treatment for the alleviation of pain receive it and, unfortunately, are not always received in an appropriate manner. Compared to other more prestigious medical fields, e.g. genetics or surgery, palliative care is still given low priority and neglected. Politicians, medical care workers and relatives have thus an important task to make sure that in many different ways the final stages of life also become a meaningful period in the life of each person. Studies have also confirmed that which medical care workers, pastors of souls and relatives already ascertained: the final stages of life can also be a time full of unexpected possibilities, and even become a source of joy both for the terminally ill patient and those close to him.

In the ethical debate it is often argued that euthanasia should be allowed since every person has the right to decide over his own body and his own life. Receiving help to commit suicide or to kill another human being is, however, not a personal matter or private affair. Man is a social being who is part of a community. What we do with our bodies and our lives concerns others. Other people also need to be protected. Euthanasia is an immoral action because it violates the bodily integrity of its victims, it violates the person who has to perform this deed and violates other people especially the handicapped, who despite difficult trials in life wish to continue living a worthy life. These people, who often feel extremely vulnerable in the debate on euthanasia, need the support of society by, among things, hearing it clearly proclaimed that life is always inviolable and worthy to be lived, despite one's medical condition or supposed social advantage. Owing to all these reasons it is important that human life is protected right up to the moment of death and that euthanasia is not allowed by law.

Besides the fact that euthanasia is contrary to the ethics of medical care workers, it does not take the possibilities of palliative care into consideration and that violating the integrity of the human person is also a serious sin against God who has commanded us not to kill (Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17). Therefore Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, confirms, In harmony with the Magisterium of my Predecessors and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person;

#### 4.4 Terminal sedation

Lately in our Nordic countries a new form of euthanasia is being discussed. The term "terminal sedation" is used to describe an action that involves a doctor anaesthe-

tizing a dying patient and discontinuing all medical treatment until death occurs. In these cases death usually occurs within a few days and up to a week after being anaesthetized. Advocates of this action maintain that it is an acceptable and legal form of euthanasia because it contains two elements that are allowed today: the administering of an anaesthetic and the termination of treatment.

Since the intention and purpose of this action is to kill the patient, terminal sedation should be seen as a regular form of euthanasia and thus forbidden. The distinguishing factor between this method and other methods where a patient's life is intentionally brought to a close, is the instruments that are used. Terminal sedation is in itself also problematic and uncertain. Medical praxis has shown that patients can experience pain and discomfort even when anaesthetized. In a situation like this terminal sedation would irrevocably deprive the patient of the possibility of awaking and requesting help. To deny a patient the possibility of communicating with those around him in such a definitive way, and possibly changing his opinion on how he should be treated, is seriously unethical.

#### 4.5 Donation of organs, tissue and cells

From a biological point of view death is not an instantaneous event but more or less a prolonged process in which the unitary and integrated functions of the body gradually decline. In the past the moment of death was normally linked to the moment the heart ceased to beat. The possibility of sustaining a person's blood circulation using artificial means has made this assumption problematic and brought to the fore the insight that a person's identity is foremost connected to his potential or his actual possibility of being self-aware, of reflecting and of communicating with others. When this faculty is irrevocably lost (what is usually termed brain death) a person can also be regarded as dead. The Church does not use medical criteria to define death, but through theological and philosophical reasoning has arrived at the same conclusion as medical science, which implies that she implicitly accepts the so called brain death criterion. The Church's competence lies in theology and philosophy. Therefore the Holy Father said recently 'In this regard, it is helpful to recall that the death of the person is a single event, consisting in the total disintegration of that unitary and integrated whole that is the personal self. It results from the separation of the life-principle (or soul) from the corporal reality of the person.'

These theoretical questions are of great relevance today due to the possibilities we have of, among other things, being able to make use of the organs, tissues and cells of a deceased person and transplanting them to order to help seriously ill people. With the great shortage of donated organs etc. which we have today in the Nordic Countries, this possibility of saving other peoples' lives, by donating our bodies after death, should be welcomed. The donation of an organ can be a person's last free act of love on earth.

Therefore we encourage all Catholics in our dioceses to promote the culture of life by taking a definite position in this important question.

The donation of an organ should even be seen within the field of medical care as a free act of love that embraces the whole person. Therefore the consent to be an organ donor is to be confirmed clearly with the help of a high standard of medical praxis before any surgical act on the dead body takes place. It is also important that the body of the deceased donor is treated with respect.

## 5. The contribution of the Church to medical care in the Nordic Countries

Since the time when the Nordic countries became Christian, the Church has been an important social figure in society and has always assisted the poor, the sick, prisoners and other marginalized people. This is especially the case with religious orders of sisters who have conveyed the care of the Church to the sick and weak here in the North.

### 5.1 Catholic medical care in the Nordic Region

After the reformation, the Catholic Church returned to the Nordic countries during the 19th and 20th centuries. Gradually it made itself known in different areas of society. This is seen most clearly when the Church manifested itself through its special work for the sick and the elderly. Up to our own time religious congregations of sisters and brothers have taken upon themselves the responsibility of looking after seriously ill people and the dying by giving them security and comfort. In many ways they have worked to relieve their pains and helped them to bear their fear and anguish. Moreover they have tried to help patients be reconciled to God by receiving the sacraments: Confession, Holy Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick. Today it is not usually religious sisters and brothers who exercise this apostolate, but individual catholic doctors and nurses in public hospitals and medical care establishments. Together with other people of good will they engage themselves in giving love and aid to the sick and the dying so that they with dignity can enter into eternal life.

### 5.2. New initiatives

In order to help terminally ill people be treated with care and respect for God as the Lord of Life, several houses for hospice care have been established under Catholic and ecumenical management.

## 6. Summary

In this pastoral letter we the bishops of the Nordic countries, have attempted to draw attention to certain questions asked today in relation to medical care at the final stages of life. These questions have been elucidated by analyzing the situation today with the help of the testimony of revelation and the teaching of the Church, by explaining



*Hubertus Brandenburg, Bishop emeritus of Stockholm, one of the signatories of the letter.*

the principles that are the foundation of Catholic philosophy regarding medical care and finally to apply these principles to concrete questions. These principles have their starting point in the experience of our relationship with God throughout history and the knowledge of the Gospel of the salvation of man in Christ Jesus. However, our philosophy regarding medical care has also its starting point in the convictions we share with many other people of good will. Among these common convictions, we can mention respect for the inviolability of human life and the equality of all human beings, our special responsibility for the weakest members of society and respect for the integrity of the medical profession.

Many of these values today are being questioned by short sighted scientific and political interests and also current ideas that isolate the human person from community. As we called attention to earlier, the danger with this type of individualistic mentality, which among other things asserts the right to euthanasia, is that other concerned parties are forgotten. The request for euthanasia must be taken seriously; however not by allowing the patient to be killed but by attending to him in the process of dying until his life comes to an end in a natural way and commending it into the hands of God.

Death is a natural occurrence, which in its own time, must be accepted by all and which ultimately is the door-

way into a new life with God. But as long as we live it is life itself, a wonderful gift from God, that we are called to serve, especially among our seriously ill brothers and sisters.

Together with Pope John Paul II, we reject a culture of death. We respond to his call for a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life. We hope that this letter will help to contribute in promoting a culture of life in the Nordic Countries. But above all we hope that it will promote respect for the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, redeemed in Christ and called to eternal life.

### Exhortations and suggestions

1. We urgently request the elected members of our parliaments and our governments to further develop palliative care in our Nordic Countries. The terminally ill and the dying need more help and support at the final stages of life. According to our position, euthanasia is an unacceptable alternative which undermines the importance of palliative care and jeopardizes human dignity. No person should ever be given the possibility of taking the life of an innocent fellow human being. Therefore euthanasia should continue to be forbidden.

2. We request all the Catholic Christians in the Nordic Countries to be especially attentive to the situation of the sick in our churches. Therefore we suggest that in every parish, according to their needs and their possibilities, draw up a pastoral plan so that the elderly and the sick receive regular visits and the possibility of receiving communion if they cannot come to church. This Apostolate of Visitation can if needed be exercised by trained ministers of the Eucharist who have been appointed thereto by the bishop.

3. We exhort all parish priests to regularly provide the Sacrament of the Sick in their respective parishes. We suggest that the sacrament be celebrated communally, appropriately within the celebration of the Eucharist in order to emphasize the communal bond among and with the sick.

4. We encourage Catholic teachers, nurses and pastors of souls to receive further education in palliative care and to

be aware of the special medical and spiritual needs of the dying. We welcome also private initiatives to found houses for hospice care under Christian management.

5. We exhort all our fellow Christian brothers and sisters and all people of good will to actively promote respect for life and actively partake in the general debate and in democratic processes so that the inviolability of human life will increasingly become more respected in our society.

+ Gerhard Schwenzer,  
Bishop of Oslo  
Chairman of the Nordic Bishops' Conference

+ Anders Arborelius  
Bishop of Stockholm  
Deputy chairman of the Nordic Bishop's Conference

+ Czeslaw Kozon  
Bishop of Copenhagen

+ Johannes B.M. Gijzen  
Bishop of Reykjavik

+ Józef Wróbel  
Bishop of Helsinki

+ Gerhard Goebel  
Bishop-Prelate of Tromsø

+ Georg Müller  
Bishop-Prelate of Trondheim

+ William Kenney  
Auxiliary bishop of Stockholm

+ Hans Martensen  
Bishop emeritus of Copenhagen

+ Hubertus Brandenburg  
Bishop emeritus of Stockholm

Help the Catholics of Scandinavia!

Leave a bequest to the Saint Ansgar's League in your will,  
or donate cash and securities now.

For information on ways to structure your gift,  
call Viggo Rambusch at (212) 675-0400

## IN THE SPIRIT OF HESYCHASM

The idea of hesychasm (quietism) comes from a Greek word, *hesychia*, meaning rest and silence. Turning inward was indeed the correct defining emblem of the hesychasm movement, which spread during the fifteenth century as the last manifestation of the strength of Byzantium.

More than anything else this religious fervor gained historical significance because it expanded in Russia, putting its mark on Rublev and other great icon painters. The same spiritual resources helped the church of Russia to overcome both Mongols

and Marxists. Jesus-prayer (Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me) as its secret weapon has overcome deadly pitfalls, one after another.

