MESSAGE TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN FRANCE
FOR ADVENT 2014
FROM THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN FRANCE

A time of inner preparation for Christmas, Advent is a special time to reflect on the radical newness of the birth of God among human beings, and the way in which Jesus was born in Bethlehem. God did not come with great pomp to his Creation. It is possible to pass by the true joy that touches the humble Christmas shepherds, and the Magi seeking for God: a joy offered in simplicity, far from material accumulation.

A time for vigilance, Advent also turns the gaze of Christians towards the coming of Christ at the end of time and makes them pray: Come Lord, do not delay, because "the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains", but maintaining the hope of being "set free from its bondage to decay" (Epistle to the Romans 8).

In December 2015, France will host the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, which aims to set out a new international agreement on climate. For many people, the lifestyle of the richest countries serves as an ideal. Yet it is based on the exploitation of cheap non-renewable natural resources. Generalized to the entire planet, it would lead to unsustainable levels of pollution.

As church leaders in France, we ask: Have Christian communities really understood what it means to confess a creator God who through the incarnation of his Son, chose to share the condition of those whom God created? In this season of Advent, we encourage Christians in France to hold in prayer the reflection of the United Nations on climate issues, to reconsider their relationship to material goods, to reorient their lives towards what is essential, to demonstrate that a more sober way of life and solidarity are possible, by moving further ahead themselves on this path of conversion. How we act towards creation reflects the way we represent it ourselves. Is it a source of resources to meet the needs of our societies? Or is it a gift of God for which we should be respectful and responsible stewards?

We wish everyone a happy and joyful journey towards Christmas.

Pastor François CLAVAIROLY – Metropolitan EMANUEL – Archbishop Georges PONTIER
Co-presidents of the Council of Christian Churches in France

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