



## A WORD FROM FATHER KELLY December 21, 2020

There is little that expresses hope like the face of a child at Christmas with all the lights, the trees, the ornaments, the nativity, Santa Clause, and the music! Eyes wide with wonder and mesmerized by color; a child's innocence marked by a smile large enough to engulf all that surrounds it. A child's ability to draw us into the miracle of Christmas fills our hearts with the "light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

From childhood innocence to adult faith, the miracle of Christmas continues to call forth hope. The love of God, never abandoning his children, sends forth into the midst of humanity his only Son. The prophet Isaiah spoke: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." This, then, this child, the Son of God is our hope...and in wonder and awe we stand.

As we celebrate Christmas this week, will we be aware of how all that happened nearly two-thousand years ago changed our life? Will we be aware that even as we live with our daily struggles and confronted with the challenge of living our call to holiness we are given hope? Will we see and strive to understand the connection of the baby Jesus lying in the manger and the body of Jesus hanging on the cross with the angels proclaiming "Glory to God in the highest" and the angel seated in the empty tomb of the resurrected Christ?

All of Advent we have been preparing ourselves to receive the Christ-child. The candles of the advent wreath have mirrored the light of Christ growing always brighter in our hearts. This has been a year marked by face-coverings and social distancing, by unemployment and business closures, by hunger and poverty, by hospitals, illness and death. It would seem that darkness has overcome the light. But this has also been a year marked by creativity and renewed family time, by care and compassion to protect the vulnerable, by renewed calls to confront systemic prejudice, and a growing awareness of human dignity. And so the light shines in the darkness as God enters, still, into the messiness of our humanity through this mystery of the Incarnation: Christmas! Now as children, we stand with eyes wide with wonder and mesmerized by love; God's love. Hope never disappoints. Merry Christmas!

