

Christmas 2009

Dear Friends of St. Jude,

It has been said that, for us who reside in the western world, the real meaning of Christmas has been lost. The historical event of the birth of Christ, the Savior of the world, is often little understood or believed in our relentlessly secular society. But the birth of the baby Jesus is "the most significant event in all history, because it has meant the pouring into a sick world of the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost two thousand years..."(George Matthew Adams).

Let us revisit St. Luke's account of the birth of Christ (Luke 2: 1-5). "Now it came about in those days..." (2:1). How serenely does the story begin, yet how momentous its results for humankind. The words lift you up into a spirit of expectancy, awe and wonderment over the account which follows: something so simply told and yet so significant to all the world. "And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' "



Joy, expectancy, awe, wonderment, sheer happiness: these are the overriding emotions of the beating heart of the Christmas season, the fulfillment of our Advent hope. You see them on the faces of children, their eyes widening appreciably as you read them the story of Christ's birth or as they tear into the wrapping of a present on Christmas morning.

But we know that there are children in war zones and oppressed areas of the world who are denied this innocent and joyful fulfillment of hope. We remember them especially this Christmas, and we pray that, through St. Jude's intercession and Our Lord's divine mercy, they may know even an inkling of the hope that He brings to our world this season.

"What is Christmas?" asks Agnes M. Pharo. "It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace." Christmas is also a season of thanksgiving, and we thank Fr. Garry Cappleman, O.P. of St. Dominic's Parish for providing the beautiful photograph of St. Jude in the snow, taken in Anchorage, Alaska.

On the reverse side of this sheet, you will see a depiction of this year's Christmas card. If you would like to send this lovely card to your family and friends this Christmas, please use the form to send us your order. Also, please send us a list of those whom you wish to include in the Christmas Novena of Masses. You may also contribute to this year's calendar appeal for the education of our Dominican seminarians.

All of us here at the St. Jude Shrine pray that through the intercession of our Holy Patron, St. Jude, the Lord may fill your hearts with the Joy, Hope, and Peace of the Child Jesus.

In Christ's Peace,

Stedman Matthew
and the
Staff of the Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus