

PAST STILL PRESENT

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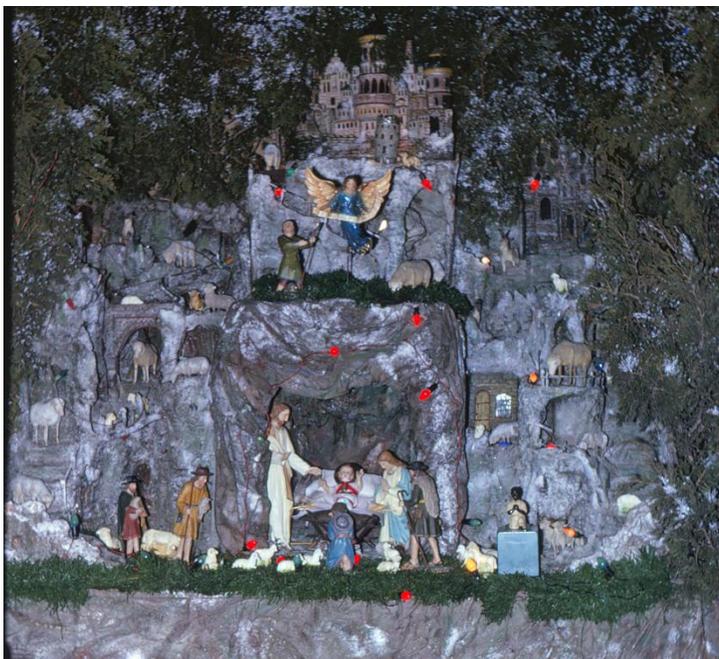
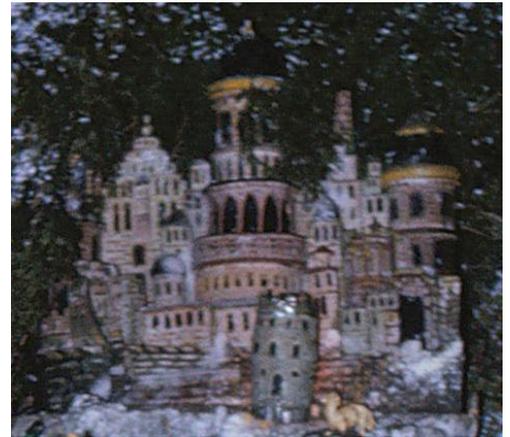
**OH, PRINCE OF PEACE DIVINE, WHO CAME TO EARTH AS MAN BELOW...
GIVE PEACE, OH, THOU THE WORLD'S REDEEMER; OH GIVE THY PEACE.**

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Many of us still remember the old Christmas crib with the little town of Bethlehem standing above it.

The statues used for the old crib were acquired by Mother Armella Beutler in 1893 from Baden in the city of Freiberg. (Sr. Lawrentine Esswein said that the figure of the Christ Child in this crib is a wood carving made in Mexico and was a gift to Sr. Ambrosia Martinez from the Bishop of Mexico, her godfather).

This crib stood for many years in the area near the outside [novitiate] Cloister walk and the Perpetual Help chapel.



When the chapel annex was built in the early 60's the crib stood for a while in the former sanctuary, wreathed in Christmas trees.



At some point the Infant had been replaced by an Infant more proportionate to the large woodcarved Freiberg statues of Joseph and Mary which were retired in 1985. These were replaced by more proportionate-sized statues made of ceramic by Sr. Mary Beth Kemper.

For some years this crib was located in the former sanctuary of St. Joseph Chapel; sometimes the statues have been displayed on the altar without the stable. More recently the crib has been set up in the Precious Blood Chapel.



Visitors to either Chapel this Christmas may find these beloved figures in an entirely new setting. Come, see.



THE LARGE INFANT USED IN THE SANCTUARY

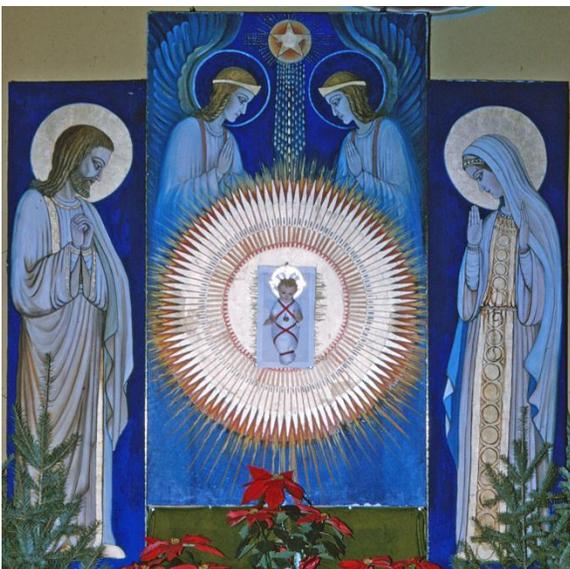
This infant was obtained through a Franciscan father, Father Casper, who conducted a retreat at the Motherhouse in 1923. In 1926 he wrote to Mother Wilhelmine from the Franciscan house in Rome that there was to be had in Rome a beautiful infant, carved in Spain. He wrote and asked if Mother wanted it or, if she couldn't buy this one in time, if she wanted another made like it. She wrote saying that that she would be glad to have it.

Accordingly, Father Casper bought it at Rome, sent it to the Holy Land where it touched the original crib and a seal was placed on it to signify this. There is a document to certify this. The community received it on December 15, 1926. A reliquary is suspended from the neck of the Infant at Christmas and contains a relic of the true crib.

On the first Christmas in 1926—and for many Christmases thereafter—it was carried in procession and placed on the stone slab behind the tabernacle on the altar.



The following year, Sr. Ambrosia painted the triptych which was placed behind the high altar during the Christmas season. That triptych was used for some years in the community room.



Sr. Hiltrudis painted a new background for the Infant. At Christmas time this hangs at the right side of the sanctuary in the expanded chapel.

*[Historic information about the crib and the Infant first appeared in **Little Cloister** in December 1938 and then again in **Archives Bulletin** December 1989]*

