



# Merry Christmas



December 2008

Dear Family and Friends,

The holiday season is upon us and the Clemente home is filled with Christmas cheer! The Christmas tree was decorated by Carmen and Mama the day after Thanksgiving. The sound of Christmas carols fill the air every evening as Carmen practices her piano lesson. The kitchen is bustling as we prepare for a luncheon here and a potluck there. In the midst of it all, a certain seven-year-old is contemplating the spirit of giving.

One day I explained to Carmen that some children don't have lots of nice toys like she does, and I suggested she choose some of her toys to give away. She agreed and proceeded to pick out some things. But the first few times she handed me something, I couldn't help commenting, "Are you sure? You still like to play with this one." "Really? So-and-so gave you this." "Oh, but Jacob will miss this one." It didn't take long for me to realize that the mother had more of a problem giving things away than the child did.

Another time, Carmen told me that she wanted to give a Christmas present to each of her classmates at school. I told her that we couldn't buy a toy for each child, but maybe she could make something instead. She seemed a little disappointed at first, but then she said, "I know! We can make cookies!" Well, that's easy enough, I thought. I told her what a great idea that was, and that she could take a little bag of cookies for each classmate on the Friday before Christmas break. But Carmen had a different idea. "No, I want to go to their houses on Christmas Day and give them the cookies. That means we'll need to ask for all of their addresses so we know where to go. . . ." I was about to interrupt her and tell her we couldn't possibly go drive around the city visiting twelve friends' houses on Christmas Day. But then a thought stopped me. Why not? Wouldn't that be a little like "Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born"?

Recently, I told Carmen that we should think of a gift we could give Papa for Christmas. Again, I suggested that she could make something. I was ready to give her some examples--like a paper weight or a pencil holder or a bookmark. But she had her own idea. "I know! I can make him (*thinking*). . . I can make him some jokes!" You know, there was a point in time when I would have laughed at that answer, but this time I nodded my head in approval and said, "What a fabulous idea, Carmen. He would really love it if you did that."

This year, I'm being treated to little lessons in giving, especially the lesson that gifts really and truly do not have to be bought from a store. Now, we're still going to buy a few, mind you. I hunted all over Kaohsiung to find a miniature Eve figure to go with the miniature Wall-E action figure I purchased for Jacob a week ago. And Carmen will indeed find a Barbie "dressed like a princess" doll under the tree. But my prayer for our family is that we are able to keep our focus more on the birth of Jesus our Savior and not on the tradition of buying gifts.

We wish you and your family a meaningful, memorable Christmas and pray for God's goodness and guidance throughout the coming year.

The Clementes  
David, Sarah, Carmen, and Jacob



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