

Christmas 2006

I seem to lose my glasses now and then, forgetting where I had just put them down. There are certain memories, however, that I can never forget. One of them is the story of Christmas.

My earliest memories are of the old Christmas crib at home. It had endured many Christmases in a house full of children who would playfully rearrange the small figures in imagining the story unfold before them. As a result of much handling, the donkey was missing a front leg, so that we had to lean him against the stable door. A donkey lying on its side does not figure in anyone's imagined story of the events of Bethlehem.

How can we ever forget a God who approaches us with the surprising humility of an infant. He is poor to meet us in our poverty. In every way He shares our burdens.

This year's story of Emmanuel (God with us) is repeated again with the hope that we will not overlook Him. It is always a tale of the divine presence in the midst of the poor and the humble - in surprising ways and in out-of-way places.

It is a small thing to miss one's glasses. It is truly troubling to lose the vision that Christmas brings.



In the footsteps of Mary of Nazareth,
young Maria Of Calavera
goes about her chores,
the weight of her labors bends her neck,
poverty clings to her skirt.
She waits for our strange caravan to pass,
we bent with other burdens,
in a poverty all our own.
She bears the One we seek,
born in every age,
the campesino God of the poor,
El Salvador.

Peace,
Father Tom