

# A Christmas Prayer of Solidarity

*God beckons, enter the threshold of the manger . . .*

*a story unfolds . . .*

the woman...pale, weary and exhausted from travel and pain, longing for home. her "welcome" bespeaks dignity. her eyes, courage and joy. cradling with love a child in tender arms.

the man...frustrated, confused, defeated. his silence renders strength. the coarse but gentle touch of his hands, comfort. dreaming of the promises of fatherhood.

the shepherd...alone, concerned about what was left behind, interrupted. his simplicity manifests trust. his presence, compassion. protecting with watchful care.

the babe...vulnerable, powerless, ever so small. he rests peacefully against his mother's breast. nursed and cuddled. forsaking glory to be one of us.

the stable...dreary and broken, filled with a stench, a wretched place for a birth. darkness is broken with the glimmering light of a star. chaos turns to serenity. love is born anew.

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*a story unfolds . . .*

the women...abused, forced to let go of her child, in the brothel longing for home. her head held high bespeaks her dignity. her eyes, courage mixed with pain. holding in her heart the promise of hope.

the migrant...frustrated, a dream betrayed, defeated. in silence, he relentlessly searches for a voice. his worn and tired feet, a home. dreaming of opportunity to give what he can.

the person dying from AIDS...empty and afraid, weakened, longing to be touched. her "dying from" turns to "living with." her resentment, compassion. reaching out to touch another.

the child laborer...vulnerable and exploited, powerless, ever so small because of malnutrition. still, he serves a meal with such joy. his smile is contagious. doing the best he can.

the world...dreary and broken, conflicted, torn and hurting, filled with chaos. the darkness of night gives way to the light of dawn. adversity to grace and healing. love is born anew.

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*the story unfolds . . .*

the babe...vulnerable, powerless, ever so small. he wraps his hand around my finger as if to say, "hold onto me."

the Christ...betrayed, beaten, killed. resurrected in a hurting world. our selflessness, our will to struggle and hope, our taking the hand of another into ours, our desire to bear children, our wiping of tears, our feeding the hungry. our letting go and saying "hold onto me." and love is born anew.