The current renaissance of Orthodox monastic life, from Optina Pustys to Athos, is for the greater part accomplished by hesychasm, almost as if an ages old well had reopened making the earth green again.

Nobody knows where Russia outside of its cloisters will be going. Rainer Maria Rilke has eloquently spoken of the "last and most secret

chamber of the heart of God". But notions such as "Holy Russia" and the "Idea of Russia" easily become empty word clatter. In his famous letter to Gogol, Vissarion Belinski angrily opposes the notion that the Russians would be the most religious nation of the world. On the contrary, they are all born atheists incapable of any kind of mystical ecstasy!

Ever since the times of Byzantium a special Achilles heel of Orthodoxy has been the persistent temptation to please the state, to let the spiritual and earthly powers merge.



*An early St. Ansgar Christmas party. Harald Rambusch is making glögg. The party is held at the old Rambusch building. Can anyone identify the other celebrators or the year the picture was taken?*

The struggles for power between popes and emperors have very few counterparts in the East. Quite the opposite, the church was sadly dependent on the support of the police to stop the schism of the eighteenth century, and Peter the Great wasted no time to make the church a government office among other offices.

In the villages the priests were seen acting as a kind of agents of the tsars ready to make noises immediately if they saw something suspicious - with disastrous effects to their moral authority.

Then followed the Red terror years and everything changed. The former favorites of the royal court and the army became a pariah class convicted to a shadow life far away in the Soviet periphery. However, against all expectations the demoting released hidden sources of energy in the faithful; they gained strength exactly because their earthly burdens had been torn away from them. Their perseverance is one of the great miracles of our time.

But what does the Orthodox Church today intend to do with this very dearly acquired spiritual capital? In the Russia of the new millennium religion is maybe the only common denominator of a nation shattered in pieces to its very ground. But there is a threat in this, too. The more clearly Orthodoxy identifies with the people and the state the greater becomes the risk that it starts to walk in the ways of the new caste of lords. Serbia is a ready example. Putin, ringing the bells of Valamo, symbolizes not only Russia that again dares to acknowledge its religious inheritance, he also represents the will of the leader which, in the history of Russia, always is evil-boding.

However, in this situation the value of the hesychasm tradition should not be overlooked regardless of how much we may criticize its

lack of societal readiness. For people even in the East who live in the ever increasing grip of technologically and commercially driven values, in the midst of constant media cacophony, quietude as represented by Gregory Palamas may become an invaluable road to inner freedom. It is a quietude that has left words behind, these words, that our era has fundamentally tainted and falsified.

Interpreting the mystery is left open in the spirit that we can find already evident in the 4th century Gregory of Nyssa, but that we in modern times also recognize in a philosopher such as Wittgenstein. "For what we seek," says Gregory, "is beyond all knowledge, completely separated from us by the darkness of fathomlessness".

It is easy for us nowadays to convince ourselves that the newest new is the best. Churches, too, fall victim to this trap and let the same kind of consumer thinking lead to their "renewals". But the more feverishly the fashions change and the isms spin around the stronger becomes our longing for continuity, and stability as a human and religious value becomes ever more invaluable. And in this lies the greatest test especially for cult and liturgical life. In order to expand inward the Europe of tomorrow must also fully accept Orthodox spirituality.



The Mother of God of Vladimir painted in 2000 at the Carmel in Tromsø.

which via Byzantium already has its roots deeply in the soil of Europe. Our continent is well equipped toward the future only when East and West are allowed to mutually enrich each other.

*From a speech given by Johannes Salminen at the Jubileum Seminar of the Orthodox Cultural Foundation Sept. 28, 2001. Edited by Rauno Ekholm.*

## SCANDINAVIA-2002

It was a warm Easter in New York, a good clear day for flying and, after saying an early Mass, I made my way to Newark. Why New York has such primitive connections to its airports is a long story. It is aggravated when one comes, for example, to Copenhagen and finds the train in the basement of the airport that takes you into the heart of the city.

I am grateful to Bishop Kozon for his hospitality at several dinners. We also had a chance to review some of the conditions in the Diocese. Denmark has had a priest shortage for some time. There are priest candidates now and there is also a seminary, *Redemptoris mater*, that is training men for work in Denmark. It was my good fortune that Father Lars Messerschmidt, was able to join us at this time.

The Chancery of the Diocese is on Bredgade and across the street is the Cathedral. It is located on what were the grounds of the Austrian embassy. When it was built, Catholic Churches were not allowed in Denmark. The parish priest, Fr. Lars Timmermann joined us for lunch. He also showed me the Cathedral renovations. The most important of these is a new tabernacle that is located to the right of the chancel and complements in form the pulpit. We then went to the cathedral museum. The Cathedral owns a number of treasures including old chasubles. One of them it is claimed is partly the work of the Empress Maria Theresa. Fr. Timmermann told me of his boy-

hood church in Germany. It was "renovated" in the disastrous way Catholic churches have been re-touched. It had a glorious window and when it was destroyed, he managed to save a fragment of it that he showed me.

I had heard of the diocesan library, Saint Andrew, which is located in the area of the theological faculty of the University. It is an unbelievable treasury of books and printed materials with its own librarian, Fr. Robert Showers, and an assistant. It is an unbelievably fine resource and is widely used. While we try not to feature commercial establishments, I think the bookstore, Bethesda, deserves notice as it is part of an inner mission establishment of the Lutheran Church. Its basement holds one of the best collections of used theological books that I have ever

Fr. Showers and I then took the train to Roskilde where the Franciscan Conventuals are in charge of St. Laurence Church. Denmark is fortunate in the quality of churches that were built in the early years of the return of the church to Denmark and St. Laurence is an attractive romanesque building. As these brothers are American, their work has a special importance for our readers. I was happy to share in a meal of Easter leftovers and then to attend a parish council meeting which was held at Ledreborg.

This palace is well worth a visit by our readers and it is open to the public in the summer months. The buildings date from the eighteenth century and were the work of Denmark's greatest architects, J.C. Krieger and L. de Thurah. It is presently owned by



*The American Franciscans at Roskilde.*

seen.

a daughter of Count Knud Hol-



*The Saints being expelled from the Church of St. Mary in Helsingborg. A painting by Baroness von Trapp.*

stein Ledreborg, Silvia Munro.. The main house had not been lived in for some years and the Munro family has devoted a good deal of attention to restoring the houses and grounds. The house contains a fine collection of paintings and tapestries and also much of the original furniture.

Of particular interest is the baroque chapel. It had originally been used by the State Church but in 1910 it became a Catholic Chapel. A member of the family, Count J.L. Holstein-Ledreborg was serving as Danish Prime

Minister and he asked the king if he would consent to this change. The king told him that he was prime minister and could do whatever he chose to do. I am inclined to think that this is the only protestant property in all of Scandinavia that is now owned by Catholics. (An exception is some of the ground in Vadstena that once formed part of the Convent property.) As in many protestant churches of that time, the pulpit is placed over the altar. There is a very fine carved baptismal font. An angel is depicted holding a sil-

ver charger.

Roskilde has the problem common to many Scandinavian churches. Its congregation is too small to support financially the work it is called to do. I never visit Scandinavia without wishing that there was a way for Americans to better support the work in Northern Europe.

I decided to make Helsingborg my first Swedish stop. It is truly a beautiful city. At the reformation in Denmark, only one church was allowed to remain in any city. In Helsingborg that was St. Mary. Later, it had the distinction of having Buxtehude as its organist. Helsingborg was the home of Gisela Trapp. She led the movement to save the buildings of the convent of Vadstena and also was a noted painter. One of her paintings shows the reformers standing at the door of the Maria Church banishing the saints who can be seen weeping as they leave their home. A new arts center is under construction and it should furnish a worthy home for the fine collection of art in that city.

The beloved bishop, Hubertus Brandenburg lives in Helsingborg. He has a small house in the senior housing surrounding the Catholic church. Few parishes anywhere have a complex of buildings to compete with this church. Much of the money for this project also came from Baroness von Trapp. The Bishop injured his jaw some time ago and it still had not properly healed when I visited him. Nevertheless we had long and interesting talks about his years in Sweden. He



*The Ordination in The Carmel at Glumslöv*

was also very concerned about the American priest problem and could not remember any such problems in his years in the German army or in Sweden. It was good to see the priests and sisters presently working in the church. Some few of them were there from my visit of years ago. The Church was pleasantly full and there were Masses to be held that day. A lovely coffee hour and also a pleasant dinner with the staff and the Bishop.

On Saturday Bishop Brandenburg drove me to the Carmelite Sisters Chapel at Glumslöv. Br. Johannes Maria Störksen was ordained as a Deacon. The convent has been added on to as the number of sisters has grown. Bishop Anders was the Ordainer, a Carmelite among his own. The growth of the enclosed Carmelite sisters in Scandinavia is a wonderful sign of God's grace.

Then it was on to Jonsered near Gothenburg where I was the guest of the TOR Franciscans. An American priest, Frans-Eric Larson, is "föreståndare" of a wonderful group of friars. The brothers live in a house once belonging to the superintendent of a factory. It is surrounded by the company houses that form a very pleasant compound.

One day Fr. Frans drove me to the remains of the ancient Swedish port of Lodöse. This was for a long time Sweden's only port on the North Sea. And today it is the home of an important museum of medieval antiquities. The work of excavation is still in progress. It was at Lödöse that King Magnus granted Birgitta the old palace at Vadstena which she was to "humble" and convert into a convent.

Another day I went to see Christ the King Church in Goth-

enburg. It is pleasant to say that the church is much improved since my last visit. The walls are painted a warm color, the seating in the chancel has been removed as has the strange railing before the altar. In its place the steps to the chancel present a worthy appearance. The same may be said of the placement of statues and tabernacle. Father Göran Degen showed me some of the changes that have been made. A fine Catholic book store now faces the plaza. There is also a cafeteria. The school that once used much of this space is thriving in its new setting. Regrettably, the School Sisters have now left Sweden.

