

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING by S. Casarotto,cs 12/14/08

IRRESISTABLE COMMERCIALISM The book *Skipping Christmas* (2001) tells the story of a middle aged man who is tired of all the expenditures for the Christmas holidays. He tried to convince his wife to save in parties and shopping. "*How much do you think we will be able to save?*" eventually asks the wife. "*About \$6,000*" replied the husband. "*And what should we do with that money?*" insists the wife. The husband replied: "*I'm thinking about going on a cruise...*"

VOICES IN THE DESERT

In 2007, the financial ministers of the G8, meeting in Germany, were practically unanimous in recommending the USA to take measures to reduce inflation and cut the cost of production. The Bush administration kept pushing for a "consumer driven" economy because "business regulates itself."

In 1985, then Card. Ratzinger, gave a lecture at the Catholic University of Milan on "*Economy and Ethics*". In it he warned about a liberalistic economic system built on credit which he called "dangerous" and "unethical."

About 70 years ago, Pope Pius XI wrote: "*It is obvious in our days that wealth and immense power have become concentrated in the hands of a few men. These few exercise in the economic sphere a domination that is despotic. They hold and control money. They are also able to govern credit and decide to whom it shall be allowed. They hold in their grasp the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will. The desire for profits has been followed by the unbridled ambition for domination. Furthermore business affairs have become scandalously mixed up with duties and offices of the civil authority and the state has become the slave bound over to the service of human passion and greed.*"

A POOR MEXICAN WOMAN named Pepita had no gift to present to the Child Jesus on Christmas Eve. On the way to the chapel, her cousin Pedro told her that "even the most humble gift, if given with love, will be acceptable to His eyes." So Pepita gathered some weeds along the roadside, fashioned them into a small bouquet, and laid them at the foot of the Nativity scene in the chapel. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into a brilliant red flower, and those who witnessed the transformation were sure they had seen a Christmas miracle. From that day on, the flowers were known as the *Flores de Noche Buena* (Flowers of the Holy Night). Today they are known as poinsettias.