

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS IN THE ROSMINIAN CHARISMATIC FAMILY



**... listen to the Word,
remember the poor!**

Rosminian Family in sinodality

I sincerely thank my friend Carlo Carlini for once again agreeing to illustrate with such generosity the title of the letter I had communicated to him. The surprise is seeing that he thought of Emmaus, and of what the pope is saying these days, of giving amnesty to prisoners, of reducing Christmas expenses in favor of the hungry people... thank you!

Dearest *Carissima Madre* Sr. Antonietta and dearest Rosminian Sisters of Providence,
Dearest brethren of the Institute of Charity,
Dearest Adoptive Daughters and Sons,
Dearest ascribed brothers and sisters,
dear consecrated ascribed,
Dearest Mother General Sister Gaspara and the sisters of Our Lady of Usambara,
Dearest Servidor General, Deacon Alexander Toro, sisters and brothers of Familia Fuente Real,
Dearest friends of the Rosminian family, alumni, people close to the community,
Dearest relatives, family members, the faithful close to us, co-workers, people of goodwill,

Merry Christmas! With this simple wish we witness together the light of the Lord and his hope for humanity. For while the Church calls for synodality in fraternity, another war has broken out in the world; to the effort to build bridges of dialogue to solve problems, we are told that they are better solved with fences and barriers, and it does not matter who is responsible on the other side of the wall; the Pope calls us to care, to compassion, to reconstruction, and the world instigates destruction, the assertion of self against others, violence of all kinds in families, in society, in trafficking human beings, weapons rather than people. Who cares? It is all equally an abyss of

meaninglessness for those who cannot see with the eyes of the child of Bethlehem, who do not recognise that his name is Peace, and who do not wish to be with him, to act with him, to live together with him. Therefore, Merry Christmas! Humanity seems to be at the mercy of what is going to happen, no one is responsible for anyone, everything is just the news of the day: war, millions of refugees, and starving peoples ... we take a baby, Jesus, by the hand.

Listen to the Word, remember the poor!

Listen to the Word: Jesus is the Word! Remember the poor: Jesus is the poor! He made himself poor for you, for me, he was born in Bethlehem... and not simply because he experienced poverty, or because he was born into such a family or social class, but because he made himself nothing, he decided to share human nature. Indeed, for him - God - it seems to be a privilege to become man and enter the world: he came down, he entered history to remain there. This is also why Jesus can speak from the heart, from within, because he experienced, thanks to Mary, our being earthly, limited, weak, and at the same time with expanded desires, aspirations, projects, and visions about us, about life, about the future.

Listen to the word, the example is Mary! Remember the poor, the example is Mary! We meet her in the house of Nazareth as the servant of the Word, and some icons depict her with a ball of wool - the Word becoming flesh in her, being woven, and at the same time the Word being woven into the life of each

person's personal history and that of the community - the Church, our people, humanity - . Mary was consecrated servant of the Word at the annunciation with a simple 'here I am', and she never changed, neither for the joyful and sad events of the census - Luke relates that refrain, Mary kept and pondered in her heart all these things - nor for the mysterious answers of the preadolescent - did you not know that I must attend to the things of my Father - nor before the cross..: she is the adoring silence of the Word, and remains, as the Holy Spirit remains; from that moment she accompanies the Church in synodality in the Upper Room, she remains in prayer with them. Jesus one day pronounced the most beautiful and greatest beatitude of his mother, with such indirect tenderness - I can imagine his complicit gaze towards her as he said: blessed are those who hear the Word and put it into practice.

Remember the poor! Mary is on the way with them, she is called poor of JHWH, poor and humble, poor because she is humble! Mary cares for the poor, always, she is the Mother! She is that mother who is burying her narcotic-addicted son; she is that mother at the prison entrance waiting to see her son, not a number; she is that elderly mother left or forgotten in a hospice who continues to love her children; she is that mother who....

