from [*an Advent letter of G. Gregory Gay, C.M.*](https://cmglobal.org/en/files/2018/06/VT-2004-06-ENG-ALL.pdf), former Superior General.

Someone commented on my letter and our call to conform our lives more radically to the lives of the poor, allowing the poor to be our teachers. My reflection was taken a step further saying that our formation ought to be carried out in the context of direct experience with the poor.
 **This Advent, when we are invited to love more deeply the Lord who chose to show his love by being born poor, let us liken ourselves to Jesus and liken ourselves to the poor, doing so in and through our closeness to them.** I recommend that our programs of initial formation, and even our programs of ongoing formation, provide ample opportunities for contact with the poor, **not necessarily putting an emphasis on what “we can do for them,” but rather on what “we can be with them,” so that we might come to know and love more deeply the Lord Jesus who will speak to us through them. Let this Advent be a time of recommitment in our walking more faithfully with the Lord and hence walking more faithfully with the poor.**

