My dear Brothers and  Sisters,

Christmas Greetings!  With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you my prayerful best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas.  
  
Christmas this year will once again be very different for many of us due to the changes of 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic still impacts our lives, and while vaccinations and boosters have made a difference, the crisis is not over.  
  
What a year it has been, and it's not even over yet!  If you are like me at all, there are times we look back over this past year in wonder and amazement. It often leaves me shaking my head a bit and even saying out loud from time to time, “I never saw that coming”!  
  
From the Global Pandemic continuing through even now, as well as racial and political tensions, can there be any doubt that we need God more now than ever before?  
  
One thought seems to help me balance out many things we see now, and it is this; “Not one time has God ever stated how surprised He has been by all this”!  
  
When Jesus came into the world over 2,000 years ago, it was also filled with political strife and turmoil. Heartache filled so much of the known world at that time. Yet in the midst of what some would call a hopeless situation was born the Savior of the World! Hope had arrived, and may I remind you today that Hope is still here, and His Name is Jesus!  *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”* (Isaiah 9:6).    
  
Let me use this opportunity to remind you that our Hope is NOT in the governments of this world. This world is not our home, but as Christians, we are merely passing through to a more excellent place!  
  
While this year may seem a bit different than other years as far as how we as a church celebrate Christmas, and perhaps even how you as a family celebrate Christmas, we know Jesus Christ is still King of Kings and Lord of Lords!  
  
Please know that whether you can celebrate with us in person here at St. Paul’s  or online-only, that you are in our thoughts and prayers during these challenging times.  
  
May your Christmas be filled with the light of God's love so that you can share it with a world so in need of a relationship with Jesus!   May Christ be born again into each of your hearts this Christmas season.  
  
Fear not, and Merry Christmas!  
  
Your brother in Christ,  
  
Fr. Sean Harlow, O.Carm.