

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB & HUMILITY: SOME INSIGHTS FROM POPE FRANCIS *A REFLECTION – CHRISTMAS 2021*



Adoration of the Shepherds by Gerard van Honthorst

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

The Christmas crib reminds us of the *humility* of God in taking on human flesh in Jesus. As a Christmas present this year, I have chosen some insights from Pope Francis on humility in his 23rd December 2021 Address to the Roman Curia.

POPE FRANCIS & HUMILITY

Pope Francis speaks of the explosive power of humility, the mystery of Christmas, and our desire to be humble.

All are invited to read and reflect on these selected passages from Pope Francis. The whole Address is at <https://bit.ly/FrancisChristmas23122021>

'Christmas... is also a moment of reflection and assessment for each of us, so that the light of the Word made flesh can show us even better who we are and what our mission is.

We all know that the mystery of Christmas is the mystery of God who enters the world by the path of humility.'

'...Our times seem either to have forgotten humility or to have relegated it to a form of moralism, emptying it of its explosive power. Yet if we had to express the entire mystery of Christmas in a word, I believe that humility is the one most helpful. The Gospels portray a scene of poverty and austerity, unsuited to sheltering a woman about to give birth. Yet the King of kings enters the world not by attracting attention, but by causing a mysterious pull in the hearts of those who feel the thrilling presence of something completely new, something on the verge of changing history.

That is why I like to think and also say that humility was its doorway, and invites us to enter through it...'

'It is not easy to understand what humility is...'

'Humility is the ability to know how to "inhabit" our humanity, this humanity beloved and blessed by the Lord, and to do so without despair but with realism, joy and hope. Humility means recognizing that we should not be ashamed of our frailty. Jesus teaches us to look upon our poverty with the same love and tenderness with which we look upon a little child, vulnerable and in need of everything. Lacking humility, we will look for things that can reassure us, and perhaps find them, but we will surely not find what saves us, what can heal us'

'...The humble give life, attract others and push onwards towards the unknown that lies ahead.'

'The humble allow themselves to be challenged. They are open to what is new, since they feel secure in what has gone before them, firm in their roots and their sense of belonging.

Their present is grounded in a past that opens them up to a hope-filled future.

Unlike the proud, they know that their existence is not based on their merits or their "good habits".

As such, they are able to trust, unlike the proud.

All of us are called to humility, because all of us are called to remember and to give life...'

'Jesus, who came into the world by the path of humility, has opened a way for us; he indicates a way and shows us a goal.

Dear brothers and sisters, without humility we cannot encounter God and experience salvation,

yet it is equally true that without humility we cannot even encounter our neighbours, our brothers and sisters next door.'

'...In conclusion, my desire for you, and for myself, is that we may allow ourselves to be evangelized by the humility of Christmas and the humility of the manger, by the poverty and simplicity with which the Son of God entered into the world.

Even the Magi, who were certainly of a higher social position than Mary and Joseph or the shepherds of Bethlehem, fell to their knees in the presence of the Child (cf. Mt 2:11). They fell to their knees.

To do so is not only a gesture of adoration but also a gesture of humility. ...'

'let us allow ourselves to be evangelized by the humility of the Child Jesus.

Only by serving, and by seeing our work as service, can we be truly helpful to everyone...'

'This is the lesson of Christmas: humility is the great condition for faith, for the spiritual life and for holiness. May the Lord grant it to us as a gift,

starting with the primordial sign of the Spirit's presence within us: desire.'

'... Let us now ask the Mother of Humility to teach us how to be humble: "Hail Mary..."

Father Gerry Hefferan

MERRY CHRISTMAS & THANK YOU



Merry Christmas.

**May each of you have a holy and
happy Christmas.**

**Thank you for the ways you live
Christmas each day.**

FATHER GERRY HEFFERAN

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