



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2018

Woman and baby Warao (Venezuela), refugees in Pacaraima - Brazil

*“Giving a glance to the past, we thank God for the benefits received, and for the graces he has granted us, even in the midst of trials to which he was pleased to submit us to. From now on, ours is a life of hope of ever new and abundant blessings on each one in particular and on the Institute.
Let the beautiful day come soon in which all, being of one heart and one soul, we may again run the path of our sanctification, under the eyes of our Most Blessed Consolata”. (Blessed Joseph Allamano)*

*“All the things we really need can only come as a gift!”
(Thomas Merton)
... Every year, Christmas teaches us this!*

There are moments in the history of the world in which the message of Christmas expresses a stronger need for sharing and unity.

Dear missionaries, relatives, benefactors and friends;

We welcome the gift of Christmas!

Christmas is the moment of our tender encounter with God who becomes one of us. God does not disdain our human weakness, but he takes it up to tell us how precious we are for him and how much he values us before his eyes. To feel ourselves thought of by God, loved by Him, sought, desired, the knowledge that He puts his life at stake for us, fills us with so much joy. Christmas is love given, given to everyone, to the good as to the bad, to the saints as to the sinners, to the important men as to all the dispossessed.



Celebrating Christmas means making room!

Celebrating Christmas means making room, in the mind and in the heart, for Jesus who knocks on our door. Often, we do not have a ready space: it is therefore necessary to provide him with an environment that was occupied, by clearing it up. It is necessary to let him enter where He is absent and offer him hospitality where he was previously excluded. The Lord wants to live among us and never gets tired of knocking on our hearts, at the heart of humanity. The world needs his presence: wars that never seem to cease and others on the horizon; religious and ethnic persecutions, more and more migrant people enslaved and killed in general indifference; a culture of waste that envelops us more and more with a strong decadence of values; natural disasters caused by the too much smog of the wellbeing of a few ...

The response of the “God who comes to us” is an invitation to welcome him in our lives and to let ourselves be transformed into “docile instruments in his hands”, so that through our commitment his tenderness may invade the entire universe and give to each person: dignity, justice, peace, love, acceptance, forgiveness, gratuity!

To celebrate Christmas is to welcome Jesus!

With Christmas, the message of Jesus becomes clearer, his identity is presented in depth. He does not claim anything from us, He offers himself. He does not want us to prostrate ourselves before him, but he wants us to kneel before our brothers. He does not ask us to give our life for him, but that, with him, we may make it available to others!

Let us contemplate and let ourselves be watched by the child Jesus so that he may give us faith, enlighten us to spread hope and invite us to transform our lives into charity!

Celebrating Christmas is to give birth to the mission!

The Son of God comes among us, is born, lives and gives himself for a specific mission: to be a sign of God's love for the world, for every man. This is our very mission. The “mission of Christmas” is to be born, to be enabled to be born, to be reborn. Even in a time of decline and indecipherable change like the one that puts us to the test. To see the One who is being born within us, in others, in the poor and excluded, in the young, in diversity, in the future. The Child of Bethlehem, in fact, does not age, he awakens the trust in those who welcome him in their lives.

I wish everyone to mirror himself in the mystery of the incarnation, to deepen the meaning of his existence, and to give good direction to his steps. To welcome Love and be a humble and credible sign. God became man so that each of us may become more human. Those who love arrive first, their steps come first. This is so for God: his steps are a lover's steps that always come first. From him we are invited to learn his style, to always take the first step because we cannot remain impassive, indifferent to the suffering of many: Christmas does not allow it!

Let us learn from the trees...

“The grandfather held the grandson by the hand and pointed to the mighty trees of the avenue. He told him that nothing is more beautiful than a tree.

- Look, look at the trees how they work!

- But, grandfather, what are they doing?

- They keep the earth attached to the sky! And this is a very difficult thing. Look at this



wrinkled trunk. It is like a big rope. There are also many knots. At both ends the strings of the rope divide and widen to unite heaven and earth. They are called branches at the top and roots at the bottom. They are the same thing. The roots open the way in the ground and in the same way the branches open a road in the sky. In both cases it is a hard work!

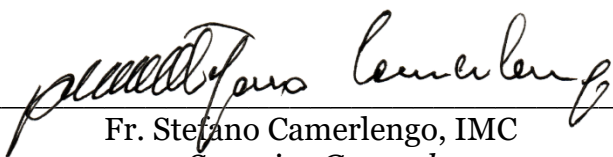
- *But, grandfather, it is more difficult to penetrate the ground than the sky!*
- *Eh no, my child. If so, the branches would be beautifully straight. Instead, look how they are twisted and deformed by the effort. They try and struggle. They make tormenting attempts more than the roots.*
- *But who makes them do all this hard work?*
- *It's the wind. The wind would like to separate the sky from the earth. But the trees hold on. For now, they are those who are winning.*

This is the hard work of our faith: to keep heaven united to the earth, to hold on tight to our God, in the certainty that He never gives up. Each of us is like that, like a tree that is rooted in the ground and in the sky, at the same time... And often there is so much effort in keeping heaven and earth together, faith and life, sewing the pieces, rebuilding ourselves, because sometimes life is really hard.”

(Taken from a collection of Christmas stories)

Dear friends, let not ours be wishes of circumstance, rituals, but be the sweet and moving caress to the heart as God does. Wishing a Holy Christmas to each one, made of silence and amazement for a lovable God who lets himself be held in our arms!

Christmas, 2018


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Superior General

