

# Cincinnati Enquirer

DECEMBER 11, 1996

## Jewelry line features Nativity stones

Gift-givers who want their present to reflect the meaning of Christmas can purchase stones from the Cave of the Nativity, the site Christians have recognized as the birthplace of Jesus since A.D. 325.

About 2.5 tons of stone were removed from the cave during its only excavation in 1963. Stanley Slotkin, a Los Angeles businessman and philanthropist, visited Bethlehem that year. An amateur archaeologist, Mr. Slotkin was invited to see the cave by Mayor Elias Bandak.

Mr. Slotkin expressed an interest in the stones that were being removed. The mayor, who had no plans for the stones, offered them to Mr. Slotkin, who first shipped them to the United States in 1964.

Initially, the stones were donated to various non-profit organizations, including the American Heart Association, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and American Lung Association for use in fund raising. Mr. Slotkin also has given them to the sick and terminally ill in hospitals all over the United States.

Now, the stones have been used to make a jewelry line of ornaments and religious symbols called the Nativity Stones Collection. Costs range from \$31.25 to \$295. A certificate of authenticity is included.

Five percent to 10 percent of the proceeds benefit the Basilica and Cave of the Nativity. The American Cancer Society and other charities also benefit.

Information: 1-800-473-8886.

— Cindy Kranz



NATIVITY STONES