



We proclaim a crucified Christ

1Cor.1.23

**A message from Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne
Christmas 2020**

Friends,

Christmas celebrations in the city of Bethlehem are likely to be very quiet this year.

Under the weight of a global pandemic, and the ongoing troubles in the Middle East, this special destination for thousands of pilgrims and tourists will resemble something more akin to that familiar Carol, 'O little town of Bethlehem... how still we see thee lie...'

Perhaps it was a similar stillness that met the Holy Family more than 2000 years ago, as they sought a place of safety to welcome the birth of their child.

Doors had been shut to them, amidst their own time of worrying restrictions. How familiar is this aspect of the nativity story to our own lives this year?

Jesus was born in such a time as this, and in fact, is born for such a time as this. He comes to us always in our need and our reality.

There has been much said about what a 'COVID Christmas' will be like, but is that the question we need to be asking? This year has challenged us in ways that have been unimaginable; it has turned our levels of comfort and security on their head.

And whilst we've sought creative ways to engage in our worship and our connections, it's never been about reinventing something.

Christmas too is not of our own making. The tinsel and gifts, food and holidays certainly play their part in how we acknowledge the festivity of the season, but they're not Christmas.

Jesus is Christmas: then – now – always.

Whether it is into a peaceful landscape, or a war torn one; a time of uncertainty and isolation, or one of abundant friendship and family; whether it is in poverty or in plenty – the question we should ask is what is the kind of Christmas we want to live?

Isn't it one that holds close the promise of life and hope that the birth of Jesus gives us? And in that very gift, is not our calling to bring this life and hope to the world?

Jesus is the gift beyond all gifts, which we receive; and He is the gift we can always give.

Which brings me back to the next part of the Carol:

"Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight"

When you gather this Christmas, in whatever way that is, don't labour on the darkness and of this year - recall the wonder of that birth and the light by which we can see ahead.

May you, your families, loved ones, your friends and neighbours be filled with the everlasting light of life and hope this year.

Jesus is Christmas.

The Nativity of the Lord

25th December 2020

First Reading: Is 62:11-12

Your Saviour is born.

This the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your saviour comes, the prize of his victory with him, his trophies before him'. They shall be called 'The Holy People', 'The Lord's Redeemed'. And you shall be called 'The-sought-after', 'City-not-forsaken.'

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 96:1. 6. 11-12

R/ A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

Second Reading: Ti 3:4-7

His own compassion saved us.

When the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

The Word of Lord

Gospel Acclamation: Luke 2:14

Alleluia, alleluia! Glory to God in the highest, peace to his people on earth. **Alleluia!**

Gospel: Luke 2:15-20

The shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

The Gospel of the Lord



*May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you today
and throughout the New Year
from Fr Jan, Fr Aloysius and the Pastoral team*