

## A REFLECTION ON CHRISTMAS

– by Sister Barbara Jean Franklin, ASC

Producers use trailers to introduce up-coming movies. The intent is to pique our interest and make us want to see the real thing, whole and entire. Trailers are selective, drawing on the casts' best character portrayals and the most intriguing parts of the script. Often we don't recognize any of the trailers when we see the actual movie because they blend into the larger action.

In a sense, the season of Advent has been a series of trailers and now the big event is ready to be screened. One final trailer is aired to a limited audience in the fields outside of a little town called Bethlehem. If we've followed the previous trailers, we shouldn't be surprised at the targeted audience for this final invitation. We've been shaken to awareness by a disheveled, locust-eating preacher and a pregnant teenager. So, of course the final trailer is shown to a bunch of poor insignificant shepherds. In this final trailer, an angel appears to the shepherds bringing good news of great joy—a savior has been born. Suddenly, in dramatic fashion a whole throng of angels sing: “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace to men [and women] who enjoy [God's] favor.”

Of course, we all know the story but, if we've given enough effort to analyzing the trailers that were presented to us during Advent, we find ourselves caught up in the story in a new way. This is the story of a God who risked becoming one of us. We go with the shepherds to a simple stable and find this God wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. We're not surprised because the trailers hinted that this God is closest to the most vulnerable. This God invites people to conversion of heart. This God is a Light shining through each of us. This God tells us that we are “full of grace.” “The shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.”

However, we can't quite leave the scene because we are in it. How can one remain a spectator when the God who created the earth and all of the galaxies chooses to become human and live among us? Our finite minds cannot grasp it but our hearts know. One of us! This has taken on epic proportions and everybody has a part: farmers and executives, addicts and priests,

athletes and star-gazers, teen-aged mothers and grandfathers, you and me. The reviews are in.  
This is good news! Joy to the World!