saint christopher's mission

LENT 1964

bluff, utah

I have been meaning to get this letter off for some five weeks now, but Time - that great thief - has a way of slipping by almost un-noticed. There is so much I would like to write about- each day is a jam-packed experience - but time and space limit my intention. So, just a few highlights. I think our life can best be divided into MOMENTS -

There are many Moments of joy: our teacher, from New York, is marrying a Navajo boy in New York this August - our staff, bolstered by several young members, is busy living, working, playing and praying together for God's glory and these People we love so dear.-- our new kitchen is finished, and what an improvement - our work continues to grow daily as souls are led closer to true Christ-like living in the Kingdom of God.

There are some Moments of sorrow: the fire on January 31 in our Church that destroyed some priceless items; the Indian creche included - the death of a parishoner's infant son - the constant in-adequacy to cope with all the problems and demands that need attention.

We have many Moments of laughter: at the dinner table after a long, hard day - at ourselves as we show-off our mastery of the Navajo language - at the three week old puppies in my hogan - at "Don and Tommie doing the 'Coon twitwist' -" at all the silly little daily happenings that break the monotony of our work and make community so much easier.

And last, there are occasional Moments of anxiety: new glasses again, bi-focals this time, a wrenched back and trip to the doctor a back brace on order - a cold - windy nights in a hogan when the fire goes out.

I think the greatest, and most constant, Moment is one of thankfulness: to God for His goodness and mercy to poor sinners, - for my vocation to this life and work - for my many, many friends and loved ones who cheer the days by their letters and cards of greeting and encouragement.

For a long time now I've been asked, "what do you do all day?" So, in closing, I'll briefly outline a more or less typical day - not Monday, when I baked 60 loaves of bread by hand; or Tuesday, my day off. Wednesday dawned bright and crisp. Rise and shine at 5:30 then to church for a private chat with the Lord before serving the 6:15 Mass. Then Community prayers and Mass; a breakfast for 12 to fix; a brief study period in common. Now the day's work lies in wait. I spent the morning getting the kitchen account closed for the month, making the inventory - about 60 people a day to feed - and lunch to start. A Navajo boy is learning to cook and bake now so he can eventually take over the kitchen. At 1:00 I pack up the jeep and leave for a remote area of the reservation to visit in hogans, pray with families, give elementary nursing care, and finally teach a catechism class of about 20 Then home again for a bite of dinner and an evening spent "catching up." Compline at 9:00 then last minute details and bed. So, until next time, good-night