



Infant Jesus Sisters

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Dear Sisters,

A very happy Christmas to each and every one of you, to each of your communities and to all your loved ones! Yes, indeed! Let us truly rejoice in this Good News: God is with us, yes, He is with us! He chose to come amongst us, and He continues to come to us, weak, helpless and insecure. He reveals his Divinity as God in a small, weak and defenceless baby. What more could he do to join us in our weaknesses and doubts, in the midst of the difficulties, problems, distress and evils of our world?

After Christmas, the path is open to meet God, to enter into God's world: we must return unceasingly to the manger in Bethlehem – **“Do not wander far from the crib of Jesus”** (FM 11). May this message from our Blessed Founder continue to light our paths! That is where our origin lies, in this little child who is the bearer of the immense love of God's heart.

What does it mean **not to wander far from the crib of Jesus** in our everyday lives as Infant Jesus Sisters and in the lives of people who are associated with us? It would be good for us to share it with others. Is it the witness that we bear personally as a community? Do we also see it in the lives of people around us, whether or not they are believers?

Not to wander far from the crib of Jesus is something to which we all aspire, since we have chosen to be the sisters of that very Infant! The testimonies heard in the General Chapter do indeed tell us that this is what we are. In all our countries the Sisters and communities are living it.

They have stepped out of the race where people want to be greater than others, a race that creates so many evils in our world. They act in the manner of the God who comes to humanity in the weakness of a baby who cannot even speak. It is unimaginable, apparently ineffective. However, it is a very striking way of saying who our God is, of being *“authentic witnesses to the love of God for each one and for all creation”* (Acts of the General Chapter).

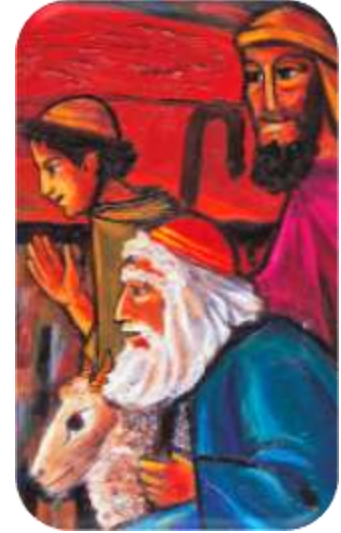


They live modestly, they have chosen simplicity as a way of living and of establishing and maintaining relationships. It is God's way of going towards others, a God of humility who does not force anyone to acknowledge Him, who is never dominant or conquering.

They become close to those who have no voice, those who are excluded, and they truly become their friends. This is what makes them happy, the very happiness of God, *"who is supremely great, yet he is happy to reach out humbly towards the little ones"* (SR 2). Even the shepherds, who were despised by all, were able to hold God in their arms.

They welcome weakness and insecurity, and choose to put their trust in God like a child in the arms of its mother. In a world where weakness is shameful, where the weak have no place, where old age is seen as a failing, they uncover beauty, because God's strength and love live in their weakness.

That child did not come to leave us in peace, He came to shake us up, to transform our lives, to change the way we see the world and our image of God. Let us allow that child to shake us up. Let us go to the crib, let us never wander far from the crib of Jesus, let us bring to it our schools, our parishes, our colleagues and our families. Let us go to the crib each day, without words *"but in deeds and in truth"* (1 Jn 3, 18).



That baby in the manger also tells us how much God needs our help. God needs our help to be God in our world. The prayer of Ety Hillesum, a young Jewish woman, in the heart of the tragic misery of a camp where she was led to death whilst her country was under Nazi occupation, expresses it marvellously:

"I shall try to help You, God, to stop my strength ebbing away, though I cannot vouch for it in advance. But one thing is becoming increasingly clear to me: that You cannot help us, that we must help You to help ourselves. And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves. And perhaps in others as well. Alas, there doesn't seem to be much You Yourself can do about our circumstances, about our lives. Neither do I hold You responsible. You cannot help us, but we must help You and defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last."



I join Jane, Felicia and Marina in wishing each of my sisters
a very happy Christmas!

*"Of what use is it that Christ was born so long ago in a stable
if he is not born today in your heart?"*

S. Brigitte

(Origen)