



The enchanting image of the Christmas crèche

From the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis
Admirabile Signum



Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths,
and laid him in a manger.



**Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply?
First, because it shows God's tender love.**

The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous
as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life.





The nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial.



**God became man. His closeness brings light where there is darkness
and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering.**



The angels and the guiding star are a sign that we too are called
to set out for the cave and to worship the Lord.



Unlike so many other people, busy about many things, the shepherds become the first
to see the most essential thing of all: the gift of salvation.
It is the humble and the poor who greet the event of the Incarnation.



**By being born in a manger, God himself launches the only true revolution
that can give hope and dignity to the disinherited and the outcast:
the revolution of love, the revolution of tenderness.**



From the shepherd to the blacksmith, from the baker to the musicians, from the women carrying jugs of water to the children at play: all this speaks of the everyday holiness.

In Mary, we see the Mother of God who does not keep her Son only to herself, but invites everyone to obey his word and to put it into practice.



To our astonishment, we see God acting exactly as we do:
he sleeps, takes milk from his mother, cries and plays like every other child!





The Magi teach us that people can come to Christ by a very long route. Kneeling before him, they understand that the God who with sovereign wisdom guides the course of the stars also guides the course of history, casting down the mighty and raising up the lowly.



Wherever it is, and whatever form it takes, the Christmas crèche speaks to us of the love of God, the God who became a child in order to make us know how close he is to every man, woman and child, regardless of their condition.



Photos: Communications Office • General Curia of the Society of Jesus.

*From the exhibition "100 presepi in Vaticano",
St Peter's Square, presented by the Vatican, Dicastery for Evangelisation.*

