

Introduction

This exhibition, which has already been shown in several European countries, features 15 artistically high-quality dioramas. These are showcases (box cots) that allow a three-dimensional view of the events depicted. They contain around 125 figures, which were custom-made by the figurists Delgado and the Colomer siblings from Barcelona and Michel Vincent from Liège. The dioramas themselves were made by master cot builder Karl-Heinz Halmes from Rocherath/Belgium with the help of members of the Free Evangelical Community of St. Vith/Belgium. They were built in the so-called oriental style.

This exhibition deals with the question: **Why did Jesus Christ come into this world, what was the purpose of his life?** By presenting scenes from the Bible in chronological order, the exhibition aims to convey the story of God's relationship with mankind and attempts to provide answers to these questions.

So we would like to invite you to take some time to look at the dioramas.

St Paul in Athens

On his journey, Paul comes to Greece (the cradle of our thinking) and finds himself in the Aeropagus, a bare limestone hill in Athens. This is where the highest court of Athens met in moral and political matters.

Paul finds an altar with the inscription "to the unknown God - agnostoi theo"

Paul stood before the councillors in Athens and spoke to them about the "unknown God". He explained that this God, who created the whole world, does not dwell in temples, but is omnipresent. He called on people to repent and proclaimed that a man named Jesus, whom God had authenticated through the resurrection from the dead, would judge mankind.

When Paul spoke about the resurrection of the dead, some of the listeners burst out laughing, and others said, "*We will hear more from you about this subject at a later time (Acts 17:32).*"

[*To consider*](#)

[*How about you?*](#)

[*Would you like to find out more about this God and his way with people?*](#)

In this exhibition, some important stages of God's history with us humans are presented according to biblical texts.

Dioramas 1: Adam and Eve

God created the earth and everything was very good: no diseases, no death, and a harmonious community between God and man. People and animals fed on plants. God's love could be felt everywhere.

But man wanted more, he wanted to be God himself: he allowed himself to be seduced by the serpent into questioning God, disregarding his will and going his own way. Through this disobedience, through his removal from unity with God, also known as sin, death entered the world. God had warned: "If you eat from the tree of knowledge, you will die."

What were the consequences of man's decision to go his own way? This decision brought pain, illness, separation and the feeling of living in a disturbed world into this world. The animals also began to kill each other. From that moment on, this world was no longer perfect.

But God didn't give up on us. He loves us and had a solution.

Curious which one that is?

The next cots will tell you!

Dioramas 2: The angel with Mary

God chose a simple, young, unmarried woman called Mary. She lived in deep trust in God. One day the angel Gabriel appeared to her and announced: "*You will conceive and give birth to a son; you shall give him the name Jesus (Luke 1:31, New Testament)*". Mary believed without doubt. But how would Joseph, her fiancé, react?

Joseph was faced with a difficult decision. He thought Mary had been unfaithful to him. He had three options in response:

1. marry them anyway.
2. leave her secretly.
3. accuse her of adultery, which could lead to stoning according to Jewish law.

Joseph decided to leave Mary secretly so as not to expose her. But then an angel appeared to him in a dream and said: "*Joseph, son of David, do not hesitate to take Mary as your wife! For the child she is expecting is of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son. You are to give him the name Jesus, for he will free his people from all sin (Mt 1:20-21, New Testament)*".

Joseph obeyed and took Mary to him. He gave the child the name Jesus.

[To consider](#)

How do you think Joseph felt?

Dioramas 3: Mary with Elisabeth

Joseph and Mary were not the only ones to have extraordinary experiences with God. Their aunt Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah also experienced miracles. Both led a life pleasing to God. But they were childless and old.

One day an angel appeared to Zechariah and said: *"You need not be afraid, Zechariah! Your prayer has been answered. Your wife Elizabeth will give you a son, and you shall name him John. [...] He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God (Luke 1:13-16; New Testament)."* But he could not really believe this announcement, asked for a sign and remained silent until the birth of the child.

