



ORDO FRATRUM
MINORUM

CHRISTMAS

Greeting from the Minister General, 2024

To the Friars Minor,
To Contemplative Sisters belonging to this Family,
To TOR Sisters, and to the Brothers and Sisters
attached to the Order



This Christmas, let us walk as pilgrims of hope on the path of peace, together building a more welcoming common home for our sisters and brothers.

During the *Holy Night* of Christmas 2024, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of the 2025 Jubilee Year to all pilgrims of hope. The world needs them greatly! And we too will be pilgrims towards Greccio, journeying with St Francis who, inspired by hope, made the ascent to the hermitage:

His highest aim, foremost desire, and greatest intention was to pay heed to the holy gospel in all things and through all things, to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and to retrace His footsteps completely with all vigilance and all zeal, all the desire of his soul and all the fervour of his heart.

(1Cel 30, 84)

At this time, when hope is being put to the test, my Christmas wish has three aspects:

1 Nourishing our desire for hope: The word ‘pilgrim’ suggests a journey guided by desire, trust, and the will to build bridges between the present and the future. When our hearts and wills are close to being extinguished, hope helps us believe that it is possible to build a better future for so many people. That is why the virtue of hope is a priority at this time - and our following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus nourishes and renews it.

2 Opening up paths to peace: Today, hope means opening ways to dialogue, reconciliation, and unity between peoples. This pilgrimage may seem impossible today. But it becomes possible if it begins with each one of us, in our communities, with the people with whom we live. Let our unceasing intercession for peace echo the cries of humanity pleading for peace.

3 Taking care of our ‘common home’: How can we nourish hope today without together bearing our shared responsibility of looking after our common home and making it a welcoming place where everyone is a sister and brother? At Greccio, Francis prepared the woods, the cave, and the animals for Christmas. Let us, too, go up to Greccio and become more able to care for human beings, for creation, and for every creature.



Hope is the virtue that allows us to face what seems greater than us, but which is not impossible. It is a gentle light that guides us on our way - was it not hope that sustained Francis in the final years of his life whose centenaries are being commemorated? Is not the Canticle of the Creatures interwoven with hope?

800 years ago, Francis also wrote the canticle “*Audite, poverelle - Listen, little poor sisters*” for Clare and her sisters. It too is a breath of hope as we follow Christ today, so let us sing these words at the top of our voices by living lives of praise and service!

With my fraternal best wishes for the Nativity of the Lord, one filled with his peace for all people and for our world.

Your brother and servant,



Fr. Massimo Fusarelli of
Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM
Minister General

Rome, 22nd December 2024
4th Sunday of Advent

Prot. 113730/MG-90-2024