



Archbishop's Christmas Message 2018

Christmas Day comes soon after the longest night of the year.

It follows that one of the prayers in Advent invites God to let the splendour of His glory dawn in our hearts to scatter the shadows of the night.

Unfortunately, the darkness of these days is not just a seasonal disorder. Anxiety and depression have invaded our culture, particularly among younger people. The scandal of the sexual abuse of minors by priests and its cover-up by bishops has roiled the Catholic Church worldwide. The domestic church—the family—is increasingly stressed by separation, single parenthood, addiction, and shortages of time and money. Youths are less likely to turn to faith for consolation and wisdom.

Yet God remains faithful to us. The celebration of Christmas is an opportunity to meet the God who came to earth to give meaning to life. I encourage you to visit the crèche in your parish and to contemplate the mystery that it reveals.

Adored by shepherds and wise men in Bethlehem, Jesus offered the message he would give later in his ministry, “Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11.28).

God is close to you in the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in the manger. All your needs are so near to his heart that he gave himself freely to bear your burdens.

That’s the message of Christmas, if you will but give yourself time and quiet to let it touch you.

Merry Christmas!

✠ Terrence Prendergast, SJ
Archbishop of Ottawa