

## Nazarenes Date Talk on Brazil

Special guest speaker at the Church of the Nazarene on Sunday, December 26 at 11 a.m. will

be Rev. James Kratz, Nazarene missionary to Brazil. Mr. Kratz is a native of Oregon, completed his education at Cascade College in Portland and pastored several churches in the western Oregon area. He was last at the Keizer Church of the Nazarene in Salem.

Rev. and Mrs. Kratz are musicians of exceptional ability and will provide special music for the service. They have just completed their first four-year tour of duty as missionaries. They will tell of the work of the Church of the Nazarene and other churches in Brazil and other parts of South America. Rev. and Mrs. Kratz and their family are making their home in Portland during this year in the United States.

### St. Nick Visits Holland In Horse Drawn Sleigh

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer and Rudolph would cause no excitement in the Netherlands, where children believe that a horse pulls St. Nicholas' sleigh.

The great horse is named Sleipner, and the Dutch children fill their wooden shoes with hay for him. This gives him energy to get St. Nick to every house.

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S. APGAR

## CHRISTMAS COMMENTARY

Vernonia Ministerial Ass'n

Christmas — What Is It?

In order to understand Christmas as observed today, one has to take a look back into history.

Jesus was born in one of the Hebrew communities surrounding Jerusalem. The Jewish people observed death anniversaries, never birthdays. On the contrary, the western world was accustomed to celebrating birth dates, hardly ever death dates.

Not until the fourth century was there an annual commemoration of the birth of Christ. Previously, Christians commemorated only death anniversaries, especially those of martyrs. From the first century Christ's followers observed the annual commemoration of His death and resurrection, which we now know as Easter, but they never observed His birthday.

The earliest known celebration of Christ's mass had nothing to do with either the birth of Christ or December 25. The "adoptionists" were placing special significance on the baptism of Jesus. This annual observance of Christ's baptism was placed on January 6.

Serious problems soon arose. Christians at this time still practiced immersion and winter's water is cold, even in the Holy Land. Too, there was the annual Brumalian (also called Saturnalian) festival to compete with. From remote times a mid-winter festival, called Brumalia, had been observ-

ed on December 25, called the birthday of rebirth of the unconquerable sun, set at the season when the short winter days began to lengthen. At this season, it seems, some Christians reverted, if only for a few days, to pagan customs and associations.

Then came one of the boldest and most courageous efforts of the early Christian leaders. This mid-winter festival of the ages was taken over and given a spiritual emphasis! This effort was in keeping with the goal of the Nazarene's followers to see all the world come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Many features of Brumalia were easily adopted—the idea of divine birth, light, rejoicing and exchanging of gifts.

Christmas, if properly understood commemorates a fact, not a date. The best way to destroy a bad habit is to replace it with a good habit. Likewise, the best way to replace death with life, human with divine nature, is to have it transformed by the hand of the Master, whose birth we now celebrate as CHRISTMAS.

### Services Are Announced For St. Mary's Church

Christmas services announced for St. Mary's parish here include confessions Friday afternoon, December 24 from 2:30 to 5 p.m. and Masses Christmas morning at 8 and 10 a.m.

Airplanes are used in Louisiana to locate illegal alligator hunters.

Vernonia Eagle

THURSDAY, DEC. 23, 1965

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Merry Christmas

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1965

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Season's Greetings



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