

Theme of the Year 2019 – 2020
«**Make your face shine on us**»

International Editorial



Saint Joseph, a face of Light

The meditation of the Mystery of the Birth of our Savior fulfills our eyes and our heart: the Holy Family is there, in the Manger. Mary and Joseph, amazed, are contemplating the Son of God, the Prince of Peace. An atmosphere of love, joy, light, bathes the scene of Bethlehem and floods our soul.

On this Christmas, let's have a look at the person of Joseph. His destiny is a chapter of unimaginable events: a miraculously pregnant wife, a precarious birth while travelling, the strange visit of magi and shepherds, then death threats, a time of fleeing abroad and a return to the home country. Not to mention the dreams and angels coming to trouble him, provoke him and encourage him to act. Finally, the settling in Nazareth, the disappearance of Jesus in Jerusalem and a few years of family life...

What a testimony to his abandonment to God's will and to his love for Mary his wife! He goes away, leaving certainties, habits, his country. Joseph is always where he must be: in the Temple, in Bethlehem, in Egypt, in Nazareth. And everywhere, always, he is silent.

What silence, what discretion, what effacement because God needs him to be the guardian, the protector of Mary and the Incarnated Word!

We have a lot to learn from the life of St. Joseph. We also have a lot to ask him - for his intercession for our families and for the Church.

Let's entrust the Rosary Teams to Saint Joseph. Let's put our team under his protection.

Throughout his whole hidden life, Joseph has been watching over the One who is the Life, the true Light. Thus, the face of Joseph, shining with the light of the Son of God, will enlighten our faces during our monthly meetings in our homes and during our personal prayer, united with the other members of the team.



Chantal COURTIN, international Coordinator of the Rosary Teams

Come to the manger with empty hands!



Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are: at Christmas!

It is true that we have been preparing ourselves for a few weeks. The liturgy of Advent helped us. There were also some external elements: illuminations of cities and villages, advent calendars from which we cannot escape, advertisements of all kinds for gifts and foods. And even if the word "Christmas" is to be eliminated from our societies - have you noticed that now everyone is wished "happy holidays"? - we ourselves really want to wish each other a "Merry Christmas"!

Among the customs which announce the coming of Christmas, there is one to which I am much attached: it is the one of the Manger. When we were children, we almost fought together to find out who was going to put the Christ Child in the Manger... after the Midnight Mass, of course! And we put the kings at the other end of the house and brought them a little nearer every day so that they arrived at the Crèche for Epiphany... but not before!

In convents, whether Dominican or not, there are also Mangers. They are sometimes huge; it depends on the convent and on the person in charge. In the convent where I am now, the Manger is simpler; there is the bare minimum. And this year, it was me who had to put it in place. That's what I did, just before joining you. Last year, we put the santons in 2 boxes: one for the figures, one for the animals.

The first ones I put in place are Mary and Joseph, leaving a place in the middle for Jesus. But I left him in the box with another santon whom I did not manage to identify: he had nothing in his hands and no particular costume.



Then I opened the box of animals and took out the ox and the donkey - must-haves! - And 3 sheep. And, strangely, these animals made me think about me, about us.

The sheep ... An animal that does not think too much, that moves in a flock and just follows, doing like the others ... not making too many waves! But as soon as the wolf comes and shows its teeth, there is no one left! He has only one fear: to finish on a barbecue!





The donkey ... An animal that has a bad reputation since we used to make hats in its name. He is a bit of a revolutionary from time to time ... but not too often! The less I think, the better I am! The donkey is a nice guy.



The ox ... that probably has a big heart, buried under a lot of worries and habits. "Do not push anyway," it seems to say, sighing to warm the Child.

Are we sheep-Christians, ox-Christians, or donkey-Christians?

The answer is: "None of the three"!

The answer is elsewhere, and I understood it by taking the last santon, the one that I could not identify.



And what if that santon was me, you, here, in this church?

He comes empty-handed before the Child of Bethlehem because in front of the King of the world, we can only offer what we are. Not what we have. What we are.

Remember, brothers and sisters, on this Christmas night: a family gathering, an evening without disputes - for once! -, a reproach that we make silently - for once! -, an invitation to someone alone, a visit to an elderly parent or a sick friend, a greeting exchanged with neighbors that we ignored for so long ... it's worth more than all the PlayStations and all the iPhones in the world.

Brothers and sisters, **Christmas is being**, not having.

