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Celebrating Christmas 2021

Some homilies, articles, videos and carols that can help us draw close to the Infant Jesus at Christmas time with the childlike piety of Saint Josemaria.

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Homilies and articles about Christmas

Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter
"Admirabile signum" on the Nativity
scene

Homily of Pope Francis on Christmas Eve 2014

"The Joy of Serving God," Homily of Saint Josemaria from Christmas 1973

"Christ Triumphs Through Humility," Homily of Saint Josemaria on Christmas Eve 1963

Christmas Time: The Light of Bethlehem

Bethlehem Ever Present in the Tabernacle

Reflections on the Christmas Crèche (article by Bishop Javier Echevarría)

The Doorway of Humility

Homily of Saint Josemaria on the Epiphany (with audio recording)

God's Way of Reasoning, A meditation given by Saint Josemaria in Rome on 6 January 1970

Why do we celebrate Christmas?

Pray by the Crib as One of the Characters in the Scene

Videos and Carols

The Infant Jesus of Saint Josemaría

Among the treasures of the Royal Monastery of Saint Elizabeth in Madrid is this seventeenth-century wooden figure of Baby Jesus. The Augustinian Recollect Sisters still have a vivid memory of Saint Josemaría, then a young priest, who was their chaplain from 1931 and rector of the Foundation from 1934. He wrote in his personal notes: "On my way out of the cloister they showed me, in the vestibule, a lovable Christ Child. I have never seen a more wonderful Baby Jesus! Totally captivating. They uncovered it. He has his little arms crossed on his breast and his eyes half open. Beautiful. I ate him up with kisses

and... would have loved to kidnap him."

He often would ask them for the figure to take it home with him. It was closely linked to many events deep in his soul, favors and special graces. Today the sisters still call it "Father Josemaría's Baby Jesus."

In the book *Immersed in God - an interview with Álvaro del Portillo* (Cesare Cavalleri, Princeton, 1996), Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo says that Mother Carmen of Saint Joseph "remembers that when the Baby Jesus was in the sacristy of the church during the Christmas season, she would often see how Father Josemaría would talk to it, sing to it and rock it, as if it was a real baby."

"The Child Jesus," wrote Saint Josemaría. "How this devotion has taken hold of me since I first laid eyes on that consummate Thief that my nuns keep in the vestibule of

their cloister! Child Jesus, adolescent Jesus — I like to see you that way, Lord, because... it makes me more daring. I like to see you as a little boy, a helpless child, because it makes me feel like you need me."

The Christ Child (video from 1972 of Saint Josemaria blessing faithful of Opus Dei in Rome with figure of the Child Jesus)

Christmas Carols and Saint Josemaría

Saint Josemaría had very fond memories connected with the family's Christmas celebrations. Together with his sister Carmen, he would help his father put up the Nativity scene. And the whole family sang Christmas carols together.

He remembered in particular the one which begins *Madre, en la puerta hay un Niño* — "Mother, there's a little boy at the door." This carol has a

chorus in which the Child Jesus repeats, "I have come down to earth to suffer." The song stayed with him from the cradle to the grave. "When I was three years old," he would say, "my mother would take me in her arms and sing me that carol, and I would very happily go to sleep." In his last years he would be visibly moved, and would become totally absorbed in prayer, whenever he heard this carol at Christmastime. (Listen to this carol in Spanish [here](#).)

An English translation of "Madre en la Puerta":

1. "Mother, at the door there's a little Child,

Lovelier than the radiant sun

Saying that he's chilled with cold

For his clothes are thin and torn."

"Bring him to the fireside blaze, give
him plate and cup;

Loving-kindness these days has
nearly all dried up." (x 2)

2. So the Child came and sat down,
Where the fire was bright and warm
And the kindly housewife asked him
What country he came from.

"My Mother's from Heaven, and my
Father too

Down to earth I've come, where
suffering is my due." (x 2)

3. "Make up a bed for this noble Child
In my alcove, the best we can."

"Don't do that for me, my lady,
In a corner I'll lay me down.

On the cold hard floor I've slept, ever
since my birth

Such will be my bedding till I leave
this earth." (x 2)

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