

## Christmas 2020

*«The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone» (Is 9:1).*

Dearest Brothers,

The Child Jesus, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, comes into the world to bring the salvation given by God to all the peoples of the earth, to every man, to each one of us. He comes to tell us that we are not alone and abandoned, but that God is among us as the light that brightens situations of darkness.

His incarnation in history was possible, thanks to the “yes” of Mary, and also thanks to the “yes” of Joseph, who humbly and silently assumes his paternity. A notable human figure is that of St. Joseph, which Pope Francis has taken up in his recent Apostolic Letter “*Patris corde*” – written to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church –, a reason that also prompted him to declare the “Year of St. Joseph”, from 8 December 2020 to 8 December 2021. Saint Joseph, a person to imitate as our Founder often insisted, and in whom we also find the meaning of Christmas.

In the background of the Apostolic Letter, there is the Covid-19 pandemic, which has changed the rhythm of our life and which, unfortunately, has caused many victims, even among our members and in the Pauline Family itself. In any case, as the Pope says, this uneasy situation has also made us understand the importance of ordinary people, those who work to alleviate the suffering of the sick and families who lose their loved ones, those who, in hiddenness and every day, exercise patience and instill hope, sowing co-responsibility. Joseph also lived in this way, as Francis reminds us, despite the great role entrusted to him in the history of salvation.

In the footsteps of St. Joseph let us open our hearts to welcome Jesus and Mary into our life and the people we meet every day; let us try to listen to God’s voice and to put his will into practice; let us abandon ourselves with faith to Divine Providence to face difficulties with courage and creativity, both in personal and in community and in apostolic life, *«so that the Word of the Lord may speed forward»* (2Ts 3:1).

To all of you I wish you a bright Christmas and a New Year full of hope, with Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Fraternally,

*Valdir José De Castro*  
Father Valdir José De Castro  
Superior General

