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MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS TO MISSIONARIES

BY ARCHBISHOP PAUL CREMONA O.P.

Dear Missionaries,

Once again it is Christmas, the time of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' family, Mary and Joseph, lived in Nazareth. Yet there are two episodes which remind us that they too were as missionaries: much in the same way as those who leave their country to travel afar in the name of Jesus, with all that this journey entails.

The first episode is when they travelled to Bethlehem for Mary to give birth to Jesus. Some of you have journeyed to places where the people have never heard of Jesus so that you may give birth to him there. As a result of your work, performed with love, the people of those countries came to know about the love of He who came from the Father to save us. Some of them have even embraced the Messiah.

The second episode is when Mary and Joseph were forced to flee to Egypt in order to protect the baby Jesus from Herod. Again, they left their home to protect the life of Jesus in order that he may continue to live so that his mission may be completed. There are those of you who have left their homeland for places where Jesus already lives, yet there is fear that without encouragement, belief in Jesus would diminish and people could lose their faith. You have gone there to protect His name and faith in Him. I wonder just how many people you have gathered together in His name so that He may be re-born in these countries.

In the name of the Church in Malta, I wish to thank you all for all the work you are doing on our behalf. Christmas is that special time where we augur blessings and joy in our proclamation of Jesus.

May the Lord bless you with a good Christmas and a New Year 2012 in which many graces are imparted from the Lord upon those countries which you serve in his name.

✠ **Paul Cremona O.P.**
Archbishop of Malta