

Christmas ...



A little late I returned home. My wife and my children were already sleeping. I opened the fridge to get some water and noticed how little we had to spend these days. I walked heavily towards my old rest chair and there I collapsed almost automatically. My gaze stopped on the wall calendar that faithfully reminded us of the days.

“It seems incredible that we are already at Christmas!” I said to myself in a recriminating tone ...

The word Christmas had never sounded as dry and empty as now. There were very hard times. For the first time my children would not get toys or new clothes. For the first time we would not have a good dinner with the whole family or do our usual exchange of gifts. We would not even have the possibility to paint the house or make some necessary repairs.

A muffled groan descended from my throat as I headed to the living room. Crossing the room, I noticed that my wife had placed the old porcelain manger with which we used to decorate the central table on those days. I had never noticed before but there was a gesture of joy in the small porcelain figures that made up the biblical scene. There were Mary and Joseph, in the foreground next to the Child Jesus. The craftsman had expressed in them a mixture of joy and tender contemplation. At the top, two angels had their mouths open in expression of praise and worship. Below were the shepherds, their faces showed overflowing joy and beyond, still on their way to Bethlehem, the three wise men reflected the expectant joy of those who are going to meet a king. Even the animals in the stable looked happy. Joy was breathed by those porcelain figurines, in contrast to the pessimism that overwhelmed my heart ...

For the protagonists of Christmas those times were not better than mine. There was shortage, poverty, insecurity, ill-treatment by the authorities and many limitations.

And despite that they smiled.

It was then that I realized that the nativity scene of Bethlehem was the most perfect symbol of what the “Joy of Christmas” means. The poverty and dirt of that stable, instead of bringing depression and frustration, was the scene where hope, joy and exuberant joy burst, not

because of the place or the circumstances but because of the person who was born there, "JESUS".

The angels did not see a poor woman giving birth to a child in almost subhuman conditions, they saw GOD himself, made man. The shepherds saw not only a child lying in a manger but the Savior, Christ, Our Lord. The Three Wise Men did not see a baby in danger of being killed by a cruel ruler, they saw the true King of the Jews.

I recognized that my sadness came from seeing my circumstances. I was looking at what I didn't have instead of seeing what I already had: life, health, my family, my children, my wife, my home, faith, hopes and strength to move forward.

I concluded that I had powerful reasons to be happy, and I will not let the manger of my needs, my problems and circumstances rob me of that joy. Instead of joining the depressive choir of those who complain, I will join the choir of angels celebrating:

"Glory to GOD in the highest and on earth peace, with men of good will"

Upon entering the sleeping room, my wife woke up and, still asleep, asked me: "How was it?"

I replied: "Very well, today I recovered the Joy of Christmas." She without understanding asked: "What does that mean my love?" I took her hands tenderly and whispered: "Sleep, honey, tomorrow I'll explain calmly."

And to all of you who have read or heard this story, we wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas. And may the Lord give you presents by sharing and experiencing the true meaning of Christmas with your loved ones.

*The sisters and brothers of the
General Committee of the
International Community of the
Divine Savior*

*This story comes from a Lay Salvatorian
from Venezuela*

