



Rome, Christmas 2017

To All the Sisters

Dearest Sisters,

It's Christmas! The joyous announcement resounds: "Today a Savior has been born to you: Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11). Mary settles him into a new grotto—that of our earth, our history, our hearts. He comes as salvation, as Emmanuel, God-with-us. We are a poor grotto, stripped bare and empty, but in it shines a splendid Light: Christ the Lord (cf. 2 Co. 4:6).

Mary and Joseph traveled the roads of their time and experienced the drama of rejection: "There was no room for them in the inn." This inn that refused them hospitality is a symbol of our contemporary society, in which many people "can't find a room"; in which their dignity is wounded. It is a society in which many of our brothers and sisters don't experience the light and consolation of Jesus or find meaningful and life-giving horizons. In this society, we too can *fail to make room* for others by taking refuge in habits that we think will ensure us tranquility and security (cf. EG 49). Let us accept the invitation to *make room for Jesus* by becoming the poor manger that receives the Father's completely gratuitous gift of the Word so as to give him to others.

The poverty of the Child of Bethlehem conceals the inexhaustible wealth of God: "He became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Co. 8:9). For us, Christmas is a summons to evangelical poverty, humility and gentleness; it is an invitation to feel once again our historic and prophetic responsibility to place our life, time, energy and talents at the service of the Gospel (cf. Const. 12). It is an invitation to be attentive to the cry of the poor and offer them our solidarity (Const. 45); to surrender our lives into the hands of the Father, placing all our trust in him.

Best wishes to all our collaborators and Cooperators, who enthusiastically support our mission throughout the world. Best wishes to our young women in formation and to our communities, especially those which during 2017 were sorely tried by natural calamities, wars and extreme political instability. Best wishes to our senior and sick sisters, whose sufferings ensure that our Pauline mission will be fruitful.

Let us take to heart Fr. Alberione's words to Maestra Thecla, overflowing with tenderness, and welcome them as his best wishes to us too this Christmas: "Today our Queen and Mother carries out her apostolate by offering Baby Jesus to us. May she place him in your arms, in your heart. Never let him leave you: carry him with you every day with always greater love" (LMT 71).

Affectionately,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General