

# FATHER ABBOT'S CHRISTMAS LETTER

In the Year of Our Lord  
Christmas 2002

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

May the little Infant of the Stable of Bethlehem surround you with the warmth of His Love. May the Peace of that tiny little Stable be caught up with the gentle breezes of that wonderful Night and be brought into your homes, filling them with the Presence of God - with the Presence of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

All of us - it matters not who we are, it matters not what our calling in life may be - are in a state of wonderment, confusion, and fear. We sincerely pray for the gentle breezes from Bethlehem, but we look out of our windows and see the red and angry clouds overhead. The wind is blowing with violence and the trees and things are suffering torment from its force. All things seem disturbed, and our hearts are beating out the measures of our concerns. We cry out to God begging Him to do something to put a stop to the disturbance, but with each new day, things get worse and worse. And we wonder. We wonder, why does not God do something?!

For the last several years, in this Christmas Letter I say to you: "DO NOT BE AFRAID!" - "DO NOT BE AFRAID!" These are not just empty words; neither are they expressions of meaningless and feelingless clichés. We look about. We look for that one person who will make our crooked ways straight once again. But we find no such person. The promise makers - they all fall quite short of the dazzling promises they befuddled us with once upon a time. As we look about for help, let us change our direction for a moment. Let us look - for a moment - in the direction of Bethlehem. Let us contemplate the times as they were at the moment of His Birth. These people were in trouble! They, too, cried out and waited for the "PROMISED" Messiah. They expected a patriot - a great general - a king! They found no such person, and they wondered, just as we wonder, was God listening to them - was He aware of their need? Why did God not answer them in their need? And yet, unknown to them, God did hear, and God did answer, but in a most extraordinary way - A TINY BABY BORN IN CONDITIONS TOO POOR TO DESCRIBE! When this same Baby grew up to be a Man, the unlikelyhood