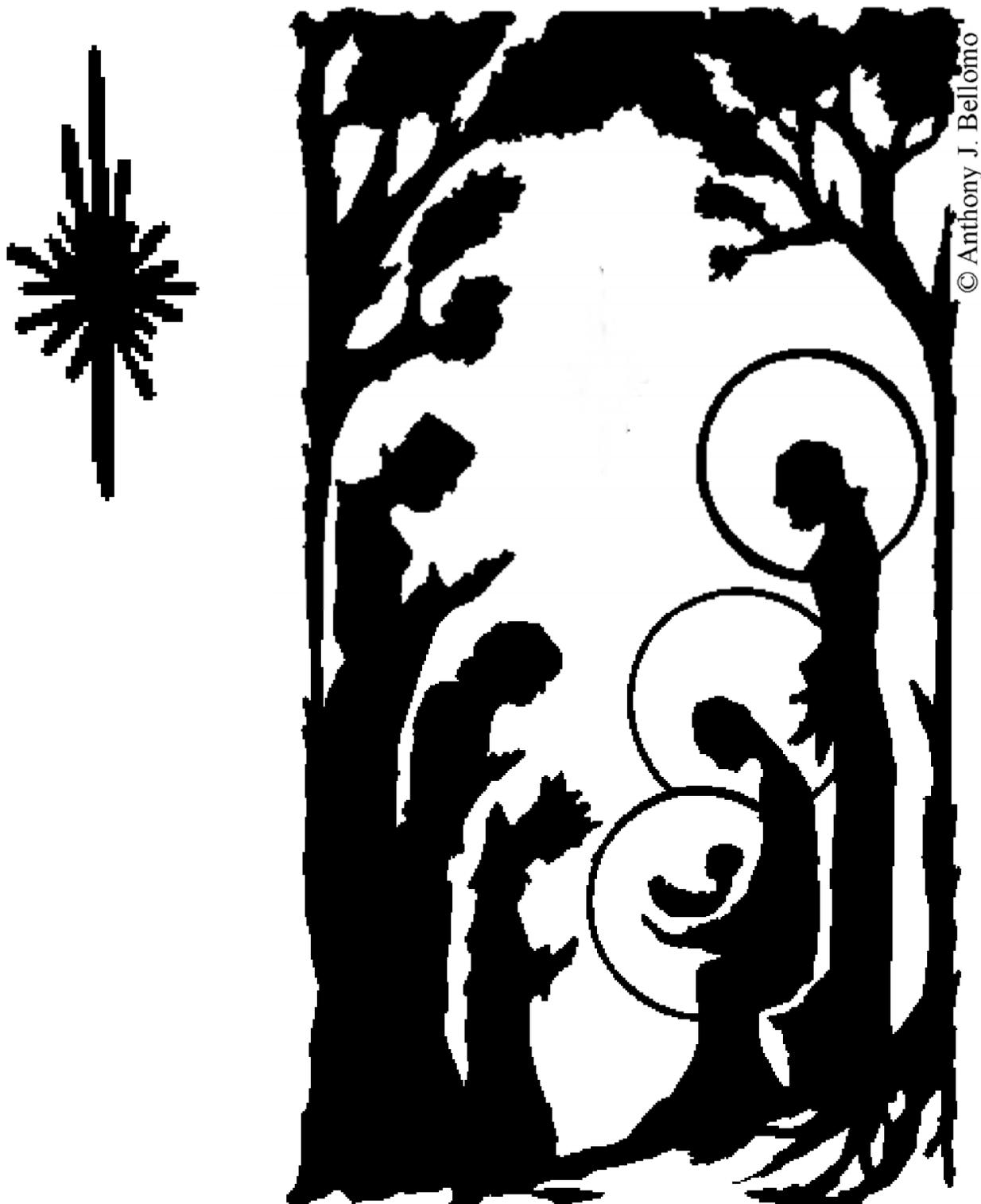


EPIPHANY

January 3-4, 2009

Fatima Mirror

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HIS FASCINATING LIFE STORY

The Bishop of Philadelphia lay crumpled in the snow a few blocks from his new cathedral on Logan Square. By the time a priest reached him with the holy oils, Bishop Neumann was dead. That was January 5, 1860. At his own request Bishop Neumann was buried in a basement crypt in Saint Peter's Church where he would be with his Redemptorist conferees.

PILGRIMAGES TO BISHOP'S TOMB

Almost immediately devout souls were drawn to his grave. They came from far and near. More than a few were claiming extraordinary miracles of grace. It was as though John Neumann, now dead, continued his works of mercy among his people. For decades this unsolicited devotion continued. Finally after many years and many incontrovertible miracles worked through the intercession of this holy man, his Cause was intro-

duced in Rome. In 1921, Pope Benedict XV saw fit to have John Neumann declared "Venerable". The procession of the faithful continued and in 1963 Pope Paul VI declared him "Blessed" John Neumann. The crowds of pilgrims prompted the building of the lower church. His remains, remarkably well-preserved after a century of interment, were exhumed and placed in a glass encasement beneath the altar in the lower church. Bus loads of pilgrims came from different parishes throughout the year to pray to Saint John. Finally the long expected happened in Rome on 1977. Pope Paul VI declared John Neumann a Saint in heaven.