I think I should add to this picture that Scandinavia in the spring is much more welcoming than is commonly supposed. Flowers were blooming everywhere, domestic and wild. The weather was not much different than it is in New York at that time of year and it is possible to visit museums and other public spaces without the hordes of summer tourists. When I returned home, I learned that our nearby family farm was now owned by a distant cousin. He had gotten my name from Lars Hallberg (no relation) whose name sometimes appears on these pages. Another reason for a trip to Sweden. **JEH**

— JEH

## NEWS FROM SCANDANAVIA

## NEWS FROM DENMARK

The Catholic Church in Denmark faced a large deficit this year. As the fiscal needs increased, income has not. Maintaining priestly salaries and living arrangements takes up a good deal of the budgeted amounts. Bishop Kozon inaugurated a campaign to improve giving and by January the situation had improved as well as a seeming change in thinking about supporting the church. A related problem is that all new immigrants are registered in the state church. Many of them pay their "church tax" to the State Church. The Council of Europe also recommends State support to other religious groups in Denmark. Although a number of efforts were made to improve the financial situation, at the end of the year a financial short fall remained.

The Carmelite Sisters in Hillerød have begun a new publishing company. They are publishing several books by the Swedish Carmelite, Wilfrid Stinesen and will soon publish a book on St. John of The Cross. For the first time since the reformation, a Sister has given her perpetual vows in this Carmel. She took the name Maria Johanna of the Cross.

Bishop Czeslaw Kozon celebrated his fiftieth birthday 17 November 2001. He has a life long interest in birds and also has a good friend who is his house cat. He grew up in a Catholic home in Lolland and attended Catholic school. He went to seminary at the Gregorian. He has been labeled a Conservative but he points out that there are many new things that he does not oppose. However, "I want to maintain the Catholic viewpoint on, for example, the sacraments and morality. I don't think one is conservative because one is opposed to abortion or divorced people going to communion. This is the teaching of the Church."

The Bridgettine Sisters are returning to Maribo. The present Cathedral of the state church was once part of their

convent. They have bought a centrally located house that once served as a children's home. As Birgitta wished, the property slopes down to the lake. Before the reformation there was also a Bridgettine Convent in Mariager, founded in 1446. The last nun died in 1585.

A Danish priest who once studied in America and is known to many of our older members celebrated his ninetieth birthday. Paul d'Auchamp is descended from a French family that came to Denmark during the French revolution. He attended seminaries in London and in Baltimore. He was ordained by Bishop Suhr 29 June 1952. He retired in 1984 but continued to help in his old parish of Søborg and as far as the Faerø Islands. The members of St. Ansgar wish him well on this anniversary.

An unusual home for troubled souls—a way of describing the Catholic chapel at Easterholtgård. In the little chapel they pray the liturgy of the hours. The founder, Inge Norling, calls her home "Peace and Reconciliation." The house has room for 14 persons but there can be 18 living there. The residents take responsibility for maintaining the premises that include a well-planted garden. In the middle of it is a statue of the Virgin. Inge spent some time as a homeless person in Copenhagen to experience that kind of life. The sacrament is reserved in the chapel and the men show great devotion to the presence of Christ.

There are 15 young men presently studying for the priesthood at the Neo Catechumenate Seminary in Denmark. Two of them will be Ordained Deacons in the fall of 2002. Most of the men are from Italy and Spain. While part of the time is spent in Denmark, they also study at the Gregorian in Rome and spend a missionary year. There are three support groups for the seminary in Denmark.

The Scandinavian Catholic Bishops are also discussing guidelines to handle sexual abuse of children. Bishop

Kozon thinks that the Church is now more aware of the complications of this problem but also warns of the hysteria that has grown up.

A long confrontation between the Diocese and a priest serving St. Knud Lavard Church in Lyngby came to a head this year. Fr. Georg Nibler has long been known as a very competent spiritual advisor but has conducted an increasingly eccentric liturgy in which the Creed can be replaced with a national anthem or hardtack served for Communion.

The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Piero Biggio has moved to Stockholm from Copenhagen. Sweden has reminded Rome that it has its own ambassador to Rome. It also has the largest number of Catholics of the Scandinavian countries. In Sweden, the Nuncio will live in a house near the Birgitta Sisters in Djursholm. The Neo Catechumenate Seminary will occupy the former embassy in Copenhagen.

At the Conference of Nordic Bishops, Lutheran bishops were also invited for a day. They discussed the question of intercommunion. Bishop Kozon said, "It is hard for Lutheran bishops to understand that we cannot have common communion. Communion is considered from two widely different viewpoints. For Catholics it means to be in agreement with the whole Catholic concept of the Church. For Lutherans it means that one should take part in something Christ has asked us to take part in. The main thing is that one is there". The problem of intercommunion became actual later in the year when a Catholic Mass was planned to be held in the cathedral at Odense. It was then decided that the church could only be lent to Catholics if Lutherans were able to communicate at the Catholic Mass.

The Danish Church still does not have a translation of the Catholic Catechism or the Mass. Much of the problem with the wording of the Mass centers in the Creed. The translations now will have to be adjusted to conform to

the new edition of the *Novus Ordo*.

The Lioba Sisters have worked in Denmark for 67 years. Their home is at St. Mary's Church in Frederiksberg. They were founded 75 years ago as part of the Benedictine family. Until recently they operated a home for the aged which has now been taken over by the community.

A group that calls itself "Catholics for freedom between faith communities in Denmark" has directed a letter to the church minister protesting government policies that favor the State Church. Civil registration continues to be made in the State Church and not in a civil office. Burials are more expensive for non State Church members. They also contribute to the salaries of ministers and Bishops in the State Church.

All of the Scandinavian Catholic Churches sent large groups of young people to the meetings in Toronto.

Fifty of them came from Denmark. More had planned to attend but the airlines did not give the hoped for fare reduction. Bishop Arborelius of Sweden said Mass for the Northern delegates. The young Catholics gathered 70,000 dk to help the children in Zimbabwe who have contracted AIDS.

A number of ecumenical activities took place in Denmark. In September 2001 the international Roman Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue group met in Copenhagen. On 9 September a Hungarian Lutheran Bishop preached at St. Ansgar and in the afternoon Cardinal Walter Kasper preached in the Lutheran Cathedral. The group met in Denmark because the Lutheran Church there did not agree with the Joint Declaration on Justification but did want the sixteenth century condemnations removed and a continuing dialog. Cardinal Kasper

was asked about the Catholic refusal to permit intercommunion and he said, "common Holy Communion is, of course, the great aim."

When did Denmark begin to be Christianized? It has long been thought that the important date was the baptism of King Harold Bluetooth in 965. The real process seems to be much more complicated and a church and cemetery have been found in North Jutland that date to around 800. There are also traces of work by Irish monks dating around 700.

## News from Finland

Dear Friends in America!

The Diocese of Helsinki has experienced many changes in recent years. Not only did we lose our former Bishop Paul Verschuren SCI few years ago, but also three important native members of our clergy have died in the past 15 months (between July 2001 and September 2002). Last year, we told of the sudden death of Deacon Pentti Laukama, who was the editor of the Diocesan magazine *Fides* and the communicator of the Diocese. At around the same time, we also lost Fr. Martti Voutilainen, the beloved Finnish Dominican, who was an intimately spiritual man and an enthusiastic preacher. Fr. Martti's probably most important work, however, was the creation of new Finnish vocabulary for many of the modern theological terms and phrases used both in the Second Vatican Council and in the *Novus Ordo*. Just in September 2002, we lost another permanent deacon, Christian Hellström, whose work especially with the Swedish speaking minority in our Diocese was both important and much appreciated. At the moment, then, there are only three native clerics in Finland, but the future with two Diocesan and one religious

seminarian and two postulants for religious orders for women seems promising, as you can see in the statistics elsewhere in this magazine.

A further sad notice must be made: In December 2001, Mother Virginia of the Child Jesus from the Carmelite monastery in Espoo died after a long illness. Her successor became Sr. Clare Marie, also an American.

After the, ultimately, natural pause in more important administrative and pastoral decisions and appointments, our new Bishop Józef Wróbel SCI has had an enormous task in getting to know his Diocese, in listening to the needs of the parishes and centers and in slowly but decisively establishing his pastoral plan in our Diocese. If the Bishop would only be needed by his own Diocese, the work would be easier, but it certainly becomes enormous if encounters, meetings and discussions with our separated brethren are counted as well. Also, the Bishop has represented the Holy See in some conferences and still makes short teaching visits to his home university, the famous Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. And learning the Finnish language, also, is not the easiest task...

So, during the past year, many priests in our Diocese have finally been

reassigned as part of the rather regular moving of the clergy. Our new Vicar General is Rev. Marino Trevisini, who moved from Oulu to Helsinki and has now been appointed rector of St. Henry's Cathedral. Two other rectors have been appointed as well, Fr. Zdzislaw Huber SCI for St. Olav's parish in Jyväskylä and Rev. Paolo Berti for the Holy Family of Nazareth parish in Oulu. Long-time rector of the Cathedral, Fr. Teemu Sippo, SCI works now as chaplain in St. Mary's parish, also in Helsinki.

Naturally, a new leadership and personnel of the Catholic Information Centre had also to be found: as director of the Centre, the Bishop chose Rev. Tuomo T. Vimpari, who is just finishing his doctoral thesis on Canon Law in Rome. As the only full time employee, i. e. the communicator of the Information Centre, was chosen Mr. Marko Teravaportti (now 33, married, so far one child). Their task in trying to create almost everything from the scratch has ultimately started to bring good fruits: the Internet presence of the Diocese has been modernised at [www.catholic.fi](http://www.catholic.fi) and they have also changed the Diocesan newspaper *Fides* a lot. It comes out now 14 times a year but has much more con-

tent inside than before. Also, *Fides* tries to be much more open to Catholic life in all parts of the world and share the joy of our Catholic Faith especially by giving much space to the words of the Holy Father and the Diocesan Bishop.

Life in the Catholic Church in Finland has continued its peaceful pace: Sunday Mass is the centre of parish life, followed by 'church coffee'. Many initiatives of more or less spiritual content have been organised as well: the Annual Diocesan pilgrimage to the death spot of the Patron Saint of whole Finland, St. Henry, in June, and the Diocesan Feast in Stella Maris, the Diocesan Activity Centre in the countryside, around Assumption (Aug. 15), gather together every year hundreds of the faithful from all of our seven parishes. Some come even from abroad. A feeling of a necessity to strengthen ties within the Diocese has grown now, as the new Bishop has settled down. This means a new, greater search for unity and shared values within the whole Catholic community here in Finland. It is a process of growing together in charity and holiness, always faithful to the teachings of the Church.

