



*“We saw his
star at its
rising...”
(Mt 2,2)*

Message of Casante for Christmas 2020

Dear brothers and sisters of the **C**alabrian **F**amily!

May the peace, joy and love of the Child Jesus fill our hearts, so that we may look up and see the light of His star at its rising on the horizon, amidst the situations and darkness that obscure our world today!

We are getting close to the holy days of Christmas. Let's be ready to live and experience it with intensity, as we have never lived and experienced it before. This year of 2020 has been marked in a particular way by the Pandemic and by many other events which have accelerated the processes of change in the entire humanity, to the point of finding ourselves living in an entirely new era. But this should not frighten us, because God ensures his presence among us in the fragility of a Child in the manger who brings us true salvation.

Despite the assurance and certainty of his presence, we must admit it sincerely that this situation upsets us and makes us experience situations of uncertainty and bewilderment in our personal, family, social and ecclesiastical walks of life and of our Opera. Many of our programs and projects were either skipped or postponed and will continue to be so, including the celebration of the General Chapters of the Congregations of both the Poor Servants Brothers and Sisters.

Thinking of the Christmas of this particular year and of the message of hope that we can find amidst the situation that we face, the words that strikes me specially are the words of the Gospel of St. Matthew: the words that we find just after the birth of Jesus and before the arrival of the Wise men, viz. *“We observed his star at its rising...”* (Mtt 2:2). Seeing *“his star at its rising”* was not something taken for granted then and it is not so even now, especially in this period in which we are looking for points of reference, so as not to walk without any specific direction and get lost in the dark. Seeing the star is the starting point of everything. But in order to see it, we need to look up to the sky; we need to search for it as we have searched for the 'Comet Neowise' which appeared a while ago. But all of us were not able to see it.

Often in life we are content with looking down at the ground, that is to say, we are content with looking at the passing and superficial things of this world. Instead, in order to live truly, we need a high goal, that which pushes us to keep our gaze high and to decide to set out our journey, accepting the invitation to move, to go out, to take risks facing the everyday fatigues of our march and the unexpected events of life. These fatigues of life we all experience, especially in this difficult time that we are encountering.

We are in a new era, in a new and changed world with new paradigms. The pandemic continues to cause deep wounds, exposing our vulnerabilities. In all continents where we are present as Calabrian Family, many are dead and many are sick. Many people and families are living a time of great hardship, due to socio-economic problems, that affect not just the poorest of the society, but beyond.

The issue regarding health has become a priority, a problem that has to be taken seriously with all the measures available to us, looking for more and more adaptations for the new times which despite the difficult situation, are times of God and of new opportunities for our life and for the life of the world. We need to have this vision of faith that goes beyond, knowing that the new times demand new adaptations and freedom of push, as Fr. Calabria would tell us.

The star of Christmas shines today more than ever. The light of Christ, born in Bethlehem remains as the point of reference for every situation felt and experienced by men, women and the entire humanity. There are no pandemics and crisis that can extinguish this light. Let us welcome it; Let it enter our hearts; Let us open ourselves to receive this light that dispels the shadows of a closed world. Let us reach out our hands to those who need the most and thus, God may be born again in us and among us.

This will be possible in as much as we respond to the call of our Charism, taking care of the weakest, the sick, the elderly and the poorest who are our real pearls. The health emergency of social-distancing, let it not distance ourselves from the concrete realities that our brothers and sisters are experiencing. Let it engage us, dedicating all that is precious to us, our time and our life at the service of others. We must respond to these needs not only as individuals, but with true sense of belongingness to our mission, following our charismatic principles. We are invited to dedicate ourselves more and more, in order to offer healing to today's world that is in great need of it. I would ask everyone of you to begin our journey together as the three Wise men did.

"We saw his star at its rising..." Brothers and sisters, today we are invited to look up to see this star at its rising, encouraging each other, sharing our hardships and dreams, with the hope of a new humanity, knowing that we are the carriers of hope to so many people who are in need of it. Looking up to his star that rises on the horizon, we are filled by his light and are transformed from within, so as to continue our journey without getting tired and discouraged. In this way, the prophetic and ever-present words of Fr. Calabria can come true who invites us to a constant search for the Kingdom of God by doing good to people, without ever getting discouraged: *"The Holy Wise men give us an example of constancy: the prodigious star as they reached Jerusalem, hid itself, but they did not get confused; they did not get discouraged; they went ahead and asked for it in the city of Jesus. My dear brothers, let us not ever get discouraged. Our happiness is not found here in the present exile"*.

Be courageous! Let's walk towards this light, keeping our eyes on high! Our mission is to recognize and welcome the light of Christ, the star of Christmas, so as to continue to radiate the light, hope and closeness of the love of God the Father among us, as we contemplate and celebrate him in these holy days.

Happy and holy Christmas to all of you and to your families! May the light of the Child Jesus fill our hearts! May God bless you and accompany you always with special gifts and graces in this Christmas and the coming New Year!

Fraternally,



Fr. Miguel Tofful