At the announcement of Jesus' birth, the angel Gabriel also told Mary that Elizabeth would also have a child: John the Baptist. Mary then set off to visit Elizabeth and help her.

When the pregnant women Mary and Elizabeth met, Elizabeth's child moved with joy in her womb, and Elizabeth recognised through the Holy Spirit that the child in Mary's womb was her Saviour.

If we compare the faith of Mary with the faith of Zechariah, we notice the following:

You can see that Zechariah didn't really believe the angel. And that had consequences, he became mute. As a priest, he should have known that it is not impossible for God to give people a child at an old age, as he did with Abraham and Sarah.

In contrast to the priest Zacharias, the simple virgin Mary believed the angel that she would be given a child, Jesus, who would one day save her people.

To consider

- *Would you have believed such incredible news when it was announced, like Mary, or would you have doubted it, like Zechariah?*
- *How does faith influence your life?*

Dioramas 4: Micha - Search for a hostel

700 years before the birth of Christ, Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:1 (Lt.) reads: "And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, little among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come to me the one who is to be Lord of Israel, whose goings forth have been from the beginning and from everlasting."

At the time of the census under Emperor Augustus, Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem, as Joseph's ancestors came from there. But there was little space because of the census. Jesus was not born in a cosy room and was not laid in a soft bed. No, after his birth he was laid in a manger (Lk. 2:7). Thus the prophecy of his birthplace was fulfilled.

What do we learn from this?

In addition to the fulfilment of the prophecy about the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14), God also keeps his promise regarding the birthplace of the Messiah. His prophecies come true.

To consider

Can you believe that the prophecies and promises of God in the Bible are true?

Dioramas 5: The nativity scene

If you set up a nativity scene at home, it will probably reflect this scene.

But what do you associate with this festival?

Is Christmas a celebration of emotions, harmony and family for you?

Do you know that many people are suffering particularly during this time?

Let's take a closer look at the cot: Joseph and Mary are happy, even though they have had their child in a less than cosy environment.

Could you imagine spending Christmas without presents and in a stable? What really makes you happy?

Joseph and Mary show us that true happiness does not depend on material things, but on a relationship with God. For the two of them do not have material gifts, but they accept the child as a gift from God. God also gives us a gift in Jesus Christ. We will unwrap this gift at the next nativity scenes.

To consider

How can Jesus be a gift for us?

Let's find out at the next stations!

Diorama 6: The Annunciation to the Shepherds

This is a very familiar scene! What happened here?

It is remarkable that the announcement of the Saviour's birth went to shepherds, people who were outcasts from society. They lived out in the fields and were considered unclean. But God loves all people, regardless of their social status. No one is excluded from the good news. What a joy that must have been for the shepherds!

Jesus often uses the profession of shepherd for his parables: *"I am the good shepherd. The shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11)."*

Incidentally, we recognise that the birth of Jesus Christ did not take place in a cold winter time. The shepherds were outside with their flock, in winter they would have been in the stable.

Christmas has been celebrated on 25 December since around 330 AD. Previously, "the birthday of the invincible sun" was celebrated on this day. However, this pagan festival was replaced in order to celebrate Jesus as "the light of the world".

The Eastern Church celebrates Christmas on 06 January.

To consider

- *What exactly is the good news?*
- *And to whom is this good news addressed?*

Let's find out at the next stations!

Dioramas 7: The wise men from the Orient

In contrast to the poor shepherds, wealthy and educated people set out to worship the Saviour of mankind.

What does that tell us?

God's offer of salvation applies to everyone - he addresses the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak.

The wise men were pagans who recognised through their knowledge of the stars that a great king had been born. They looked for him in the palace, which frightened Herod. Jesus is a thorn in his side. People obsessed with power, then as now, often exclude themselves from the good news of Jesus.

Everyone can come to Jesus, whether rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, educated or uneducated, woman or man, adult or child; everyone, regardless of culture, skin colour or religion. No one is excluded.