However small the number of Catholics seems to be in Finland, the encouraging aspect of our life is that we are growing all the time. The Church gains new members both by conversion from other Christian denominations and by more and more baptisms. In one year (2001) the number of Catholics grew by about 150 persons. In the end of last year (2001), there were 7,986 registered Catholics in all of Finland.

The tragic effects of Sept. 11 were felt also in Finland. The Bishop expressed his condolences to President Bush, a special Mass was celebrated the following Sunday in St. Henry's Cathedral with the attendance of dozens of members of the Diplomatic Corps, and the same was done one year after the attacks. Our Bishop also participated in an inter-faith prayer gathering held in the centre of Helsinki at the end of October, 2001.

Thank God, many happier occasions have taken place throughout the year as well. Autumn 2001, the Ursuline sisters celebrated with the whole Diocese their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in

Finland, this being already the second stay of their order in our country, the first one having lasted some years before our independence (1917). The sisters have two foundations in Finland, one in Jyväskylä and another one in Helsinki. They operate kindergartens in both cities.

Also, Rev. Guy Barbier celebrated in the autumn the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination. Père Guy is a member of the Prado Institute the scope of which is to bring the Gospel to the poorest of the poor. This is evident in Père Guy's own life as well: during WWII he spent years in Nazi labour camps, and later was moved from one concentration camp to another. The experience, solid faith and deep spirituality of Père Guy are greatly appreciated and make this God's servant a very much loved confessor, preacher and distributor of the sacraments. *Ad multos annos!*

Being a professor of Moral Theology, Bishop Wróbel has also wanted to give insight to Finnish Catholics, and not only them, on the fundamentals of Catholic moral teaching. This task has been accomplished by his homilies, by a long article in the Diocesan newspaper and by many talks and speeches. The timing for a moral perspective has been very opportune, partly because the Finnish Parliament passed a law allowing the so called same sex unions in autumn 2001. This caused a big controversy among the Evangelical Lutheran Christians in our country, too.

The Diocese of Helsinki is, as shown, living in the middle of a new spring: the many good fruits of the Second Vatican Council that have been growing here in the past decades, are slowly being fully recognised, determined and developed in the pastoral life of the whole Diocese. In this sense, a leap towards modernity is necessary. This can be said for many good reasons. The many deaths and other changes made have shown the vulnerability of a structure mostly dependent on the work of individual persons only. In the reality of a changing and more 'technical' world, the Diocese and all its centres need a more established existence, and a greater unity with the leadership of the local Church. This process is slow

but hoped-for by all, and will still need a lot of planning, prayer and resources, both material and spiritual.

With my prayerful greetings,  
Marko Tervaportti  
Communicator  
Catholic Information Centre  
Diocese of Helsinki

#### News from Fides

The new ambassador of Finland to the Holy See, Antti Hynninen, presented his credentials to Pope John Paul II in December 2001. The Pope congratulated Finland for being mindful of the European moral and political responsibility and persistently investing in defense of human rights and aid for developing countries. The Pope stressed human rights and the inherent value of each human person as part of the European legacy. In his speech the Pope also emphasized his delight in the new appreciation for the Catholic Church in Finland not only in its spiritual sense but also for its social and educational contribution. He also wishes that the new religious freedom legislation under consideration would, more than before, concretely acknowledge and advance the equality of all officially established religious communities: Ambassador Hynninen also serves as Finland's ambassador to Switzerland.

March 8, Bishop Wróbel signed an agreement with the governing board for religious programming of Yleisradio (general radio). The Catholic Church is now a full member of this body. The diocese of Helsinki is represented by the bishop or in his absence the director of the Catholic information center, Marko Tervaportti. The church has participated in this supervisory board previously as an observer.

Members of this body are the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Orthodox Church of Finland, the radio committee of Finland's free churches and congregations, and the Oy Yleisradio Ab (general radio).

Within the framework of media license requirements and the general rules of Yleisradio, this body oversees religious services in radio and televi-

sion, makes decisions about the relative representation of different religious communities in public media, approves or prohibits presenters, etc.

In the spring of 2002 in Sigtuna, Sweden, representatives of the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Finland and Sweden started local level discussions on doctrine. This was the first time for Finland that doctrinal dialogue was carried on between the different churches. In Sweden it has a longer tradition. The purpose of this new discourse was, during the next five years, to further deepen the *United proclamation on the doctrine of grace* signed 10.31.1999 in Augsburg, Germany. A united proclamation on grace is expected to become the issue of most central and significant impact on the life of the churches historically, pastorally, and in terms of language. Present were the Lutheran archbishop of Finland, Jukka Paarma, Archbishop K. G. Hammar of Sweden, Bishops Anders Arborelius OCD and Martin Lind from Sweden and Eero Huovinen from Finland. Vicar general Jan Aarts and Father Tuomo T. Vimpari represented the Helsinki diocese of St. Henry. The next meeting will be held fall 2002.

New research shows that Finns have a more positive attitude toward the Catholic Church. About 44% of Finns now had positive feelings about the Church when the corresponding figure in 1999 was only 24%.

There were 1024 persons, representing a well balanced cross section of people over 15 years of age, who responded to a questionnaire prepared by the research center of the Lutheran Church. Respondents were most positive about the Lutheran Church, Salvation Army, Orthodox church, and Catholic Church, negative towards Islam, Mormons, Scientologists and Jehovah Witnesses. About 10% of those interviewed had a negative attitude about the Catholic Church.

The Holy Mass is celebrated at last once a month in Tikkurila, Vantaa. The first Catholic Mass was celebrated by Father Paolo Berti of the Cathedral congregation of St. Henry on January 27, 2002 in the Resurrection of Christ Or-

thodox Church. About 40 faithful persons attended, several children and young people among them. This was made possible by the Helsinki Orthodox parish and thanks are owed especially to Father Raimo Huttunen for lending the space and guiding in its use. The Cathedral congregation and the Helsinki Orthodox congregation have agreed that the Catholic Mass is to be celebrated in Tikkurila on fourth Sunday of every month at 4 p.m. In the future, gregorian chant will be incorporated for the Ordinary of the Mass in accordance with a wish expressed during the coffee hour. There are about 1000 Catholics living in Vantaa.

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During the annual school ski vacation in February 16th to 23rd, a traditional camp was held at Steila Maris, or Stellis as the young people call it. Attendance was greater than ever, 32 kids between the ages of 5 to 12, and 11 teenagers up to age 17. Five adults led the camp. Snow was not abundant this year, and some summer sports like frisbee were picked up instead. Because the camp also coincided with Lent, two ways of the cross were prayed daily. Mass was celebrated three times. For many children the Mass was a new and different experience. Father Kazimierz delighted the children with many goodies. A candlelight procession was organized in celebration of St. Mary. A small offering for Lent was getting by without TV or computer and other games.

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On October 25, 2001 different religious communities together held a common prayer for peace at the Senaatintori in Helsinki. Bishop Jozef Wrobel SCJ brought the message of the Catholic Church and led a short prayer in Finnish. The only speech at the event was delivered by a member of the government, Harri Holkeri, who pleaded for mutual understanding among the nations, for the acceptance of others as they are "different in our own country as well as elsewhere".

After his speech prayers were also read in Swedish, Arabic, and Hebrew as

the Islamic community of Finland, the Jewish congregation, and the Salem congregation took their turns in addition to the representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox churches.

About two thousand people holding candles gathered at the Senaatintori. The event was attended by the President of the Republic and her spouse.

A traditional ecumenical evening prayer service was held at the central market square of Tampere. In the light of burning tapers prayers were offered for peace, tolerance, and mutual respect between different religions and cultures.

The mayor of Tampere, Jarmo Rantanen, opened the event by expressing the hope that the city dwellers would not direct their possibly negative feelings aroused by the world events against the immigrants. All three major religions and several denominations of the Christian church were represented.

Founder of the Catholic Information Center and rector of St. Birgitta and the Blessed Hemming Church, Father Jacobus Reijnders SCJ, passed away July 7 in the land of his birth, Holland. He had returned there in 1989 after spending more than forty years in Finland. Father Jacobus acted many years as the general vicar for Bishop Verschuren, but he also did much work on behalf of youth organizations.

In accordance with the agreement between the Sacred Heart of Jesus Order and the diocese of Helsinki, Father Jan Aarts SJC, after reaching the age of 65 has asked to be relieved from his duties as the vicar general of the diocese. The superiors of his order will decide about his future duties.

Bishop of Helsinki, Jozef Wrobel, has named Father Mario Trevisini as the acting vicar of the diocese. Father Trevisini was also appointed as the rector of the Cathedral parish of St. Henry.

Father Paolo Berti has been appointed rector for the Holy Family of Nazareth parish in Oulu.

Caritas of Finland has at last received a director of operations to develop its programs. The administration of Caritas has selected Hannele Kankuri, 41, for this post, starting November 19, 2001. Ms. Kankuri acquired

substantial experience both at home and abroad in public administrative roles as well as civic organizations in providing aid for the needy. She worked several years with development projects in Zambia, and with starting up refugee projects in northern Uganda. Lastly she has worked at the center for political asylum seekers of Helsinki.

Funding is being provided by the Caritas of Switzerland which follows the aims of the Caritas of Europe in attempting to expand opportunities for small Caritas to operate.

The former rector of St. Henry's parish in Helsinki, Father Reinier Brugemann SJC, spends his retirement days in the Sacred Heart cloister in Asten, Holland.

Even at his high age of 90 he is still in good health and does much for the benefit of the cloister and parish. Among other things he is the cloister librarian and sometimes, when asked, celebrates Mass in nearby churches. He surprised his visitors by organizing museum visits and a long nature hiking trip. Tirelessly and at times flashing his legendary humor he showed us the cloister, Asten, and even some of its surroundings.

Asten is a quiet village in the middle of one of the most industrialized areas of the world and subsequent massive traffic. The red brick cloister building is next to a big magnificent neo gothic church. "Isn't it remarkable that a huge church like this in its time was built right in the middle of the fields!" exclaimed Father Brugemann. Nowadays life is very quiet in the big church and mass is rarely celebrated there. Secularization is a problem in Holland too, and because of the low attendance Sunday Mass is often held at the small convent church. Father Brugemann also considered it worrisome for the future that so few young men in Holland as well as elsewhere in Europe feel the call for priesthood as their own. The shortage of priests is a fact already.

