



## 2025 Christmas Message from Fr Desiderio Garcia Martínez, O.Carm. Prior General of the Carmelites

Dear brothers and sisters of the Carmelite Family: I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2026! May the Child Jesus fill you with his blessings and grant you peace.

1. A few years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI illustrated this Holy Night, which we are about to celebrate, by reminding us that anyone who tries to enter the Church of the Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem will find that the entrance gate has been largely bricked up. Only a small opening of about one and a half metres remains. As he pointed out, “the intention was probably to better protect the church against possible attacks but, above all, to prevent horses from entering the house of God.” This is providential, because “those who wish to enter the place where Jesus was born must bow down... if we want to find the God who appeared as a Child, we must dismount from the horse of our “enlightened” reason. We must lay aside our false certainties, our intellectual pride, which sometimes prevents us from perceiving God’s closeness.” What is humility if not lowering oneself in order to enter through the door of faith and find God? May the Christ Child teach us to bow down before the mystery of God. Let us also pray this Christmas for those who have to live in poverty, pain, sickness and abandonment, so that through our hands, the goodness that God, with the birth of His Son, brought to the world may also reach them.

2. The Music of Silence. Entering the Sacred Space by David Steindl-Rast and Sharon Lebell is a book that a friend gave me. The authors of this book remind us that the biblical stories of Christmas are full of “angels.” In fact, they are omnipresent in our lives. Voltaire, quite sceptically, went so far as to write mockingly that “no one knew precisely where angels lived.” Our era, happily freed from understanding reality literally, no longer concerns itself with the wingspan of angels, their gender, or how many can fit on the head of a pin. We focus on the meaning of their name: angel, which, as we well know, originally means “messenger, herald.” “Beings of light,” dedicated “totally to the service of God,” and defined, above all, by the mission they carry out. Mary and Joseph, through an angel, were able to meet the Lord. In our communities there too are many “angels.” To discover them, we must pause, connect with God, and contemplate our surroundings. Those who accompany our sick brothers and sisters to the doctor; those who quietly close or open doors every day; those who take out the rubbish for collection; those who bring in the mail; those who smile kindly every morning... All of them are inspired by an angel. Perhaps what Voltaire did not realise is that angels dwell in the community. That is where they live!

May the Child Jesus bless us, sustain our families and all those who have been forced to be far from their loved ones, their friends and their homeland. May He strengthen our leaders in their commitment to defend life and the most vulnerable. May our communities be the new dwelling place of the angels.

Fraternally in Carmel,

*Desiderio García Martínez, O.Carm.*  
Prior General