

Unknown painter
Children Begging

WHAT A CHRISTMAS!

16 February 2009



It was the Twelfth Night.

It had been snowing and Rafel was frozen stiff. He was just thinking all the time that winter would be very harsh, and as he didn't even have enough money to buy an overcoat he had his hands in his jacket, saying to himself

WHAT A CHRISTMAS!

It was the first time he had begged in the high street. But Rafel had his principles:

"I don't just want to ask, I also want to give," he was saying. "I give you a little song and you give me a coin."

He was accompanied, as always, by his friend Joan, who hadn't eaten for two days, had a broken leg and had to walk on crutches.

Joan didn't want to just ask either and so he said:

"Sir, it's cold, I'm hungry, give me something and I'll sing you a Christmas carol".

The man looked him in the eye, felt pity, dropped a few coins and continued walking because he was in a hurry. Joan started singing straight away:

"What shall we give to Mary's child" ...

Rafel and Joan were orphans and lived in a shanty-town without water or light, with no toys or television.

That bitterly cold winter they had had no option but to beg to survive. That night there was nobody waiting for them at home, no presents, no fantastic dinner. The Three Kings had never left anything in their shanty-town.

Rafel didn't lose heart:

"Don't worry Joan, at least we'll have the money for the medicine for your leg."

And they continued with the carol:

"Raisins and figs and walnuts and olives"...

People, as they passed by, heard the tune, saw Joan's outstretched hand and really wanted to help them, but everyone was in a big hurry and only stopped for a short while.

When darkness has fallen, the lights in the shop windows started going out, the people began setting out for home... and they only had enough to buy a loaf of bread.

Suddenly, three gentlemen came and stood in front of them and Joan got frightened. Rafel said to him under his breath:

"Stay calm Joan."

And the one who was black said:

"Don't be afraid, this is Melchior and Gaspar and my name is Balthasar, and we have come to give you the presents you asked for."

The two boys looked at them in surprise.

"Presents?"- asked Joan. "What presents?"

And their eyes popped out when the kings read to them the letter they had received.

The letter said:

"To Their Majesties the Kings,

Please give Joan and Rafel a gigantic Epiphany cake and a lovely dinner; for Joan, an operation on his leg and for Rafel, a new coat so that he won't get cold this winter."

Rafel and Joan would never forget that Christmas... What a Christmas!