



We are yet again at the threshold of celebrating that event which changed the whole history of the world. That is why the passage on ‘One Solitary Life’ about Jesus ends with, “...all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as that of one solitary life.”

After what happened last month in Paris and the threat that both ISIS and Boko Haram of Nigeria pose before the world, one wonders as to where the influence of that one solitary life of Nazareth has disappeared!

But if we look at the Infancy narrative of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke, it takes us into a similar inhospitable world. Luke asks us to enter into those scenes with a particular kind of awareness. In the Annunciation of Mary (Lk 1:26-38), we have a young woman in a remote village in Galilee. There is no room for Joseph and Mary in town, so Mary gives birth to her child outside the town. The ‘visitor from on High’ finds no room, no hospitality, in the city which as Son of David, he could rightly call his own. His birth takes place on the margins, beginning a pattern to be realized over and over in His life and ministry. The visitor, Son of God who could not find hospitality in his own city, will nonetheless institute in the world, ‘The Hospitality of God’. The poor and the marginalized shepherds of Bethlehem would be the first to experience it.

I am sure you have been reading or watching on TV, how lakhs of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, escaping the terror of ISIS are flocking to Europe. What is most fascinating in this whole episode is the ‘hospitality’ they are receiving from the ‘Christian’ Western people. True, many in the west are not church-going Christians but in their gesture of offering ‘hospitality’ to the refugees, opening their hearts to the suffering humanity, they stand as

great witnesses to Christian love and hospitality for sure. Pope Francis has led the way by opening the Vatican to a family and asked the parishes and families in Rome to do likewise.

The birth of Jesus in the world is nothing but God offering 'hospitality' to a world torn by war and violence or intolerance for that matter in our own country and to us in our journey of life. Therefore Christmas offers us a good opportunity to reflect on the two sides of the same coin – God's hospitality.

On one side, hospitality challenges one to accept 'the other' as other and the 'stranger' as one bearing strange culture to the observer, as our own. This encounter requires attentive listening and willingness to enter into another's world and be ready to be transformed by this world.

No doubt we are all on a journey and during this journey, we sometimes get distracted with stations (things) that do not concern our final destination.

The other side of the coin would be, of course, how do I, as one blessed by the 'Hospitality of God', share the same love and warmth with my less fortunate brothers and sisters?

We are also invited to connect with the people and bring more people into the knowledge and the love of Jesus and together experience this hospitality of sharing and caring for our brothers and sisters. It would be good for us to spend some time as we prepare ourselves during this advent to pause and ponder on the question:-

How have I personally experienced God's offer of hospitality through Jesus in my own life?

CELEBRATING THE HOSPITALITY OF CHRISTMAS DIFFERENTLY

-) Share with each other in our communities our experiences of this 'Hospitality of God'.
-) I would also like to suggest to you dear sisters based on the theme of this Circular to kindly celebrate Christmas with a poor family / at your outreach program /village etc. wherever feasible or
-) Invite a poor family to your community over a meal and
-) Could we keep our gift exchange as simple and more symbolic as possible?

My team and I, wish every one of you dear sisters a Joy filled Christmas and a Wonderful start for the New Year 2016. May our communities extend to all the 'Hospitality of God'

Sr. M. Nirmalini A.C.
Provincial Superior