



**D**ear brothers and sisters of the **C**alabrian **F**amily!

Warm and fraternal greetings to all of you, wishing you a Christmas enriched by every blessing, joy, and renewed hope in the Lord, who is born in our hearts.

God is who makes known to us his mysteries, his salvation. He is the God of surprises, who reveals to us his "dream", his will to save humanity in the simplicity and humility of a Child.

*"Let us go to Bethlehem, and see what the Lord has made known to us":* this is the invitation that the shepherds address to each other, setting out on a journey after hearing from the voice of the angels the revelation of this great news.

This is the invitation that the Lord wants to reveal to the whole Church, to all of us, in the liturgical celebration of Christmas. God does not come to us while we stand still and stable, but as we walk together, in mutual listening and joy. Will we too be able, like the shepherds, to listen to the voice of God, to let ourselves be moved by the desire to see the sign that God has prepared for us, *a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes*, overcoming every distance and every division, setting out on a journey together with others?

This year's Christmas is characterized in a particular way by the invitation that Pope Francis addresses to the whole Church to start a synodal journey, to set ourselves together searching for the One who comes to give meaning to life and history.

The invitation is also addressed to us, the Calabrian Family, a synodal path that we are already walking in preparation for the celebration of the General Chapters, to try to discern, in the light of the charism and the signs of the times, the *"dream of God"* for the Calabrian Opera and Family. A dream that has already begun with Saint John Calabria and that in every moment of history we must rediscover, to stick to it with fidelity and involvement, responding to the needs of the present time.

I consider this providential time that the Lord gives us, despite all the struggles and difficulties of the present moment, due to the pandemic and not only, a suitable time in which to respond to the questions, to the deep desires of the human heart, to the hidden dreams, to the hopes and expectations of a humanity that seeks, but sometimes loses its way.

Synodality is a path that we are invited to follow, that opens us to listening, that pushes us to evaluation and sharing of dreams, it is a lifestyle to be embodied in everyday life as an ordinary and permanent journey. We are called to live our lives as a *synod*, that is, to walk together towards the true Light, because this is the path that can bring us closer to the great event of our life, Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

The synodal journey, like that of pastors, is a journey made together, by listening, discerning, looking at the signs that show us the way, that guide us on the journey. Let us allow ourselves to be wrapped by this desire to walk together, to involve us all with a contemplative and attentive gaze to what God wants to reveal to us and make us known.

May the Christmas that we wish in this time of synodal journey of the Calabrian Family be pervaded more and more with joy and light, with a concrete exercise of listening and sharing, to seek, without tiring, to live the dynamic between discernment and life with eyes that see and hear in the depths.

May the Christmas that we wish for all of us be a time of concrete attention to others, to the smallest and neediest, to the least, to those who cannot walk like us and with us. May our journey be inspired by the mystery of the God of Jesus Christ, who, by becoming incarnate, lower himself to meet our humanity and set out on a journey towards us. He came to take mine, yours and everyone humanity, without exceptions.

Let us learn all this from Jesus, our Lord! It is he, the Lord, who comes to meet us so that we too can, with humility, go out to meet others!

*"Let us go to Bethlehem, and see this event"*, with a heart full of joy, desires and hopes, like the shepherds, and then manifest in the simplicity of our lives the wonders that the Lord has done for us.

Dear brothers and sisters, may we never lack the capacity to be amazed, to open up and to initiate new processes. It is enough to make room in the heart to welcome the newness, the surprises, the wonders of God and, guided by his Star, to take new paths of light, joy, listening, hope and salvation.



May the Lord grant us the grace to learn ever more the art of true and sincere listening to his Word, to incarnate it in our relationships and in our experiences, in our communities, in our homes and activities. Enlightened by faith, strengthened by hope and animated by charity, let us all walk together, so that God's dream may become a reality in our Calabrian Family.

I wish all of you, the communities and families, a Merry and Holy Christmas! A fraternal embrace and a mutual remembrance in prayer.

Fraternally

Fr. Miguel Tofful