

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

At Christmas, which is fast approaching, we will once again hear the angels proclaim: “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will” (*Lk* 2:14). Each year the echo of this refrain fills the entire world. It stirs up in us a joyful hope, above all because peace has drawn close to us and we can contemplate it in the face of a Child. “For he is our peace” (*Eph* 2:14), Saint Paul later wrote, as he reflected on the mystery of Jesus Christ.

The world stands in great need of peace. Each of us, our families, the place where we work, the environment around us, need this Child whom the angels announce as the Savior (cf. *Lk* 2:11). Without Him, every effort to bring peace to hearts will fall short. Therefore the Church never ceases speaking about Jesus to mankind, like the shepherds after seeing Him in the manger (cf. *Lk* 2:16-18). We too want to make Him known to others; in our apostolate “it is Christ we must talk about, not ourselves” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 163).

During these days of Christmas let us contemplate the great mystery of God’s love, in this Child who has been born for us (cf. *Is* 9:5). How easy it is to find or regain peace and serenity when we pray before the Crib and let ourselves be captivated by Jesus in the manger surrounded by Mary and Joseph! In contemplating this mystery of love, God will give us new energy to transmit it to others.

With my most affectionate greeting and blessing,

Your Father,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leonardo".

Rome, December 16, 2018.