

Christmas Message "Here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."  
(Lk 2:12)

Brothers and sisters,

Merry Christmas.

Christmas time always evokes excitement and joyful anticipation for us. By now, Christmas cards would have been written, posted or handed out, Christmas presents being bought, wrapped and ready to be given, Christmas dinner being sorted, ordered and ready to be shared with family and friends at the Christmas table, Christmas carols are heard and Christmas lights are now flickering in the evenings.

There is more to Christmas though. It is not just one of those holidays. It is more than just something we do or something we give. It is not just about giving presents but being present ourselves. It is not just about giving cards, but showing that we care for one another. It is not just about fun with family and friends, but faith in and friendship with God. It is not just about shopping but worshipping the Emmanuel (the God-with-us). It is not just about partying but praying to the child in the manger. It is not just about something or some things, but someone.

It is about Jesus-‘the Christ’, ‘the Messiah’, the Emmanuel, the God-with-us, the God who humbly came down from his throne in heaven, and chose to be born in a lowly manger-from a poor family- a saviour who has been born to us (Lk 2:11), the ‘true light that enlightens all people (Jn 1:9).

God is so in love with us that he wanted to become like one of us, not to put himself lower but to lift us up higher. In love, he willed to become part of our human story, in order for us to become part of the Divine story. In love he was born for us because he wanted us to be part not just of the ‘Good story’ but of the ‘God-story.’

This is indeed worth celebrating and worth rejoicing. Let us endeavour this time therefore, to encounter the Lord Jesus in a more real and personal way. We can meet him intimately in every celebration of the Eucharist. We can meet him personally in the guise of our brothers and sisters especially to those who are poor, weak, vulnerable and marginalized. In the spirit of solidarity let us remember in our prayers especially those our brothers and sisters in many parts of the world whose Christmas is not as joyous as it should be, by reason of war and conflicts, by persecution and violence, by false ideologies and acts of terrorism.

Let us pray for those who have lost someone in their family especially in this time of the year, when family get together is always something worth-looking forward to and wonderful to have.

Let us also pray for our country that we may never lose the sense of God. Let us also pray that we may be courageous to stand up and uphold the Christian principles and values that has benefitted the whole world, shaped cultures and traditions and had produced numerous heroes and holy people over the centuries.

Let us pray for those who are displaced and seeking asylum that world leaders and countries may offer them a space in the inn of their hearts and land. Let us pray for our families too that Christ be welcomed into our homes and be given a space in the inn of our hearts so as to honour him who is the real reason for this season. Let us altogether pray and work for peace, starting in our own lives by forgiving those who have wronged us, by being generous with our time, talent and resources to those who have less, and by bringing Christ and his message of peace, joy and love to others.

Let all these be our Christmas present for the new-born child in the manger.

On behalf of Fr Junray and Fr Shibu, I wish you all a very happy, solemn Christmas season and a grace-filled new year!

Fr Junjun