

# Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

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## Christmas: Light, Joy, gift

I do not know if you noticed with how few words the Evangelist narrates the so- extraordinary event: “While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.” The simplicity and the poverty of these words are contrary to the solemn and noisy Nativity to which we are accustomed. Our “rich” Nativity has prevailed and has impoverished the true Nativity. What really happens today at Christmas? What does Christ do for us at Christmas?

**1. Christ comes to bring us light:** “The people walking in darkness saw a great light; they lived in a land of shadows and a bright light shone unto them.” We found out soon enough that his light is an annoying light, an indiscreet light which discovers our miseries, our limitations, our meanness. It is a light which is not satisfied only being a decoration. It compels. It demands painful changes in our existence. Many are not ready to take this step. What about us?

**2. Christ comes to fill us with joy.** The angel announces to the shepherds: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” Joy because we know that there is a God who thinks of man with love.....that he approaches man.....that he becomes a man. He is a God who walks along our same path. He is a God who shares our troubles and miseries, our worries and hopes. He is a God who comes to bring salvation to all. Christ has come to bring us happiness, a happiness which goes beyond all earthly horizons. And we insist on our own joy, our own poor, human, earthly joy. It is terrible to reach Christmas already believing oneself to be a happy person, a person satisfied by other reasons. Perhaps we are very wealthy and have many material things and therefore find so little joy in heavenly things.

**3. Christ brings us his gifts.** He himself becomes a gift for us, the gift par excellence, and we want to pretend that we are not aware of such a gift. In reality, we expect little from Him. Who of us, this Christmas, has asked Christ for a spiritual gift, a miracle of change, of transformation?

We are too occupied with our own packages which conceal our gifts, our poor gifts. In this way, we drown the only gift under a mountain of colored paper, trinkets, and other unnecessary things.

## Our Mission

1. We should **become light**. May the light of Christ penetrate us intimately. May it transform us. May it make us so transparent that others who see us may be so dazzled by the enchantment and attractiveness of that supernatural light.

2. We should **become joy**. Our mission is to be witnesses of Christian joy. May the world understand that the message of Christ is a message of salvation and not of condemnation; a message of freedom and not of oppression; a message of joy and not of sadness.

3. We must **become a gift**. It is customary to give presents at Christmas, many presents. In this way we want to settle our debts of gratitude with those persons to whom we owe a favor. But, that is very comfortable. Much more is required of a Christian. He has the obligation, not to give presents, but to become himself a present, to become a gift. His life must become a giving of self without reserve to everyone because everyone is his creditor.....because the Christian should feel indebted to all his peers and, above all, indebted to God.

With this birth which we will celebrate, something has to be born in each one of us. We are all called to be born again. St. Paul says that only one thing is important.....and that is that we become a new creature. It is useless that Christ was born thousands of years ago if nothing will be born in us today. The marvel of Christmas Eve, brothers and sisters, is that the Child Jesus can be born anew and live again in the heart of each one of us.

## **Questions for reflection**

1. What is Christmas for me today?
2. How do I celebrate Christmas?
3. What do I ask for and what do I give?

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Translation: Carlos Cantú Family Federation La Feria, Texas USA 120907