



Remain in my love
Jn 15:9

Christmas Message 2017

We are now well and truly into December. School's out and the shops are busy. This year in Toowoomba we have more shops than ever to visit. I am thinking of buying some rollerblades so that I might more easily get around the shopping centres!

Certainly we have to make preparations for Christmas: Where will we spend Christmas? Who will we invite? Have we finished our Christmas shopping? Have we forgotten someone? What do we hope to receive?

Over the past few weeks there have been a number of end-of-year school functions. For quite a number of young people their school days are now over but their education continues. In listening to the speeches of many school leavers I have been heartily impressed by the maturity of those young women and men. Our community will surely be the better with their participation. At times we might think that we are the teachers. When all is said and done we can surely learn from these young people who have a passion for social justice and building a better world.

The Catholic Bishop's Social Statement (2017-18) is titled *Everyone's Business: Developing an inclusive and sustainable economy*. Our economy should be one that is founded on justice and offers dignity and inclusion to every person.

Let us welcome new arrivals as we ourselves would like to be welcomed if we were a stranger. May we all play our part in creating welcoming communities where people experience God's love as something real which brings joy and needs to be shared.

Some weeks ago we had World Day of the Poor with this year's motto: *Love not in word but in deed!* A Christmas gift of financial support to people in need is a meaningful and worthwhile act of charity and speaks louder than words. Donations can be made to Caritas Australia www.caritas.org.au or Vinnies www.vinnies.org.au or some other charity of your choice.

In all our rush and bustle, try to leave some time for relaxation and reflection. Perhaps we could turn off all our gadgets even for a short time and listen to each other.

May we travel safely on our roads and be patient with other drivers. Let us all show respect to others who may hold different beliefs or make different choices in life. Let us value the dignity and life of each person.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones now and throughout the coming year. I wish you a very happy Christmas!

Most Reverend Robert M McGuckin

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