



Christmas 2020

Christmas Greetings

*from Br. Roberto Genuin
General Minister of the Capuchin Friars Minor*

*D*ear Brothers,

Yesterday evening upon entering the Curia's chapel, there was something unusual there that struck me. One of the brothers, particularly good at such things, had set up a small scene near the entrance. It is customary during this time to prepare nativity scenes. Ours is already set up in the sanctuary. And then on Christmas Eve the child will be placed in the manger, and the Magi added at Epiphany. But this year's setup is novel and striking because the scene near the entrance depicts the wise men on approach, searching for the Child that is to be born.

I believe that each of us has already encountered the Lord, but we are also always looking to meet him at a deeper level, to know him more.

Among the most beautiful things we can experience by living in fraternity, one that enhances our strength and our relish, is knowing that the brothers we walk side by side with are all seeking to meet the Lord in a deeper way. Here at the Curia, we also share this fascinating experience in our daily life: despite all our frailties, along with our sins and limitations, it is wonderful to see the commitment of each friar trying to meet the Lord more deeply. Because that alone is worth more than anything else.

The joy of Christmas lies in the fact that like the Magi who follow the star and find the Child, we too will find Him at the end our quest. And truthfully, an even greater joy is knowing that He has already been looking for us! Every time we encounter Him, we visit Him as a friend who has preceded us in the effort. This is a beautiful thing: the Lord continually goes before us to meet us. By becoming a man-child, incarnate in this world, he seeks a relationship with us ... seeks a dialogue with me.



The dialogue that Jesus seeks with me makes me feel worthwhile in the eyes of God; it tells me that I have a sure shoulder to lean on, that there is a particular benevolence on the Lord's part for me. At the same time, it makes me reflect: if the Lord seeks me out and goes before me to meet me, then he does so not only for me, but for each and every one of us.

So, while this brings me assurance that I am favored, beloved by God, it also provides for me an "address" where I can try to meet Him on a deeper level. It is the "address" also where I should do likewise with my brothers and with everyone as much as I am able. It is precisely in the littleness of the Child that the Lord indicates to us that he is ready to be welcomed. No matter what path one has walked, what titles he has, no matter how great his faith, no matter what faith he is! The Lord comes to meet each human person. This lines up exactly with - and we will never stop thanking him! - what the Pope has taught us in recent years regarding the openness that the Lord has towards each of us and the openness that each of us should have towards all people. It seems that what the Pope teaches is strongly linked to our way of perceiving a relationship with God, so close to the Franciscan sensibility. This should give us great courage!

We have just come through a unique year. But despite the disorientation of those initial months, the Order has not fallen off course, and there are many indications of this. For example: the fact that we continue, albeit in a different way, to serve the poor. It's a pleasure to see the images and hear the stories of many of our brothers in Asia, Africa, Latin America... the photos of them as they bring food or medical supplies to the scattered villages, to the population that has no assistance. It is a very beautiful thing! And it reflects God's style of approaching us, thereby renewing our lives. There is also much enthusiasm here in the Curia on the part of the brothers in charge of the various offices that animate the Order, maybe in a different way than usual, but viable, nonetheless. We shall continue along this path.

So, my wish is for each of you to continue along your path in search of the Lord; to realize that the Lord never stops but continues to draw near to us in order to encounter us; and that by welcoming the Lord who precedes us, our hearts may also open up to look upon and to encounter our brothers in the same way.

*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year to all!*




Br. Roberto Genuin OFM Cap