



FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN BRISTOL

FLAT 7, THE GLEBE, GLEBE ROAD, BRISTOL, ENGLAND, BS5 8LU
TEL. / FAX NO. 0117-9414672

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

It was only four days before Christmas.
The spirit of the season hadn't yet caught up with me,
even though cars packed the parking lot of our local discount store.
Inside the store, it was worse. Shopping carts
and last minute shoppers jammed the aisles.

Why did I come today? I wondered. My feet ached almost as much as my head.
My list contained names of several people who claimed they wanted nothing but
I knew their feelings would be hurt if I didn't buy them anything.

Buying for someone who had everything and deploring the high cost of items,
I considered gift-buying anything but fun.

Hurriedly, I filled my shopping cart with last-minute items
and proceeded to the long checkout lines.
I picked the shortest but it looked as if it would
mean at least a 20-minute wait.

In front of me were two small children - a boy of about 5 and a younger girl.
The boy wore a ragged coat. Enormously large, tattered tennis shoes
jutting far out in front of his much too short jeans.
He clutched several crumpled dollar bills in his grimy hands.

The girl's clothing resembled her brother's.
Her head was a matted mass of curly hair.
Reminders of an evening meal showed on her small face.
She carried a beautiful pair of shiny, gold house slippers.
As the Christmas music sounded in the store's stereo system,
the girl hummed along, off-key but happily.

When we finally approached the checkout register,
the girl carefully placed the shoes on the counter.
She treated them as though they were a treasure.

The clerk rang up the bill. "That will be \$6.09," she said.
The boy laid his crumpled dollars atop the stand while he
searched his pockets. He finally came up with \$3.12.
"I guess we will have to put them back," he bravely said.
"We will come back some other time, maybe tomorrow."

With that statement, a soft sob broke from the little girl.
"But Jesus would have loved these shoes," she cried.

"Well, we'll go home and work some more. Don't cry. We'll come back," he said.



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Quickly I handed \$3.00 to the cashier.
These children had waited in line for a long time.
And, after all, it was Christmas.

Suddenly a pair of arms came around me and a small voice said, "Thank you lady."

"What did you mean when you said Jesus would like the shoes?" I asked.
The boy answered, "Our mommy is sick and going to heaven.
Daddy said she might go before Christmas to be with Jesus."

The girl spoke, "My sunday school teacher said the streets
in heaven are shiny gold, just like these shoes.
Won't mommy be beautiful walking on those streets to match these shoes?"

My eyes flooded as i looked into her tear streaked face.
"Yes" I answered, " I am sure she will."

Silently I thanked God for using these children to remind me
of the true spirit of giving."