



*The light shines
in the darkness,
and the darkness
has not overcome it* (John 1:5).

Christmas 2020

Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,

Meditating on the *Prologue* of John's Gospel, which the Liturgy proposes to us on Christmas Day, my heart was captured—and not randomly—by this phrase: “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn. 1:5).

Light and darkness: a conflict that characterizes every period of history, including our own. But even in these days of such concentrated and pain-filled darkness, we nevertheless see fragments of the Light that overcomes the dark and reveals the presence of God, here, with us, every day. As well as this Christmas, marked by the pandemic.

Jesus, the Light of the world, offers us glimpses of the light that gives meaning to history and illuminates our journey, allowing us *to move forward in hope*.

As poet Charles Péguy writes, Hope—the “youngest” of the three virtues—is born on Christmas Day and takes her older sisters, Faith and Love, by the hand to guide them because “hope sees what is not yet but what will be.”

May this Christmas be for all of us a true *conversion to hope*. There are already numerous sprouts of hope grafted onto the “roots” of the Promise, onto the “good soil” of the Pauline life.

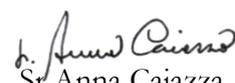
May the year ahead of us be one long “Christmas year,” a biblical year of hope for us who, like the Apostle Paul, are called to the *sacred ministry of proclaiming the Gospel of God* (cf. Rm. 15:16), a ministry that, in the Founder's thinking, is expressed in terms of light: “You are rays of this light, which is Jesus—‘I am the light of the world,’ ‘You are the light of the world’—because you take from him and give to others” (FSP56, p.73).

So let us arise and set out on our journey fearlessly because the Promise is renewed, Hope holds us by the hand and is beside us in the Son who has been given to us: Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Dearly beloved, on my own behalf and on behalf of the whole General Government, I want to wish you a blessed Christmas and a serene 2021 under the sign of new beginnings and under the protection of St. Joseph, “a creatively courageous father” (cf. *Patris corde*, 5).

May these best wishes ripple out to embrace all your families, lay collaborators, Cooperators, friends and benefactors, to whom we are sincerely grateful for their contribution to the proclamation of the Gospel in every part of the world.

With deep affection, in communion of hope.


Sr Anna Caiazza
Superior General