Dioramas 8: Infanticide - Escape to Egypt

The wise men wanted to honour Jesus, but King Herod became jealous and planned to kill the child. God revealed to Joseph in a dream that he should flee to Egypt to protect Jesus. Herod then had all the boys up to the age of 2 killed. (Luke 2, 16-23)

Why did these boys have to die?

Because Jesus was a thorn in Herod's side?

Or because there is actually something else behind Herod - namely evil itself?

According to the Bible, Satan is behind the evil. He wanted to prevent God's plan with Jesus and used Herod to do so. In the Bible, Satan embodies all that is evil and he wants to keep us humans away from God. He is happy to use any means to achieve this and is delighted when we live apart from God and act against God's commandments.

To consider

What about you? Do you live with or without God?

Diorama 9: Jesus in the temple

Joseph, Mary and the 12-year-old Jesus travelled to Jerusalem for the Passover. The Jewish Passover commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, when a lamb was slaughtered and its blood painted on the door frame to protect the first-born from death.

At the age of 12, young Jews became religiously mature. Jesus was now also responsible for his own religious life and therefore remained in the temple.

This scene is relevant because even at the age of 12, Jesus clearly expressed who his Father is, namely God. The biblical text (Luke 2:51) shows that Jesus was always obedient. That is why his parents thought he had travelled back with their group, but in the evening they noticed his absence and returned to look for him. They found him in the temple, where he replied to their reproach that they had sought him with pain: *"Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*

Jesus quite naturally refers to God as his Father and is surprised that his biological parents did not know where to find him. Here we can already see how intimate Jesus' connection to his heavenly Father is.

When Jesus later taught, he referred to the fact that he came into the world to fulfil the will of his Father, i.e. God. The following verses illustrate this very well:

"For I have not come down from heaven to do what I myself desire, but to fulfil the will of him who sent me. And the will of him who sent me is that of all those whom he has given me I should leave no one to perish, but that I should raise them from death on that last day. Yes, it is my Father's will that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and on that last day I will raise him up (John 6:38-40, New Testament)."

"My food is to do the will of him who sent me. [...](John 4:34)."

The will of the Father is the reconciliation of man with God, possible only through the sacrifice of Jesus. Just as the blood of the lamb in Egypt stands for the salvation of the firstborn, Jesus' blood, which was shed on the cross, stands for the salvation of mankind. The prerequisite is personal faith in God and acceptance of the sacrifice. (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; John 6:40)

To consider

- *Did you know that it is the will of the Father to reconcile people with HIM? What does that mean for you?*
- *Do you have such a relationship with God that you call him Father?*
- *Are you prepared to put God's will above that of other people, including your own?*

Diorama 10: Jesus and Nicodemus

Here we see Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the High Council, led a deeply religious life but was unsure how to be saved.

That is why he sought dialogue with Jesus at night. Jesus understood his need and said: *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3)."*

Nicodemus asked: "How can a man be born who is already old?" Jesus explained: "Anyone who does not repent and is born again through God's Spirit cannot enter God's kingdom!"

This conversion is called conversion; a personal decision to align one's life with God's will, to put God first in life. Jesus said: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16, Meng)."*

To consider

- *What does eternal life mean to you?*
- *Do you believe that everything ends with death?*

Martha and Mary also asked themselves this question when their brother Lazarus was seriously ill. More about this in our next post.

Diorama 11: Jesus raises Lazarus from death (John 11)

Shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus received the news that Lazarus was seriously ill. But instead of leaving immediately, he waited several more days. When Jesus finally arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days. According to Jewish understanding, the soul hovers over the corpse for three days, after four days there is no longer any hope.

So why did Jesus wait?

Jesus said that this was for the glory of God. He wept with the grieving sisters Mary and Martha and said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever accepts me will live, even if he dies." Do you believe that?

Jesus ordered the stone in front of the tomb to be removed and called out: "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out, alive. This miracle proved that Jesus is Lord over life and death.

Many eyewitnesses came to believe, but the Pharisees decided to kill Jesus. The person of Jesus divides humanity to this day.

