

# **Christmas Memories and Hopes**

by Alan Krema / Originally published in Spirit Journal December 2016

Christmas is a time of memories and hopes. I have happy memories of my childhood with a warm, loving family and the joy of toys. I also have some sad memories of family members who did not fare well during some of the holiday times.

I have memories of our children in their childhood of Santa, trees, toys, and joyous times. I have large hopes for my children and grandchildren. This season of Christmas is full of special memories and hopes. We spend this advent time of waiting in thoughts and feelings connected to all who are close to us.

Memories and hopes place us in the past and the future. Our mind loves to oscillate between them. All these memories and hopes are in our thoughts and as we sit in Centering Prayer, as we wait in patient consent to what is happening within, our thoughts dissipate in a sea of connection which cannot be grasped or controlled.

The days are short, the nights are long, and we sense we are changing. The contemplative work is to open ourselves to the divine presence and action within. In this advent, can we open to that which is being born eternally? Can we patiently wait for the rebirth of a child? Can we participate in this rebirth?

I recently came across this admonition from Rainer Maria Rilke in his *Letters to a Young Poet*:

*What if we think of Him as the one who has been approaching from all eternity, the one who will someday arrive, the ultimate fruit of a tree whose leaves we are? What keeps you from projecting his birth into the ages that are coming into existence, and living your life as a painful and lovely day in the history of a great pregnancy? Don't you see how everything that happens is again and again a beginning, and couldn't it be His beginning, since, in itself, starting is always so beautiful? If He is the most perfect one, must not what is less perfect precede Him, so that He can choose Himself out of fullness and superabundance? Must He not be the last one, so that He can include everything in Himself?* (Rome, December 23, 1903)



I send you my deepest wish for a blessed advent and a joyous Christmas.