



An Indonesian painting.

Christmas Message

Franz Kamphaus, a theologian and the former bishop of Limburg in Germany, published a book with the title: *Mach's wie Gott, Werde Mensch* (Do it like God, become a man). This can be considered as a summary of the Christmas message. God has chosen to become human. That is the way of salvation. Christmas is an invitation to accept, recognize and live out our human dignity, at the same time an inspiration to renew our commitment to promote the respect for every human life.

What does it mean to become human? Among others, it merely means to be dependent on God, on the environment as our common home, and other people. Being dependent on others is not a sign of weakness but belongs to our very essence. Sometimes we have to go through difficult moments to realize how others are important for us. We need each other to grow fully as a human, also in our religious missionary vocation. We are dependent on our community, just as the community depends on our participation. The people for whom and with whom we serve consider us important as they enrich us at the same time. Our presence, closeness and ministry to the poor are instrumental in accompanying them in their struggles to make changes in their lives, but at the same they are our evangelizers who help and inspire us to be consistent in our religious missionary life.

Our interdependence reminds us that every one of us, as well as every culture, is gifted by God with unique talents for the good of the whole. The renewal and transformation as envisioned by the last General Chapter is a call to acknowledge the good in the other and let them enrich us. In return, we give back what is given to us for the improvement of the quality of life of others, especially the poor and the marginalized. Let us, as God does, become human! With this, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

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