Jesus says: "*Whoever is not for me is against me (Math. 12:30)* "

To consider

We are also being asked to make a decision.

What does Jesus mean to you?

Dioramas 12: Still life (crucifixion)

Let the cot have an effect on you.

Two points are important for this cot:

- 1 Christmas cannot be understood without Easter.

At Christmas, we remember that God became man out of love for us humans (John 1:11). But why did Jesus come into the world?

2. The crucifixion of Jesus is the content of God's gift to this world.

What does that mean?

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)."

Jesus died on behalf of all people, taking on the punishment we deserved and thus building us a direct bridge to God. *"The punishment was on him for our peace, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)."*

After all that people inflicted on Jesus (contempt, slander, torment ...), one of Jesus' last words (on the cross!) emphasises his indescribable love for people: *"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)."*

To consider

Do you recognise why Jesus came into the world and why the crucifixion scene is part of Christmas?

Dioramas 13: The empty tomb

Is everything over now with Jesus' death? Is that it?

After Jesus' death, his body was hastily placed in the tomb and the Jewish authorities had it guarded. But on Easter morning, Peter and the two Marys find the tomb empty.

The Gospels report that the tomb was open and angels announced that Jesus had risen! This had been foretold by the prophets: *"He will not remain with the dead and his body will not decay (Ps. 16:10)."*

The resurrection of Jesus is the centrepiece of the Christian faith. Without it, our faith would be an illusion (1 Corinthians 15:13-22) and the message of the Bible would not be fulfilled. Jesus' victory over death gives us hope for eternal life, guarantees us forgiveness of our sins and strengthens our trust in God's plan for humanity, but also for our personal lives. The resurrection confirms Jesus' message.

The Bible reports that Jesus appeared to many people after his death (John 20 and 21; Luke 24; Mark 16; Matthew 28; Acts 1 etc.).

Weren't people just naive back then?

People at that time were not gullible. Many disciples could not believe the stories of the others at first (Lk. 24, 13-26). Thomas, for example, could only believe this after Jesus himself appeared to him and he put his fingers on Jesus' wounds. He then testified: "My Lord and my God!". (Joh. 20, 24-28)

Isn't the resurrection just an invention of the Bible?

It is not only the Bible that reports Jesus' resurrection, but other sources also attest to it. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, for example, wrote around 90 AD: "Jesus, a man full of wisdom, was condemned to death on the cross by Pilate. But on the third day he appeared alive again to his followers."

Hasn't it been proven long ago that the resurrection is a Christian invention?

No, even scholars who specialise in the study of historical facts can believe it. For example, Prof. Thomas Arnold (quoted from P. Zöllner-Greer, 2000)¹, who held the Chair of Modern History at Oxford University, said: *"I have been accustomed for years to study the history of other times, or to examine and weigh the evidence of those who wrote about it, and **I know of no single fact in the history of mankind which has been better and more fully proved, at least as far as a fair investigation is concerned, than the great sign which God has given us, namely, that Christ died and rose again from the dead.**"*

[To consider](#)

[Can you believe in the resurrection?](#)

¹ <https://professorenforum.de/ressourcen/zur-historizitaet-der-auferstehung-von-jesus-christus/m> Lake of Tiberias.

Diorama 14: Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples did not know what to do next. Peter decided to go fishing again and six other disciples accompanied him. But after a whole night without a catch, a stranger called out from the shore: "*Children, do you have anything to eat? (John 21:5)*" When they replied in the negative, he said, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat." The catch was so large that they could hardly haul in the net. John recognised: "It's the Lord!" Peter jumped into the water to get to Jesus quickly, who was waiting for them on the shore with a charcoal fire, bread and fish.

This presentation could bear two titles:

-Jesus on the shore of our lives

-Our lives are characterised by toil and worry, often without success. But Jesus waits patiently on the shore of our lives and takes care of us.

-Grief and work often distract us from the essentials. But Jesus meets his followers again and again and can be experienced in real life.

