



REFLECTIONS

December 15, 2019

**And suddenly there was with the angel a
multitude of the heavenly host praising God
and saying:
"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"**

Luke 2:13-14NKJV

Memories of Christmas

Christmas rush begins too soon it seems these days—October in some places. Really though, memories of Christmas can't begin soon enough. I remember the excitement of gifts around the tree, and the sleepless anticipation of Santa coming in some mysterious way to leave even more. But the lasting thoughts aren't usually about the gifts opened or mysteries of Santa Claus. Warmest memories are of the love our family shared for one another. But Armando's memories of Christmas were nothing like those.

Armando grew up in one of the many poverty-stricken areas of Puerto Rico where memories finds no joy, only want and need. He had no gift giving scenes to remember; nor does he identify Christmas with either family or love. For Armando Christmas is a time to forget.

My friend Paul's Christmas memories recall how his large family struggled to get by on their meager means. But at Christmastime, Paul's dad invited anyone and everyone he saw to attend their family Christmas celebration. "Many of them came!" Paul exclaimed, still astonished. "We just never knew who was going to show up at our house for Christmas."

These stories remind how much our Christmas memories differ. Few families in the world enjoy Christmas as we do in ours. There are many people with no memories of the abounding love that we almost take for granted. And there may not be many Christmas celebrations that sacrifice precious family time in the unselfish manner Paul's dad encouraged. Many more carry memories of Christmas like Armando.

But there is a Christmas memory we all can share—the story of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. The story tells of a couple of meager means, a crowded inn, and a stable bed. It describes a bright star illuminating the stillness, and voices from the heavens singing, "*Peace on earth good will toward men.*" It is the story of God coming into the world as a child bringing peace, joy and love. It's a memory to leave with all the world.

Can there be a better gift.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.