The cloister, now operating as an old age home, has a few dozen inhabitants. Some of them have worked in exotic circumstances far away from Europe.

Dinnertime conversations are colored by the knowledge of many cultures the brothers bring to the table. Father Brugemann asserts this to be one good factor in keeping one's mind alive - there is always more than one cultural perspective for examining the matter!

The rector or director of the cloister, Rein van Langen, is a very modern man. He is a theologian and a biologist. Even if life in the cloister seems slow-paced critical thinking there can be very modern. "Even if the residents of the cloister are old, it does not mean that they could not think in modern ways", says Father Brugemann. "Sometimes even hobbies make you keep up with current times". Father Brugemann had received a telescope as a gift in Finland. At Asten he has attended astronomy classes and marvels at all the fantastic scientific discoveries of the universe. "I often think about the nature in Finland. Here especially I miss two things from there: the sea and Christmas", Father Brugemann was reminiscing. "Even if Holland is by the sea we do not see much water". There are many objects of memorabilia from Finland in his room. He says his thoughts often wander there and he prays for his friends and parishioners in Finland.

Father Brugemann is not the only person in the cloister who understands Finnish. Brother Aufridus worked in Finland from 1963 to 1970. He was a member of the congregation of St. Henry and also played the organ there, which he also did now at the Mass in the cloister church. As a surprise he played the hymn part of Finlandia in the end, and that was a very moving moment for the visitors.

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"It is wonderful to be a priest", says Father Barbier. "If a person does not find purpose for his life, he will become depressed. Inner life with God gives life its purpose and joy".

Father Barbier was born in central France on Sept. 20, 1921. He is a priest of the Prado Organization, not well known in Finland. When Hitler's troops occupied France in 1940 he was sent away to work in factories in Germany.

Later he was imprisoned for plotting an escape and spent time in both Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps.

After the liberation he went to Paris, attended seminary and was ordained in 1951. He later became one of the first "worker priests", and did hard physical work sharing the life of ordinary working men.

After studying the Eastern Rites in Rome and Russian language in Helsinki University he wanted to stay in Finland. For 19 years he worked for Emmaus with former convicts, alcoholics, and other outcasts of society. His past experiences were of great value there, and he soon earned the respect and trust of the men. At 80 he is still working, most recently for the Cathedral church of St. Henry assisting foreigners.

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The Catechetical Center has begun a correspondence course in Catholic studies for high school students. Ten persons have applied for next year.

Extensive rebuilding has taken place in the Cathedral parish. More room for the kindergarten and the assembly room was provided. Offices for priests and a common room have also been provided.

The wooden statues of old men which stand outside of many Finnish churches are being exhibited in Rome at the Palazzo della Cancellaria. They were introduced to Sweden and Finland by Queen Christina. They held money boxes, the receipts to be given to the poor.

The Birgitta Anniversary will be celebrated with a number of events. Among them are a music festival in Naantali and an ecumenical observance in the Cathedral of Turku.

The pages of a number of medieval liturgical books have been preserved in a remarkable way. They were used as binding for the government account books after the reformation. Two liturgical books were printed for Finland in the middle ages: *Missale Aboense* in 1488 and *Manuale Aboense* in 1522.

## NEWS FROM NORWAY

## Oslo

Among the 80,000 persons who greeted the Pope in Toronto in July at the World Youth Days, were 60 youths from Norway. The young people represented in fact two groups, which are active in the youth apostolate here. The first group is the N.U.K.-Young Norwegian Catholics, and the other is the young Norwegian members of the French-based "Beatitudes Community". Like so many young people from all over the world, both of these groups experienced the spiritual invigoration which the Holy Father, through his special charism and in spite of serious illness, always manages to convey to youth. They all heard his challenge, and surely many understood it, "Why have you come together from all the ends of the earth? Because you say in your hearts, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Who has the words that bring us eternal life? You have the words of eternal life.' The usual group pictures were taken with the Norwegian flag displayed in the background-and foreground. I only wish that when they display the pictures in our Catholic Bulletin, "Broen" they would have used a larger format. Even with my "loupe"(magnifying glass), I can hardly make out the faces. Of course my eyesight is not what it was. But there you are, I mean, how was I to check up on them, those young people that is?

In connection with the great admiration that I have for Pope John Paul and the enormous inspiration he is, also for us "oldies", I must mention that I was able to see the direct TV coverage of the Holy Father's recent visit to his native Poland. The Pope's visit was covered in its entirety. As an aside I could mention that the technical quality was really superb. The Holy Father was ill. He suffers from Parkinson's disease, as we all know. The medicine he has been taking has helped to minimize the traumatic shaking symptomatic of the disease, but it has also caused extreme drowsiness and confusion. So now the Pope refuses to take the medicine, preferring to accept the traumatic shaking in order thereby to be alert. This he certainly was. There

was fire in his eyes; his farewell ceremony at the Krakow airport must have moved even the coldest critics. The multitudes who attended the stadium Mass on the day before (two days actually) were like a great sea of humanity, stretching as far as one could see. The discipline was incredible-the order and peace in that enormous span of humanity. Then, towards the end, suddenly and it seemed spontaneously, that day, increasing in volume "dziekujem, dziekujem" we thank you, we thank you. Again and again this came from young and old, from all, perhaps thirty times, their thanks for the Vicar of Christ. The sincerity was tangible.

The Missionaries of Charity, also known as the Mother Teresa Sisters, arrived in Bergen on 20 August. The sisters are now established in all of the Nordic countries. In the Diocese of Oslo, which includes Bergen on Norway's west coast, the sisters have taken up residence in the old and now restored Birgittahjemmet, just next door to St. Paul's Church. Birgittahjemmet was the residence of our diocesan congregation, the St. Francis Xavier Sisters, from 1902 to 1983. This was the Mother House for the congregation for all of those years. The parish has taken over the home but now the Missionaries of Charity have been given the use of one floor and the basement for living quarters and for their practical work with asylum seekers and refugees, and care of the elderly within the various non-Norwegian groups. The foundation begins with four sisters, two from India, one from Germany and one from Poland.

When I think of Mother Teresa, soon to be beatified, my thoughts go back to 1979 when she came to Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. There she was, that little nun in her white and blue sari, almost out of sight in a maze of human skyscrapers. But in that grand meeting room, the University of Oslo's aula, she was in command. She had arranged that a little prayer card with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace" be placed on every chair. At the end of her speech she told the entire assembly to take that card and read the prayer together. The audience was composed of

politicians, diplomats, professors, and people of various races and creeds. Mother Teresa sort of shamed them into saying that prayer. Some just stood there dumb, various grimaces bespoke various reactions, but the vast majority took the cue and joined the little nun in prayer.

In her talk to the assembly, Mother Teresa had posed the question, "Why is the world afflicted so with wars, terror activity, famine, injustice, crime?" Then she answered the question by saying that all of these things are the result of the thousands upon thousands of aborted children whose cries call out to heaven for vengeance. The Lord would not abide the termination of life, which is his alone to take and give. This is what she said, but the very next day the press tried to water down her statements. They could not directly attack her because she was indeed a Nobel Prize winner. But here she was in abortion country, and so they were not about to let her get away with it either. The reports ran something like this: Mother Teresa gave a most noteworthy speech, she is a true humanitarian, a noble woman who has offered her life for her fellowmen. But, of course all that anti-abortion folderol is the result of a rather overdimensioned Catholicism.

In Toronto the young were encouraged to pray the rosary frequently. To start now, so that as the years go by one will have the special training in meditation on the mysteries of our faith *in union with our Lady, the Virgin Mary*. Recently someone presented me with a lovely print of an icon. It is called "The Mother of God Orans (praying)". Must the professors, academics, theologians, judges and lawyers, bishops and priests, mothers and fathers, blue collars and executives be found on their knees, "telling their beads" along with the little kids and teenagers? The answer should be obvious if we are aware of what is going on in our world. The answer is "Yes. They must." By the way, it was an American professor of history who gave me the icon of Mary praying.

Recently Bishop Arborelius of Stockholm gave a day of recollection for the Oslo clergy. We were privileged to meet and hear this bishop who came at

the invitation of our Bishop, Gerhard Schwenzer. In one of the conferences, Bishop Arborelius quoted a nun who expressed some reservations on bishops-one of which was that a bishop must have a good nose so that he is able to detect both the perfumed holiness of true holiness and the foul stench of evil. Really that is a nose which so many of us have use for in these times, bishops or not.

With all good wishes in the Lord to the members of St. Ansgar's League.

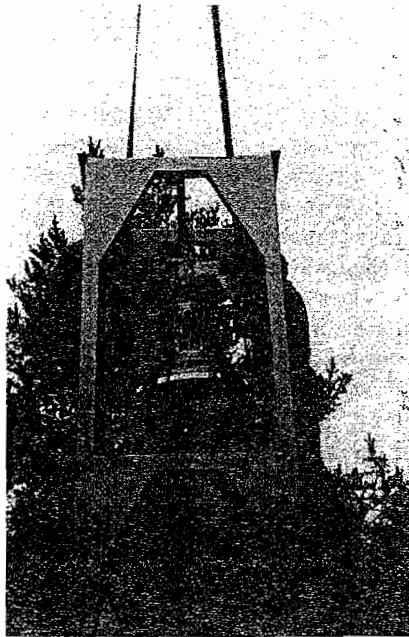
-Fr. Olof I. Waering, Diocese of Oslo

### Trondheim

The Convent of Mary is now celebrating its third year in Norway. The seven Cistercian sisters (five American and two Norwegian) came from the Abbey of Our Lady of the Mississippi in Dubuque, Iowa. They live on the island of Tautra that has the ruins of a Cistercian convent from the fourteenth century. The sisters support themselves by making glycerin soap. On 2 June 2001, the sisters celebrated the First Vespers of Pentecost in the ruins of the old convent church. Sixty boy scouts from all of Norway took part. On 23 November the architect traveled to the sisters only to drive his car into the fjord. When he was rescued, the car, the drawings and the model for the new convent were destroyed. However by spring, 2002 the building of a chapel, chapter room and other parts of the building should be begun. (From St. Ansgar, Sr. Gil-Christ)

Architectural plans for Tautra now are completed. The convent will be built in a quadrangle, one side of which will be the church. The buildings will be of a stone to match those of the medieval ruins. On the inside, however much will be built in glass and wood. The church and the rooms for nuns will be completed first. The rest will wait for more funds. Contributions may be made to Tautra Mariakloster, 7633 Frosta, Norway.

