

...if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. Rev 3:20

Reflection

A Christmas without doors

That was his first Christmas celebration in the parish of his appointment. The newly ordained young priest brought the whole parish together for it and made that memorable event of Christian unity. Soon after the mid-night mass, the parish community including the sacristan returned to their homes. As he sat alone at the dining table facing the cold Christmas breakfast, his heart ached. Complaints sprang-up from his mind, his sorrow poured out as tears. He knelt before the decorated crib inside the church and opened up the bundle of his complaints: "Lord I was the main celebrant for all the services in connection with your birthday. Here I am alone now. All are celebrating Christmas in their homes behind closed doors!". The Holy Family spoke to him from the crib: "Doesn't matter my son! We are also alone here. Come inside our crib, the crib without doors. We shall celebrate together!". Since that day he never complained or cried.

Another Christmas is here reminding us that life is to be celebrated by opening up our doors and our hearts, and not by opening our gifts. Isn't Christmas more a giving rather than receiving? It is giving not only what is in our hands but giving our hand itself.

We are muddled by the pattern and nature in which the Son of God entered into the world and lived in harmony with the environment. Christmas compels us to redefine the modern concepts about homes. Apart from being a safe shelter, home has deteriorated to a display of our wealth and pride. The manger in Bethlehem where Jesus was born, is the expression of the fulfilment of the desire of the Heavenly Father that each one should have a home to live.

Christmas denotes the constant conflict between the closed doors and door-less houses. All the houses that denied shelter for the Infant Jesus had secure doors. Joseph and Mary reached the manger without doors, giving a message, that God will not be born in houses with secured doors. The manger is like an open heart that welcomes every one, inside which space is never a problem.

The shepherds who received the news about the saviour's birth first also lived in open fields. The wise men who came from the East to worship the Infant also came out of their open doors. They crossed many cultures and lands in search of Jesus. Theirs was a journey into the wider world. "...If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Rev 3:20). To open the doors is an eternal message of the Bible.

Let not this good news for all people not be confined to the privacy of our small houses and behind closed doors. Let not the doors and walls be blocking the light of Christ in us which is to be shared to others. Let them not prevent people from coming to the Infant in the manger.

Rev. Fr. Cherian Nerevettil (Chaplain, Jesus Youth International)

Saint's Quote

"The mystery of the Holy Night, which historically happened two thousand years ago, must be lived as a spiritual event in the 'today' of the liturgy. The Word who found a dwelling in Mary's womb comes to knock on the heart of every person with singular intensity this Christmas"

St. Pope John Paul II

To Do

Offer a meal to a stranger or a beggar in your house's dining table. (Preferably on any Sunday during this advent season)

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