

December Article for The Rhode Island Catholic by Sr. Patricia McCarthy, CND

Children teach us amazing things. With Christmas coming, I was thinking of a conversation I had shortly before Christmas with a five year old a few years back. The setting was a living room in the little girl's aunts' house.

Katie was rolling around the floor and happened to glance up at a picture of the Christ Child hanging on the wall.

The conversation follows:

Katie: "Did you know that that is a picture of Jesus when he was a little boy?"

Yes, I did.

Katie: "Did you know that Jesus had a plain old mommy just like mine?"

Yes, I did.

Katie: "Did you know that Jesus had a plain old daddy just like mine?"

Being cowardly and totally avoiding with a five year old the topic of the conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, I remained silent. Katie read the silence as consent.

Katie: "I don't get how a plain old mommy and a plain old daddy could make a God."

I don't get it either, Katie; but it is amazing and wonderful."

A few more rolls on the floor and looking up at the picture again, the conversation continued.

Katie: "I know why you help poor children."

At that time I was working in a residential home for abused, neglected and abandoned children.

"Why do I help poor children?"

Katie: "Because every poor child is really Jesus. My daddy is taking me to Toys R Us to buy presents for them."

Where did you learn all this about Jesus?

Katie: My sister told me. She knows because she is making her First Communion this year."

I wonder what kind of world we would have if every person who made their First Communion knew and acted as if every poor child was Jesus.

The nativity sets are being put up on front lawns, in public places, in churches and in our homes. A five year old teaches us that Jesus is not a plaster image of the unimaginable God. The face of Jesus is in the face of every child. If we want to celebrate Christmas, cradle with love a child and reach out to the poor children who have no loving arms around them. We will be holding Jesus, the Son of God and Prince of Peace.