

**IT IS CHRISTMAS, IT IS EMMANUEL — GOD-
WITH-US WHO SAYS: “DILEXI TE”**

The celebration of Christmas is undoubtedly one of the most joyful moments of the year — in the Church, in society, and in families — especially for children eagerly awaiting their Christmas gifts. It expresses God’s love for humanity through the Incarnation: the gift of love that God offers to the entire world. Humanity in turn — whether believing or not, Christian or not — shares in this moment of joy in different social and cultural ways. Christmas is, ultimately, a time of reunion and family love, when, inspired by the Holy Family, every family on earth is invited to live the ideal of domestic love. This celebration embraces all families, including the poorest.



The Poor: the Privileged Ones of Christmas

The connection between Christmas and the poor is first revealed in the reality of birth itself — the first stage of life that Christmas celebrates. Christmas highlights the poverty of new life: vulnerability and innocence that the Almighty God chose to embrace. A poor Child is born in a manger and brings us divine joy.

The second dimension is the family. God was born into a poor family seeking shelter, finding refuge only in a stable, where Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, “because there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk 2:7). Christmas therefore celebrates human poverty — personal and family poverty — transformed by the grace of God who comes to dwell among us: the Incarnation, **God-with-us!**

God-with-Us Has a Special Love for the Poor



In the light of the vulnerability Jesus assumed, Christmas is an encounter between God and human poverty. He is the God “who fills the hungry with good things”, who supports the weak, the poor and the little ones of society, and who, by the birth of Christ, calls us to draw near to the poor. This call reveals, as Pope Francis says, “the heart of Christ: His deepest feelings and choices, to which every saint strives to conform” (GE 96).

To celebrate Christmas is therefore to celebrate God’s love for the weak, the poor, and the vulnerable — those for whom God has a preferential love.



Dilexi te, dilexi nos: God Loves You! God Loves Us Through Mary and Bernadette

Mary and Bernadette are witnesses of God's love, and both experienced vulnerability. Mary is vulnerable before the angel's message; she risks being rejected because Joseph did not understand at first. She gives birth in poverty, knows the hardship of exile because of a tyrant, and lives in uncertainty until his death — then finds refuge in the home of the Beloved Disciple, John.

Bernadette, for her part, experiences poverty throughout her life: family poverty, fragile health, limited education and even spiritual trials. Yet she is always supported by the love of her family — a true “island of love” — and by the love of the Beautiful Lady, who gives her the strength to love and witness “against all odds”. She contemplates and expresses God's love until her final breath.

Mary and Bernadette are two poor ones dearly loved by God, and Mary came to show Bernadette her maternal tenderness. We, devotees and children of the Family of Our Lady of Lourdes, have the filial duty to pass on this love of God to everyone, especially to the poor.

Christmas: the Feast of the Poor Loved by God

The season of Advent is full of promise and hope. The birth of Christ reveals God's preferential choice for the poor. He is the God who sees the misery of His people, who hears their cry, who knows their suffering, and who, through the Incarnation of His Son, comes down to save them.

To celebrate Christmas is, following Christ, to listen to the cry of the poor, for “in listening to the cry of the poor, we are called to identify with the heart of God, attentive to the needs of His children, especially the most deprived” (WDP 7).

With the image of Santa Claus, consumerism and the pursuit of pleasure, we risk living a superficial and fragile happiness, forgetting the millions of poor who suffer in inhuman conditions. God comes poor among the poor. Like Mary, His Mother and our Mother, let us welcome Him and celebrate Him by adopting His preferential love for the poor, the fragile and the vulnerable in our society.

Merry Christmas!

With all my heart, I wish each and every one of you a blessed celebration of the Nativity and a grace-filled beginning to the New Year 2026.

P. Emmanuel Mvomo, CFIC

Chaplain Responsible for NDL Missions and the Relics of Saint Bernadette

Chaplain of the NDL Family