On 29 June 2002, Dominic (Thanh van) Nguyen, was ordained a priest. He became the first Catholic priest in charge of a military station in Norway. The airfield lies near to Trondheim and



*The Bell Tower at Alta*

he also serves a small group of Catholics in that area.

The Archdiocese of Cologne has contributed to the renovation of the Church of St. Olaf in Trondheim. The centennial of the first St. Olaf Church was celebrated in November. The medieval Diocese of Trondheim was founded in 1153. The present Catholic Diocese dates to 1953.

### Tromsø

On behalf of Bishop Goebel I will answer your letter. I am sorry to tell you that Bishop Goebel had a stroke three weeks ago. He was partly lamed on his right side. He is still (Sept. 11, 2002) at the hospital for rehabilitation. The physical therapy is making progress, but he still needs a wheel chair. No one knows to what extent he will regain vigor, but we are optimistic.

The bell tower in Alta was set up this summer. The enclosed picture will show you how beautiful it is with its bell made in Poland by professional bell founders. However the bell is not yet consecrated because the bishop became ill. We are very grateful for your donation that made it possible to raise this building with the bell in Alta.

The bishop has asked me to express his deepest gratitude to the donors for your gift. He hopes that you will soon visit Tromsø and Alta and see the bell

tower yourself and also to meet Father Wojciech who has played a very active role in the whole project.

Today is September 11<sup>th</sup>. We pray that you in New York and the rest of America will be spared any more terror attacks.

Our most hearty greetings to you and your community from all your friends in this northern part of the world.

-Ågot Kermit

### News from Broen

In 1967 a Trappist Brother, Robert Anderson, left his community in Massachusetts and came to Norway to live as a hermit. For the last 15 years he has lived in Hylland and six years ago this property was purchased for a hermitage. At about this time he was joined by a brother from England and they form a contemplative Benedictine community. Each brother lives alone but the prayers, work and meals are in common. The brothers have built a little church and the Mass is celebrated in the Eastern Rite.

On 16 June 2001 the Church of St. Clare of Assisi was dedicated at Kongsvinger. It will be part of the parish of Hamar. In the area of the church live 200 Catholics. Besides Norwegians, there are Vietnamese, Filipinos and Poles. The church complex also contains a parish center and rooms for a priest.

The Catholic Church in Norway now has an internet site: [www.katolsk.no](http://www.katolsk.no). It not only continues the famous site for information about saints, but also news from Norway and around the Catholic world. The Swedish site is [www.katolskakyrkan.se](http://www.katolskakyrkan.se)

The hospital building in Arendal once run by sisters has been bought back by the church and will be used for a school, nursery and youth center.

By the fall of 2003, the Augustinians will return to Bergin where they will have a monastery and also be in charge of the parish. They have been resident at Klosterneuburg in Austria. The house will be opened with two canons and that number will increase as they take over duties in Bergin from the resident secular priests. In the twelfth

century there was a Dominican monastery here. This will be the first male monastery in Norway after the reformation.

The Holy Father has given a mosaic depicting Mary the Mother of the Church to Norway. It will be mounted on the tower of the cathedral.

Catholics in Norway grew in number by 865 persons. That is a growth of 2%. Most of the Catholics live in the neighborhood of Oslo. Besides the 43,274 registered Catholics, it is estimated that there are about 20,000 who are unregistered.

The era of the state church system in Norway seems to be coming to an

end. A number of passages in the basic law of Norway will have to be amended before this happens. The state church would still function as such on official occasions. As in Sweden, there might be a separate ecclesiastical law for that church as opposed to other religious bodies. The rules for the freed church would seem to indicate a democratic synodal arrangement much as in Sweden where delegates are elected to church meetings much as we send representatives to Washington.

The parish of St. Olav in Trondheim is now 100 years old. It at one time hosted a seminary for priests to train them to work in Norway. The

buildings later were taken over by the Elizabeth Sisters who operated a hospital until 1980. In 1902 the old train locomotive barns were bought and remodeled into a church. In 1937 the present church and rectory were built. The new church was an important statement for modern architecture in Norway. It was largely built of glass blocks. There were some flaws in its construction and for some years efforts have been made to replace this church. The church also functions as the Catholic Cathedral for Mid Norway.

## NEWS FROM SWEDEN

The city of Stockholm has just celebrated its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The weather could not have been better and Stockholm could not be more beautiful. It started with an ecumenical service of the Te Deum on 1 June in the Lutheran Cathedral *Storkyrkan* in the heart of the Old City. The Lutheran Bishop, Caroline Krook, had invited me to take part and give a meditation and some other Catholics also took part with readings and intercessions (some in Polish and Arabic). Nearly all the members of the royal family were there. For us Catholics the final day of the anniversary, June 8, was historic as we were allowed to celebrate Mass in the medieval church of Riddarholm where nearly all the kings and queens are buried, also our Catholic queen, Josephina, whom some want to see beatified. So many people came that the guardians of the church closed the doors but the faithful did not accept that and kept knocking on the medieval doors until they were reopened! Especially for the Franciscans it was a great event because this was their church before the reformation and now since a year ago there is a Franciscan community in Stockholm again.

The oldest priest of our diocese, Monsignor Czeslaw Chmielewski, died recently. He was nearly 90 years old. He came to Sweden in 1945, directly from the concentration camps with the "white buses" of Folke Bernadotte who

brought so many prisoners, Jews and Catholics alike, to our country. Monsignor was ordained a priest in 1939 and just a few weeks afterwards he was sent to the camps where he spent all the years of the war. He was a saintly man who never said a word against the Germans. Msgr. Johannes Koch (former dean of the cathedral) who came to Sweden as a young German student just after the war was received in a friendlier manner by Msgr. Chmielewski than by anyone else. He built up the mission to Polish Catholics in southern Sweden where he lived up to his death.

The bonds between the Catholics in Poland and us here in Sweden were strengthened in another way when the Cardinal Primate, Józef Glemp came for a second visit to our country in May. In the church of St. John, one of the largest Lutheran churches in Stockholm, where Catholic Mass is celebrated in Polish twice each Sunday, he gave the sacrament of Confirmation to a group of young people. On the invitation of the Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, KG Hammar, an ecumenical service was celebrated in the metropolitan cathedral of that city where the relics of Saint Erik, patron saint of Sweden are kept. In south Sweden, a new church was dedicated in the town of Trelleborg. It is a smaller industrial town that has an important harbor with ferryboats going to Germany. So many guests had arrived from Germany for the dedication of the church of St. Catharine. Even if it is a

rather small church holding about 100 persons, on this day several hundred persons joined us together with four bishops and clergy from various dioceses for the feast day.

This year seems to be a good year for ordinations. Two priests were ordained in our Cathedral of St. Erik on Ascension Day. Connie Årlind who was a Lutheran minister before becoming a Catholic and Omar Rojas González formerly of Columbia. Three more young men are to be ordained during the year: one Carmelite, one Dominican and one priest of the Maronite rite. During the last years many Catholics of the various Oriental Rites have been coming to our country. A large group of permanent deacons will also be ordained this autumn. As for sisters, the situation is more difficult. The Sisters of Saint Joseph have left Stockholm after being present here for 140 years. The Poor School Sisters of Notre Dame who founded the Catholic School in Gøteborg have left that city. There are some vocations for the contemplative life of women but extremely few for Apostolic Sisters.

There have been happy moments during this year in our diocese but life also has its dark moments and shadows. Since the year 2000 the Catholic Church has the same rights as the Lutheran Church and thus we can also receive the fees of our members through the tax authorities. This is, of course, a tremendous help for our financial situation. Up to now we

have had to rely on help from abroad, especially for all the new churches that have been built. Unfortunately a number of Catholics have reacted very strongly against this new system. Some of them had had no real contact with the church and were just furious when they realized that they, just like the Lutherans, were to pay a fee to their own church. Contrary to the Lutherans, Catholics can ask for a dispensation from this fee, but still a good number preferred to leave the church. This fact reminds us that there are many more or less lapsed Catholics. We also noticed that some were registered as members of two churches and as a result paid a fee to two churches! So there are indeed many difficulties to be solved before this new system will function in a more satisfactory and peaceful way. Anyway it means that after so many years of persecution and marginalization the Catholic Church is finally recognized by law. There has even been an exchange of diplomatic notes between the Holy See and Sweden in order to confirm our juridical position, something unheard of before.

Next year will be an important year for us: the Diocese of Stockholm will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and there will be the jubilee of St. Birgitta who was born 700 years ago. Why not join us then?

-Anders Arborelius ocd

#### News from Katolskt Magasin

A great deal of controversy has been stirred up in Sweden by the debate over contributions to the church being collected by the State. Barbara Adams of Vadstena has seen in the new collection a lack of respect for the opinions of the laity who were not consulted on the change. The new system seems to her to be like tyranny and slavery. One reader claimed that the new system promotes equality between the various religious groups in Sweden (presumably with the State Church that has long collected money this way). A number of readers asked for more patience to let the new system show its results. The reason free church people are more generous than Catholics was discussed and

a need for better presentation of the needs of the church was suggested. At least one Catholic is protesting that the new "tax" is illegal as it is taxation without representation. In 2000 when the new church laws were introduced, Catholics in Sweden became members of the Roman-Catholic Church. A number of people claim that they were never Catholic and have been mis-registered. Some people have asked to be removed from church rolls. The free churches in Sweden only receive the state collection from people who have requested to be taxed. There seems to be some confusion between the universal Catholic Church and the Church that now has been organized in Sweden. This year the Diocese received 75 m s.k. in contrast to receipts of 7.7 m s.k. in 1999. There are now 60,002 persons who support the church by paying with their tax returns. A recent letter to the editor praises the Bishop for the open dialogue that he has allowed in the magazine.

