

Christmas, 2011

Dear Friends of St. Jude,

Each Christmas we sing Christmas carols or Christmas songs that express the joy and happiness that fill our hearts when we realize that, once again, the Savior of the World has been born to save us from our sin and sorrow. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" is one favorite, and there is a line from it that has always touched me deeply: "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." A beautiful thought.

On Christmas Eve, Jesus Christ has come to fulfill our hopes – hopes that accompany us throughout the years. But these hopes can sometimes be intermingled with the fears that weigh us down. Now, with Christ's presence among us, those fears and sorrows are lifted. The Gospel of Matthew (1: 22-24) tells us:

*All of this took place to fulfill the words spoken by God through the prophet:
The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel,
a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

And so at Christmas, but every other day as well, we rejoice that God is with us. His eternal presence among us makes us keenly aware of the happiness and joy of our fellow-Christians, too. And we hear, as if with new ears, His immortal words spoken on the Mount:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance.
Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: they shall have their fill.
Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.
Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognized as children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness:
the kingdom of Heaven is theirs (Mt. 5: 3-10).*

This Christmas, and always, we cast our needs, hopes, and fears upon God and St. Jude with the certainty that they will be heard, and our lives renewed by the Savior of the World.

With all good wishes at Christmas and during the New Year 2012,

Fr. Allen Duston, O.P.

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and the Staff of the St. Jude Shrine



*The Madonna of Humility
Fra Angelico, 1387 - 1455*