



Christmas Message from His Majesty the King

24 December 2018

Good night,

At this very special time of the year, when we should always be brought together with loving emotions, I, along with the Queen and our daughters, Princess Leonor and Infanta Sofía, would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and hope that all your dreams and aspirations come true in 2019.

Today, I would like to especially remember those of you who are currently experiencing a difficult situation due to personal, economic or social reasons; or those who are far away from your homes and loved ones. At this time, which is full of joy and celebration, our hearts and thoughts are with you; and our greatest wish is for you to overcome these circumstances as soon as possible.

Over the last few years, on Christmas Eve, I have conveyed to you my concerns and thoughts with regards to our democracy; social and territorial cohesion, the economy, unemployment and education; also on corruption, terrorism, and gender violence; a violence that is so sadly topical and that always deserves our strongest repudiation and condemnation, and the commitment of society as a whole to eradicate it from our lives. All these issues that I have just mentioned still concern us, of course, very gravely.

I would also like to take the opportunity tonight to talk to you about a topic that is very important to me. I would like to address our coexistence, and the principles on which it is inspired, bearing both the present and the future in mind, and our younger generations, who today I would like to address in particular.

On 6 December of this year, on the 40th anniversary of our Constitution, I once again underlined the ideals that encouraged and united Spaniards during the political transition and that have been the foundation and basis of our freedom and progress over the last 40 years: reconciliation and harmony; dialogue and understanding; integration and solidarity.

Those of you who lived through those years know very well that if there is one thing that defined them, it was the value of working together and in a team, with our country and its future in mind. Spaniards had the will to understand each other, and the political, economic and social leaders had the will to reach agreements, despite holding very different ideas and convictions.

They were all united by a very clear objective: democracy and freedom in Spain; defining common rules that would guarantee our coexistence. And they managed it. The subsequent generations have benefited from this success; and today we must do everything in our hands to ensure that those principles are not lost or forgotten, so that the rules that belong to everyone are respected by all. By doing this we will assure young people, with greater certainty, further decades of progress and advancement, such as those that we have been fortunate enough to have known.

Those of you who played key roles or witnessed the transition will surely understand what I have just said very well. For those of you who did not live through this time, and especially the younger generations, it is our duty to share with you that period of our history, the path that allows us to understand why and how Spain has undergone the most radical change in its history; the reason why our society has advanced and prospered so much since then.

On the one hand I think that this is necessary; but on the other hand, perhaps it is not enough. Because, as a society, we have an outstanding debt to our young people. We are responsible for their future, and the circumstances prevalent today are by no means the easiest.

Young people are immersed in the reality of a technological society which is subjected to continuous and accelerated changes. This raises new questions, but at the same time is full of new opportunities. You are talented, you believe in peace, you are open to the world because you are and feel European, you are united, you are committed to social causes, to the fight against climate change and to protecting the environment. You want to live and to live together, but you have serious problems.

You know that it is very difficult to find work without having appropriate training. Many of you have this, but sometimes you are forced to take up positions for which you have not prepared or which do not meet your expectations. And we need to help you: to be able to build a personal and professional life, with a decent job and salary, to have a suitable place to live and, if you so wish, to form a family and be able to maintain

a work-life balance.

Our responsibility, that of our society as a whole, is for your capacity, motivation, enthusiasm and effort to overcome all the difficulties; because it is our obligation –relying on you, on your energy– to continue building a better, more creative, more dynamic and constantly avant-garde country on a daily basis; a Spain that is more socially cohesive and more committed to real equality between men and women.

Today, because we live in a well-established democracy and share the same principles and values with other democracies around us, it is fundamental for us to ensure our coexistence at all times.

A coexistence that is based on consideration and respect for people, ideas and the rights of others, which requires us to take care of and strengthen the deep bonds that unite us and that must always unite all Spaniards; which is incompatible with animosity and resentment, because these attitudes form part of the worst chapter of our history and we must refuse for them to re-emerge; a coexistence where overcoming great problems and injustices can never be the product of division, much less of confrontation, but of agreement and union in the face of challenges and difficulties.

A coexistence, in short, that demands respect for our Constitution; which is not an inert reality, but a living reality that safeguards, protects and enforces our rights and freedoms. All projects need solid foundations, and modern-day Spain has them, since they are made up of a determined will for harmony, peace and understanding.

And this is the main idea that I wanted to convey to you tonight: that coexistence –which, let's remember, is always fragile– is the greatest heritage that we Spaniards have. It is the most valuable work of our democracy and the best legacy that we can entrust to our younger generations. It is for this reason that we must prevent it from deteriorating or eroding away; we must defend it, care for it, protect it; and do so with responsibility and conviction. We have demonstrated this during these last forty years of freedom, as we have believed in ourselves and our own strengths.

Now we must proudly value who we are, what we have done and trust in what we can do together, moving away from disillusion and pessimism. We must be aware of the new reality imposed on us by the 21st century and be capable of reaching civic and social consensus that will ensure the great modernisation of Spain.

Let's move forward with this hope and confidence in the future. With courage and without stopping. Because we can all do a lot for the common good, and surpass ourselves every day; doing our part and supporting those who meet their obligations; encouraging those who need it –without leaving anyone behind– and contributing all our strength to the desire for an ever-better Spain, because we, Spaniards, deserve it.

You have my encouragement. Thank you for listening to me and once again I wish each and every one of you and your families a very happy Christmas: Feliz Navidad.

Eguberri on. Bon Nadal. Boas festas.
Good night, And a happy and prosperous 2019.