

Christmas Message 2023

Dear brothers,

Wish you all a very joyful Christmas!

The celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas this year is of special significance for our charismatic family in this 175th anniversary of the birth of our Congregation. I invite you to look at the origin of the Congregation in the light of the divine logic of incarnation. Understandably, God becoming a finite, vulnerable human being is beyond the grasp of any human logic. At a deeper level, it makes sense that God chose the channel of personal relationship and presence to welcome us into the dynamics of divine love. In Jesus, we can truly be who we are in God, born out of love and born to love as God loves us. Christmas reminds us again that God has assumed our human condition in Christ so that our humanity can beautifully bloom in God, who is love.

Our Congregation is born in the Church as a community of disciples to keep this message alive in the world. Although we are finite, vulnerable, and fragile humans, we share in Christ's divine nature and become a new creation as "love for God and our brothers and sisters has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and builds up our communion" (CC 10). Our mission flows from our dwelling in Christ. Indeed, our missionary vocation is a mini-incarnation event in reverse. Hence, we do not have to be super humans and do great feats to win the world for Christ. Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds at the first Christmas were as human as any of us. The presence of Jesus in their lives transformed them.

The world continues to be vulnerable and fragile, but a new world is possible when we hold the treasure within, the lord of love and life dwelling in us. Our world continues to operate on the logic of war, spending God-given resources to kill and destroy one another, leaving thousands wounded and homeless. In the darkness of desperation in human hearts, the angels still sing the songs to announce the birth of a new humanity of goodwill that glorifies God and builds peace on earth. Let us listen to that song in the silence of our depths and render our hearts and communities a welcoming manger for God's love to become flesh in our flesh.

Christmas also reminds us of a reported mystical experience of our Founder on Christmas Eve when he had a vision of Mother Mary, who handed the Baby Jesus to him. For a missionary, Christmas is a special moment to renew his communion with God and fidelity to the mission.

In the XXVI General Chapter, we looked to the Heart of our Holy Mother, saying, "We dream like Claret of a Congregation that, following the example of Mary, treasures in its heart, fulfils and proclaims the Word of God" (QC 51). We learn Christmas from her to make Christmas real in our times.

May the joy and peace of Christmas remain in you all through the new year 2024!

Mathew Vattamattam, CMF

Superior General

25 December 2023