



Archbishop's Christmas Message 2022

Dear faithful of the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall,

The season of Christmas is once again upon us. How we decide to welcome it and celebrate it is of utter importance. Many in our world today live under the many pressures of society, of work and family obligations and, of course, of personal challenges. The “busyness” of our lives can easily overwhelm us and steer us off course. So, in what space will you be when Christmas arrives?

Obviously, we remain attentive to upcoming events if they mean something for us. If they are of little importance, or if they are likely not going to change anything in my life, chances are I will let them pass by without notice. We therefore need to ask ourselves if celebrating Christmas really matters or not. Another question relates to the understanding we have of Christmas. What is Christmas really all about? In order to cut through all the glitter and traditions around Christmas, it is essential to seek understanding by going back to the source.

Holy Scriptures, during the Christmas liturgies, relate to us the day Jesus was born in Bethlehem. His birth is presented to us as a gift from God to humanity. Let us hear once again the message of the angel: “good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). The celebration of the nativity of the Saviour is therefore an invitation for us to welcome in our personal lives a divine gift that has life-changing consequences.

Opening our hearts to Jesus the Christ is allowing ourselves to enter into the Light where healing Love and lasting Peace reign. It is about dying to earthly things and choosing Eternal Life. It is giving ourselves a chance to experience profound Joy and Hope. It is our way of answering God's call and giving the best of ourselves in accomplishing his will.

This gift, received in faith, transforms human lives. This is why it has such a huge impact. This is why Christmas takes on meaning and is truly celebrated. In welcoming the Gift, we become the Gift to others around us. The more we share the Gift of Christ, the more our world resembles the Kingdom of God.

It is therefore my prayer that you may all celebrate Christmas this year with great expectation.

Christmas blessings to you all!

✠ Marcel Damphousse
Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall