

A Message at Christmas

Christmas is truly the most atmospheric festival of celebration. Our senses are assailed by the sights, sounds, spectacles and smells that are part and parcel of Christmas. Every year, it captures the hearts and minds of people throughout the world as we strive to recreate that 'perfect day' of joy, happiness, merriment, warmth and goodwill.

Christmas is the season which commemorates the birth of a Baby in humble circumstances, a Baby whose arrival was to bring hope and salvation to all mankind. This Baby was Jesus. Through His birth, He revealed Himself to us on earth and His coming amongst us brought purpose and meaning to our lives. Through His teaching, Jesus explained how we could achieve eternal life. Ultimately, He gave up His life to redeem us. This is the essential message of Christmas. It is a time of unbridled joy when we celebrate the triumph of life, goodness and hope over death, evil and despair.

We must not allow Christmas to be obscured by idle commotion and shoddy commercialism. More than ever, it is important for us to reflect on the real significance of Christmas and to fully understand why the enduring message of Christmas continues to be relevant and meaningful for all of us.

It is easy to be distracted by materialism and the way it alters our perspective and dilutes our true values. Today's society is in a state of flux. We are challenged relentlessly by secularism: old tenets no longer seem to hold in an anguished world, a world that is becoming more permissive and more confused. Indeed, many of us are perplexed or disillusioned: we are at a loss to know exactly what direction we are taking as we reap the benefits of prosperity and affluence.

In a complex society which is undergoing so much rapid change, the only true constant is the glorious Christmas message. This saving news has remained steadfast: it has never altered with the times. In the midst of all the mayhem of modern living, the resounding message of Jesus is untouched by the grubby hands of evil, violence, greed, self-gratification and disrespect.

During this happy time of 'giving and receiving', we must look beyond the tinsel and the turkey and we should make a renewed effort to receive the saving message of Jesus. In turn, we must resolve to 'give' a little more of our hearts and minds to all those who need our Christian friendship. We should also give more of ourselves to Jesus each day by simply being proud of our beautiful faith and our Christian tradition. We must always be prepared to put our faith into practice by safeguarding what is right and by rejecting what is wrong.

If our Christian way of living were evaluated by our lighting displays or by the vast amount of money we spend at Christmas, we would surely be top of the class. But much of the frippery and the feasting are misguided and the pleasure is transitory. The joy on the Birthday of Jesus extends far beyond mulled wine and fancy trinkets. It is the deeper significance of Christmas that we must embrace if we are to discover the deeper, lasting joy which it represents in our lives.

And so, this Christmas, consider what it is you are celebrating. Consider how you show pride in your faith and consider how the central message of Jesus Christ can make a very real difference to your life if you receive it with an open heart.

I pray all God's Blessings on you and your families this Christmas. May the Birth of Jesus always bring peace, joy and tranquillity to your lives.

Fr. Paschal Moore, P.P.