



25 December 2023
Nativity of the Lord

Dear confreres, Sisters, Mission Partners, Benefactors, Friends, and Relatives,

Christmas is a season to be grateful and to be in deep meditation- an opportunity to be immersed in God's love, and taken by God, to look within ourselves and at the world around us. Let us, with open hearts, acknowledge the wounds we bear and those we may inadvertently inflict, recognizing the vulnerability that unites us all.

Christmas, at its core, reveals God's profound willingness to embrace vulnerability. In the words of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, who glorifies the tremendous significance of the humanity of Jesus, "What has not been assumed has not been healed." His insight into the event of incarnation challenges those who reject the very act of God accepting humanity in its totality. In Jesus, God assumes our human reality and acknowledges our vulnerability and fragility. By this divine humility, we are healed; our relationship with God and one another is restored. For us, this would mean, the very act of assuming our own vulnerability, of acknowledging our weaknesses, becomes the path to healing.

I am elated to have encountered many confreres in the places I visited who discovered the truth and essence of the phrase, "What is not assumed cannot be healed." Many of us have deep wounds for various reasons but we are able to move on because we have learned to accept our brokenness. With the experience and awareness of our own vulnerabilities, we are committed to journey with the people who are wounded by poverty, lack of education and health facilities, broken relationships etc. As we are healed by the Light of the Lord, we become wounded healers – embracing our own brokenness and bringing healing to others.

The theme of the next General Chapter, "Your light must shine before others, Faithful and Creative Disciples in a wounded world," resonates deeply during this Christmas season and sets the tone for our journey toward the Chapter. It serves as both a call to action and an invitation to meditation, urging us to embody the true spirit of Christmas. As faithful and creative missionaries, let us bring the light of compassion to desolate places, war-torn regions, and hearts burdened by suffering.

Just as God embraces our vulnerabilities, let us, in turn, extend our embrace to those suffering in Gaza, Ukraine, and countless other places. Through this collective embrace, we become agents of healing, that in and through us the Light of the Lord shines before others.

As we celebrate this joyous season, let us carry the light of Christmas within us and share it generously with those who need it most. Together, as one family, let us continue our journey as faithful and creative disciples, making a profound difference in a wounded world that awaits the light of compassion and hope.

On behalf of the General Council, I wish each of you a Christmas filled with love, empathy, and a renewed commitment to our shared mission.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to you all!


Paulus Budi Kleden, SVD
Superior General