



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO PERFORMERS AND ORGANIZERS OF THE CHRISTMAS CONCERT

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 14 December 2018*

[Multimedia]

Dear friends,

We are preparing for the celebration of Christmas. The event of Jesus' birth, 2,000 years ago, took place in a precise cultural context. Today, Christmas is celebrated in all parts of the world and is manifested according to many different customs and traditions, generating multiple representations, to which you artists also contribute with your talents and your passion.

Christmas is ever new, because it invites us to be reborn in faith, to open ourselves to hope, to rekindle charity. This year, in particular, we are called to reflect upon the situations of the many men, women and children of our time — migrants, displaced people and refugees — setting out in order to flee from war, from miseries caused by social injustice and by climate change. To leave everything — homes, relatives, homeland — and face the unknown, one must have suffered a very harsh situation!

Jesus too came 'from someplace else'. He abided in God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, in a communion of wisdom, light and love, which he wished to bring to us with his coming into the world. He came to dwell among us, amid our limitations and our sins, in order to give us the love of the Most Holy Trinity. And as a man he showed us the 'way' of love, meaning service, done with humility, to the point of giving one's life.

When Herod's violent rage fell upon the territory of Bethlehem, the Holy Family of Nazareth experienced the anguish of persecution and, guided by God, took refuge in Egypt. Little Jesus reminds us in this way that half of the displaced people in the world today are children, blameless

victims of human injustice.

The Church responds to these tragedies with many initiatives of solidarity and assistance, of hospitality and welcome. There is always much to do; there is so much suffering to soothe and problems to resolve. There is a need for greater coordination, for better organized actions, capable of embracing every person, group and community, according to the design of fraternity that associates everyone. This is why it is necessary *to build networks*.

Building networks with education, firstly, in order to instruct the youngest migrants, namely those who, instead of sitting among school desks like so many of their peers, spend their days travelling long distances on foot or on haphazard and dangerous means of transportation. They too need an education to someday be able to work and take part as citizens mindful of the common good. And at the same time we must all be educated in welcoming and in solidarity, in order to prevent migrants and displaced people from meeting indifference, or worse yet, intolerance along the way.

Building networks with education means allowing people to get back on their feet, to set out on their way with full dignity, with strength and courage to face life by maximizing their own talents and their own hard work.

Building networks with education is a valid solution in order to thrust open the gates of refugee camps, to allow young migrants to insert themselves into new societies, encountering solidarity and generosity, and promoting them in turn.

I thank the project of the *Don Bosco Missions* in Uganda and that of *Scholas Occurrentes* in Iraq, because they have responded to this appeal to 'build networks with education', cooperating in the transmission of the Christmas message of hope.

The mission of the Church has always been manifested also through the creativity and genius of artists because, with their works, they are able to reach the most intimate aspects of the conscience of the men and women of every era. For this reason, my gratitude goes to you present here, and my encouragement to continue in your work, so as to kindle the warmth and tenderness of Christmas in every heart.

Thank you and best wishes for your concert!