Listen to the Word, for Joseph it became a dream, perhaps it was so difficult for human logic to understand and accept! Remember the poor, for Joseph it was work: he never took advantage of prices, his work was of the highest quality and he taught it to Jesus, just as from him and Mary, Jesus, the Word, learned to speak. Joseph gave a chair to a poor old man, made some toys for poor children in Nazareth, repaired the door of a

humble house for free while they were in Bethlehem, and even in Egypt he helped other poor immigrants for a smile of peace...Remember the poor!

The family of Nazareth, as we imagine it, helps us discover in its reality our family, not that of others, our community, not that of others, our society, not that of others, our world, and not that of others.

He opened their minds to the meaning of the Scriptures (Lk 24:27)

It was Pope Francis, at the conclusion of the Year of Mercy, who asked the whole Church for a renewed listening to the Word of God, the encounter with Jesus and his presence in the daily life of



the Church. The letter *aperuit illis* is a beautiful icon, Jesus explaining the Scriptures to the two disciples of Emmaus, becoming their travelling companion. Well, I am the unnamed disciple, the one whom Jesus is accompanying and calling to holiness. I would say that the entire ministry of Pope Francis can be circumscribed by these two expressions: *listen to the word, remember the poor*. This is the precise scope of mercy, that of the Father, and of the merciful response of the Church and of each of our communities. God does not tire of forgiving, because he always listens, it is we who do not listen and with hardened hearts tire of forgiving. And that expression said by Card. Hummes to the

Pope immediately after his election, 'do not forget the poor', and then the choice of the name, Francis, the poor man of Assisi. Telling the journalists, the Pope exclaimed: "Ah, how I would like a Church that is poor and for the poor!"

The Day of the Word (3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time) and the Day of the Poor (XXXIII Sunday of Ordinary Time) are parts of this icon of the Church today, of the presence of Jesus today, of our work as a community today.

The proclamation that communicates joy

We hear in the Gospel that John the Baptist seems disappointed at one point, he who had spoken of God's coming as that of the flamethrower and as the one who wields the axe at the root of the unfruitful tree, and sends to say to Jesus: are you the messiah or must we wait for another? Jesus reveals what he is to people at that moment - "go and tell what you see" -: salvation, deliverance, healing. But I am surprised that among the signs there is also this: the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor (Mt 11:2-6). Enough of this! But the poor want something else, food, medicine, clothes... and yet it seems that the proclamation of the word changes everything, gives the poor what they really need - dignity, respect, human warmth - and gives the world a new dimension: the poor are no longer the refuse of society, with them God builds his Kingdom.

The testimony of word and joy

Even the word can be despised, and in our societies, in the world, our neighbour, others, are despised, because first of all the word

is despised. The human word, before that of the word of God. The word truth, the word peace, the word fraternity, and the worst treated, the word love

The church is aware that in many new and old places we are at the point of first evangelisation in the light of the gospel. The thread of the Word between the generations has been broken, we seem to have to start from scratch, we have forgotten, we have lost the memory of faith. And we must do as St Francis said to his people, the Pope repeats it so much: *always proclaim the Gospel, if necessary even with words!* The first evangelisation requires a different kind of proclamation, sometimes slower but the only effective one. That of Jesus in Bethlehem, his hidden life in Nazareth, his work and sharing in the family for thirty years was the first evangelisation! The mystery of Christmas is all in the aura of that first proclamation, without words, which the Church reappropriates every year on Holy Night, and we in our lives! Just as Father Founder invites us, let us learn from the silences of the Child Jesus and what he expresses in his childhood, just as Pope St Paul VI invited us when contemplating the Holy Family of Nazareth

Prayer and fraternity

A continuous listening, from the word to the brother. Generosity to live the word...means prayer and fraternity. These words of Pope Francis in his response to the Superiors General last November seem to me to indicate our work, dear sisters and brothers that we are religious, consecrated: between listening to

the word and remembering the poor opens up the possibility of manifesting in our lives the face of Christ, and it means first of all prayer and fraternity: listening to the word that is made and is prayer, and remembering the poor that begins with those closest in community, fraternity.