-My 2nd chance - a new beginning

After breakfast, Jesus also asked Simon Peter, who had betrayed him three times, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter replied each time: "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said: "Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, take care of my sheep."

Simon, gets a new chance and a job.

Just as Simon gets a new chance, you too will always get a new chance with God. No one is perfect, everyone sins. But through Jesus we can be freed from this guilt: He wants us to "bring to him" all our bad deeds and characteristics, all our fears and weaknesses, that is, to lay them bare in our hearts before him and "hand them over" to him. **He wants to relieve us of all these burdens so that we are freed from them and can live a trusting, loving and undisturbed relationship with God and our fellow human beings.** This relationship not only gives us hope, strength and freedom, but also inner peace, which is particularly important in a world that is full of challenges and difficulties. **THAT is Jesus' gift to us!**

Jesus' followers have the task of proclaiming this love of God and making it visible in their lives, with God's help: "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22:39)

To consider

- *Would you be prepared to give someone else who has betrayed you a second chance?*
- *How do you feel when you consider that God wants to give you a new chance?*

Dioramas 15: Jesus' Ascension

Jesus commanded his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. He said: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation! (Mk 16:15)"*.

He led his eleven apostles to Bethany and, as he blessed them, he ascended into heaven. A cloud hid him from their sight. Suddenly two men in bright white stood by them and said: *"Why are you standing here staring at the sky? This same Jesus will come again in the same way (Acts 1:11)."*

The ascension of Jesus is an important fact for believers. Jesus is reunited with his Father, with God ("he sits at the right hand of God") in a place of righteousness that we call "heaven".

Jesus is therefore no longer physically in this world. Before he ascended, he told his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go into all nations and make disciples of me, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And be sure of this: I am with you every day until the end of the world" (Mt 28:18-20, New Testament).

To consider

- *What exactly does this mission of Jesus mean?*
- *And what could be meant when Christians say that Jesus is still alive for them today?*

Pentecost (50th day): Peter's sermon

On the day of Pentecost, all the disciples were together when suddenly a roar came from heaven, like a violent storm, and filled the whole house. At the same time, something like tongues of fire appeared and sat on each of them. The people were astonished: "What is that?" Some mocked: "They have drunk too much wine." (Acts 2, 1-12)

Then Peter stood before the crowd with the other apostles and shouted: *"Here is the fulfilment of what the prophet Joel said (3:1): In the last days I will pour out my Spirit on all people[...] Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved [...]. God raised this Jesus from the dead. We are all witnesses of this. [...] Him whom you crucified, God has made Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:17-37)."*

The listeners were deeply moved and asked: "What should we do?" Peter replied: "Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, for the forgiveness of sins! Then you will receive the Holy Spirit."

To consider

What is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, for you?

"The door to the heart"

At the end of our tour, we meet the Apostle Paul again, who points to a mysterious door. This door, decorated with a cross and a red heart, radiates light from every crack. There is no other entrance to this building - only this door!

This presentation leads us to the **core of the exhibition**, to our own heart's door.

Anyone can open this door of the heart to God's love of their own free will (John 3.16, 1 John 5.13).

God says: "***I stand at your door and knock. Whoever listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (Rev 3:20, ZB).***"

He wants no one to be lost and every person to find him and his boundless love. "*So there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7)*", i.e. heaven rejoices over every person who seeks God, finds him and lets him into their heart.

God wants to enter into a loving relationship with us in which we fully entrust ourselves to him because we are convinced of his omnipotence and goodness. He wants to **give us a meaningful life on earth and that we continue to live forever and ever after death in perfect happiness, in communion with God** - without consideration or purchase price, **only by grace**.

Is there any other way to have fellowship with God than to accept the gift and open our heart's door?

Jesus said: "*I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life. **You can only** come to the Father through me (John 14:6, New Testament).*"

To consider

- *How do you react to Jesus at your door?*
- *Will you open the door to him and let him into your life?*
- *Are you ready to accept and unwrap his gift (see dioramas 14)?*
- *Or do you leave the door locked?*