

## Sharing Christmas

From Mother Olga

***“The Incarnation sprang from the goodness of God. The humility contained in this mystery is amazing, marvelous, astonishing!”*** Blessed Charles de Foucauld

Early in Fall, and in recent years, even before Thanksgiving, we have witnessed the preparation for Christmas in the culture starts very early. It begins with many signs and symbols of putting up Christmas trees, decorations, wrapped boxes as samples for gifts, Christmas music at many stores and public areas, etc. In some ways it is beautiful to see all these external signs for something very special and meaningful for those of us who know the true meaning of Christmas. Especially the symbols of light, the music that indicates joy, and most of all, the wrapped boxes that indicate the Gift! Indeed, Christmas is about the light and the joy that came to the world the day that God the Father sent His ultimate Gift for us.

Since I came to this country, I have wondered as I have wandered among many places of ministries and hearing people often talking about Christmas gifts! The question that I have asked myself if we ever thought where this tradition began? Whether it is to remind ourselves of the ultimate Gift that came to us on Christmas day? For me I think of Christmas the day that God came to share Himself with humanity. In a sense Christmas is as Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI calls it “Epiphany”. For on this day our humanity recognized the appearance of the Face of God by the birth of Jesus Christ on earth. In that stable of Bethlehem, God the Father expressed His solidarity with our human race and chose the time and space to make His epiphany to the world.

That is why in our religious Community sisters stay together at the convent so that we can share our Christmas with others in need, so that they may come to experience God’s epiphany on this day. We choose this way of life, a vocation that is free for God and His people “unboxed, untagged, unsealed, unwrapped, etc.” It is a vocation of an open gift of self for all throughout our life and more so on Christmas.

On Christmas day, we began our day receiving the ultimate Gift of God in Emmanuel at Mass, Who came to be one with us. All throughout the day, we all spent our Christmas by sharing “the singing joy of the angels, and the sharing of the gladness of the shepherds, and the wonder adoration of the wise men” through the service of hospitality, hospital ministry, and outreach to the homeless wherever we were needed throughout the day.

From the outside, the Christmas day may seem like that silent night “the holy night” yes, all is calm because not too many people were out or on the road because most of the people were at home or off work, thanks be to God! Yet, from our interior experience because of all the various services, our day was “all bright” because of the light of the newborn King that we saw in all the people that we served. It is truly as Saint Francis said that by giving that we receive. Yes, all our Christmas day was spent for others, our own Community Christmas dinner didn’t happen until very late in the evening, yet, in a way, each of the sisters became like a Christmas candle quietly burning away, unselfishly grows small, but only to give itself away with light ☺



Through the Crib of Bethlehem God chose to reveal His love for the World. This Crib contains the whole Christ, God Who became Man... The same God Who has called each of the Daughters in our Community to follow Him, and to become as a little child in total abandonment and gift of self. This Nativity Crib is part of our Nazarean spirituality that is why we keep it all year long at our Convent and not just during Christmas Season. Our Faith teaches us that our God is God of giving and receiving; eternally giving, eternally receiving and as His followers we spend our lives too by giving to Him and receiving from Him and in return He has made us to be in union with Him that essence of gift to others on Christmas day and beyond!