If we can say to one another like the two on Emmaus, 'did not our hearts burn in our breasts as he explained the Scriptures to us', if we recognise him in the breaking of the bread, then with joy we can return to Jerusalem, we can proclaim, we can become Church in the service of others, we can become what we are: charity, becoming missionary disciples on the way.

When did he explain the scriptures to us? In meditation on the word, in Eucharistic adoration, in lectio divina, in vocational growth talks, in group formation, in praying the psalms together, in spiritual guidance.

When did he break bread for us? In the daily mass, in the friendship of brothers and sisters, in helping a stranger, in a word to an elderly person, a kindness in the street, a smile to little ones. But also: in mutual trust, in living friendship, in solidarity, in communal compassion, in caring for one's brother, in bearing one another's burdens, in going together to the peripheries, in making paths of reconciliation and peace.

Word in Action

Jesus is the Word, and he is the Poor.... From there we understand our call, our action, our mission... to be charity, first of all... The Rosminian poet Father Clemente Rebora (1855-1957) defined the moment of his own conversion in this way: "And the Word silenced my talk ". The



path was long, perhaps continually unresolved, but at one point he let himself be led, guided, educated by Jesus the Word, and like Paul of Tarsus when he went blind, still searching for that light: I am Jesus...! The Word is light on the path, it is Jesus. A word that resounds from afar, the word that created the heavens, that led and educated the people in the wilderness, *like an eagle watching over its brood* (Deut 32:11), guiding them to freedom from slavery, the word that liberates within, like a two-edged sword divides the body from the spirit (Heb 4:12-16), that word that was spoken by the prophets and through which the father spoke to mankind, and which has now been revealed (Heb 1:2).

Listen to the Word is the call to interiority, it is the Word that animates life, you just have to pay attention to it, listen with your heart.

Remember the poor is the missionary mandate, it is the memory of the heart: both situations are love, they are the two states or situations of life of the brother and sister of this Rosminian family and that is what we want to live with the Church, to be missionary disciples. Disciples of the Word, missionaries of the love of Jesus in life and works, word and charity!

The Pope tells us that 'the word of God touches your heart, it changes your life... always! " (Francis, Catechesis on Discernment, 21 December). From the cave of Bethlehem, St Jerome wrote that the scriptures grow with the one who reads them, it is a growing, maturing and walking together. In fact, he also says that whoever does not know Jesus through his Gospel, does not know him at all. Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ! Blessed Antonio Rosmini really took these notes of St. Jerome seriously, and as a child he frequented the Word every day, and with abundance: the first page of his travel Bible contains the starting dates of each new reading. At sixteen years of age, he was translating the psalms from Hebrew and quietly spent the hour after the celebration of Mass reading the Bible.

When the Poor enters the heart

The two of Emmaus return with joy at that hour of the night to Jerusalem to announce that they have seen the Lord, alive and risen. It is the joy that makes them run, it is the joy of the Gospel, the joy that is needed when we think of going to the poor. It is the joy of witnessing, the joy in which the angels

witnessed to the shepherds, the joy of the shepherds who were the first missionaries, and the joy of the Magi and of all those, young and old, who arrived in Bethlehem... because the poor, in Bethlehem, must be reached sooner or later - otherwise it is only welfarism and has little evangelical value - the cry of hunger, of need, of indigence, of the many poverties, the cry of Abel must be heard.

When I welcome the poor into my heart, my life changes, there is a transformation. The experience of our young people among the Indians for Holy Week, in the Sierra of Perija (Venezuela), they went on mission, what they received was infinitely more than what they brought: new eyes to see the presence of the poor, the real needs, returned to their normal life they could recognise and be more attentive, more supportive, more present. So, the experiences of mission, of going with the poor, of seeing how pastors in order to be missionaries... asked the pope where he wants us to be, where he wants us to go, and he replied: of course to the peripheries, to the poor, but let us ask ourselves if we can bear the contradictions encountered there...

