



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Advent season of preparation and expectation will soon give way to the joyful days of Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. I pray that this season will be for you and your family a time of peace, joy and deep faith.

My recent trip to the Holy Land included a day in Bethlehem, where our pilgrimage group celebrated Mass at the Basilica of the Nativity. Afterwards, we joined the long line of hundreds of faithful to enter the grotto, believed to be the very site where Jesus was born. It was an awesome feeling to enter that grotto, one of the oldest sites of continuous Christian worship; interestingly, I found the wait in line just as inspiring. Seeing the faith of so many pilgrims eager to show reverence to the Lord's birthplace was truly uplifting. It is a sign of the power of the Christmas story, one that still captures imaginations and moves hearts and minds. Jesus' birth is the great revelation of Divine Love, the Good News that God has visited His people and, in Christ, assumed our lowly humanity.

No wonder people are drawn to Nativity scenes at this time of year, which are places of prayer, reflection and wonder. A visit to Bethlehem isn't easy or practical, but in our Christmas crèches, we erect a piece of Bethlehem in our homes and churches. When you see a Nativity scene this Christmas, let it speak to you of the awesome power of God's love made visible in Jesus. May the power of the Lord's birth be a sign of hope for you and may it inspire you to show God's love to a needy and waiting world.

May you enjoy a very blessed Christmas Day and season.

Yours in Christ,

+Daniel Miehm  
Bishop of Peterborough

