



The Little Donkey and the Flowers – by Jeannine Blanchette

He had grown up in faraway Judea where little donkeys bear the heavy task of beasts of burden. He was used for journeys, for ploughing and to carry goatskins. As a result of having had to work excessively hard, he developed a painful limp. In order to rest at night, he would go and sleep in an abandoned cave where he found his old friend, the ox ruminating.

Then, a day came when an unknown couple showed up at the cave looking for shelter, for the Lady traveller would soon give birth. When the Child appeared in a jet of light, the ox and the donkey immediately sought to warm him up. Then, the days went by and bad times followed, during which King Herod resolved to exterminate all the newborns in each family, fearing that he would lose his throne.

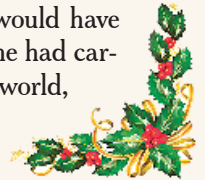
As a good protecting father, Joseph chose to use the little donkey in the manger as a means of transportation to save the life of the little Child from the fury of this despotic king. Once Mary and the Child had settled on their mount, the little donkey was surprised to feel no weight and no pain. He even managed to reach Egypt with the lightness of a firefly, without any suffering or limp.

Later, the Holy Family settled in Nazareth where Jesus

grew in wisdom. Then, Joseph thought of getting rid of the little donkey by selling him to a merchant who sold flowers. So the quadruped found himself in a huge botanical garden in the middle of fragrant flowers where he would ferry visiting children to and fro. As he went along the floral paths, he would always stop before a scented variety of red flowers in front of which he seemed to be in contemplation. This always astonished the tourists who observed him. They asked the florist: “What are those red flowers whose fragrance is so delicate and which cause the little donkey to go into ecstasy?” He replied: “In learned terms, they are “*Dicentra spectabilis*”, but they are commonly called “Hearts of Mary” or “bleeding hearts”. They come out in May!”



At dawn the next day, the little donkey having reached old age, he was found lifeless in front of the bush where those magnificent red flowers grew, flowers with such an evocative name and which he liked so much: the “Hearts of Mary”. He had taken his secret with him, for if he had been able to talk, he would have recounted that one day, as they fled to Egypt, he had carried on his sore back the greatest Love in the world, and he had been cured by Him.



The Christmas season begins with Christmas and ends with the Epiphany, in between which is the feast day of Mary, Mother of God. Three mysteries closely bound together: that of the birth of the Son of God and of Mary, that of the divine Motherhood and that of the Son's Kingship – and now also of the Daughter's as well – which must reach its full development in the Kingdom. Thus, the Christmas season is a blessed time to prepare our soul for this great coming under the leadership of Marie-Paule who, from God's Heart, is watching over the development of her Work as the



days and years go by.

May She, along with the other persons of the Quinternity, bless all those in charge and all the members of her Work here below! May She guide all of us and make of us Knights after her Heart!

In the New Year, may She be ever more present to us! May the feast days prepare us for this and dispose us to receive her in a soul filled with wonder! May each one of us be like a paten upon which She can rest with Jesus Christ, the One and the Other being the blessed Children of the Mother of God!

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year 2018! Blessed Epiphany!