



Christmas Greetings from the General Minister

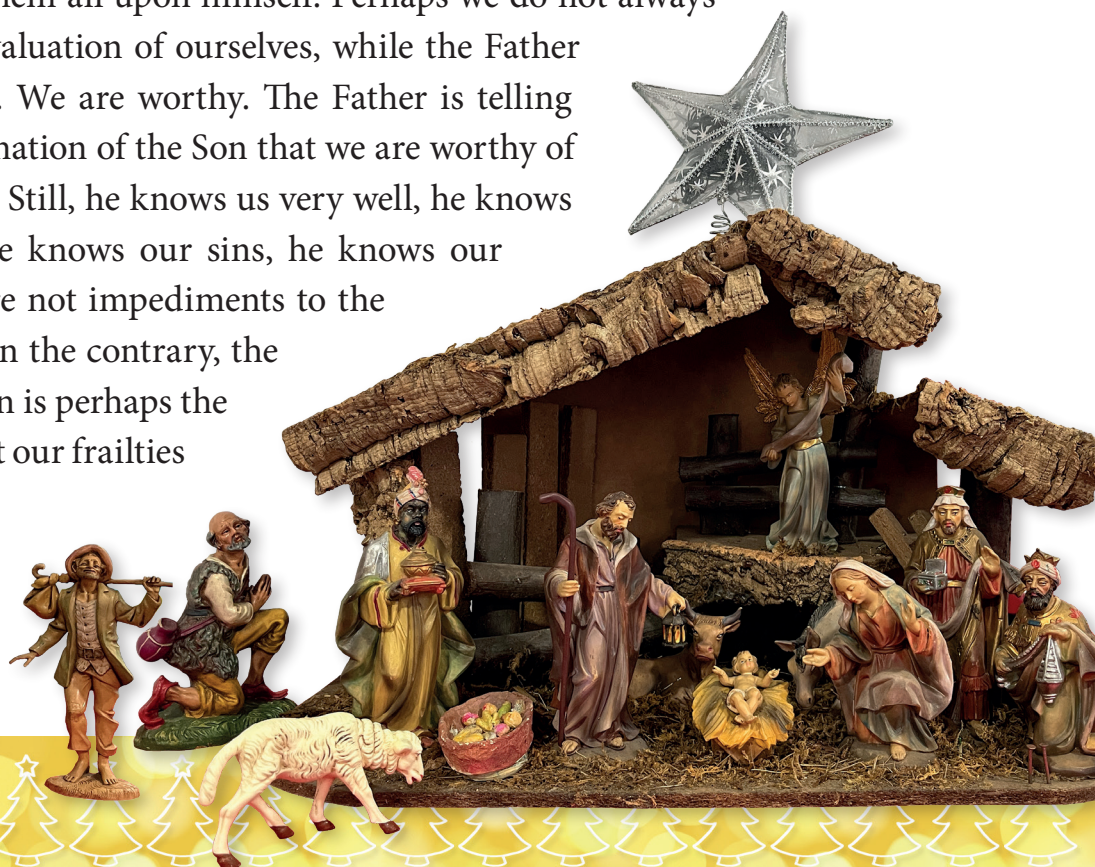
Christmas 2021



Dear Brothers, greetings to you!

Lately, there've been many occasions in which I find myself in front of a camera in order to reach out and be present to everyone. We met with the friars of America, with the friars from India, with the friars of Europe, with the Italian friars. In short, there were many occasions due to the pandemic that have forced us to stay put and reach out to each other only through these means. Although this is a more traditional occasion, it is always very important to be able to reach out and communicate with one another, and I now desire to wish everyone well for this approaching Christmas.

The Father loves humanity. I don't know if we have fully understood that, but I think not. Because this mystery of the Father who loves us and who reveals himself with extreme clarity in the Incarnation of the Son is a great mystery. It indicates that our flesh, our persons, what we are, are so worthy in the eyes of the Father, that the same Son takes them all upon himself. Perhaps we do not always make such a good evaluation of ourselves, while the Father evaluates us as good. We are worthy. The Father is telling us through the Incarnation of the Son that we are worthy of him, that he loves us. Still, he knows us very well, he knows of our limitations, he knows our sins, he knows our fragility. But these are not impediments to the Father's love for us; on the contrary, the Incarnation of the Son is perhaps the most evident sign that our frailties are not impediments.





We must take small steps and grow in the understanding of this great mystery, which shapes the meaning of our life, the meaning of life for humanity.

If we want to grow, we must open a small window for the Lord who comes. There is no doubt about the love of the Father! The Incarnation tells us everything: how he loves us, how he appreciates us and how he desires salvation for us, closeness with him, divine sonship. But there is one small problem: we can only experience this when we open ourselves up, in some small way, to welcome the Lord. Celebrating these mysteries every year is a real boost. Indeed, we have already opened our lives a crack to the Lord many times – this is obvious – but then afterwards we fall into distraction by the many situations that surround us. At times we forget... urging us to appropriately remind ourselves: see to it that life becomes worthy in every area; and it will, if we manage once again to open a small window to the Lord.

Why all of this? What's happening here? While reading through some books over the past few days, I came across an ancient rabbinic commentary on the Song of Songs, which reads as follows: «the Lord said to Israel: My children, open to me a window of conversion as small as the eye of a needle, and I will open wide for you gaps where carriages and wagons can pass» (Shir HaShirim Rabbah, 5:2).

So, the wish I truly want to make for all of you ... with my whole heart to all my brothers, is that you might open your doors to the Lord, so that he may pass, the carriages may pass, the wagons of the Lord's benevolence may pass! He loves us, and we will remain well – if we open up just a crack to his love.

**Best wishes for a Merry
Christmas to all the friars!**

Br. Roberto Genuin
General Minister OFMCap

