

To Love Jesus and to Make Him Loved
The Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Circular Letter For The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Year of Our Lord 2008

*In dulci jubilo, Now sing with hearts aglow! Our delight and pleasure Lies in praesepio Like sunshine is our treasure
Matris in gremio Alpha es et O! Alpha es et O! (*)*

The beasts of burden, the sack cloth feed bags, the straw, the manger and the poverty of a hidden and unknown cavern. All of these things speak to us, in a tranquil silence, preparing our hearts for a feast truly loved by St. Francis and the Franciscan Order for centuries! Indeed, with sweetest rejoicing we prepare with glowing hearts for our delight and pleasure. The Infinite and Glorious King, Light Omnipotent, Almighty and rich above all imagining, Jesus Christ the Lord God wrapped in frail human flesh comes in the midst of poverty and an abundance of humility. He will appear to save us from our sins, to destroy and conquer forever our sins, death and the snares of the demon. Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, God made Man, comes to save us and to bring us His Life, in a poor and humble setting.

*O Jesu, parrule, For Thee I long alway; Comfort my heart's blindness O puer optime With all Thy loving-kindness
O princeps gloriae, Trahe me post te! Trahe me post te!*

Through the sore trials of this life our sole consolation now lies before us in a poor manger. Wheat, when harvested is taken as a grain from its stalk. The stalk is cut in this process and is used as straw. How symbolic, how wonderful and beautiful is this scene, the Bread of Life, the Fruit of Mary's womb, the glorious Grain, par excellence, is prepared for the grinding and this in Bethlehem (which means *House of Bread*, states Dom Gueranger in his Liturgical Year.) He has begun His life of sacrifice, and even now those little limbs, those blessed members, have started to feel the pinch of suffering. The cold, the hunger and the surroundings already cause the Word made Flesh to feel the weight of His Cross. He has willed it and thinks of us. Each of our sins, forseen, begin to cause Him pain. His Sacred Heart, tiny in size, has already been loaded with the sins of the world and rejoices exceedingly in the long awaited chance to suffer martyrdom for His children. To suffer for His brothers and sisters though we have offended Him greatly. He has come to save.

*O Patris caritas! O Nati lenitas! Deeply we were stained Per nostra crimina; But Thou for us hast gained
Coelorum gaudia. O that we were there! O that we were there!*

Our holy father Francis, was the first to make the Christmas Creche in honor of the Divine Christ Child. Upon having the life size nativity scene set up in the Italian town of Greccio, the Holy Mass was said there with our holy father preaching, serving as deacon. This feast caused him to tremble with an outstanding love and rejoicing. "He spoke charming words concerning the nativity of the poor King and the little town of Bethlehem. Frequently too, when he wished to call Christ Jesus, he would call him simply the Child of Bethlehem, aglow with overflowing love for him; and speaking the word Bethlehem, his voice was more like the bleating of a sheep. His mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words. Besides, when he spoke the name Child of Bethlehem or Jesus, his tongue licked his lips, as it were, relishing and savoring with pleased palate the sweetness of the words. The gifts of the Almighty were multiplied there, and a wonderful vision was seen by a certain virtuous man. For he saw a little child lying in the manger lifeless, and he saw the holy man of God go up to it and rouse the child as from a deep sleep. This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again through his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory. At length the solemn night celebration was brought to a close and each one returned to his home with holy joy." (1)

We will as sons of this blessed Francis follow closely behind our blessed father and the Angels. To the manger we make our way, let us not fear to approach this Christ, for though He is indeed the King of Heaven and Earth, He has become very small that we may approach Him with confidence and love. Behold Him, your Brother, He awaits you, He invites you to approach. Though the poverty of the holy family was such that there was no room for them in the inns of Bethlehem, Jesus thrills in the chance to fill the poverty of our hearts with His presence. Approach! Offer the little creche of your hearts

to this Babe! He has seen the preparation of each of our souls for this feast, and He is pleased with very little. His Heart rejoices, in that He has power to make that which is wretched and filthy, nothing less than divine! Will we not believe that God is delighted to be with us, poor weak and fickle though we may be? "My delights were to be with the children of men (Proverbs 8.)" says the Divine Infant.

Ubi sunt gaudia In any place but there? There are angels singing Nova cantica And there the bells are ringing In Regis curia. O that we were there! O that we were there!

Now that we have come to kneel before the Child Jesus we look to the Virgin, the Immaculate our Mother to whom we have given charge of our Fraternity. She too accepts us and allows us to approach. She offers to us, the Babe. To us! This Christmas, Brothers and Sisters of Penance, let us embrace Jesus the King and give ourselves over to Love. St. Therese of the Child Jesus has said: "O my divine Master! Is it Thy justice alone that shall receive victims of holocausts? Has not also Thy merciful love need of them? Everywhere it is misunderstood, rejected... The hearts upon which Thou longest so generously to bestow it, turn aside to creatures and, for the miserable pleasure of an instant, ask happiness from them, instead of throwing themselves into Thine arms and accepting the sweet torrent of Thine infinite love."(2) We refuse to offer our hearts and our souls to creatures! We will join the Saints in offering ourselves to Jesus without reserve this Christmas. We will not wait, already our hearts begin to warm, we refuse to delay, we must give ourselves totally to Love.

