

28. December

Fourth day of the Christmas Octave
"The Child"

The Lord comes into the world as a child. This is the way God chose to come down to us so that we might understand Him. A child arouses joy and love, tenderness and a desire to protect. No one is afraid of a child! Even people who tend to be closed can sometimes open up in the presence of a child.

A child can bring out the best in a person.

Especially in the first stage, the child is like a reminder of paradise, showing us the original innocence of man, even though he already bears the inheritance of original sin. But the Lord is free from the shadow of sin! The Divine Child is the messenger of Heaven. In Him, Heaven comes to us, the lost paradise becomes visible... We can approach Him without fear and fill Him with our tenderness.

There is no darkness in the Divine Child, but darkness hangs over Him. King Herod, in his thirst for power, sent his executioners to kill the Child, to eliminate the testimony of the sweet presence of God. Surely he was driven by the same spirit of evil that today incites people to kill unborn children in order to destroy the special presence of God manifested in the little ones.

"Jesus grew in wisdom and age and grace before God and man" (Lk 2:52).

The Divine Child undergoes the same process of development that God has planned for every human life. The Word made flesh wished to penetrate human life in all its aspects, to sanctify everything.

The birth of Jesus therefore leaves us with an important message for all human beings: God wanted to manifest Himself in the beauty, but also in the weakness, of a child. He wanted to place Himself in our hands! The Lord does not appear as a mighty ruler who dominates everything with violence, but comes as a child in search of our love, awakening the tenderness of our hearts as only a baby can do.

Just as the Child in Bethlehem cannot frighten us, God does not want to frighten us. And this Child, whom we will later recognise as the Lamb of God, remains faithful to His mission. Even as an adult, He continued to conquer the hearts of men with His love.

To this day, the Lord continues to entrust Himself to us through our neighbour, especially through children and those most in need of our help. He has placed children under our special protection:

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

He also invites us to imitate the openness of children:

Then he called a child and set him in the midst of them, and said, *"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Mt 18:3).

The Lord also places Himself in the hands of men through His word and sacraments: He is not a sovereign who only gives orders and does not care about his subjects!

God entrusts us with the greatest thing: He gives Himself to us in the Child of Bethlehem. The deepest desire of His heart is to lead humanity back to the Kingdom of the Father.