

Christmas Messages

*It is Christmas
every time you let God love others through you.
Mother Teresa*

Walking Together at Christmas

Despite COVID 19 still present in the community, in comparison to recent years we are able to enjoy this Christmas and New Year time in relative freedom from drastic restrictions. We can meet each other face to face and not simply on a computer screen. We can cultivate deeper friendships.

So let us focus anew on the Christmas story.

Regardless of religion or the lack of it, people are generally happy to walk together at Christmas and reflect on their lives in the light of the coming of Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem. Walking together and reflecting on this "Silent Night, Holy Night", gives us an opportunity to deepen inner silence in our chaotic lives. We can permit ourselves to be still for a moment in our change of era. A response can be made in simplicity in contrast to life's confusions. I trust that such reflections can make us more graceful and peaceful. Hope is given. A star leads us.

Humble shepherds help us to reflect on the lost, lonely and least around us. We are given motivation to offer practical assistance.

By walking together at Christmas, we realise afresh that we are not alone. We dismiss the temptation from self-appointed ideological elites that life is merely about "my choice" and "my Rights". We start to talk also about "our responsibilities and duties" to family and society's poor and oppressed.

Walking together means that this time is not simply "the festive season". We are not reduced merely to eating and shopping. It is also "the Christmas season". It is when "God-is-with-us" (Emmanuel) in Jesus. There is joy and laughter. There is song and hope. There is transcendence and radiance.

Let us pray for peace in our world, especially in Ukraine. May we do all we can to make peace flourish as we walk locally under God's "Star of Wonder". May Jesus bless and protect you all at this Christmas time!

Archbishop Christopher Prowse

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Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn

Apostolic Administrator of the Military Ordinariate of Australia 2022

Dear Friends,

We wish each other a Holy and Blessed Christmas and Peaceful New Year 2023. We are God's gift to one another; none of us can pass through life without being supported by others. The existence of our parish is brought about by people like you, who show their faith in action. I'm touched to see how many of you devote your time, energy and money to support the

parish. I pray that God who inspires such action may be your reward. Christmas and New Year is a time of peace and joy, a time to celebrate with family, and loved ones. It is also a time to renew our relationship with God and with one another; a time to forgive and let go.

May you be blessed with Peace and Joy at Christmas and in the New Year 2023.

Fr. Sijo

Dear Parishioners

*"Out of deep Longing and stilled mysterious nights,
God fell into our midst like a small star twinkling in the dark."*

(Source unknown)

As we once again celebrate this wonder-filled season of Christmas I give thanks for the many ways I have experienced God in our midst through you – your actions of care, hospitality, service, compassion, generosity and the outpouring of love to those in our community.

2022 has been a year in which we have been challenged through events beyond our control. We grieve, we mourn, we trust and we pray in hope that the message of Christmas will continue to be realised through people like you who keep living the Christmas message of "peace on earth and good will to all". May you experience ever more deeply the closeness of our Emmanuel God who journeys with each of us day in and day out.

"May Christmas fill you with an awareness of how God is fully in our midst."

(Source unknown)

Sr Maureen McDermott rsj

The Work of Christmas

Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

