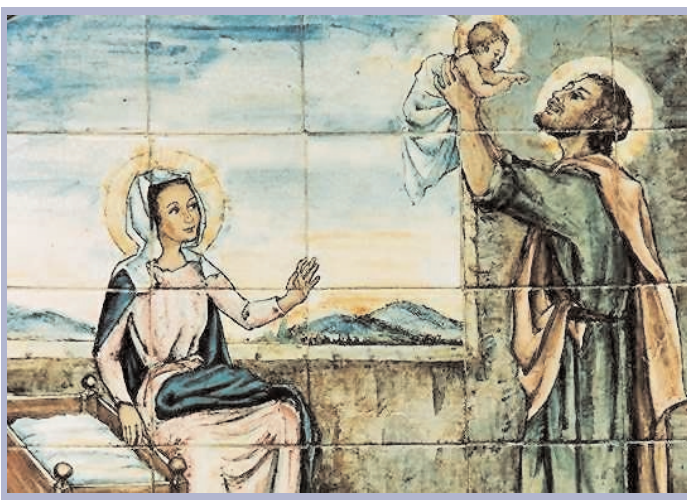


Christmases with St. Josemaría



The best Christmases in my life were in the four years I spent in Rome with St. Josemaría Escrivá. I don't remember exactly what we had to eat - that didn't matter so much. But I can still hear the carols we sang round the crib. And I can still see the figure of Baby Jesus: a life-sized figure which was the centre of the gathering, and which we were not embarrassed to kiss, because we felt that all this was not just a child's game but something much deeper.

St. Josemaría, our Father, spoke to us in a weak voice. By the end of every day we could see that he was exhausted, even on special days like Christmas, because he worked just the same. But when he looked at the Baby his eyes were those of a mischievous and very loving child. I and many others learnt from him that you can pray with your eyes, your imagination, your inventiveness, and even your dreams.



St. Josemaría explained the best way to bring about the transformation we need. "Being little," he said, "means believing as children believe, loving as children love, abandoning yourself as children abandon themselves, and praying as children pray." And, later, he stressed the same point: "Become little. Come with me, and (this is the essence of what I want to tell you) we will live the life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph."

Extract from Henry Hernandez, *The Christmas Crib that God made*, Hounslow: Scepter (UK) Ltd, 2002, pp.159-162.)