

*Now this is the message that
we have heard from him and proclaim to you:*



God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

December 24, 2009

Dear Brothers and Friends:

Peace and all good!

Given all that has been going on in our nation and around the world, I imagine that more than a few of us will be very happy when 2009 is over. A relentless recession; the remorselessness continuation of wars all over the globe; battles over healthcare and immigration reform that too often shed more heat than light—these are all signs of our human weakness, mortality, sin...the darkness.

Yet, even the midst of all of this there is...the Light. He shines where families and neighbors help each other get through the tough times. He shines where people dare to stand for justice and a culture of life in all its forms and fullness. He shines, as I am seeing even these days, in brothers who spend a few moments simply sitting with another friar who moves toward the twilight of his life in hospice care.

Even in 2009 “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). Please join me in praying that it shines even brighter in 2010!

The biggest lesson I learned this year was ancient one in our Franciscan tradition: the blessing of itinerancy. I have spent a lot of time “on the road” in my work as Provincial Minister, beginning the year by visiting Frascati, Italy in January and ending it visiting our brothers in the Vice Province of Arabia in December. I have been able to behold the beauty of God’s creation in Bluefields, Nicaragua and Mono Mills, Ontario.

Over the past year, I’ve been asked more than once: “Don’t you ever get tired of sleeping in a different place all the time?” In truth: yes, sometimes. But I’ve also come to realize that every place can be “home” in some sense, if I am willing to see it. Any place where there is goodness, kindness, faith, hope, love, generosity, patience, wisdom, prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, and peace—these can all be “home” because God is there. In this season when we celebrate God making his home with us, I pray that we and our world will make a greater home with God in 2010. Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Handwritten signature of John Celichowski.

John Celichowski, OFM Cap., Provincial Minister

