



Chapter – Christmas 2024

THE TRUE LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS EVERYONE (John 1:9)



Very dear Sisters and Friends,

As we prepare ourselves – our communities and families – to celebrate Christmas, we are reminded of the profound truth that Christ, the Light of the World, has come to dwell among us, offering renewal, peace and hope. Global events such as general elections and transitions in leadership have underscored a year of significant political shifts. The context of wars and escalating violence on different continents, shaped by a mix of longstanding conflicts and new emerging tensions, is of great concern. Other urgent issues include the pressing environmental challenges and the need to change our way of life. Moreover, we are increasingly realising the aggressive attitudes, selfishness, and competition within us as well as in our communities, families and mission fields. In this context, Christmas comes with the light of Christ, radiating peace, love, and goodwill. In a world dazzled by glittering lights and commercial distractions, let us welcome the true light of Christmas, Jesus Christ.

As John 1:9 states, "The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world." "The true light" is Jesus Christ, the ultimate source of life, truth and enlightenment. In biblical terms, light symbolises knowledge, holiness, and divine presence, contrasting with darkness, representing ignorance, sin, and separation from God and one another. This true light came to "enlighten everyone", and it is not limited to a specific group but is available to all people, regardless of background or status. However, individuals must choose to receive and embrace this light. The evangelist reminds us of the spiritual enlightenment, the transformative power of Christ to illuminate the human condition, revealing both human brokenness and the path to reconciliation with God and one another. The prologue highlights the broad and inclusive nature of God's love and grace. The "coming of this true light" refers to the mystery of Incarnation—the act of God entering the world in human form through Jesus. The journey of light thus points to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies and the hope of redemption for a world in darkness. It marks a pivotal moment in salvation history, emphasising God's everlasting integration by bridging the gap between the divine and human realms.



The journey of light symbolises new beginnings and the possibility of a better future, urging individuals, families and communities to foster harmony and fullness of life for all. In a world often marked by suffering and shadows of hopelessness, the light of Christmas shines as a beacon of hope, renewal and peace. The birth of Christ reminds us that even in the darkest times, there is reason to hope—God's love enters the world not in power but in humility, offering peace to all who open their hearts to it. Pope Francis often invites us to be optimistic, open our eyes to future possibilities and "see the promise of light even when evil seems to prevail", reinforcing that even in difficult times, hope is always present. Christmas calls us to become messengers of this hope, to extend kindness to the weary, comfort to the grieving,

and justice to the oppressed. It reminds us that the smallest acts of love can transform hopeless moments into opportunities for grace and renewal.

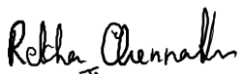
Experiencing hope in challenging times presupposes a profound experience of God and a change of mindset. Christmas thus invites us to embrace metanoia, a transformative change of heart and mind. It calls us to reflect, turn away from the noise and distractions of life, and realign ourselves with the values of love, compassion, and humility. The Christmas season is a time to let go of burdens that harden us and to open ourselves to the renewing power of grace and peace. Biblical peace (*shalom*) is more than the absence of conflict. It is about wholeness, completeness, and a more profound harmony—restoring our relationships with one another, creation, and God. This inner harmony and wholeness give us everlasting joy no matter what challenges come our way.

Christmas joy is not a momentary feeling, nor does it ignore the struggles around us. Instead, it is a deep assurance that light overcomes darkness, that genuine love is more powerful than selfishness, and that every tear and trial is seen and held by a God who journeys with us — Emmanuel.

May the light of Christ, born in a humble manger, shine into the corners of our hearts, bringing renewal, peace and joy. May we become instruments of peace in a world longing for healing, and may this Christmas inspire us to live with greater purpose and generosity. Let us make Christmas this year a season to recommit ourselves to combating selfishness and violence, striving toward a more compassionate and equitable world. Let us support global and local peacebuilding initiatives and embrace sustainable and ethical practices to safeguard the environment and the cosmos. Let us walk together, building new connections and inspiring others, into the new year with courage, kindness, and faith, trusting that love will always prevail.

During this jubilee year, may the light of Christ enlighten our hearts, strengthen our bonds, deepen our relationships as God's communities and families, and renew our hope in Christ's promises of life and grace.

With every prayer for a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year – 2025!



Sister Rekha Chennattu, RA
Superior General

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