What transforms, the spark that makes all things new, is that joy of having found the treasure in the field, the precious pearl, the secret and meaning of existence. Before Christmas - not its traditions - in these festive days we ask ourselves - each one - are you happy? How did it go this year? Let us find out if there is joy in my heart, if it flows from my heart to others, if there is a commitment to responsibility and service for others, sisters, and brothers. "It's hard Father, but we will make it! " "It's hard, but I must endure for them! " So much hunger in the world, Jesus became bread: the bread of the word and the Eucharist. He

cannot stay there. In consecrated life, in baptismal life, in walking together as a Rosminian family Jesus makes you light, word, bread for others and for the life of the world with him. The Superiors General of many congregations present at the meeting asked the pope about the concern, that there are more lay people than religious living the charism of the religious family, if this is right.... the pope responded to *broaden the participation of the laity in the proper charism: This must be done, the invitation already comes from the Council, ... not only give a course but live together, work together, share apostolic programmes and not be afraid, if the laity share the intimate things of the congregation... I would worry about the opposite, if a religious congregation does not prepare the laity, if it is closed, excludes them,... there is something wrong, with this congregation we need to see where the problem lies. Give, share responsibility, include the laity, trust more in broad participation, be careful that the spirit is maintained.*

In the parish of St Mary's in Loughborough, England, a group of young university students decided shortly after the outbreak of war to drive to the Ukrainian border and help get people to safety, they were catechumens and the parish priest decided to anticipate Baptism before this venture: is it just the ardour of converts? We all know how the grace of Jesus works, we can all experience it, and his plan is to pass through the flesh of the poor, as the Pope would say, that is, the flesh of Christ: if it does not challenge me and move me, it is not love.

Listening to the Word moves us to prophecy. One Sunday morning we visit with Fr Francis (Provincial in India), Bishop Sylvester in Ponalloor (India), he accompanies us to the chapel and

then prays for us, invokes the Holy Spirit, and asks for the prophetic role of the Rosminians in the Church... after and together with their Prophetic Founder.

Let us pray as a family

There are two days in particular that make us feel close as a family, Christmas Eve, the time when we remember the birth of God's son, and the last night of the year, 31st December. Moments of family, of nostalgia, of memories, joys and sorrows of many Christmases. Let prayer illuminate



our personal history with hope and enkindle the joy of Jesus in our hearts. And so as we think of the past year and the new 2023 I would like to offer you three prayers for these Christmas days:

Prayer for 25 December

Jesus, newly born in my heart, it is a refuge of luck, Mary and Joseph see him.

Jesus, I adore you, word made baby,

Word that for now expresses you in peace, safe in your mother's arms,

word that for now you say everything with a smile: thank you for being here!

May your smile communicate joy to my heart on this day, that I may understand and live your Gospel.

Thank you because from being rich you made yourself poor for me,

thank you because your presence is light and meaning in life today, thank you!

Give your peace as soon as possible to the Ukrainian people and all the people who are at war with each other.

Give peace to children, toys instead of weapons, food instead of violence, medicine instead of lies.

Give your peace and your smile to the children, teenagers and young people in our families and communities: the sense of goodness and your divine presence in their lives.

Give your peace to people's hearts, and may every Christian become peace for his brothers and sisters day by day. Amen.

Prayer for 31 December

The prayer of this day is supposed to be that we stop and give thanks, that we go back over this year and transform any criticism, resentment, negative things, looking at them with different eyes... it can cost a little time, some things we haven't got over... the pope says not to confuse tension with conflict... so we can do it... Gratitude to the Lord is supposed to arise at some point from our hearts, thanks to



God who became a creature, who entered into our history, who sympathises and also takes on what I have experienced during this year, and that is why everything is grace, not because I am more or less fortunate than others, not because of appearances or any other kind of comparison, but because of Him and His presence.

Jesus, beginning and end of all things!

Jesus, meaning of my life and of this year 2022: thank you!

