



CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES

The Superior General



Adoration of the Shepherds - Pieter van Lint - Museum of Fine Arts of Seville

2025 Christmas Message

Starting afresh on the Lord's new paths: Christ the light of the Gentiles

*"I am the light of the world;
he who follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life." (Jn 8:12)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Nowadays we are called to mission in an era of change, marked by conflicts and crises that redesign the dynamics of a new global order, full of uncertainties and new challenges for the future. It is necessary to set out anew, along new paths of thought and new choices, within a complex scenario and when the forces come, let ourselves be guided by the light of Christ, which enlightens the path of every people.

The future must not frighten us, because daring the newness of the mission does not necessarily mean breaking away from tradition, on the contrary, it becomes a guarantee of creative fidelity to the breath of the Spirit who opens new paths in the desert, beyond the walls of discrimination, builds bridges of dialogue, encounter and fraternity. As missionaries, we are called to walk the paths of fragility and desolation and orient ourselves in those of welcome and proximity and also experience the digital and intercultural ones.

The Jubilee of Hope was a time of mercy for all, in order to open the doors of the heart and allow ourselves to be transformed by Grace. An opportune time to discover that true joy does not come from material or technological achievements, but from the encounter with Christ, the Saviour.

So, the celebration of Christmas in this **Jubilee Year 2025** acquires an even deeper meaning because it is lived as a time of grace, reconciliation and renewed mission. It is an invitation to return to the roots of our faith, to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation: God who becomes man, makes Himself close and becomes light for the journey.

Christmas is precisely the feast of light that conquers darkness, of life that defeats death, of hope that is always reborn even in difficult times. In a world marked by conflicts, loneliness

and new forms of poverty, Christ presents Himself as the light of the nations, capable of enlightening every heart and history itself.

We are like the *“people who walked in darkness and saw a great light; on those who dwelt in the land of darkness a light has shone”* (Isaiah 9:1). So “Christ light of the nations” is not just a theological definition: it is a living reality that challenges us today.

The **Consolata Family**, founded by St. Joseph Allamano, finds its identity and mission in this mystery. Our Mother the Consolata, who welcomes and guards the Son of God, becomes a model of consolation for all humanity. Allamano taught us that holiness is not a privilege for the few, but a universal calling, as he used to exhort: *“Be saints, fully saints, not half saints.”*

Christmas invites us to live this holiness in the concreteness of mission:

- ✳ To be light in families, bringing peace and unity.
- ✳ To be a light among the poor and the suffering, offering consolation and hope.
- ✳ To be light even in the digital world, where relationships are intertwined and the Gospel can resonate as a living word.

In Bethlehem God chooses smallness to manifest his greatness. It is there, in the simplicity of a grotto, that salvation is born. It is there that the light of Christ begins to shine for all peoples.

“The nativity scene speaks to us of the humility and simplicity of the Lord. If he made himself small, why should we not make ourselves small? ... The holy Child gave us an important lesson in overcoming the three human lusts: pleasures, riches, honors, in order to teach us also to overcome them. He gave us an example of this with his sufferings, with his poverty and his humility. By being born so poor, the Lord wanted to detach all of us from the delights of this world. He canonized poverty.” (This I want you to be, n.61).

St Joseph Allamano reminds us that: *“It is not enough to be good, we must be missionaries”* spurs us, this Christmas, not to close ourselves in comfort, but to go out, to bring Christ's consolation to the ends of the earth and also to the existential peripheries that inhabit our cities and Christian communities.

Our mission will be to be a sign of consolation and hope:

- ✳ Consolation for those who live the fatigue of life.
- ✳ Consolation for those who seek meaning for the journey.
- ✳ Consolation for those who are waiting for a word of peace.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

let us set out again, let us set out on our journey, let us go to Bethlehem. It's a long, tiring, difficult journey, I know. But this, which we must make “backwards”, is the only journey that can push us “forward” on the paths of mission.

The important thing is to move. The Holy Founder assures us that for Jesus Christ it is worth leaving everything. And if in Bethlehem, instead of a glorious God, we come across the fragility of a child, with all the connotations of misery, let us not assume that we have taken the wrong path. **Because, since that night, since that Christmas,** the frightened faces of the oppressed,

the limbs of the suffering, the loneliness of the unfortunate, the bitterness of all the least of this earth, have become the place where the Child continues to be born and lives in hiding.

It is up to us to seek him, to recognize Him and to love Him and with Him to savour the taste for the essential, the taste of simple things, the zeal for the mission, the desire for commitment to justice and peace, the wonder of true freedom and the tenderness of prayer.

In Bethlehem we will also meet **Mary Consolata** who keeps us company in this fresh restart and embraces us, as she did the Child Jesus. She teaches us to guard the light of Christ and to give it to the whole world.

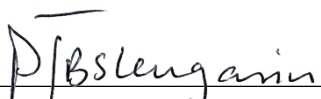
May our Mother Consolata watch over you and may the missionary spirit of St Joseph Allamano inspire you to be witnesses of hope and consolation in the world.

May this holy season give you the peace and joy of the Lord. Set aside some time to savour His wonders, to be surprised by His light and to share with others the consolation that comes from faith, *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”* (Jn 1:14).

Let us therefore set out, without fear, towards Bethlehem for a new start of the mission!

Merry Christmas to each of you and your families.

Fr. James Bhola Lengarin IMC


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