

Let's Be Charitable this Christmas

by bro FRANCESCO DILEO OFMCap

“For the charity of Christ compels us!” (2 Cor 5,14). Never before as in these times has it been necessary to rediscover the truth of these words of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

When the cries for help are always increasing, the birth of the infant Jesus in the bareness and poverty of a manger is a compelling call on our charity even if our response means only sacrificing some of the delicacies in our Christmas dinners or not placing some of the gifts beneath our Christmas trees that we would like to give to our dear ones.

When power and economical profit trigger off hatred, wars and deaths we should defend and hold up to the world all the more fervently this precious gift of Jesus who was born to us over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

We must acclaim this fathomless gift of the Incarnation, with the angels: “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will” (Lk 2, 14), proclaiming it united in our Eucharistic celebrations that transcend all barriers of space and time.

Peace too has its demands and price to be paid. We need courage when we are attacked, we need to learn how

to decrease our pride, and how to forgive.

It is not easy, but neither is it impossible.

It means that we visit our “Banks of Charity” that we find in the tabernacles of every Catholic church, where there are no rate interests to be paid on loans, where there is only one rule, that of giving that multiplies the good and gives wealth to everyone.

The Church’s mission is to spread this message that radiates from the Incarnation, the alpha point of history, when the Word became flesh and the omnipotence of the divine erupted into the ephemeral world of humanity. This message must be spread by every single member of Christ’s mystical body, not just by its ordained priests.

Fully admitting the indisputable need, on a practical level, for diplomatic negotiations to bring to an end the current conflicts, our most powerful weapon to stop the logic of arms remains always prayer.

Pope Francis often reminds us of this.

And our holy fellow friar Pio of Pietrelcina was also firmly convinced of this when, shortly after Italy’s entry into the First World War, he ex-

horted: “Let us always trust in God [...] and may our lively faith and the comfort of Christian hope assist us in this. We must pray continually, moreover, that peace may soon smile on the nations. We should turn our thoughts to heaven, our true homeland, of which our earthly country is but a dim image, and make every effort with the divine assistance to preserve at all times, amidst happy or sad events, the cheerful calm that becomes the true followers of the fair Nazarene” (Letters I). For this reason, during the coming Christmas season let us make gifts to ourselves and to others of those essential gifts. Let us gift ourselves with that joy and happiness that is experienced when we practise charity giving what we can to those who are in need: material help to those who do not have the necessities for life, and spiritual help, through our prayers to the Lord, for those who wake up each day not knowing if this will be their last, and uncertain they will ever see their loved ones again.

A Happy Christmas full of peace and every blessing to you all! ❧

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