



ADVENT – CHRISTMAS 2013 SUPERIOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

As I write this message, the people in the Philippines are still numb in shock and disbelief following the unimaginable devastation in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan only a matter of days ago. In certain parts of the world, wars continue to rage; in other parts, hearts remain stubbornly closed to resolving decades-long conflicts. In yet other parts of our global village, people are protesting – sometimes violently – for a more just and fair society, especially for those seeking asylum; those who are victims of abuse; those discriminated against because of race, gender, colour or creed; those committed to protecting our environment and planet into the future. I ask myself and challenge you to ask: ***“What is our response as Passionists to this reality?”***

Soon we are beginning in the Church a new liturgical year with the time of Advent – an opportunity and call for us to prepare ourselves, personally and communally, for **the coming of God** – a time for renewal. This ‘coming’ or ‘Advent’ is effective for us, both in the liturgical memorial of the Incarnation (God taking on the human condition in the birth of Jesus Christ) which is celebrated at Christmas, and in the reality of God/Christ ‘coming’ into the everyday events of our lives and our world. Of course we also live the mystery of our faith that “Christ will come again!” So:



Madonna e bambino: Gerardo Dottori, 1924 - Italy

“What does this Advent mean for us Passionists in the context of what is happening in our lives and our world today? How do we prepare a way for the Lord who has come, who is coming daily, and who will come again?”

I share the following reflection from the Glenstal Bible Missal in which I have found food for thought:

“The Church, this Advent, puts before us the great visions and prophecies of Isaiah. The purpose of this is not to make us relax, or go to sleep but on the contrary to rouse us to watchfulness, to spiritual effort, to an honest, just and brotherly (sisterly) life. The forebodings awakened in us concerning the future bring us back to the present and rouse us to weigh what is at stake. It is really a matter of recognising Christ, here and now, while living in his Spirit. It is waiting only on him, so as to be able to welcome him full of confidence when he finally reveals himself.”

Our Advent preparation to meaningfully celebrate the feast of the Incarnation at Christmas can only challenge us to open the door of our lives in welcome and hospitality to the Prince of Peace. Then, we too can join in singing with the angels: *“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will”*, as we deepen our witness in working for peace, through reconciliation and dialogue, within our communities, families and society.

I wish you every grace and blessing as you enter into this time of renewal with the prayer: ***“Come, Lord Jesus!”*** and I pray your lives be filled with Christ’s Peace in the New Year.

Fr Joachim Rego CP
Superior General