



## Advent & Christmas: From Watching to Rejoicing



Advent is a time of watching and waiting, of expectation and promise. We open our ears, our eyes and our hearts to hear, and see, and feel the presence of God in the dark night of our longing. But this waiting is a purposeful waiting, it holds a moral pledge, our being responsible. Once when I was flying after they increased airport security, the full meaning of this kind of watch came home to me. I sat in the terminal, hours before my flight, having cleared security. I watched the many stressed travelers scurry from gate to gate. I saw a woman not far from me surveying the passers by, gazing without much purpose at the flow of travelers, until one approached her and asked her to watch her bags while she

left for just a moment. I was struck by the look of horror on the face of the woman who had sat there expressionless while everyone passed. The panic that met her in that moment when her sentry post was disturbed, changed her, for now her watching took on moral weight. She was now obliged to risk, to trust the genuineness of this passerby, to weigh the countless warnings against such recklessness and face the moments of uncertainty, watching the bundle of bags and eagerly awaiting their owner's return.

Advent is a similar waiting, a waiting with moral purpose. It places upon us an obligation to risk the cold dark nights of our lives, to trust the promise of dawn's light and warmth, to believe in the goodness of strangers and to trust in our capacity to be holy.

Each year the Church gives us this season of Advent to make ready the reality of Christmas, to lift high the ancient portals. As the weeks are marked by the growing light of the Advent wreath, Christmas grows ever green with hope to welcome the babe born of Mary. Our weary days of waiting, of watching through the long and lonely hours, now comes to an end. For the promise God made was real and we are the ones born anew in His birth.

In this special Christmas newsletter you will find some prayers and greetings from the Dominicans at work in our projects. Their sentiments come from the Advent of their lives and inspire us all with the vision of what Hope means, true Hope. May God bless you this Christmas and in the year to come. You will be remembered in prayer this Christmas.



God bless,  
*fr Michael*



O Lord, always give us passion and patience  
in our quest for truth.

But, above all, help us to remember

that truth is nothing if it doesn't lead us to charity.



*Adrien Candiard, OP*

After formation in History and Political science, he graduated in theology in Lyons and arrived in Egypt in 2012. There, he is studying Arabic.

*Christmas celebration of the birth of the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah).  
"Are you serious?", many people would say considering  
what is going on in the Middle-East.*

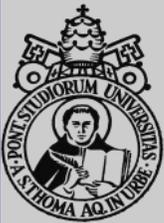
*In fact, what we try to do in such difficult situations is  
mainly to build bridges, to heal the wounds, to reconcile people.*

*May Christmas give us a new enthusiasm for this  
mission.*



*Fr. Jean Jacques Pérennès, OP*

He lives in Cairo since 2000 where he has successively been prior of the convent, general secretary and then director of the IDEO.



Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise You for the great wonders You have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise You for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold His glory, and are bathed in its radiance. Be with all our alumni, friends and benefactors as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you shepherds, innkeepers, wise men. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

*Alejandro Crosthwaite, OP*

Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum). Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor of Catholic Social Teaching, Political & Social Ethics, and Mass Media, & Director of the Ethical Leadership in International Politics & Economics. Head of Public Relations



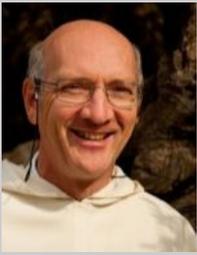
*Lord, you know the hardness of the heart of man,  
fill him with thy mercy to hunt his selfishness,  
his blindness, violence, anger,  
his dislike for those who do not like him.*



*fr. Emmanuel Pisani, OP*

Scholar in Islamic studies, editor of IDEO's journal, spends his Sunday nights in the streets of Montpellier, providing hot soup, but also a little warmth.

*O Lord, send your Spirit to all of us so that the peace of Christmas  
may embrace the Holy land, more and more.*



Spiritual, archaeological and historical support for Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, member of the editorial board of the *Revue Biblique*

*Christian Eeckhout, OP*

## Do Yourself a Favor this Christmas. Read this!

*THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come.*

This is the opening paragraph of Pope Francis's letter of November 23, 2013, the Feast of Christ the King. It is called an "apostolic exhortation" for it calls us, challenges us, to a deeper sense of our Faith. If you tend not to read these Church documents I highly recommend you read this one. It may be the best thing you read this Christmas. Click [here](#) for the entire text.



On Monday the 9th of September 2013 the Holy Father, Pope Francis, received the Master of the Dominican Order, Brother Bruno Cadoré, in a private audience at the Apostolic Palace.

[Read more...](#)

## Want to know more?

Are you curious about the three projects we support? Where are they and what do they look like? Here is an easy way to learn more about the Foundation's projects, just watch these videos. Click on the three links to watch.

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