



Savior of the World family



With Love and Prayer

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Dearest Family,

Its a pleasure to bring you Christmas greetings from Sierra Leone, west Africa. Its with great delight to celebrate another Christmas with joy, good health and a sound mind. We feel blessed to not only celebrate this year Christmas, but blessed to have you as a family that help to make our Christmas a joyful one and for this, we say thanks for the special Christmas gift that you have given us. Your gift is deeply appreciated and without you in our lives we never would have tell what our lives would have been.

And God has given us all the grace to welcome him and to show love, patience and kindness to the world as a whole but the news is that you have

always being ready to welcome the Lord and therefore you decided to open your heart to the poor, the needy,



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and the unwanted and you have made yourself an army who is ready to fight for good. may the Lord continue to guide and protect you and love in whatever you do.

Thanks once again as we wish you a blessed Christmas and a prosperous new year.

With love and prayers,

Louisa & Children



Kadiatu Krema



Ramatu Turay



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Quality Time

From Fr. Umuhozanimana to the children, to Louisa and her family, and to all our friends at Savior of the World – may the Peace of Jesus Christ be with you!

Dearest brothers and sisters,

I begin this letter the way I begin every Christmas letter because at the moment I am doing what I do every year during the few days that precede Christmas. I am in East Africa in the silence and coolness of the evening gazing upon Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. I am praying. I am feeling a sense of unexpected relief and unanticipated confidence because I have just told Jesus all my problems, and He has just convinced me that there is no problem that will unsaddle me, take me off my feet, knock me down, discourage me, drain away my joy, or sink me into a quicksand of inescapable pain.

Jesus has reassured me that God is Love; that Love created me; that Love sets me free from my doubts, fears, frustrations, and misgivings; and that Love raises me up to live eternally in the joy of heaven.

My sense of relief and the new energy it gives me, my surge of confidence and the new hope that fills my heart are the gifts that Jesus wants to give to all who pray. All Jesus asks for is our faith. We do indeed grow in

faith when we say frequently to Jesus: “Lord, You have given everything to me. All I have, all I am is yours. Dispose of me entirely according to your will. Give me your love and your grace: this is enough for me.”

It is early evening; the sun has gone to sleep and everyone is very quiet. It is a peaceful moment; I am feeling happy to be with Jesus and I am hoping ardently that Jesus is feeling happy to be with me. Jesus says:

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, Jesus has taken from me my burdens: what burdens my heart this evening?

On Christmas Jesus was born into a world where people are often homeless: Mary cradled Jesus in the animals’ feeding trough because there was no room in the inn for her, her son, and her husband. The students who have no place to stay and are left without food – in other words, the students who resemble the Holy Family – burden my heart.

On Christmas Jesus was born into a world where people are often suffering unnecessarily from sickness. They are eating stale food; they are drinking water that is quite impure. The majority of the students that I know have suffered from typhoid in the

past year or so, probably from the impure drinking water.

The first missionary to Africa was not there to give Africans money, clothing, food, medicine or an economic plan. The first missionary was there to receive food, clothing and shelter from Africans

Indeed some months ago I also suffered from typhoid.

If we probe more deeply into what happened at the inn on Christmas night, we may get the feeling that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were shoved aside because they were not wanted. The people at the inn left the pregnant Mother Mary with the feeling that she was not wanted, so Jesus was born in a manger. Herod did not want Jesus so he put into action a plan that he thought would bring the baby Jesus to a violent death. When Jesus began his public life, the people of his hometown, Nazareth, did not want him so they were ready to throw him off a cliff. Judas did not want Jesus so he sold him to the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders did not want Jesus so they gave him to Pilate. Pilate did not want Jesus so he gave him to Herod, King of Galilee, and the son of the Herod who wanted to kill Jesus when he was a baby. Herod, King of



Galilee, did not want Jesus so he gave Jesus back to Pilate. Pilate did not want Jesus so he gave Jesus to the crowds. The crowds did not want Jesus so they gave him to the Cross. The people surrounding Jesus as he thirsted to death on the cross left him with the feeling that he was not wanted. So Jesus bled. Jesus' bleeding heart saves the world.

I remember the day recently when I enjoyed a cool glass of water with twenty Tanzanian psychology students. These are students with whom I pray Christian prayer four times each week. The



faith and very evident virtue of these women and men left me with the feeling that, yes, there are those who want Jesus. It is true that three of the students are Moslem; but they also pray with us, are accepting Jesus without knowing fully who He is, and very soon may accept him as the true God and Savior of the World.

Many people seem to forget, but the first ones to really give Jesus the warmth and tenderness of hospitality were Africans. Those who visit Egypt will find a place marked as the site where the Ho-

ly Family stayed: who knows whether it is the real spot? Yet one fact cannot be denied: the first missionary to Africa was not there to give Africans money, clothing, food, medicine or an economic plan. The first missionary was there to receive food, clothing and shelter from Africans: he was Jesus, who is God himself. He arrived in Egypt as a refugee, and he left Egypt as one of the African family.

Indeed the uplifting conversation of these twenty students, their wholehearted desire to live their lives for God, their beautiful smiles, and their evident willingness to love the way God loves – yes, I am including the Moslems – inspires me with a feeling that soars towards heaven.

You might ask: how can I be sharing and giving at every moment? How can I be like those Tanzanian students? Must I not have some "self" time – some "quality time for myself"? Can I really be giving at every moment even when there might be people, men or women, who strive strenuously to disfigure my heart?

When we feel our fatigue, our irritation that things are not going as planned, our anger at others who may be deliberately interfering with our plans, our anger at those who simply do not move at the same pace that we are moving; our sadness when someone we love

gets sick or hurt or offended or discouraged; when we feel distempered, distraught, distracted or disappointed, we may not feel like now is the moment to give and share. What in fact can we do? How can we share when we feel like staying alone?

Jesus and the Christmas celebration offer us an answer. Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus tells us about a special grace that we can give at every moment: our peace and our joy.

But to have that peace and joy we need to do what Louisa's children are doing every day. We must give "quality time" to Jesus. All of us, children and grown-ups, must pray in the morning for many minutes; we must pray in the evening for many minutes. Jesus accepts our prayer and he opens our eyes to the goodness of each sister and of each brother who lives by our side, even the naughty ones and the ones who disturb or vex us. Jesus, in a word, gives us peace.

So let us say to each other: "Do not be discouraged! Do not be afraid! Everything that happens in life is preparing us for a heaven full of love, peace and joy. To those who trust him, Jesus gives life. Receive Jesus in the Bread of Life – in Holy Communion – and taste the sweetness of God. Merry Christmas to all of you!



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7-9:30 P.M.

HOST
Diocese of Gary Office of Evangelization

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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