



## 2021 Christmas circular

December 22, 2021

Dear family and friends,

Finally, a circular letter from me! Yes, I am still alive, and in Quebec. I have been here now for 2 years and 9 months... minus a few days. Who could have imagined that this parenthesis would be so long? But it's a fact, a reality... that has plunged me into mystery.

Actually, it gave me time to realize once again that life is mystery in its very essence. Mystery and darkness too! I've counted the whys, but without them taking me out of the darkness.

And so, shortly after my first three months - the planned duration of my leave in Quebec - I began to render some services on Quebec soil: I went to parishes and gave a variety of small services in my own community. That's how I wrote several articles for our magazine. Of course, at the same time, I continued to try to get my file unblocked in South Africa.

Naturally, and this is understandable, some people tried to convince me to stay here permanently and to finally enjoy a good retirement, doing what I want; others wished that I would "save the world" by helping out the too many needy of my environment. La Fontaine was right: one cannot "*please everyone and his father*". For me, given my age and my personality, I have preferred to give part of my time to a somewhat monastic way of life, which I greatly enjoy, doing what I particularly like - reading, reflection, meditation, etc. There is something of the monk in me.

How long still will this temporary Quebec adventure last? I can't say. At the moment the Immigration offices in South Africa are all closed for a month - from December 15 to January 15 - which is the big summer holiday there. We'll see after that. One thing at a time!

We are already on the threshold of Christmas and New Year's Eve. Yes, already! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have stayed in touch with me during the year 2021. This has undoubtedly contributed to keep me sane - I dare to believe it - and in good health bodily. Well, there would be so much to say, but I'll stop here to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a fantastic year 2022. Sensational even!



Christmas, in essence, is also about mystery. Our human expectations will never be fulfilled. Just like those of the Baptist and the Jews who did not materialize. In no way is God's logic ours. It is totally unexpected, perfectly surprising, a thousand miles from our human concepts, and superbly paradoxical. In order to "answer" our fundamental restlessness, definitively and forever, God brought out of his bag of

magic the inconceivable: a baby lying helpless in the straw of a manger! And this "solution", so to speak, surpasses our most insane expectations. Why did this happen?

Fr. Rolheiser gives a wonderful answer: *"Because you can't argue with a baby! He doesn't compete, he doesn't stand up, he doesn't try to get the upper hand, he doesn't try to impress with his answers. He can't even talk. Rather, it is we who must get everything from him, either with a smile or a word, and this effort, which requires great patience, draws out the best in us."* The answer could not be more brilliant! Well, this God will be with us at Christmas. That is his name: God-with-us. The unimaginable is therefore possible, it is even within our reach, and through it we have access to the experience of happiness and joy that will never end. And that begins even here on earth. We only have to let the baby of Bethlehem change us from within.

You are one of those people whose company I especially appreciate. You are not just an acquaintance to me, you are someone who means much to me, and Christmas seems to me a particularly beautiful time to express this tenderly to you.

May Christmas be for you the announcement of a growing happiness in joy and peace! May the mystery of this feast be with you every day of the New Year! Much happiness, sweetness and serenity in the New Year, as well as the realization of your most cherished projects!



Fr. Yves La Fontaine, CMM  
[yveslf43cmm@gmail.com](mailto:yveslf43cmm@gmail.com)  
[www.abbotfrancis.org](http://www.abbotfrancis.org)  
[www.mariannahill.org](http://www.mariannahill.org)