

Crib Exhibition by Haus Emmaus, Coesfeld, Germany



Hospitality and engagement are the core spirit of the small international community, Haus Emmaus, in Coesfeld. We four sisters from different countries try to engage with people and create or be involved in as many occasions as possible to proclaim God's goodness and provident care and share our love and joy. For this Christmas season, we exhibited a variety of cribs during the last Advent weekend and invited our sisters, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. Our plan was to arrange various cribs in two gardens and inside our future guest house and sell some hot drinks, home-baked cookies, waffles, and hand-made 3D star lamps. Months of preparations for such an event meant a wide range of undertakings: distributing invitations to people; posting them in a church, a large supermarket, and a hospital; shopping for materials and ingredients for the items to sell; preparing those items; cleaning the gardens; clearing the garage as a passageway to the gardens; decorating the hall and setting tables; borrowing and gathering cribs to arrange along with related texts.

The display days finally arrived. In spite of the rain many visitors came, looked around, appreciated the exhibition of our twenty-one creative cribs outside, and enjoyed hot coffee, chocolate, punch, ginger biscuits, and waffles inside. Our Christmas cookies were almost sold out, and star-shaped lamps were also popular. On the second day a sister musician from another congregation visited with a good friend of ours and, on the spot, played a couple of beautiful pieces on wind instruments, both solo and with our community members. This made a nice little instant concert and added a special air to the event.

As it became late and too dark, no one stayed for our evening prayer service closing the whole exhibition; but we four members of Emmaus were fully satisfied and deeply grateful to Baby Jesus that everything went well. All visitors really enjoyed being together and were touched by our display.

The exhibition had now come to an end but our activities for Christmas were a long way from being over. The following day we carried the leftover waffle batter and necessary tools to Salus in Annenthal to treat our elderly sisters with fresh-baked waffles, always a favorite food item. This small surprise gave a great joy to the sisters. Are our plans for this festive season all completed now? Not quite, because we have yet another plan to fulfill – to invite the Annenthal sisters once more to share Christmas stories together and sing songs with a tea and refreshments.

Shared joy doubles and triples. Where there is love, God is there, too. In our joyful harmony, our good God must be very happily there, strengthening this harmony that we in turn continue to spread. This is the way we, Haus Emmaus, live our charism and our chapter theme.