



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

1_The deeper meaning of Christmas

Dear Friends,

I was asked to write a short "Christmas Story" - an unusual request, I said to myself, since it is a well-known story. Then it occurred to me to propose it through a few scenes, thinking of offering them as a way to approach Christmas. I would like that while listening to it one would not think of an episode from the past, but rather of an event that concerns me *today* and that knocks at my door. In truth, Christmas is an event prepared for me from eternity.

Allow me, then, to guide you on this journey that will accompany us in five stages during these days of Advent and Christmas.

First, a question: What is Christmas?

Some people wonder, others don't; for some it's just another day and they have no reason to wonder, for others it's an end-of-year celebration: A festive season, full of lights, rich in gifts, a time for culinary specialties and typical sweets. The advertising industry overwhelms us with it all.

I'd like to respond right away: It is not simply a festivity on a calendar, placed on December 25 with an atmosphere that extends for a few dozen days. It is not someone's birthday. It is not even a simple popular or cultural tradition. Instead, it is the memory of the *Mystery of God's Incarnation* in our world.

I will try to briefly explain this.

God is not only the creator of the universe and our earthly world, of visible things; He, at the same time, loves His creation, as every artist loves his work and compositions. We, too, love the good we do and the relationships we weave.

When a student writes a good paper he has the pleasure of showing it at home and to friends. One who does some good deed has the pleasure of sharing about it. A work of art should not be hidden.

The human being is God's work, created and loved by Him. The word 'love' challenges us: Can I love what I do not know, for example, a person I have never seen? Perhaps, the desire to do so is there, but the bond is missing!

The Holy Scripture speaks to us, so to speak, of a dialogue that took place outside of time, whose protagonists were God-the-Father, God-the-Son and God-the-Holy-Spirit: that is to say, that God who is coeternal and One in Himself like the homogeneity of a flame which, although separated into parts, does not lose its characteristic identity.

The summary of that dialogue was the following:

“Men, although created, do not know the Creator; they do many things, they toil in search of a good that continually eludes them; they seek love, they sense it, they perceive it, they desire it, they are nostalgic for it, they are restless, but they fail to find it because their knowledge is not proportionate to God; pain and death frighten them, and for this reason they offer sacrifices; and even this is not enough. Can the Creator be insensitive to such reality? Perhaps it is necessary to come into direct contact with them, to speak to them, to show them that love and fraternity are possible and that they are loved. But this is conceivable only if God Himself takes on their human nature, a face, a language; in short, if He reveals himself by inserting Himself into their history”.

It is at this point that the Son - according to the biblical narrative we find in the Letter to the Hebrews - turns to the Father and says:

“Behold, O Father, if this is the reality, I must go to them! When I enter the created world, I will do Your will: I will need a family, I will take on a name, a real body, a real face, a real soul, and in my flesh I will establish a new covenant; I will submit to every limitation, except in doing evil; I will speak to them about You in a language they can understand, and they will know Your infinite love, the love that has always been between us; finally, I will show them a new brotherhood and forgiveness”.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

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