



## GOD IS PEACE AND PEACE IS UNITY

by bro FRANCESCO SCARAMUZZI OFM Cap.

“God is the fount of all peace and Communion. Now let us praise with reverent hymns this Divine Peace, the source of all mutual attraction. This Peace unites all things together and begets and produces all the harmonies and agreements of things. All men long for it, it draws their manifold separate parts, it unites their divisions into concordant fellowship. This perfect Peace penetrates all things through its simple, undiminished presence and power, uniting and binding the extremities and intermediate parts in one homogenous attraction. It bestows even to the utmost limits of the universe its beneficial presence, it makes all things akin to one another by the unities, the identities, the communions and the mutual attractions; for this peaceful fecundity, that overflows with abundance, goes forth and gives itself to all things” (*Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite*).

Christmas which we will soon be celebrating can be looked at and understood from a variety of perspectives: love, joy, life, gratuitousness, fraternity, peace. This profusion of meaning is proper to Christmas. It was with this in mind that I chose those impressive words of Dionysius the Areopagite, a Father of the Church of the late 5th to early 6th century, on “Unity and Communion.” Christmas, in fact, more than any other mystery, tells us of a God who does not surrender before

the fall of creation and who is incarnated in order to restore unity and communion in all things. God, who becomes man, reminds us that we come from one same beginning, form one same family and are created for one same end, to be participants of God’s divine nature. In times when the force for division is always stronger, we are called to restore that unity that truly comes from God. Man who is estranged from himself does not correspond to God’s plans, and similarly mankind (collectively) that is estranged from itself rejects the original designs for which it was created. The very notion of “peace” that we typically associate with Christmas signifies, ultimately, the restoration of that broken harmony: God is Peace because He reconciles individual man with himself; He is Peace because He re-establishes unity between mankind; He is Peace because He returns unity between Himself, mankind and all of creation. In this sense, Christmas that moves us instinctively to reunite with our families and friends, is more than just a time of festiveness. It should be seen as an opportunity to go deeper and to want something more than just a temporary distraction from the routine of daily life; an opportunity to restore it to its true meaning, and to dedicate ourselves to the realization of this unity and harmony between mankind and God,

which is the true end of Jesus’ nativity. This dedication is not easy, it means hard work and even suffering, as Padre Pio’s words imply: “Peace is simplicity of heart, serenity of mind, tranquillity of the soul, the bond of love. Peace means order, harmony in our whole being; it means continual contentment springing from the knowledge of a good conscience; it is the holy joy of a heart in which God reigns. Peace is the way to perfection, indeed in peace is perfection to be found. The devil who is well aware of all this makes every effort to have us lose our peace” (Letters I). So remember, when you make your wishes for a “Happy Christmas” you are in fact pledging yourself and others to the building of this unity and peace; to be builders of a new world, no longer corrupted by egoism and division. With my Christmas wishes to you for a dedicated building of this peace and unity, that must commence first from ourselves and from within ourselves, I cite words of St. Pio that he would have said to each of you: “For the feasts of the Infant Jesus... may your heart be His cradle filled with flowers, where He can rest without feeling any grievance for what He left behind, as implied in His words: ‘I left the Father to come into the world’” (Letters I).



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