



Apostolic Nunciature in Kuwait, Yemen, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates Apostolic Delegation to the Arabian Peninsula

Christmas Message 2017 of Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla, Apostolic Nuncio in Kuwait, Bahrein, UAE, Qatar, Yemen and Apostolic Delegate to the Arabian Peninsula

There is no room in the Inn

As we celebrate the great and most solemn feast of the birth of Christ in this world, we recall the words of St. John: *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him* (Jn. 1:10-12).

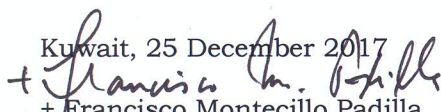
Today, many people run away from their homes to escape wars, violence and persecution, to seek shelter, harmony and peace. Unfortunately in most places where they take refuge, the answer they receive is: There is no room for you. Joseph, Mary and Jesus in the womb of Mary arrived in Bethlehem and the answer of the innkeeper was: there is no room in the inn. They suffered rejection because they were poor and could not offer what the innkeeper wanted. If the innkeeper(s) had known that the One about to be born was the Lord of glory, one cannot help but wonder if he/she would have made room for Him in the inn.

How do we react to the rejection of the baby Jesus? Would there be a different mindset if Jesus were to visit each one of us personally? How does the community today react to Jesus? Does it want Him? Do we want Him? Are we willing to make room for Jesus in our lives? Could we have adopted the now famous statement of the innkeeper: "for there was not for them a place in the inn" (Luke 2:7)? One can talk about God, about Christ, about the Holy Spirit, about the church, and so on; but when we confront Christ, do we want Christ in our hearts? Is there any room for Him in our lives? God has not shut us out! He sent His Son to save us. Have we shut God out of our lives?

Once again it is Christmas and we sing Glory to God in the Highest and Peace to the People of Goodwill. The baby Jesus would seek to gain entrance into the overcrowded hearts of men and women. He would not find room in their hearts because many prefer the things of this world; nevertheless, the search goes on and the rejection of Him still continues into the present era. Jesus wants to come into our life. He stands at the door of our heart knocking. Here I am! I stand at the door and I knock. "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

During this joyful season of Christmas, let us all reflect: Is there room in my heart for the Lord Jesus? Whom do I serve? Do I serve Jesus or the world? To do something good to Baby Jesus we have to do something good to our brethren. Let us become instruments of love and peace in the midst of hatred and violence. Let us be more generous of our gifts to the needy brothers and sisters. Let us share the gifts of the Lord to the Church in this region, to all Christians and people of other faith and none. It is in giving that we receive. We will receive life, joy and peace if we know how to love and give to the people in need.

—May you have a blessed Christmas filled with joy and peace. God loves us and we must never reject His love.

Kuwait, 25 December 2017
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Apostolic Nuncio in Kuwait and in the Gulf countries