



Common Letter No. 31  
M. Angela Strobel, OSB  
Christmas 2011

Dear Sisters all over the world,

On the Day of the Great Joy,  
Love and Peace from our Newborn Saviour!

A few months ago we set out on the way to our 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, in prayer, reflections and work. **Christmas** - has it something to do with **our General Chapter**? Yes, since nothing in our life, in our history is outside the History of Salvation which we celebrate day by day in the Liturgy and especially on the great liturgical Solemnities: *God's stream of love flows and it brings life wherever it reaches.*

It is worthwhile to reflect on our chapter theme "*Conversatio Morum and New Evangelization*" in the light of the Christmas Mystery.

Our 11th General Chapter made us aware of the *Missio Dei*: "The missionary initiative comes from God alone." Our 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter will address the New Evangelization in connection with *Conversatio Morum*. God's mission was announced as the first and brand new evangelization by the angel to the shepherds as reported by Luke: **Ecce enim EVANGELIZO vobis gaudium magnum....** - I announce to you a great joy, for all people; today your Saviour was born, Christ, the Lord.

It seems that there was not much discussion among the shepherds to come to an agreement what they should do, that is, go to Bethlehem to see what had happened according to the Word of the Lord. The proof given to them was a baby wrapped in cloths, a proof that is far from extraordinary. However, this baby lying in a manger seems rather a contra-indication for the Savior, Christ the Lord.

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem. Nothing is said whether anyone stayed behind to watch over the flocks. The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. They saw and believed. They believed and they told what the angel had said about the child. All were amazed at what the shepherds said. Then the shepherds went back singing praises to God.

Having received the message of the angel, the shepherds immediately went on with the evangelization because believing in the Word, they set out in faith, leaving things behind; they proclaimed the word they had heard and went back singing praises to God.

Evangelization and *Conversatio Morum* belong together. We receive the message, we follow the call in faith, we encounter the mystery of God's love, Jesus, and we cannot but proclaim what we have heard and seen. We will return to daily life but we will do it giving thanks and praise to God.

Again and again, Evangelization and *Conversatio Morum*, *Conversatio Morum* and Evangelization will be the dynamic in our Missionary Benedictine life.

May the light of Christmas illumine our common way of *Conversatio Morum* for a fruitful New Evangelization, a credible announcement of the great joy for all people:

Today our Saviour was born, Christ the Lord!

Lovingly,

*Sr. Angela OSB*