The Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas

Gospel text (*Jn* 1:1-18): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race (...). The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him (...).

The "ox and the donkey"

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Today, before the smallness of Jesus-God, the Gospel solemnly proclaims His divinity: His highest dignity is based on the reference to God, the Father. But who can recognize Him as God? According to Isaiah (1:3), "the ox and the donkey", i.e., beings with so simple a heart that at least the ox "knows" its owner and the donkey its master's crib.

At Christmas the "ox and the donkey" (the simple of heart) are shepherds, the Magi, Mary and Joseph. Could it have been otherwise? The cave stall, where the Baby Jesus lay, was not inhabited by refined persons; it was, in fact, the home of the ox and the donkey. And what is our position? Are we very far from that stall precisely because we are too refined and intelligent? Don't we perhaps live too much in "Jerusalem", in the "Palace", to perceive in the night the voices of angels so that we may join them in the manger in adoring him?

—On the Holy night, the faces of the ox and the donkey remind us of the question: my people do not understand; do you understand the voice of your Lord?