



decided that I, too, had got to have an orange for Christmas. So each one had peeled his own and taken off a slice. Then they had carefully put together the ten separate slices into one new, beautiful and round orange. This orange was the most beautiful Christmas present in my life. It taught me how consoling real fellowship can be.

This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- This month let us try hard to watch over our thoughts. – Let us see to it that we keep our minds pure – in every respect! Chastity is not only a matter of the 6th Commandment.



St Theresa of Avila venerated many Saints, yet for her st Joseph was unrivalled. She had an intimate relationship with him and special spiritual experiences. He was the only one able to help her with all spiritual and physical problems. No person can get anywhere near him in grandeur. – Let us do our best to venerate st Joseph and to also spread this veneration!

Merry Christmas and GOD's blessing in the New Year!
Wit heartfelt regards and the blessing of saint Joseph, your

Sister Paula



December 2013

Lay Community of St Joseph

Christmas



„A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him ...“ (Is 11,1f)

The source of our salvation is very small, tender and delicate, it is hardly to be seen. GOD, who created all things, comes to us in a tiny, weak and hidden shape. If I do no longer have an eye for the little, silent hints of the presence of GOD: the smile of a baby – children playing free from care – friends who encourage me and show me their affection –, then I will always be tempted to lose faith.

It is the Child of Bethlehem, the unknown young Man from Nazareth, the unpopular Preacher, the divested Man on the Cross, who desires my full attention. The work of our Redeemer takes place in the midst of a world constantly shouting, screaming and overrunning us with the flood of its demands and promises. The promise is hidden in the shoot coming up from the tree trunk, a shoot, hardly noticeable.



In various passages of the Gospel, JESUS urges us to remain sober and watchful. Apostle Paul writes plainly to the Christian congregation in Rome: „And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now ...“ (Rom 13,11) This joyful anticipation of the coming of GOD determines our life (Christmas, Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, etc.). The expectation that GOD’s promise will be fulfilled to us makes us closely watch our steps.

That is the mystery of Christmas, which does not cease to give us comfort and confidence. The dear GOD does not abandon us. He has given us life and has sent us His SON so that He may be with us always and everywhere and that we may never feel deserted in all our struggles. (Henri Nouwen)

The Orange of the Orphan Boy

When I was just a little boy I had lost my parents and I ended up in an orphanage near London at the age of nine. It was worse than a prison. We had to work 14 hours a day – in the garden, in the kitchen, in the stable, in the field. Not a day brought any change and there was only one day of rest for us throughout the year: that was Christmas day. At Christmas each boy was given an orange. That was all. But this orange was given only to those who had not done anything wrong during the year. This Christmas orange embodied the longing of a whole year.

It was Christmastime again. But to my young boy’s heart it almost meant the end of the world. While the other boys walked past the governor of the orphanage and everyone received their orange, I was forced to stand in the corner and watch. It was my punishment for having wanted to run away from the orphanage once.

When the sharing out of presents was over, the other boys were allowed to go and play in the courtyard. But I had to go to the dormitory and stay in bed all day. I was very sad and ashamed. I cried and did not want to live any longer. After a while I heard footsteps in the room. A hand pulled away the blanket under which I had crawled away. I raised my eyes. A small boy called William stood before my bed with an orange in his right hand and holding it out to me.

I was completely flabbergasted. I looked at William and then again at the fruit and I vaguely felt that there had to be something special about the orange. It suddenly dawned on me that the orange had already been peeled and, looking closer, it was all perfectly clear to me. Tears came to my eyes and when I reached out my hand, I knew that I would have to have a firm grip holding it to keep the orange from falling apart. What had happened? Ten boys had joined together in the courtyard and

