



## Christmas Message of Hope

*December 25, 2002*

As “the holidays” each December get more and more generic and less and less religious, many Americans can’t remember anymore why we’re supposed to feel joy and peace. Warm feelings need a reason, and this year especially, we have plenty to feel burdened about: a tough economy, a war on terror, troubles within the Church herself, a looming conflict with Iraq.

All of these burdens are real, but for the believer, none of them can obscure the real meaning of Christmas. None of them can diminish the clean, bright beauty of Christmas Mass, or the glory of the carols we hold dear. This day is the birthday of life. This day is the beginning of hope. Jesus Christ is Lord — the only name under heaven by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12); there is no other — and His birth is our rebirth.

The joy in Christmas is the fact that God’s love becomes flesh; God enters a sinful world in order to redeem it. The peace in Christmas is the reconciliation God begins in Bethlehem between Himself and humanity. The stable leads to the cross; the cross to a tomb; and the tomb to resurrection and life. Easter begins in Christmas, and that is the reason we sing. This is a good time of year to remember that what we celebrate as Christians is much more than a pious story about a baby, or a parable about new life. Christmas is real. Christmas is a revolution. Christmas begins an uprising against the world, against sin, against death, against despair, against loneliness, led by the loving God who created us.

In Genesis, God said, “Let there be light,” and creation began. This Christmas, and every Christmas, God speaks again through His Son — His Word made flesh — “Let there be a light,” and in the Christmas sky rises a light to the gentiles which renews the world.

The source of our joy is our hope; and the reason for our hope is our faith in Jesus Christ. May His birth fill each of you with happiness this Christmas season and throughout the coming year.

Your brothers in the Lord,

*Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.*

*Archbishop of Denver*

*Most Rev. José H. Gomez, S.T.D.*

*Auxiliary Bishop of Denver*