



Christmas 2023

House Circular #12
Subject: Christmas

"...the calf and the young lion will browse together, with a little child to guide them."
(Isaiah 11:6)

Dear Sisters and Associates,

This year as we put up our nativity scenes, we are reminded that the first nativity scene was fashioned by St. Francis of Assisi 800 years ago. For all these years, people just like us have been pondering the meaning of the nativity scenes in their own homes, churches, and other public places. What is the most important part of a nativity scene? Is it Mary and Joseph? Is it the animals? Is it the shepherds and wisemen? Or is it the little child lying in the manger? Without this little child, nothing else would have meaning. As Isaiah told us, "a little child will guide them."

We all like to admire and cherish a little child, but as the child grows older, is he or she received in the same way, or is that child told to "sit down and be quiet" so that the adults can go about their business? If a little child brings an idea, how is it received? It may be a very good idea, but if it is not even considered, something with a great deal of potential may be dismissed simply because it is from a child. What if the child lying in the manger had been treated that way? Where would our world be?

This Christmas, may we see the little child lying in the manger in a whole new way. Perhaps we could envision that child as someone asking us to consider a new perspective to the way we have been doing things. Perhaps we need to really see the child's insights and wisdom and not just consider the child's surroundings or family of origin. May we see the children among us and give them the opportunity to influence our lives in a new way.

With Sister Maureen and Sister Anna, I wish you a Christmas filled with many blessings and a prosperous and joyous New Year.

In Francis and Clare,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Janice Schneider, OSF".

Sister Janice Schneider, OSF
Assistant Superior