



# Christmas Letter 2024



UNITED IN CHRIST JESUS



# "HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT"

Dear All,

The mystery of the Incarnation guides and reminds us that being disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ for the poor originates in *"God our Savior and Jesus Christ our hope"* (1 Tim 1:1). The light of Christmas accompanies every life tested by hardship, but it is through faith that *"nothing and no one will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ"* (Rom 8:39).

We hope this message of hope offered to each of you will be the word that you share with those you meet on your daily journey—those searching for *"the hope that does not disappoint,"* according to the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (Rom 5:5).

Pope Francis invites us to embark on "Paths of Hope" during the Jubilee Year, which begins this Christmas. How can we rekindle our hope and that of others? What paths are we called to travel to rediscover the beatitude of those who place their hope in the Lord?

This year, we make our own the words of hope that come from our Pradosian brothers from Prado d'Orient. The people of this region, pastorally accompanied in their suffering, endure the scourge of war, mistrust, and blind violence that spares neither ordinary citizens nor those in armor. In such lands, where violence reigns, the sense of the "other"—as someone distinct from oneself—has been erased. The meaning of life, sacred in the eyes of the Most High, is lost. This loss not only alters our perception of life but also transforms our understanding of God. God is no longer seen as the universal foundation of all peoples; instead, He is claimed by messianic nationalism. It is therefore in the name of God, who is in power, that everything one does is justified, including the violence that takes the life of others and, therefore, denies God himself.

Let us allow ourselves to be led on paths of hope by the faith-filled insights our Pradosian brothers offer amidst their current trials, especially in Lebanon.

*"As pilgrims of hope, let us walk with Joseph and Mary, who move according to the emperor's decree while awaiting the One whose existence he does not know. Let us walk joyfully and hastily with the shepherds, who run to see the Word announced by the Angel of the Lord. Let us walk with the docility of the Magi, guided by a star and driven by the deep desire of restless hearts that find rest only in God!*

If we dare to embark on this journey, born of desire despite unfair circumstances, this journey will arouse in us a joy and peace not of this world—a joy named "Spirit of God" or "Divine Breath." Then, Saint Peter invites us to *"always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you"* (1 Pet 3:15).

Returning to the text of this epistle (3:8–18), we are called to embrace the blessing as our inheritance. Even in the worst of times, let us never lose this blessing. Instead, let us live by it today, making it fruitful, drawing strength from it and spreading it around us. It is true that we face a multitude of difficulties, but who can live without encountering challenges? If suffering is inevitable, let us endure it by doing good rather than evil.

Peter invites us to cling to Christ and make room for Him in our hearts. From Him, we receive our hope, for though He died in the flesh, He lives by the power of the Spirit. Our life in Christ—through Him and with Him—is the sign of our hope. It is by our lives, not just our words, that we bring hope to the world. As Father Chevrier taught, it is our virtues, not our power or word, that reveal the beautiful face of the Word made flesh.



Across every continent, we witness both natural and human-made disasters. Before our eyes in Lebanon, many are suffering without hope. Yet, the messenger of Christmas proclaims hope to humanity!

This hope is evident in concrete signs. Though such signs may not immediately end today's tragedies, they plant seeds of God's Kingdom in our humanity and in the world. These signs come first of all from those who suffer yet refuse to surrender to evil and despair. In fact, they have the courage to fight when they see around them those who suffer. They remind us that the Church was born from the wounds of the Crucified One, who gave His life as Son and Brother.

We also draw hope from those who show compassion, those who demonstrate solidarity through small gestures, and those who choose to live among those affected by disasters, exposing themselves to danger in order to serve their brothers and sisters in humanity. Christmas reminds us that such signs are not merely human efforts; they reflect God's solidarity with us through Jesus Christ. He extends his compassion for the world through the signs of men who bear hope and are thus the manifestation of this Love.

As we journey in hope toward God's Kingdom, walking alongside our brothers and sisters today and tomorrow, we prepare for the Jubilee of the Holy Year 2025 and the Pradosian Jubilee celebrating the bicentenary of Antoine Chevrier's birth (April 16, 2026–2027). The Spirit grants us the grace to live in communion with the charism begun by Blessed Antoine, to follow Our Lord Jesus Christ more closely, and to continue bringing His love to the world, starting with the poorest.

May this Christmas deepen our knowledge of the Incarnate Word, strengthen our attachment to Him, and make us His living signs and sacraments for the salvation of the world."

Lyon, 08/12/2024



**Armando PASQUALOTTO** (General Manager),  
**Luc LALIRE** (1st assistant), **Sergio BRAGA DOS SANTOS NETO** (2nd assistant)  
and **Youssef ASSAF** (Advisor and member of the Prado d'Orient).



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### General Prado

Institute of the Priests of the Prado  
13, rue Père Chevrier - 69007 LYON - France  
Tél. : (+33) 04 78 72 70 66 - [www.leprado.org](http://www.leprado.org)