



Christmas 2022

*“Do not be afraid; for behold,
I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you
who is Christ and Lord...and this will be a sign for you...” (Luke 2:10-12)*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

What is this sign that the angel in St. Luke’s Gospel proclaims? God is born among us. What a wondrous sign of God’s love for you and me! St. John of the Cross once wrote to a friend: *“Think nothing else but that God ordains all, and where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love.”*

When God the Father didn’t find love in the human race, He put love in the human race through the Incarnation of His Son. Then, He found Love, in His Son Jesus and in all who had become a part of His Body. Each of us is called to go and do likewise. When we don’t find love in a situation, we can put love there and then we’ll find it! We can make a difference.

A current example can be found in the tens of thousands of Polish families opening their living rooms to Ukrainians fleeing their homeland. Polish monasteries, convents, rectories and homes are among some of the places where Ukrainian refugees are encountering the living Lord in their neighbors.

We must embrace the same kind of faith in the overriding providence of God in all the events of our lives—even in a world that, at times, seems so loveless, so Godless. The angel insists: Do not be afraid, I’ve got some great news to share with you. God has been born among us and, through His Spirit, He remains ever present.

Fear can be a crippling emotion that often raises our defenses and restricts our outreach to others. However, such a divine intervention as God’s birth on earth, prepares you and me to open ourselves to the gift of God’s presence. When we accept such an invitation in humility and with patience, we can grow in holiness. Fear subsides because we know we are in the presence of Jesus.

The Christmas story is our love story. It’s the story of our encounter with the living God and sharing the fruits of that encounter with others. It’s no wonder that this is a season of great hope, joy and peace. May the Christ Child bring you and your loved ones the Gift of Love, the Blessing of Hope and the Promise of Peace. A blessed Christmas and joy-filled New Year!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg