

# Christmas Reflection 2023

Wandering around my city, I found Him in an abandoned spot. Discarded.



Of no account, like so many people, youngsters, and children who are not seen.

And just now, I read the words of Carlos Desoete, a Flemish priest-poet:

*There is no place for the child,  
For the stranger, the job seeker,  
For the unmarried man or woman, the divorcee,  
For those who belong to the LGBT community ...  
Only in the stable is there always room.*

*The hidden poverty of little people is the hidden presence of God.  
This hidden poverty inescapably presents me with this choice:  
Make God's love visible or obscure it.*

By becoming human, God has come to eye level with us. God, whom we situate in heaven, has come to live in the midst of people, thanks to Jesus. He does not look from above but at eye level. He looks at us as fellow human beings. He sees us. Above all, he sees those who are out of sight and brings them back into view.

As members of that great international Chevalier Family, we know that He loves each of us and invites us to make the warmth of His love felt in others. Especially with those who do not count in our society ... so that they too may have life ... and in abundance at that.

Still, Christmas is most often celebrated in the warmth of the stable.

Behind the closed doors of prosperity, no one knows about the darkness of cold.

No one there knows about the new life, the new hope born in the stable, where people are there for each other: close by, full of compassion and tenderness.

There, no war is perceptible, no injustice, no greed, no striving for power, no climate devastation.

There God is with us... among all people of goodwill... poor or rich.

Heartfelt greetings to you all, to your family and friends, and to all those you may meet on your way: on behalf of the International Lay Council, I wish you a warm Advent season of solidarity and a peaceful Christmas. All good wishes and God's blessing every day in the New Year.

AMETUR.

Rita Cleuren