

Dear Mothers, Sisters, Oblates and Women in Formation,



Loving greetings and best wishes to each and everyone of you during this holy Advent and Christmas season. This is truly a “Marian” season in which we are invited and urged to “start afresh from Christ,” growing in a conscious awareness of our union with the indwelling Jesus and pondering His redemptive mystery together with Mary’s insight and love.

During the past two years, we have had many opportunities to thank and praise God for the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the Passionist Nuns. As we thanked God for what has been, both the sorrows and the joys, we also thanked Him for what is still to come, that is, for the history the Holy Spirit is currently writing in the lives of all Passionist Nuns today. We have crossed over the threshold of another 250 years, a new era of our history, no longer journeying as isolated communities, but now together as a Monastic Congregation called to make visible a true spirituality of communion. True spirituality of communion is not based on nice feelings for each other, or on fear of facing difficulties truthfully, but rather on trust, obedience and self-sacrificing love for God and neighbor.

Throughout this holy season, we naturally ponder **Jesus living and growing in Mary** during the Advent of His earthly life. And this loving memory naturally leads us to ponder **Jesus living and growing within each of us**, the members of His mystical Body. Stirring up our graced awareness of this foundational truth is how we can all “start afresh from Christ,” as we begin this new year. Living the Year of the Lord, 2023, is Christ living within each of us in a unique and unrepeatable way. This is the key to the spirituality of communion. **For us, life is Christ** who is **reliving His mysteries in each of us for the salvation and sanctification of the world!** When we come to the end of our short life, this is what will matter. All else will fall away

So often in my mind’s “eye,” I “scan” the globe in a spiritual encounter with each and every one of you in each of our monasteries from east to west, from north to south. And I find welling up within me prayers and sentiments similar to those expressed by the apostle St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: “I, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones, **do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of Him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened that you may know what is the hope that belongs to His call....**” And again a little later in the same epistle, the Apostle prays: **“I kneel before the Father...[praying] that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 1:15 f, 3:14 f).**

Truly, this is my Christmas prayer for each of you: that more and more fully, Christ may dwell in all of our hearts so we may be filled with all the fullness of God! And may this fullness of God’s personal love for each of us enable us to “start [the New Year] afresh from Christ!” Merry Christmas!

Prayerful and joyous best wishes to all of you,

Mother Catherine Marie CF

