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FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1998

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Can St. Joseph help you sell your house?

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NORWICH - With the real estate market moving slowly in today's economic world, people are willing to try just about anything to sell their homes. Recently, the practice of invoking the help of St. Joseph in speeding the sales of homes has made a resurgence.

In the early 1980's, certified public accountant Jerry Micklewright of Cary, Ill. was desperately trying to rid himself of the burden of a

large home. In an interview with The Arizona Republic, Micklewright remembered the words of his father: "Dad said if you ever get in trouble trying to sell your house, that you should say a prayer and bury St. Joseph."

He followed his father's advice and sold his home for the asking price the next day.

In 1994, Micklewright created his St. Joseph house-sale kit. The kit includes a statue of St. Joseph, an introduction, and a specific petition for St. Joseph. In his

first year, Micklewright sold 8,000 kits and told The Arizona Republic that he expected to sell 75,000 in 1997.

Gail B. Frayer, owner of the Christian Harmony Gift Shop located on American Avenue in Norwich, said customers have been inquiring about the statue for some time. "When I first opened the store, people wanted the kit. I had never heard of it before," she said. Frayer said she began selling St. Joseph statues without the specific prayer in order to

meet her customers' demands. In the year since her store has been open, she has sold almost a dozen St. Joseph statues.

Six weeks ago, Frayer contacted Micklewright and began selling his kit. Priced at \$5.95, Frayer has sold three house-kits since she began stocking them.

"People come in and tell me it works," she said. Frayer tells a story of a man who was being transferred from his job and was willing to do anything to sell his home quickly - almost any-

thing. "He felt funny about burying the statue," she said. "So, he put it in his garage and within one week his house was sold."

Frayer said she strongly believes it is not the statue alone that works, but the prayer that accompanies it. She said she believes in the strength and power of prayer. "Prayers for anything can't hurt," she said.

"We need something positive in today's world," said Frayer. "This is positive."