



Christmas Message 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

Like you, I am looking forward eagerly to the celebration of Christmas, especially since this is my first one here in Peterborough, my new home. I give thanks to God for many blessings this Christmas, especially for the kind, encouraging and gracious welcome that you have shown to me. It is good to be at home in Peterborough!

The Catholic writer, G.K. Chesterton, often reflected on the theme of Christmas. He once wrote: “Christmas is built on a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home.” Jesus was born into the bosom of family, but far from anything like a home: Mary and Joseph, faced with a “no vacancy” sign after a long journey, took refuge in a humble and untidy stable. Still, they experienced joy at the birth of Jesus, God’s own Son, the long-awaited Messiah.

For those blessed to be at home surrounded by loved ones this Christmas, and for those who will be far from family and friends, the meaning of the Lord’s Nativity is the same. In his lowly birth, we see the great love and compassion of God for humanity. Strengthened by this hope, we make our pilgrimage through this earthly life. Christians are always, to some extent, travellers in a foreign land, for we realize that our true homeland is with our heavenly Father.

Nonetheless, within the community of the Church, we already have some foretaste of our eternal destiny. At Christmas, we rejoice that God himself chose to make his home with us and revealed that we are His beloved children. May the joy of Christ’s birth fill your family home at this time, and may all of us, in the bosom of the Church – our spiritual home – generously share the great gifts of love, mercy and peace this Christmas.

I pray that you may have a very blessed Christmas and I ask your prayers for me during this holy season.

Yours in Christ,

† Daniel Miehm
Bishop of Peterborough