

2025 Christmas nativity scene on ICDS Christmas greetings card

Some thoughts on the nativity scene we see in the picture on the cover of this year's ICDS Christmas greetings card.

The location is a dark, dirty and maybe wet side room, separated from the outside world only by a half-open door. It is the moment immediately after the birth.

In front of us lies a woman on a simple mat directly on the hard-packed earth. Next to her, a man crouches on an invisible stool. Both of their eyes are fixed on a small trough in which a newborn baby lies. Behind his head, a simple lamp provides its meager light.

The hardships of the day, of the past hours, have not left those involved unscathed; on the contrary, with the exception of the newborn, they seem deeply marked by them. Mary is completely exhausted; she has given everything to give life to the child. The pain subsides, and an almost paralyzing fatigue sets in.

Josef's face and posture also reflect the hardships he has endured, the futile search for suitable accommodation, the failure to achieve anything better for his wife and child, and the fear he endured for his wife and child during the birth.

It is the moment of the first "breath" after all the tension. The transition from the challenge that has been overcome to the one that still lies ahead. A moment that is often perceived as complete emptiness. A moment of upheaval, when it is not yet clear what will happen in the future or how things will continue. Will the child survive the next few hours or days? Will it be possible to provide adequate care?

So the question arises here: to what extent is this reflected in our lives today, even if our external circumstances and realities may be different?

I think the image invites us to pause for a moment and reflect on our own lives and situations, especially now at Christmas – and how or whether we could or should change something.