So, for once, do not be a sheep, nor an ox, nor a donkey ... even less a camel!

Be yourself. Tell those you love that you love them, simply. Christmas Eve is made for that.



Be what you are, nothing more, empty-handed, and come to the Manger!

There, you will find Mary who will place in the hollow of your empty hands, her son Jesus.

Believe me, this is the most beautiful gift!

Come to the manger!

Amen.

Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, OP, International Chaplain





L - Person in charge or the person who receives at home and leads the prayer
1- 1st reader 2- 2nd reader 3- Cantor A- All together

◆ Welcome

The person who receives says the Father Eyquem's prayer to the Virgin.



L. The Word of God invites us today to go, like the Magi, on our way to the Manger of Bethlehem. Like them, let us not be afraid to go forward into the night, to Him who is the Light of the world

1. Throughout this journey of Advent, let us take time to prepare our heart for the One who comes, let us live this waiting time in faith, hope and charity.

2. In union with all the Rosary Teams in the world, let us enter the prayer by tracing on us the sign of the cross, sign of our salvation:

3+A. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

◆ Prayer to the Holy Spirit

L. Holy Spirit, help us to overcome our fears and concerns, purify our sight, so that we can, like the Magi, see the star and follow it with confidence up to the Manger.

**3+A. Come, Creator Spirit, visit us
Come and enlighten the souls of your sons;
Fill our hearts with grace and light,
You who created everything with love**

1. Holy Spirit, enlighten our Advent way, teach us to prepare ourselves so that on Christmas Eve, our hearts will be ready to welcome the God of Love coming to visit us in his Son Jesus.

3+A. Come, Creator Spirit, visit us...

◆ Invocation to Mary

L. Virgin Mary, the Magi have followed the star that led them to Bethlehem, please be our star throughout our journey on this earth.

**3+A. Look at the star, call upon Mary
If you follow her, you've nothing to fear!
Look at the star, call upon Mary
She leads you on the right path!**



2. Virgin Mary, you who have watched over the baby Jesus, watch over the marching Church; that despite hardships and troubles, it never ceases to announce the Good News to all men.



3+A. Look at the star, call upon Mary...

◆ Listening to the Word of God

Matthew 2, 1-12

R. ¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem ²and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'



1. ⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." ⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

2. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

L. Let us welcome in silence the word of God.

◆ Reflection on the Word

L. These Magi from the East are not only astronomers, they are also scientists. It is the fruit of their knowledge and their discovery that pushes them to undertake a long journey to prostrate themselves in front of the newborn.

1. They leave with confidence because, since their departure, they are guided by a star: "his star". However, they do not know yet that by following this star, they are actually guided by God.



2. They thought they had considered everything, and yet, their knowledge of the stars was not enough for them to reach the goal. In the end, it is the Word of God, interpreted by the scribes, that leads them there.

**3+A. Walking towards you, Lord,
our hearts are full of joy,
your light leads us
to the Father in the Spirit,
to the Kingdom of Life.**

L. At last, at the end of their journey, they enter the house where the Child and his Mother are. There, discovering the face of the Child, they pay tribute to the One they recognize as a king: the "King of the Jews" and, bowing down before him, they offer him their presents.

1. These three gifts that come from their distant country have each of all a very special meaning: they reveal to us the identity of the One they came to adore.

2. Indeed, gold reveals to us the kingship of Christ; incense testifies of his divinity because he is the "beloved Son of the Father". In the book of Isaiah (chapter 60, verse 6), gold and incense were announced as tribute gifts to the God of Israel from the people. Finally, myrrh, which is used to embalm the bodies, testifies of its mortal humanity because its body will be buried.



3+A. Walking towards you, Lord,...

L. In this house where they bow down, the Magi are illuminated by another light, that one which emanates from this new-born who will be "the shepherd of the people of Israel" and from whom they have the joy of contemplating after a long journey.

1. What happened during this face-to-face meeting with the "King of the Jews"? The evangelist concludes soberly, "warned by a dream", that is to say by God, the Magi return to their country by another way. They will not go back through Jerusalem. Thus, Herod, like the high priests and the scribes, will not be informed of the place of the birth of Jesus.

2. But this change of route also has another meaning for them. After meeting the Messiah, they cannot go back to their old life. From now on, it is Jesus who will be their light, their guide.

