



*Christmas of the Word Incarnate
is a school of Peace.*

Blessed J. Alberione

Christmas of the Lord 2023

Dearest sisters and young women in formation,

As always, this year too I am captivated by the holy Night when the heavens opened above the shepherds guarding their flocks. However, this year, perhaps because of everything that is going on right now, I am particularly struck by the contrast in Luke's narrative between the brilliant *light* that shatters the darkness and the *great fear* that seizes the shepherds (Lk. 2:1-20), because it is usually darkness that instills fear...

And there is another contradiction in the same account: the radiant light, the appearance of angels, the celebration in heaven and song of praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests"...are all in sharp contrast to the simple, humble, disarming sign of "an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

The shepherds go to Bethlehem and see and believe despite everything, despite the fact it was unthinkable that the Messiah proclaimed by the angels—the "Savior, who is Christ the Lord"—is clad in swaddling clothes and lying on rough straw in a manger, just like their own little ones. It is only at this point that their fear gives way to joy, and they feel the need to recount the amazing things they had seen: the Almighty had become a child, cloaked in utter weakness and in need of everything, including the motherly care of hands ready to welcome him. His uplifted gaze and tender humility change the worldview of societies built on the dominance of just a few, on terror, on violence...

That is why this Child—lying on the straw, defenseless and dependent on others—is the "Prince of Peace."


That is why "no one can take up weapons that kill other people in his name" (C. de Chergé).

That is why, on this holy Night, we should ensure that our lives and those of our communities resound with the angel's proclamation to the shepherds of "peace on earth," pleading for harmony and consolation on behalf of all humanity, sorely tried by wars and crises of all kinds, imploring the birth of God in the heart of a world in desperate need of him:

We need you, you alone, and no one else. You alone can feel how great, how immeasurably great, is the need for you, in this world, in this hour of the world. Whoever seeks the beauty of the world seeks, without realizing it, you, who are complete and perfect beauty; whoever pursues truth in his thinking, desires, without intending it, you, who are the only truth worth knowing; and whoever strives for peace, seeks you, the only peace, where the most troubled hearts can rest (G. Papini).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you, my dear ones, also on behalf of the sisters of the General Government. Best wishes to your families, collaborators, friends, benefactors, and the brothers and sisters who make up our marvelous Pauline Family. Thank you for your lives and for the passion with which you proclaim the Gospel every day.

With great affection, in communion of joy and hope.


Sr. Anna Caiazza
Superior General