In Denmark, contributions to the Church collected by the State are given voluntarily. There are only 4,320 who pay the "tax." There are 34,370 Catholics in Denmark, 6,500 of them are children.

The influence of Spanish Catholics in Sweden continues to grow. A copy of a miraculous picture of the crucifixion is carried in procession in Stockholm yearly on 28 October. Four Carmelite sisters from Mexico have begun mission work in Stockholm, Franciscan brothers from Mexico have also begun work in Sweden. They plan to visit parishes which need to reach their Spanish speaking members.

The Guild of the Holy Body has been founded to promote the celebration of the 1962 (Tridentine) Mass. It has 50 members. Besides celebrating the traditional Mass, the guild wants to promote information and also to support priests who are favorable. The members are also active in their own parishes and faithful to the Church. A plus of the old Mass is the time given to quiet and reflection. A letter from Msgr. Johannes Koch relates the visit of a group of Catholics to China where they found the role of Latin as a factor

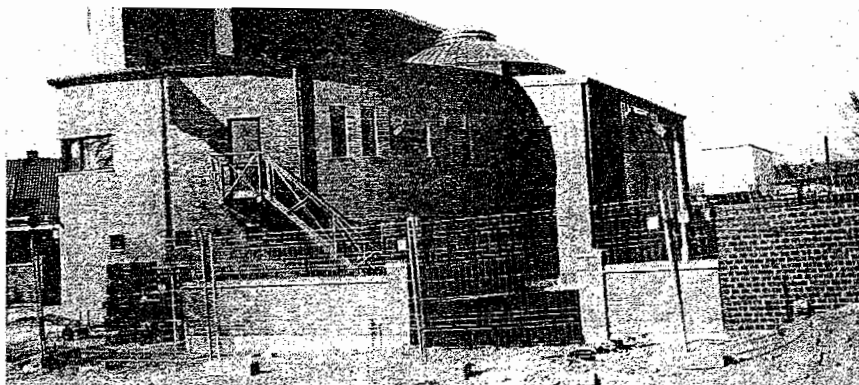
for recognition and contact with the world wide church.

A group of Swedish women has petitioned for an investigation of the cause for canonization of Queen Josephina. She came to Sweden to marry the crown prince who was to become Oscar I. She remained Catholic and was active in support of church and eleemosinary activities.

Revision of the hymnal for Catholics is under discussion. It is now proposed that the ecumenical part of the hymnal and the Catholic part be issued separately. Revision of the Ecumenical part is under discussion and Catholics want more Marian hymns as well as more saints' hymns. It is hoped that the Catholic part of the hymnal will be ready for use by the Advent season in 2003.

Don Riccardo Bulloni was an important figure in the development of the Catholic hymnal in Sweden. After some early attempts at creating a hymnal, Cecilia gave the Catholic Church a useful hymnal in the post war years. It was the work of B.D. Assarsson and contained a number of Catholic hymns from the homelands of Catholic immigrants but also many of the classic hymns of the Swedish protestant tradition. When this hymnal became outdated, Don Riccaro produced a new hymnal containing not only Cecilia but also a number of hymns which had been produced in the following years. He was the editor, printer and binder. The resulting hymnal looked a little disorganized but it functioned very well. I (JEH) am forever envious of Scandinavian Catholic hymnals as I compare them with the American failures. As postage was too expensive, he would place a box of hymnals on a train and hope that they would be received at their destinations. Retirement was challenging to him and he died in his native Switzerland. He was serving as a chaplain in a retirement home. Requiescat in pacem.

Kerstin Hedberg, a nurse in Uppsala has said that it is forbidden to say anything negative about abortion in Sweden. It is seen as a sign of sexual inequality. It is forbidden to even say that the foetus is a person. She would



*The new church at Trelleborg.*

like to see a poll taken of how women regard themselves after an abortion. She said, "What kind of a world is it where women take medicines into their bodies in every way by eating p-pills (these are available without a prescription in a drug store) and cause bleeding by taking day after pills to cause an abortion?" While Vadstena is the best known remaining medieval cloister in Sweden, the Franciscan cloister in Ystad is just as well preserved. A century ago it was to be razed but the townsfolk insisted on its preservation and today it is a museum. In February, Catholic vespers were again sung in the church led by Father Joseph Maria Nilsson. The convent was founded in 1232. The brothers were driven out in 1532 at the orders of the king of Denmark.

In the port city of Trelleborg in Skåne a new church has been dedicated. This town is the port of entry for many immigrants coming from parts south in Europe. It is on the route of the train from Copenhagen to Malmö. The new church continues as a part of the parish in Malmö. It has 400 members and the

church seats 120. It is built to resemble an early Christian church and is decorated with paintings that resemble the icons of Rublev. In 1616 the Franciscan monastery with its chapel was razed. The new church restores the name of the old chapel to Trelleborg: St. Catharine of Alexandria. The pastor of the church is Roman Kunkel OMI. The Oblate missionaries came to Sweden in 1962 where they continue to serve a number of parishes. They also are active in Denmark. The School of Notre Dame in Gothenburg has outgrown its five year old buildings. Instead of the 312 students that were expected, the school now is expecting a student body of 480. The school is based on the Marchtal system of pedagogy from Southern Germany. Each student is expected to take responsibility for his own education. Instead of a system of competition, each student is expected to work at his own general development. An unusual element in the student day is that each student spends a half hour reading fine literature. Thirty persons gathered for a conference on

"Medical ethics and abortion" in Helsingborg. There were presentations on natural family planning, the rights of the fetus, the abortive effect of preventive methods and the post abortion syndrome. There was a general hope that the church would take a more active role in these questions. The Catholic Church in Sweden now has 500 study circles with 4,500 members. It is hoped that the number of groups will grow to 800 next year. A great deal of interest centers around church music.

#### BRIDGETTINE YEAR

In the current year, we are celebrating the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Birgitta. It began with an observance in Rome on the weekend of 4-5 October 2002 and will be concluded in 2003 with an observance in Vadstena which it is hoped will be attended by the Holy Father. A high point of the weekend was a Vespers at St. Peter led by the Pope. The Holy Father sent a message to Mother Tekla Famiglietti, Abbess General of the Order of the Most Holy Savior on this occasion. He pointed to Birgitta as an outstanding example of "feminine holiness" both as a mother and in her conventual life. He also pointed out Birgitta's love of the cross and her service to the poor. Her relation to Mary helps us to see the Virgin as "a female icon of Christianity."

#### Deceased Members of St. Ansgar

Bette Gerasi  
Rev. Walter Heeny  
George E. Pearson  
Aased Sjovald  
Dom Andreas Rask  
Cheva Thompson

Gone before us with the sign of faith



ST. ANSGARIUS

## Book Review

Torgny Lindgren.  
*I Brokiga Blads vatten.*  
Stockholm, 1999.

Torgny Lindgren.  
*Pölsan.*  
Stockholm, 2002.

The number of important Scandinavian Catholic authors is amazing when we consider the relatively small size of Scandinavian Catholic Churches. We have featured in past Bulletins, Sigrid Undset and Halldor Laxness. A writer who is still very much alive and publishing is Torgny Lindgren. He was born in 1938 in Västerbotten in Northern Sweden. His first book was published in 1970. It was a book of poetry. One of the poems told of the feeling of security that he experienced at the union meeting when the chairman pounded with the gavel. Since then there has been a steady, slow stream of books. They are for the most part novels. Having read a good number of them, I would say that I never had the feeling that they are mass-produced with the help of various ingenuous helpers, a rather common practice today. They all reflect a sturdy craftsmanlike personality. Through the years he has received a number of literary prizes and was elected to be a member of the Swedish Academy in 1991.

In an interview which was published on 9 April 2002 in the *Svenska Dagbladet* he was asked about the influence of the Bible on his writing. He replied

"I have never been asked that before, I have to think a little. I have read the Bible carefully and all of the narratives are there in their original form. I believe that all western authors refer to the Bible even if they are not conscious of doing so.

They can find there the original form of their own stories. I happen to be somewhat religious but I have problems with some sides of religious language. If a priest talks about the meaning of life I enter a protest. Life has content, it is possible to interpret but I don't know if life has meaning from the perspective of eternity. (For many years I have found that Roman Catholic Christianity is nearest to my own concept of religion.)

"Existence is filled with something which must be described as divine. Everyone must seek the system, the paradigm that speaks to him. Pascal has described it as taking a bet. It is intellectual laziness not to deal with these questions and I have tried to accept the bet.

"The basic concept from which *Pölsan* [his latest book] develops is directly Biblical: man as a seeking being. The forty-year wandering through the wilderness. Perhaps this is the most Biblical book I have written because I conceive of a person as continually seeking."

I must confess that I am a voracious reader. (Someone described herself as a vociferous reader.) But my favorite novels are Victorian English with Trollope heading the list. Lindgren writes about rather ordinary people and situations but his fiction often has a surreal quality to it. In it we are admitted to a rather private and surprising world. In one of them the family says that the noise in the basement comes from rats. In reality it comes from the liquor which is fermenting there. At times he reminds me of Peter Ackroyd although Lindgren is by far the more careful and inventive of the two. His view of life has a certain

ambivalence to it. It is not surprising that last fall he spoke at the Swedish Catholic retreat center on the subject of sin in life. A few of his earlier novels have been translated into English. Only one of them was in print when I last checked. I would like to limit myself to considering his last two books.

*I Brokiga Blads vatten* (1999) which translates to *The water of the many colored (pallet) knife*, Lindgren offers a number of short accounts, some factual, some fictional. The simplest one seemed while I read it to be rather slight but I keep returning to it. It is the story of a man whose wife has died and he has to arrange for her burial. Coming home, he faces the problem of climbing the steps to his apartment. It is his determination that engages the reader and when he reaches his door, we have experienced a kind of catharsis. Lindgren describes the homecoming: "Soon he will put the key in the lock and open the door, unconquered, in a not too distant future, he will be at home and able to shut the door behind him." What is meant by being at home?