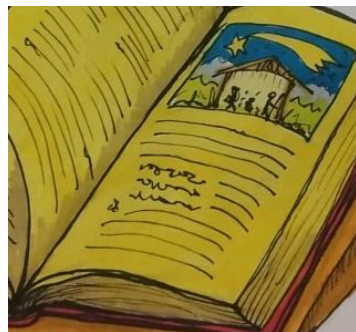
Like Peter I will say to you: "you know everything, you know that I love you! "

I recognise in this moment your greatest love, your infinite love, your presence, your providence, and protection at all times of the year... so great and so complete: I did not realise it! It is the night in which to sing your wonders, to compose the psalm of thanksgiving, and I thank you for....

It is the night to feel your thankfulness in my heart too Lord, for you are THE thankfulness, you are THE faithful Amen of the Father, eternal thankfulness of the whole plan of salvation, Bread-Eucharist, our thankfulness!

Prayer for 1 January

Let us begin the New Year by blessing, for God has blessed us in Jesus, has blessed us forever in Him, and continues to bless us through life's circumstances with His goodness and Providence. Let us



continue the song of thanksgiving with the song of blessings, let us transform -it is up to us- the song of lamentations, the psalm of criticism and the list of misfortunes -always possible- into a dance of joy. Let us bless, for this is our inheritance and our calling! The peace of the Messiah will be made by the shepherds, the Magi, those who listen to the Word... it is a peace that walks with joy, it is also our responsibility - and it begins with blessing - that prophecy is fulfilled, with Jesus and through him: *a joyful message to the poor, bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted, proclaim freedom for the slaves, release of the prisoners* (Lk 4:16-18).

A crown instead of ashes, oil of rejoicing instead of a mourning dress, a song of praise instead of a sad heart (Isa 61:3)!

These are the promises of God, the blessings of Jesus the Word among us, the blessings of Jesus the Poor for us: I invite you on the first day of the year to feel these blessings of Jesus upon you, and to pray, to bless:

*Blessed are you Lord,
blessed for this new year 2023 that we begin today with you and
receive from your goodness. As light you have come into the
world,
and give meaning to our days, our desires, our dreams, our plans.
Jesus Light, guide our lives in this new year,
Fill our hearts with blessing and enable us to listen to your Word
every day,
to respond with generosity.
Give us to remember the poor and you remember us, your poor.*

*Blessed are you for your peace, the peace you will give to our land;
Blessed are you for your holiness, that we may live by your inner
fire;*

*Blessed for vocations - sisters, brothers, young people of peace,
people renewed by your blessing - those you will still give to our
Rosminian family. Amen.*

Our Blessings

We bless the Lord for the sisters celebrating their anniversaries of religious life, among the sisters of Providence - Rosminian Sisters and the sisters of Our Lady of Usambara.

We bless with the Lord the lives of the brothers and sisters who commemorate the anniversaries of their consecration in the Fuente Real Family.

We bless the Lord for the brethren celebrating special anniversaries of religious life:

80 years: John Buckner.

75 years: Charles Sormany

70 years: Alfredo Giovannini, Franco Costaraoss, John Daley, Michael Hill, and John Bland.

65 years: Umberto Muratore, Anthony Meredith, Aidan Cunningham, and Patrick Cunningham (Gerry).

60 years Sean Walsh and 50 years Thomas Griffin.



40 years: Mai Dai Viet and Eamon Fitzpatrick,

30 years: Joseph Gardner, Emilian Kibiriti. Enhart Mpete, Vincent Mwinami. and Giovanni Pacheco;

25 years: Jose Francisco Valderrama, Robin Thomas Vernoor and Edison Bernavas.

Finally, 20 years: Carlo Stefanazzi, Joyel Patric Cletus, and Manoj Mathew K.

We bless the Lord for the life and priestly ministry of our dear fathers: Giuseppe Giovannini 65th, Guido Malacarne 60th, Edoardo Scordio and Antonio Belsito 50th, Belavendran Soosai Pillai 10th.

We bless the Lord for the new deacons in East Africa: John Mulevu, Severine Kilala, Damiani Pelagi Lyakurwa Mathias Misibo and ; for the deacons to be in Italy: Anselmo Mammadov, William Milanese, Camille Temon. We bless the Lord for the candidates to the diaconate in India, Abin Bright and Jith Francis.