Now pilgrims came from all over the world. From his native Bohemia, from Germany and Holland they came to claim allegiance to one of their own. Pope John Paul II made it a point to visit the Shrine when he came to Philadelphia to attend the Eucharistic Congress. Yes, the City of Brotherly Love was bursting with joy. The diocesan seminarians from St. Charles, Overbrook, have made annual pilgrimages to his tomb. The various Irish Societies of Philadelphia have made formal pilgrimages to the tomb of this humble man of God who, as bishop, did so much for their immigrant forebears in the 1850's -- this "foreigner" who went to the trouble of studying enough Irish to be able to hear the confessions of those who "had no English," up in the coal regions of nineteenth century Pennsylvania.

Those of Italian extraction remember Bishop Neumann as the founder of the first national parish for Italians in the United States. At a time when there was no priest to speak their language, no one to care for them, Bishop Neumann, who had studied Italian as a seminarian in Bohemia, gathered them together in his private chapel and preached to them in their mother tongue. In 1855, he purchased a Methodist Church in South Philadelphia, dedicated it to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, and gave them one of his seminary professors, Father John Tornatore, C.M., to be their pastor.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ESTABLISHED

Bishop Neumann lays several claims to fame in Philadelphia and the United States. Ever a humble and self-effacing person, he would be the last one to mention it himself, but the records stand. It was he who organized the first diocesan schedule of the Forty Hours' Devotion in America. The credit is likewise his of establishing the first system of parochial schools in various parts of the country when Neumann came to Philadelphia -- but the first unified system of Catholic schools under a diocesan board. This he did in May of 1852, a fortnight before the Plenary Council at Baltimore which seconded his proposals.

FOUNDER OF SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

He may also lay claim to being founder of a religious order for women, the Third Order of St. Francis of Glen Riddle, whose Rule he drafted in 1855 after returning from Rome for the solemn promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame likewise regard Bishop Neumann as their secondary founder, their "father in America." In 1847, Father John Neumann, superior of the Redemptorist Order at the time, welcomed the

MONEY MATTERS

Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 21)

280 people Celebrated Liturgy at O.L.F. contributing \$ 3,344.74 of which \$ 235.93 accounted for "loose".

Envelopes In Circulation **236** # Used 113 # Unused 123

Christmas Bake Sale Profits \$ 441.00

first band of these teaching sisters from Munich. He found them a home in Baltimore and then provided them with teaching assignments in his Order's parish schools at Baltimore, Pittsburgh, New York, Buffalo and Philadelphia.

A REDEMPTORIST

Bishop Neumann, as a young priest, was the first to make his religious profession as a Redemptorist in the New World. This he did in 1842 in the Church of St. James in Baltimore. Before his elevation to the See of Philadelphia at the age of 41, he had served as rector of St. Philomena's, Pittsburgh, and St. Alphonsus, Baltimore, as well as vice-provincial of this missionary order in America.

Recent research in the files of the State Department show that Bishop Neumann became a naturalized citizen of the United States in Baltimore on February 10, 1848, renouncing allegiance to the Emperor of Austria in whose realm he was born on March 28, 1811. On his 41st birthday, he was consecrated bishop of Philadelphia by Archbishop Francis Kenrick at St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore, in 1852.

A DIOCESAN PRIEST

Before joining the Redemptorists, John N. Neumann labored as a diocesan priest in Western New York. He was ordained in June of 1836 by Bishop John Dubois at old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mott Street, New York City. The following week he was pastor of the whole Niagara Frontier, some hundred square miles of swampy primeval forest. Many German immigrants had settled this sector of the diocese and were in danger of losing the Faith. It was for this reason that Father Neumann was sent there. He built churches, raised log schools where possible and even taught the three R's himself to the German and Irish children.

"Among the shepherds of the flock in Philadelphia," wrote the late Pope Pius XII, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the diocese, "the figure of Venerable John Neumann is pre-eminent. It was mainly through his prodigious efforts that a Catholic school system came into being and that parochial schools began to rise across the land. His holy life, his childlike gentleness, his hard labor and his tremendous foresight is still fresh and green among you. The tree planted and watered by Bishop Neumann now gives you its fruit." James J. Galvin C.Ss.R.

THE IMMIGRANT SHEPHERD

It was fitting indeed that Bishop Neumann was beatified during the Second Vatican Council. In a personal letter to each bishop of the world, before the opening of the Council, the Holy Father asked each bishop to aim at achieving the heights of personal sanctity in order to assure its success. He reminded them of their first and highest mission of carrying on a constant policy of instruction and of pastoral visitation so that they can say: "I know my sheep, each and every one," and that one of the great blessings that can come to a diocese is a bishop who sanctifies, who keeps watch and who sacrifices himself. All these qualities are pre-eminent in the life and holiness of Bishop Neumann, the shepherd declared Blessed during this council.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR January 5-11, 2009

Monday	1/05	08:00 AM	Frank Filipiak, M/M Stan Krish & Family	<i>John Neumann, bishop</i>
Tuesday	1/06	08:00 AM	Debra Shuma, Homer & Patty Paulos	<i>Blessed Andre Bessette, religious</i>
Wednesday	1/07	08:00 AM	Grace Hebler, Faith Vollenweider	<i>Raymond of Penafort, priest</i>
Thursday	1/08	08:00 AM	Wally Jorkasky, Janet Pufka	<i>Weekday of the Epiphany</i>
Friday	1/09	08:00 AM	Raymond McCall, Wife, Theresa	<i>Weekday of the Epiphany</i>
Saturday	1/10	04:30 PM	Theresa Bruno, Unter Uns Ladies Retirement Club	<i>Weekday after Epiphany</i>
Sunday	1/11	09:00 AM	Ed & Mary Douglass, Jack & Colleen	<i>Baptism of the Lord</i>
Sunday	1/11	11:00 AM	Liv/Dec members of Our Lady of Fatima Parish	<i>Baptism of the Lord</i>