But there are two longer accounts that display Lindgren's talent in full. One of them (the stories are untitled) concerns the composing of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, probably one of the greatest works of art of the last century. Lindgren describes the series of chance encounters that led to its composition. They center in the home of Mahler's future wife, Alma Schindler. When her father does a favor for a Jewish friend, he is rewarded with a macaw that sang a simple melody: c-d-e-g-a. He wanted the bird so that he could copy the colors of its feathers in a painting. Many years later he brings Alma the book of Chinese poems that Mahler used as the basis for the texts he wanted to set. Anton Webern wrote of *Das Lied*, "Works of art are a digest, what is real vanishes, the idea remains, that is how it is with these songs." Everything concerned with the song vanished: Alma

was unfaithful, the daughter and Mahler himself died, the painting was burned in a World War II air raid, the manuscript of the songs was sold and now is in New York. Lindgren ends the story by saying, "One of the feathers of the macaw remains, it is preserved between the pages in volume 14 of a history of Austrian composers in a library in Vienna.

His latest book is titled *Pölsan*. That is a kind of meat pudding eaten in Northern Sweden. Barbro Lindqvist described it as not bad. In a recent survey as to what was the worst Swedish food, it came in second place, just after "surströmming" which is made from fish that is allowed to rot and then is canned to be eaten in August. The *Wall Street Journal* described the pudding as being made of intestines and flour. In commenting on the meaning of his book, Lindgren said that it was that the pudding should never be made with flour. He also claims that the structure of the book is like a meat pudding which should not be dissected into its parts but "should be written of in terms of a total experience where the individual details are subordinated to the whole which is greatly more than the sum of the parts." As much of the book concerns the search for the perfect pudding, I will spare you the recipes. As I have noted above, my own literary taste tends toward Victorian realism. The greatest problem for me as a reader is that the literary device of one person growing younger is central to the book. I sympathize with Alec Guinness who wrote that (plays about time and its tricks) "appeal and intrigue but finally don't add up."

One of the themes in the book centers on tuberculosis, a disease that Lindgren knew as a child. In fact one of the chapters has the pudding seekers visit the boy, Torgny Lindgren. The child is alone as his parents are off to care for the family graves. In an ironic comment we are read that "during the summer, all the graves have to be tended just like the potato patches and the cabbage beds." Little Torgny is re-

signed to an early death because of the advanced stage of his illness.

The visitors are disturbed by the dark, life-denying attitude of the boy. For Torgny, death means an escape from all the problems faced by adults. When the visitors question him on faith he says, "On my mother's side of the family we mostly believe in God but on the Lindgren side we believe more in Jesus Christ. Many don't believe in anything special. Sometimes my parents believe and sometimes they don't." The visitors sing a song for the boy and leave. Lindgren concludes the account by writing, "He would never forget this, he would remember it as long as he lived. Whatever it meant." Again there is this uncertainty of the meaning of life even as events may be analyzed and remembered.

In fact, part of the apparatus of this book is the question of what is real. A man is writing obituaries for a newspaper. The problem is that he writes about people who never lived. For the paper, this transgresses their rule of documentation. "Reality is by its nature documentary." For the writer, fantasy is a product of reality. Reality is deeper than documentation. "In itself, truth has no real existence, that is to say, it is nothing which exists as something real in a certain place or point of time or in any other manner. In fact both known truths and those which are only thought have a real existence at a given time in the consciousness of a thinking and knowing being... The truth itself which forms the substance for these thoughts, truth in itself, cannot be accorded any existence." The author reveals something out of his inmost being. He must have courage and pride to do his work in the face of the world and of himself. I think that Lindgren is writing about his own method of authorship. He writes slowly and the sentences are carefully formed. At the end of the book he is asked how he could have drawn so carefully a map. He answers, "It is just the same thing as making a sentence."

A strange intruder in the book is an observer named Bertil. He has a per-

fectly symmetrical body, both halves matching the other. Lindgren says that Bertil symbolizes the person who knows everything. "Symmetry breeds self righteousness."

"I don't know the cause of this" Lindgren said, "but I believe it is the lack of a metaphysical thought world. Metaphysics (in Sweden) is banned. In Sweden the individual is ashamed of religion and religious concepts."

I must admit that the first reading of this book left me somewhat confused. A second, careful reading brought the realization that I was reading a new kind of novel that would require very careful reading. It is not that the book lacks humor or humanity. It is not a "thesis piece." I hope that it will be translated into English. I would wish that even more for the previous book.

The final volume of the works of Birgitta has been published by the *Svenska fornskrift sällskapet* and this

Sancta Birgitta.  
*Revelaciones Bk. VIII.*  
ed. Hans Ali.  
Uppsala, 2002.

organization deserves much credit for the high level of scholarship involved in this project. They have carefully sifted through the various texts that remain and produced a standard text of her work that will have lasting importance.

Book VIII consists of writings about kingship. Many of them are contained in other parts of the *Revelaciones* but, as brought together, they form a kind of Mirror for Kings. They also help us to understand Birgitta's changing attitudes towards King Magnus.

The age of Birgitta was also that of the crusades and it is interesting to see Birgitta tempering her approval of these endeavors. Chapter XXXIX is an interesting caveat for those who go on crusade.

*The king of Sweden asked the spouse of Christ to consult with God as to whether it pleased him that he do*

*battle against the pagans as he had vowed. As the spouse prayed, Christ appeared to her saying, If the king wishes to go against the pagans, I counsel-not order-as it is more meritorious to do what I counsel rather than what I order. Therefore I counsel two things: First that he have a good heart and a sound body. By a good heart, he should have no other intention in going but the love of God and the salvation of souls. The body should be sound with sensible fasting and work. Secondly he should endeavor to have willing and trained servants and soldiers. Therefore he should go about the kingdom asking how and by whom judgments and governance is done. As he strives to bring others to heaven, it is necessary that he begin with himself. Correcting his own errors and after that admonishing and correcting his subjects, inciting them by examples of virtue.*

It is strange to think that it is now 40 years since the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. It is even stranger to try to remember what the Church was like before that date and

Skydsgaard, K.E.  
*Omkring det andet Vatikanerkoncil.*  
Copenhagen, 1966.

which things are better, which worse. A recent presentation of Vatican II to young people seemed to indicate a general disinterest in the Council, a thing unthinkable twenty years ago.

One of the most sympathetic Lutheran observers at the Council was K. E. Skydsgaard of Denmark. He gave some radio talks that then were published as *Omkring det andet Vatikanerkoncil*. That a Lutheran country would take this kind of interest in a Catholic Council is in itself a sign of its importance. Already in 1966 the esti-

mation of its importance differed in the eyes of conservatives and liberals, even more in the eyes of protestant observers. Luther, at one stage, had appealed to a "free, Christian council" to solve the religious differences of his day. Skydsgaard writes, "Could this council be the beginning of such a 'free, Christian council?' The question is surprising, even shocking, but it is not completely baseless and unspeakable. Who can give a completely certain answer to this question as of now?"

One by one the documents are reviewed with great sympathy. There is an amusing anecdote of an incident that happened the Sunday after the collegiality of bishops with the pope had been discussed. He was at Mass when he was handed a note on which was written, "The Apostles handled 'collegially' in the garden of Gethsemane when they all deserted the Lord."

The document that caused him the

#### Scandinavian Feast Days

Mass is said by our Chaplain for the intention of the League on the Feasts of our patrons as follows:  
St. Ansgar (Scandinavia) February 3, Saint Canute (Denmark) and Saint Henry (Finland) January 19, St. Thorlak (Iceland) July 20, St. Olav (Norway) July 29, St. Erik (Sweden) May 18, St. Brigitta July 23 and October 7

#### Honorary Patrons

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For facts about the Church in Scandinavia and general information, please address corresponding Secretary at Headquarters.

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most problems was the one dealing with the church in the modern world. From the standpoint of theology, he questions whether the Biblical view of the world as in revolt against God, in flight from him has been given its proper weight. Another problem is that the church suddenly comes into worldly politics from being one with a Lord who said that his kingdom was not of this world. How is the church to differentiate itself from any well meaning organization, the Red Cross perhaps?

What impressed Skydsgaard was

the Council's ability to renew the Church without breaking from the traditions of the Church. One of the problems he saw was that protestants would stand with hands in their pockets and do nothing. He reminds his brethren that they must do penance for many wrongs and that they must analyze the structures in which they live. Moreover the protestant churches must try to overcome their separations from other Christians.

If I might analyze the influence of the council, I would say that the time of change has been more confusing for

protestants than for Catholics. For the high church movement, it has posed the problem of what target do they hope to reach. Despite liberal complaints in the Church, uncontrolled change has led to greater chaos outside of the Church than inside it. It is still a time for reflection.

## STATISTICS FOR SCANDINAVIA

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Oslo	Tromsö	Trondheim	Stockholm
Population	5,471,210	5,181,115	286,275	3,423,428	462,908	635,936	8,909,128
Catholics	35,048	7,986	4,803	48,514	1,675	3,080	144,043
Protestants	4,532,635	4,432,054	264,308	3,174,914	424,075		7,860,000
Orthodox	926	55,692	71	2,000			100,000
Jewish	3,000	1,157	20	1,200		150	10,272
Mohammedan	160,000	1,199	178	55,000	245		100,000
Bishops	2	1	1	2	1	1	3
Priests	80	19	11	50	8	7	161
Secular Priests	33	6	6	23	1	5	75
Religious Priests	47	13	5	27	7	2	76
Deacons	4	2		3			14
Brothers and Male Religious	4			31		2	11
Religious Orders of Men	6	2	3	7		2	14
Sisters and Female Religious	231	40	38	135	25	20	231
Religious Orders of Women	19	4	5	10	4	4	21
Parishes	51	7	4	20	6	5	40
Churches and Chapels	65	7 + 3	12	52	17	8	80
Catholic Schools	24	1	1	3			9
Students (Catholic)	1368	?	29	945			1,053
Baptisms	644	644	97	643	43	76	1,091
Confirmations	449	449	52	322	19	39	769
Marriages	123	123	25	117	6	10	249
Ordinations to the Priesthood				1		1	2
Deaths	307	307	11	115	6	8	395

Several of these reports came with annotations. Denmark includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands. All of these reports do not include unregistered Catholics living in Scandinavia. In some cases these numbers might be relatively large. As only members of the "state churches" are civilly registered, the number of "others" involve some guess work. In Sweden, there are maternity, compulsory and folk high schools included in the statistics. Students are divided between these nine schools.



The Catholic Chapel at Ledreborg

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