



### **No Place in the Inn**

I have always been struck, reading the Christmas story, at the seemingly unbelievable act of the innkeeper. Who could turn away someone pregnant with Christ child? The story doesn't suggest that the innkeeper was malicious or inhospitable. It says only that "there was no room in the inn."

No room! No place for more guests! Booked up! No space for hospitality! In these expressions, I see the real reason why there is so little of Christ left in Christmas. It is not so much, our excesses in shopping, decorating, or partying that deprive Christ of a place, as it is our busyness, preoccupations, hurriedness, and agenda which fill the inn and leave no place for him. Our hearts and lives are too full for Christ to have a place.

Looked at from the outside, our lives often do look selfish, inhospitable, idiosyncratic, and un-Christian. However, we are not bad people, nor are we, deep down, inhospitable. Beneath all the hurry, pressure, and preoccupations, our hearts are warm, unselfish and welcoming. Then why aren't we more warm and hospitable? In brief, because we haven't the time.

Love and hospitality are not abstract. To have Christ in our lives, to put him back into Christmas, involves something much more than protesting commercialism. It involves creating time for him, time for the those in need, time for hospitality, time for celebration, time for prayer, time for the itinerant couple who show up unannounced on a busy night. To make a holiday is to, ultimately, make a holy day. We must create some room in the inn!

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Like Mary may we continue to ponder these thoughts in our hearts.

Amen