



*Thousands of years ago, hopelessness prevailed as gloom, anguish, and contempt filled the earth.
Consumed by lost faith and empty souls, people wandered aimlessly in spiritual darkness as
Cultures fractured, shattered by hatred, violence, and social tension.
Amidst a troubled land of discontent, two weary travelers sought refuge in the uncertainty of night.
With the uproar of turbulent times echoing around them, the simple cries of an innocent Boy,
Born prophetically in the curious comfort of a humble stable, forever changed the world.
Beneath the tapered beam of a guiding star, He shined the brightest;
The true Light inviting us to follow, His saving grace illuminating the darkness of despair.*

*In the heat and humidity of an August day, two hundred sons of Notre Dame
Gathered reverently beneath the imposing shadow of the Golden Dome, their dampened spirits awakened,
Their fleeting lives forever altered by the sacred heart of their beloved mentor.
Fifty-two years earlier, he enthusiastically embraced the dark ages of Irish Football and brilliantly brightened it as
His magnetism and intensity inspired wins while his lessons guided young men through a time of social change.
Across the beautiful campus, the enormous classroom of competition towered conspicuously above the horizon,
Its wins and losses now trivialized, overshadowed by his greatest victory of overcoming incomprehensible adversity.
With "no breaking point" his character conquered the darkest of sorrows as he truly exemplified the lessons he taught.*

*In the heart of downtown Louisville, a monument to "The Greatest" extends regally above the highway.
Its colorful displays and flickering videos chronicle his incomparable skills in the ring as
He danced, weaved, and bobbed to Olympic fame and three World Championship titles.
After a legendary career of athletic achievement secured in the narrow restraints of a rectangular ring,
He emerged triumphantly from the darkness and shadows of bigotry and hatred to teach, educate, and enlighten.
Accepting a greater battle, he transcended his craft, his footwork and finesse replaced by commitment and compassion
As he became a radiant beacon of love, peace, and social justice; his service, "the rent you pay for your room on earth."
His unrivaled conviction and passion, the powerful torch of his life, shined the brightest during his darkest days.*

*May this Christmas Season summon us to heed the call of the young Savior
As we emerge through the darkness and challenges of our journey and shine our light on one another.
May we embrace adversity with dignity and class, relying on our faith, trust, and love as
We live the words we speak, committed to mentoring those entrusted to our care.
May we benevolently raise our hands beyond our own needs to lovingly answer the call to
Inspire, embody, and act boldly with a total commitment to living peace, understanding, and compassion.
May our loving actions enlighten and altruistically enrich the lives of others as
We realize that, "it is in the darkest skies that we see the brightest stars."*

*Frank Allocco
Christmas 2017*