



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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Dear sisters and brothers all over the world!

May the good Lord give you his peace!

Brightness and musicality – two of the characteristics of the “grammar of Christmas”, as the Christmas letter of the Conference of the Franciscan Family noted. This letter is a message from us, Franciscan General ministers, which we want to share with you this year. It was a common work, a joyful work, a real experience of belonging to the same spiritual family, an experience that we are “**all brothers**”. Therefore, first of all I would like to call your attention to this Christmas letter, as a common message of the entire Franciscan Family, and you will see that not much is to be added. It puts the message into the imagery of music. We should not forget, however, about the other characteristic of Christmas, the light.

I would like to send this short message to you inviting you this time to have a different look at the light of Christmas.

The light of Christmas is way far not that ambient light that we made of it. It is invisible in the illuminated city, full of glittering and merchandise. It did not shine up in a warm, well-heated house but outside in the unfriendly and cold night, in a total darkness, shining up for those “arriving from east” (cf. Mt. 2.1) or “living in the fields” (Lk. 2.8).

The light of Christmas is a messenger. It can be a glorious splendor around someone, who hardly can be identified but is somehow bringing the message of God to those poor shepherds, who are ready to set out. “The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them” (Lk. 2.9)

The light of Christmas is a „lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” (Ps 119.105) Yes, it can be a pale, flickering star, almost invisible among the others, but shining for those who know how meaningful and important it is, and showing them the way. “The star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was”. (Mt. 2.9) Christ is the only light which can lead us to salvation, therefore let us not lose the sight of it. If we do so, we will not miss our way to Bethlehem, and we will see the Child.

The light of Christmas is an inspiration. It has pushed the magi and the shepherds to „go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place”. (Lk. 2.15) Let us set out, too, be „overjoyed at seeing the star” (Mt. 2.10), and let us be inspired to move closer to those who have to experience that cold and unfriendly night, either in their body or in their soul. During this very special, and sometimes very hard times, especially during the days of the feast of Christmas let us not forget about those who are in an

even greater difficulty. Though we have to close our doors, we shall not close our hearts. Let us discover the light of Christmas together with them, giving them the gift of a message, a phone call, a small gift, or a sign of solidarity. It may make them experience the love of God, the word of God, who came to us on this very day.

The light of Christmas is the only real light. When we lit it, may it give us the greatest gift of Christmas, the certitude that Christ is with us and we have found Him.

I wish you all a blessed and holy Christmas, illuminated by Christ, who is the one and only light!

Your minor brother



Tibor Kauser
CIOFS Minister general

