

***Love came down from heaven to create love on earth....*** Christmas is the celebration of love. This year as Franciscans we are privileged to celebrate the 800 years of the 'Christmas at Greccio.' What inspired St. Francis of Assisi to reenact the birth of the Savior? It's the love of God and love for God. St. Francis was in total love for the humility, simplicity and poverty of God who took human flesh in Jesus. God chose us, He chose our imperfect world to dwell. This world is not better than the world of St. Francis, in fact it's even worse right now. Our world remains wounded more than ever, wars and natural disasters continue. Human pain and misery are at rise. So, can we still celebrate Christmas? Jesus is Emmanuel-God is with us. God came in our broken and sinful world. He came to share His love and make us love one another. He is present with us in our joys and sorrows. He is our only hope and strength in times of tragedies created by humans. St. Francis has much to say about the joy of Incarnation. I do not have to remind you about 'perfect joy' of St. Francis. He truly lived in a true relationship with God and neighbour. He saw the love and presence of God in each animate and inanimate being, treated them with equal dignity as all have one source of origin. Lack of sincere relationship with God and neighbour will result into selfish behaviour and wish, that cause unrest in our life and society. This Christmas, I would remind you and myself to focus on the love of God who spared nothing but gave His only begotten Son to love and save us. May we be grateful for God's gift to us and share His love with each other.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2024!***

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