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### WITH THE IMMACULATE ONE AT THE MANGER

O Immaculate One, what did you think about when you for the first time placed the Divine Infant onto the hay? Or, when you wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, took Him close to your heart, and fed Him with your own milk at the breast? What sentiments overflowed your heart?

You knew well who this Child is, for the prophets had preached and announced Him. You understood it all far better than all the Pharisee and Scripture scholars. The Most Holy Spirit gave you incomparably more enlightenment than all other souls combined. Moreover, how many mysteries about Himself did He make known exclusively to your immaculate soul, when the Holy Spirit of God came to dwell and act in you!

Already at the moment of the Annunciation, the Most Blessed Trinity clearly made known to you through the angel the plan of Redemption and awaited your response. You already then expressly knew what you were agreeing to, whose Mother you were to become. And now, He is before you as a helpless infant.

What sentiments of humility, love and gratitude must have filled your heart that night..... When you looked upon the humility, love, and gratitude toward you of the Incarnate God!

Fill my heart, too, I beg you, with your humility, your love, and your gratitude.....

*Art. With the Immaculate One at the Manger, EN 24.XIII.1938 p.8/. Maria was His Middle Name, p. 19-20*

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*You are one of the many blessings from God for us. We will remember you in our prayers of thanksgiving as we reflect on the year's blessings and ask God for all the graces that we need to faithfully do His will daily during the New Year.*

*Through the Immaculate,  
The Sisters Minor of Mary Immaculate*

# SHARED BLESSINGS



"You must give even those whom you love, so that others may benefit by their love. ...Thus did I give you My Mother. ... It is your privilege to be loved. Only in Heaven will you understand what you owe to those who have loved you. Do not keep for yourself those who have loved you; give them to others! That their action may reach other souls, and that without limit."  
Jesus to Sr. Mary of the Most Holy Trinity

It was the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in December 1986. The mailman came to the door with an express letter from the Philippines. The following letter was included in my Christmas cards that year as a result.

Dear..... This Christmas, let me share with you a gift I received from Our Lady on the Feast of her Immaculate Conception – a dear leper from the other side of the world!

Jesse's handwritten letter [dated November 24, 1986], which I have typed here, for you, arrived by express mail while I was remembering you at prayer.

Dear Sister Carolyn,

I beg you to pardon this unexpected letter. Please hear my sad appeal and give me your heart for Christmas.

Like any human being, I breathe with life. But I got no health, no work, no happiness, no real home, no dignity, and no hope for a better future. I am a released negative or cured, leper. Due to the cruel stigma of leprosy, my family refused to accept me back home – especially that my feet are badly deformed. I live in my makeshift house in the big compound of the leprosarium. Like the other unwanted cured lepers, I used to depend on charity for my daily needs.

At present, I am so worried. I cannot attend Mass regularly at our Chapel because my pair of rubber shoes are already worn out. I cannot walk for a long distance bare footed due to plantar ulcers on both feet.

Sister Carolyn, please let me come to your side for Christian love. Kindly include my poor self into your joy of giving when you will celebrate the coming Birthday of Our Lord Jesus. Share with me a little of the blessings that you have. A small personal donation, enough for a pair of rubber shoes, would strengthen my faith that, amidst my sorrows and sufferings, "God is love and He is life." Please, please don't turn me away." Lastly, as I wait for your kind and loving response, I wish you all the joys of Christmas, please pray for me. Thank you very much. I am respectfully yours, Jesse Suano

Every person I wrote had been a blessing to me and so I shared Jesse's letter with them. The donations were sent to Jesse for rubber shoes for Christmas along with a tiny Infant Jesus in a manger.

Jesse's thank you revealed that he had gotten my name and address from a newspaper that featured an article about the Youth Mission for the Immaculate that I helped direct in New Britain, Connecticut, the summer before.

Jesse had another request. Could I please send him "a dollar a day" each month? I felt that was more than I could do. Yet, every month, God provided exactly, "a dollar a day". People I never imagined were providing the dollar a day; a crossing guard, an alcoholic, a teenager, etc. Each month it was exact: \$30 for a 30 day month, \$28 for February, \$31 if there were 31 days.

Then, in May, Jesse asked for \$400 for a child of a leper family who needed surgery for a cleft palate correction. That was way out of my league!

Our school principal had stopped by just after I read Jesse's letter. She needed prayers for a desperate situation. I promised to pray. Then I mentioned Jesse's impossible request. Sister responded, "If God answers those prayers, I will give you \$400 from mission money for Jesse". The next day, the money was on its way to the Philippines!

I tried to picture Jesse, and couldn't. Then, one last letter arrived. The child's surgery for the cleft palate was successful. Everyone was grateful. Enclosed was a photograph of Jesse. It was a picture of Jesse in his coffin. There was another photo of Jesse's wife, Honey, and their 3 little children.

I have remembered Jesse at Holy Mass every day since that Christmas of 1986. I can never repay that dear beggar for the way God has enriched and blessed my life because of him – and because he reached out across the world to share his needs.

Sister Carolyn Mary Cossack, SMMI

*Holy Christmas Season and Blessed New Year with the Lord!*