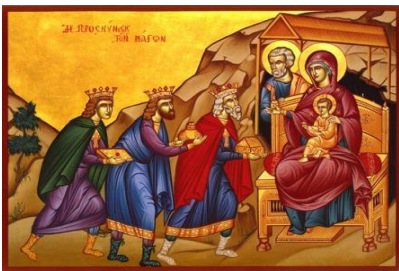
3+A. Walking towards you, Lord,...

Reflection for our life

L. The Magi stopped in Jerusalem to ask Herod where the "King of the Jews" was. If science, astrology or wisdom allow us indeed to admire the work of God, they cannot help us to reach Christ.

1. The Magi were scientists, Herod was king of Judea, and yet they did not know where this Child was to be born. Seeking the answer in the Scriptures, the scribes are teaching us that only the Word of God, as a good star, can guide us to His Son.

2. It is the scribes reading "what is written by the prophets" who could point to Bethlehem. And us, for whom are we the scribes? For our brothers who no longer know where to turn do we know how to be true guides to the path that leads to Him who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life"?



L. Let's take a moment of silence to remember all the faces who showed us the way.

**3+A. Light of men we walk towards you,
Son of God, you will save us.
Those who seek you, Lord,
you lead them to your light,
you, the road for those are lost.**

R. "Epiphany" means "manifestation of God". That day, God "lying in a manger", manifests Himself in his poverty. But he has also manifested Himself by His only wealth which is His infinite love for men, because it is by love that He becomes man.

1. To this God we recognize in the Child of the Manger, what do we have to offer? Let us not hesitate to approach Him; He will welcome us, as He welcomed the shepherds and Magi, without distinction, full of tenderness for those who turn to him.

2. When we are close to Him, let us remember what we say at each meeting in Father Eyquem's prayer: "Let no one feel embarrassed either because of his poverty or of his wealth." Let us simply offer him the testimony of our love and recognize in Him our Savior and our God.

3+A. Light of men we walk towards you,...

L. The Rosary Teams gather every month to live the Gospel with Mary. Now let's ask ourselves the question: With or without sparkle, how are we going to celebrate Christmas?

1. Christmas is a family gathering, a party that has to be prepared because before this day, there is an actual path to follow. No one can arrive at the Manger without having something to offer: beyond the small daily effort expressed by a time of prayer, more patience or more listening, it is ourselves that we have to offer to the Lord.

2. Christmas is also a church celebration. No doubt we will take the time to join all those who will come and adore "the child who was born to us, the Son God has given us"? Then, after the



holiday season, what will our return to daily life be like? Like the Magi, we are invited to take "another route".

L. Which new routes are we invited to take? How can Christmas lead us along these new routes? Let's take the time to share.

3+A. Light of men we walk towards you,...

◆ **Prayer of praise and intercession**



L. Praised be to you, Father, for this blessed day of Christmas when your Son has come to reveal to all men Your infinite and merciful love.

3+A. Today, in our world, the Word is born

**to speak about the Father to the men who loved him so much and heaven teaches us the great mystery:
Glory to God and peace to men, alleluia!**

1. Praise be to You Lord Jesus, You, true light coming to enlighten all men.

3+A. Today, in our world...

2. Praise be to you, Holy Spirit, you who inspire us every time we dare to say

3+A. Our Father who art in heaven...

L. Mary, please help us to know how to welcome Jesus in our hearts, He, Who is the true wealth of men.

3+A. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, *the true light of the world.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God...

1. Virgin Mary, we entrust to you all the families in trouble. After coming to bow before your Son, the Prince of Peace, may they return home full of hope.

3+A. Hail Mary,... (*with the clausulae*)

2. Virgin Mary, may you look after the Rosary Teams, in order that they continue to be witnesses and messengers of the Good News.

3+A. Hail Mary,... (*with the clausulae*)

1. December prayer intention of Pope Francis

That every country take the necessary measures to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

3+A. Hail Mary,... (*with the clausulae*)

L. Let us complete our decade with all our intentions, without forgetting those of Pope Francis, the Church and the world.

A. Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...

◆ **Sending on mission**

L. Today, the Magi taught us that in the midst of our troubles, God continues to guide us by his Word.

1. Like them, let us persevere in our desire to meet the Savior, He alone, can fulfill us with joy.

2. After worshiping the Child of Bethlehem, let us too be guided by Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**3+A. Come and sing to our God, the King of heaven,
He has come to save humanity and give us life.
Exult for your King, Jerusalem, and dance with joy!**

Celebration prepared by

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*And Fr. François-Dominique FORQUIN,
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Bethlehem town today



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