

## LIVING FRATERNITY

**Theme: Advent, the time, to welcome God's love in the child Jesus ...**

At the beginning of December 2025, we invite you to read and share your reflections on excerpts from a homily of Pope Francis said on December 24, 2014.

*Good thoughts and sharing*

**Reminder:** May our fraternal encounter be a time of *privileged encounter with Jesus* who walks among us.

## DECEMBER 2025 MONTHLY MEETING

### Opening of the meeting

At the beginning of our meeting, let us sing: **Oh, come, oh, come Emmanuel** Followed by a prayer according to the Ritual: or any other, chosen by the fraternity. Now, the meeting begins. **(You will find the words of the song on page 6)**

### Start Reading

" The people who walked in darkness saw a great light rise; and on the inhabitants of the land of darkness a light has shone forth" (Is 9:1). "The angel of the Lord came before them (the shepherds), and the glory of the Lord enveloped them in his light." (Luke 2:9) Thus the liturgy of that holy Christmas night presented to us the birth of the Savior: as a light that penetrates and dissolves the densest darkness. The presence of the Lord among his people erases the weight of defeat and the sadness of slavery, and establishes joy and gladness.

We too, on this holy night, have come to the house of God, crossing the darkness that envelops the earth, but guided by the flame of faith that illuminates our steps and animated by the hope of finding the "great light". By opening our hearts, we too can contemplate the miracle of this child-sun who brightens the horizon by emerging from above.

The origin of the darkness that envelops the world is lost in the mists of time. Let us think back to the dark moment when the first crime of humanity was committed, when the hand of Cain, blinded by jealousy, struck his brother Abel to death (cf.

Genesis 4:8). Thus, the course of the centuries has been marked by violence, wars, hatred and abuse. But God, who had placed his own expectations in man, made in his image and likeness, was waiting. God was waiting. He waited so long that perhaps at some point he should have given up. But he could not renounce, he could not deny himself (cf. 2 Tim 2:13). That is why he continued to wait patiently in the face of the corruption of men and peoples. God's patience, how difficult it is to understand this: God's patience with us!

### **Reflection and sharing**

Have you experienced situations that seemed hopeless?

How has your faith in God helped you keep hope in your heart?

Have you ever seen the hand of God working in a situation that seemed hopeless?

Take the time you need to have a good sharing.

### **Continue Reading**

Along the path of history, the light that pierces the darkness reveals to us that God is Father and that his patient faithfulness is stronger than darkness and corruption. This is what the announcement of Christmas Eve consists of. God knows no fits of anger and impatience; he is always there, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, waiting to catch a glimpse of the return of the lost son from afar; and every day, with patience. God's patience.

Isaiah's prophecy foretells the appearance of an immense light that pierces the darkness. She was born in Bethlehem and was welcomed by the tender hands of Mary, by the affection of Joseph, by the astonishment of the shepherds. When the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of the Redeemer, they did so with these words: "And this is the sign that is given to you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). The "sign" is precisely the humility of God, the humility of God taken to the extreme; It is the love with which, last night, he assumed our fragility, our suffering, our anxieties, our desires and our limitations. The message that everyone was waiting for, the message that everyone was looking for in the depths of their souls, was none other than God's tenderness: God who looks at us with eyes full of affection, who accepts our misery, God who loves our littleness.

### **Reflection and sharing**

In anticipation of this holy night, we are invited to reflect:

How do we welcome God's tenderness?

Do I let myself be loved by him or do I prevent him from approaching?

Take the time you need to have a good sharing.

### **Continue Reading**

(...) Do we have the courage to accept with tenderness the difficult situations and problems of those who are next to us, or do we prefer impersonal solutions, perhaps effective but lacking the warmth of the Gospel? How much the world needs tenderness today! God's patience, God's closeness, God's tenderness.

The Christian's response cannot be different from the one God gives to our littleness. Life must be faced with kindness, with meekness. When we realize that God is in love with our littleness, that he himself makes himself small in order to meet us better, we cannot help but open our hearts to him and beg him: "Lord, help me to be like you, give me the grace of tenderness in the hardest circumstances of life, give me the grace of closeness in the face of every need, Gentleness in any conflict".

### **Reflection and sharing**

How do you feel the closeness of Jesus in your daily life?

Is it different in the expectation of Advent?

Take the time you need to have a good sharing.

### **A word from Pope Francis**

Dear brothers and sisters, on this holy night, let us contemplate the manger: there "the people who walked in darkness saw a great light rise" (*Is* 9:1). Simple people, people willing to welcome God's gift, have seen it. On the contrary, the arrogant, the proud, those who make laws according to their own personal criteria, those who assume attitudes of closure, have not seen it.

Let us look at the manger and pray, asking the Virgin Mother: O Mary, show us Jesus."

**To finish the sharing, let's read together an excerpt from *The Christmas Spirit* of Pope Francis (Éditions Lafond, published on December 25, 2021)**

Christmas is you when you decide to be reborn every day and let God penetrate your soul.

The Christmas tree is you when you vigorously resist the winds and obstacles of life.

Christmas decorations are you when your virtues are the colors that adorn your life.

The bell that rings Christmas is you when you invite people to gather and try to reunite.

You are the light of Christmas when you light up the way of others with your presence, with your kindness, patience, joy and generosity.

Christmas angels are you when you sing to the world a message of peace, justice and love.

The Christmas star is you, when you lead someone to meet the Lord.

You are also the Three Kings, when you offer the best that you possess regardless of who you give to.

Christmas music is you when you conquer the harmony that is within you.

The Christmas gift is you when you behave like a true friend, as a brother with all human beings.

Christmas greetings are you, when you forgive and restore peace, even if you are suffering.

Christmas Eve is you when you fill up on bread and hope the poor man who is with you.

You are Christmas Eve when, humble and awake, you receive in the silence of the night the Saviour of the world without noise or great celebration.

You are the confident and tender smile of inner peace who establishes his kingdom in you.

## **Links with the Rule and the Constitutions**

### **Rule – Article 13**

Just as the Father sees in every man the features of his Son, the firstborn of a multitude of brothers, so the secular Franciscans welcome all men and women as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

May the sense of fraternity make them joyful and ready to place themselves as equals of all men, especially the least of them, for whom they will strive to create conditions of life worthy of the creatures redeemed by Christ.

## **General Constitutions**

### **Article 18.2**

They must deepen the true foundations of universal brotherhood and create everywhere a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of brotherhood. Let them make a firm commitment against all forms of exploitation, discrimination and marginalization, and against any attitude of indifference towards others.

### **Article 18.3**

Let them collaborate with movements that promote fraternity among peoples: let them commit themselves to "creating the conditions for a dignified life" for all, and to work for the freedom of every people.

## **Biblical reflection and sharing**

Choose from the texts of Advent or the day before the meeting.

Share our thoughts on this gospel with the following suggestions:

- Take a moment to reflect; underline inspiring words or phrases
- Share your thoughts on the chosen Gospel text ...

**Life Objective** In this month of December 2025, during our fraternal meetings, let us share the joy of coming together and sharing our memories of this Advent and Christmas season...

## **Events and Information of the Church and the Order.**

In your prayers, we ask you to have a special intention for the members of our local fraternities...

**End of the meeting:** (song or prayer of the members' choice)

**End of the fraternal meeting**  
Fellowship Time - Break and Snack

**Song: O come, O come, Emmanuel**

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of Hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Accept our wishes for a peaceful Christmas as well as a New Year filled  
with peace and joy for all our brothers and sisters.**