We bless the Lord for the brethren who have made their Perpetual Profession in the Institute on 25th March 2022.

We bless the Lord for the sisters who have made their Perpetual Profession this year.

We bless the Lord for the brethren who have made their first profession this year, and are now scholastics of the Institute. In East Africa: Denis Tayebwa, Gerald Tumwesigye, Francis Atusiimire, Lowland Atwebembere, Aloyce Moshiro, Mathias Mkumbaye, Benedict Sibomana, Simon Mgore, Ambrose

Niwamanya and Joachim Mathew. And in India; Jagadeesh David, Anthony Yesu Raj Arokiasamy and Edwin D'Almeida

We bless the Lord for the brothers and sisters who have made their Vow of Consecrated Ascribed during this year, and those who have renewed it with perseverance.

We bless the Lord for all the brothers who have resumed their ascription to the Institute this year, for the new ascribed men and women; for all those who have made contact to begin their journey towards ascription. We bless the Lord for all those brothers and sisters who have felt welcomed by the Rosminian community and have begun to know and live our spirituality.

We bless the Lord for the journey of the brothers and sisters who have begun their formation in the Novitiates and Postulancies, in the Discipleship of the Fuente Real Family, and those who have begun a new stage in their formation or have felt in their hearts the desire for perpetual consecration.

We bless the Lord for all the brothers and sisters who have been men and women religious, those who have shared part of the journey with us, in formation and in the priesthood as Rosminians, all those who forever feel and are Rosminians in their hearts: may listening to the word and remembering the poor always be a testimony to living the charism of charity together: may you be blessed!

Blessed be the Lord for the religious, novices and young women in formation from other families and Congregations for walking

together in prayer and fraternity, for being close and listening to the Word together: blessed sisters who accompany us on our journey of faith, hope and charity.

I bless the Lord for the work and mission of all the brothers and sisters, for the daily commitment to being a synodal church in proximity, a church of charity, the presence of Jesus in the world, a church and community that makes itself a travelling companion. I remember in particular, among many good Samaritans, Rosminians of proximity, the ministry of Fr Umberto Muratore at the Centro Studi, 37 years, and I bless the Lord for this gift to the Institute. I remember also the extraordinary dedication of our ascribe prof. Pier Paolo Ottonello, Director of the Rivista Rosminiana for 47 years and colaborator in the field of the intellectual charity for more than fifty years.

We bless the Lord for the work in the time of remembering the poor, for so many generations of Rosminians who have held hands in creative fidelity filled with the love of the Lord. I remember in particular the 175th anniversary of Ratcliffe College (England), an anniversary culminating in the opening of the process of beatification (20 November 2022) of one of its former students, William Doyle, later a Jesuit religious priest.

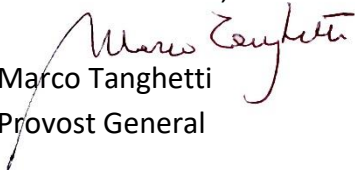
We bless the Lord, together with many brothers and sisters, for the sisters and brothers who have given their witness to Christ with a life following him on the path of holiness: dear sisters, ascribed men and women, priests and brothers. I recall here Fr Gianni Zamperini, John Mullen, John Barry Farmer and Birinus

Mutashambara, a novice in Lushoto (Tanzania), and the former Rosminian Charles O'Toole.

Being in synodality can require a long journey, the Magi know this, the Shepherds know this, Joseph and Mary know this: the star is the Word and the sign is that of poverty, essentiality, humility. We are accompanied by the poor of JHWH, those who listen to the Word and bear fruit with their perseverance. Therefore, sisters and brothers, Merry Christmas, may the smile of Jesus born in Bethlehem accompany you throughout the new year 2023!

May the Lord bless you and may Our Lady accompany you! Let us say to each other as a wish, towards peace: ***listen to the word, remember the poor!***

With an embrace,


Marco Tanghetti
Provost General

Roma, Porta Latina
22 dicembre 2022



