



Remain in my love

Jn 15:9

Christmas Message 2018

The month of December is a season of anticipation and also a chance to look back over the year that has past. Both globally and domestically the year has been very mixed. Even now many are struggling with the plight caused by drought, fire, and other difficulties.

On top of all this the preparations for Christmas are in full swing: gifts and cards for loved ones, travel and festivity planning, and perhaps the anticipation of seeing someone after a long time. All of this builds excitement and expectancy for many.

In the approaching season, the home has an elevated significance. Some are travelling to unite with their families and others are opening their homes in hospitality.

Perhaps it is a good time to remember that in Bethlehem, on the first Christmas, the parents of the Christ-child were traveling and in search of a home for the night. The inn-keeper made a home for the Holy Family, and it was there that Jesus came to us.

The Catholic Bishops' Social Statement (2018-2019) titled *A Place to Call Home: Making a Home for Everyone in Our Land* challenges us to reflect on our sense of belonging.

At this time of festivity there are still many lacking the home and stability that is rightfully theirs. Moreover, there are many whose homes lack the comfort, security, and support which others take for granted.

In the rush of preparations for the imminent merriment, it might be a good time to think of those less fortunate and offer some support to them.

As a Christmas gift, some financial support to these people in need can be a meaningful and worthwhile act of charity that goes a long way. Donations to Caritas www.caritas.org.au, Vinnies www.vinnies.org.au, or some other charity of your choice can help bring the peace and joy of a home to some of these people in this season of hope.

Preparing our homes and the homes of others, this season indeed invites us to prepare a way for the Lord and welcome the Lord into our own heart and world.

Whether we are traveling to see others or preparing for Christmas in our own homes, I hope that we can all take the time to reflect on the time and appreciate the spirit of peace and goodwill that it fosters.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones through this season and for the year ahead.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Most Reverend Robert M McGuckin

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