The following prayer beloved brethren is a very special one which perhaps you will recite before the Crib this Christmas. It is a prayer which will open a torrent of grace into your souls. It is a prayer which will open the flood gates of the Sacred Heart of the Baby Jesus. It will pour into your hearts those graces which the good God vehemently wishes to offer to souls but unfortunately are cast back upon Him due to their love of creatures, their ingratitude and their sins. It is not a plea for more suffering, but will act upon your souls as an aqueduct, a channel of grace which is rejected by many. Do not hesitate to make it. Do not fear for it is a gift of yourself unreservedly to the Love of God. It is impossible to look upon the Child Jesus, to contemplate the immense, unbelievable and admirable Love which has caused Him to become incarnate in human flesh without longing with a great desire to make some return. What can we do? "It seems to me that if Thou wert to find souls who would offer themselves as victims of holocaust to Thy love, Thou wouldst consume them with the flame of love and wouldst rejoice that the streams of infinite tenderness should no longer be pent up in Thee." "If Thy Justice- which is on the earth- needs to be satisfied, how much more does Thy merciful love long to take souls into its embrace, for Thy mercy rises up to the heavens. (St. Therese)"(3)

Here is the *oblation*, the *prayer*, the *offering* we make this Christmas as a little gift to Jesus Christ the Babe of Bethlehem, written by St. Therese of the Child Jesus. God grant that we all make it!:

O my God, Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to love Thee and to make Thee loved, to labor for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and by delivering those who suffer in Purgatory. I desire to accomplish Thy Will perfectly and to attain to the degree of glory which Thou hast prepared for me in Thy Kingdom; in a word, I long to be a Saint; but I know that I am powerless, and I implore Thee, O my God, to be Thyself my sanctity.

Since Thou hast so loved me as to give me Thine Only Son to be my Saviour and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine; to Thee I offer them with joy, beseeching Thee to behold me only through the eyes of Jesus and in His Heart burning with love.

Again, I offer Thee all the merits of the Saints, in Heaven and on earth, their acts of love and those of the holy angels; and finally I offer Thee, O Blessed Trinity, the love and merits of the Holy Virgin, my most dear Mother; to her I entrust my oblation, begging her to present it to Thee.

Her Divine Son, my well-beloved Spouse, during the days of His life on earth told us: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." [John xvi. 23] I am, then, certain that Thou wilt hearken to my desires. My God, I know it; the more Thou wiltest to give, the more dost Thou make us desire. Immense are the desires that I feel within my heart, and with confidence I call upon Thee to come and take possession of my soul. I cannot receive Thee in Holy Communion as often as I would; but Lord, art Thou not Almighty? Remain in me as in the Tabernacle; never leave Thy little victim.

I long to console Thee for the ingratitude of the wicked, and I pray Thee to take from me the power to displease Thee. If through frailty sometimes I fall, may Thy divine glance purify my soul immediately, consuming every imperfection, like to fire which transforms all things into itself.

I thank Thee, O my God, for all the graces Thou hast showered on me, in particular for having made me pass through the crucible of suffering. It is with joy that I shall behold Thee on the Last Day, bearing Thy sceptre, the cross; since Thou hast deigned to give me for my portion this most precious cross, I have hope of resembling Thee in Heaven, and of seeing the sacred stigmata of Thy Passion shine in my glorified body.

After exile on earth, I hope to enjoy the possession of Thee in the eternal Fatherland, but I have no wish to amass merits for Heaven; I will work for Thy Love alone, my sole aim being to give Thee pleasure, to console Thy Sacred Heart, and to save souls who will love Thee for ever.

At the close of life's day I shall appear before Thee with empty hands, for I ask not, Lord, that Thou wouldst count my works. ... All our justice is tarnished in Thy sight; therefore I desire to be clothed with Thine Own Justice, and to receive from Thy Love the eternal possession of Thyself. I crave no other throne nor other crown but Thee, O my Beloved.

In Thy sight time is nothing; one day is as a thousand years. [Ps. lxxxix. 4] Thou canst in an instant prepare me to appear before Thee.

In order to live in one act of perfect love, I offer myself as a victim to Thy merciful Love, and beg Thee to consume me unceasingly, letting flow into my soul the floods of infinite tenderness which are contained in Thee, so that I may become a martyr of Thy Love, O my God.

May this martyrdom, having first prepared me to appear before Thee, break life's thread at last, and may my soul take its flight unhindered to the eternal embrace of Thy merciful Love.

I desire, O my Beloved, to renew this offering to Thee an infinite number of times, with every beat of my heart, "till the shadows retire," [Canticle of Canticles, iv. 6] and I can tell Thee my love, face to face through all eternity. Amen. (4) (Emphasis Mine.)

Indulgence of 300 days each time. Plenary Once a Month under ordinary conditions if recited each day of the month. (Info of indulgences from Fr. Albert H. Dolan O. Carm. In his work, The Intimate Life of St. Therese Portrayed by Those who Knew Her. Pg.335)

Merry Christmas! Your little servant in the Heart of the Babe of Bethlehem,
Fra Pio-Francis.

Fra Pio - Francis T.O.S.F.

Circular Approved By Rev. Fr. Mery SSPX.

Albi Freddy Mery p.m.

Footnotes:

- (*) In Dulci Jubilo From Silent Night. The Transalpine Redemptorist Christmas Book Hymn 53a.
- (1) First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano. Chp. XXX. 86.
- (2) The Spirituality of St. Therese. By L'Abbe Combes. Pg. 47
- (3) The Spirituality of St. Therese. Pg.50-51
- (4) <http://www.catholictradition.org/Lisieux/oblation3.htm>