

## **Christmas between miracle and the market economy**

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*Motto: "Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who art the way, the truth and the life, and you traveled with your servant Joseph, and with the two disciples who went to Emmaus, Thyself, O Master, travels with I your servant, blessing me out. Send it to me as a guardian angel to Tobias, to be my guardian and adviser and forbid me from all bad accident unharmed. And so with peace, good health and increase, to return fully mine and my life to glorify the most honorable and great fit thy name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. "*

**Abstract** *Christmas is one of the biggest religious holidays and also one of the most beautiful by combining faith that celebrates the Nativity with Santa's coming tradition, full of gifts for the children behaved. It is also a business for artisans and merchants, from toy manufacturers to electronics, from small producers who sell at Christmas fairs to major companies, whose products dominate supermarket shelves. Also, is traveling time, for pleasure for tourists who prefer the mountain to practice winter sports, to those who go home to parents or relatives or those who feel the need to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to celebrate Christian the birth of Christ. This article aims to explore those situations where cold calculation of merchants' figures is changed by belief, by desire to do well to others, forgetting profit.*

**Keywords:** Pilgrimage, Christmas, need, miracle.  
**JEL Classification:** Z19

### **Introduction**

Christmas stays in my mind as a small Christmas miracle occurred while trying to organize a pilgrimage for a group of believers from a Christian church in Romania, who wanted to attend a religious meeting, which took place in Brussels, Belgium on New Year.

We have created a route, which corresponds to a pilgrimage, with interesting places to visit, and a few accommodations, few indeed, as it was not a pleasure trip, but a pilgrimage <sup>[2]</sup>, placed in austere conditions in which matter more power prayer than personal comfort.

One accommodation was at a hotel in Amsterdam, owned by a large hotel chain, which also prepared few offers matching feasts that were to come, but, I must say that, I have not paid before booking, but only have guaranteed it with a card credit, which did not have much money on it, as I was supposed to pay upon arrival, thus avoiding high bank fees on international bank transfers and complicated formalities born from the desire to avoid the possibility of circumvention authorities charges<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Impersonal figures accounting.**

Being all set, I was ready to go, when I saw a missed call from an abroad number, and immediately I thought that something was wrong, because there was nobody to call me. And so it was. I got home and saw while checking e-mail a message on behalf of booking site that had made the reservation, which I was communicated on an impersonal tone:

*"I was contacted by the hotel that you have the booking to inform us that the credit card information provided at the time of booking is not correct and was refused.*

*Please be kind enough to contact the hotel directly by phone within 24 hours to provide another credit card or correct information about the card originally offered.*

*If the hotel is not contacted within the time limit referred above, it has the right to cancel your booking without notice. "*

Now people were right, but it was December 24th, Christmas Eve, and everything was closed. On the other hand, no warranty was requested at the time of booking<sup>[4]</sup>, but probably they had far too many reservations and checked which are good and which are not.

I got in touch by email with the hotel and explained the situation:

*"I'm sorry to hear that there are problems with my credit card. Booking is real and all data is correct, as these two bookings, in total 19 rooms for 46 people, will be paid cash when check-in and accommodation is made.*

*We are a group of Christian pilgrims from a Romanian church, going to a religious ecumenical meeting taking place in Brussels and we arrive in Amsterdam in the morning and will go to Brussels next day early morning without having breakfast.*

*Please find below credit card details, once again, and please trust us because at the moment it is impossible for me to get in touch with the bank, everything is closed for Christmas and on December 26<sup>th</sup> early morning we will leave to Brussels.*

*Please let me know as soon as possible regarding the decision taken, as it is impossible for me to make another booking at this time (no travel agency is open for Christmas). To see that we are serious, I enclose a list of people who are participating in the pilgrimage. I expect your response and wish you a good day. D."*

And the answer came around 16hours and without any hope for me:

*"Dear D., Thank you for your mail and explanations. The problem is that the bank has not authorized amount and we have no guarantee. If the problem was only about 1 room, there was no problem, but are 19 rooms and we cannot keep the booking without being guaranteed. 19 rooms represent for us a group booking and we simply cannot believe you're coming by trust ... the risk is too big for us.*

*We are very sorry, but at this time we will cancel the booking. We apologize for the inconvenience. Greetings, C. Reservations Manager"*

And it seemed that everything was over, were no money on the card and no bank was open so I could put money on it; everyone being busy decoration the Christmas tree and waiting Santa Claus.

I was thinking if there was any way to force them to keep the bookings, whether was because of international institutional [\[5\]](#) cooperation or current legislation, but could not find any solution.

Upset the situation apparently hopeless it is, I said to myself and open my soul and write them one more time, convinced that I lost all hope:

*"Dear C., I'm sorry to hear that a big hotel like yours with 216 rooms belonging to a group so important does not trust Christmas night to keep 19 rooms for a group of Christian pilgrims attending a religious meeting and wish to visit Amsterdam in the way. I can give you the name of the contact person from religious community who is organizing meeting and who can guarantee to us or our priest, but do not know if that helps.*

*I hope you realize that this is Christmas time (and everything is closed for the holidays) and with less than 4 days before our arrival in Amsterdam we cannot find another hotel, so we are forced to sleep in the bus. But because it is Christmas, we still have faith that you will reconsider your position and promise that we will not disappoint.*

*Merry Christmas! God bless you. D."*

### **Christmas miracle.**

Night past and Christmas came, when, after I came back from Christmas mass, I found the next e-mail from the hotel

*"Dear D., Thanks for the email. Please understand that I believe what you say, but I run a hotel and want to make sure that everyone gets booked and paid, due to bad experiences in the past when I considered group bookings accepted without collateral. However I do not want to have a bad conscience because it is Christmas. Therefore I will make an exception and will keep rooms for you.*

*Your faith solved everything. Have a safe journey. Merry Christmas. C. "*

### **Instead of conclusions**

I read and read this message a dozen times and I could not believe it, indeed our prayers worked and faith was the one that triumphed. There is no point to tell you that those rooms were waiting for us and everything went great. For me it did not matter than those words coming from afar: "***Your faith solved everything.*** Have a safe journey."

**So I tell you now for Christmas: "Have faith and you will get a pleasant trip wherever you go. Merry Christmas! "**

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