



## ‘A Christmas to Remember’

As we make our preparations for the celebration of Christmas the year, our minds and hearts remember how last year, just after Christmas, our province went into the lockdown due to Covid-19. We began to tackle this pandemic together and with courage and hope that it would pass quickly. However as we prepare this year, we know that the pandemic is not yet over, we are still taking precautions to be safe and healthy, and we are moving forward with hope, due to vaccinations and protocols, that this Christmas will be more joyful than last year.

We have been preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus for the four weeks during Advent. We have prayed, shopped, decorated, and sent greetings, all in the spirit of this wonderful event. We have asked the Lord to guide us and keep our families safe as we gradually returned to Mass in our parishes, even though protocols and distancing still exist. However, there are signs that we are moving in a good direction and that things will look brighter in the future.

The Christmas lights that we see illuminating the many homes around us, remind us of Christ who is our Light and who guides us in our daily lives. We celebrate His birthday at Christmas but we know that it is the Risen Lord who accompanies us each and every day. His Holy Spirit prompts us to live in Hope and in Love for one another. We can be distracted by all the preparations we are making in anticipation for this feast, but may they not block us to the true nature and meaning of Christmas. Christ the Lord, the Son of the Father, came to earth as a baby to teach us of God’s great love for us and to be an example for us of loving compassion and generosity, which God wants us to model in our own lives. Jesus died and rose from the dead to bring us the greatest gift of all, our redemption and our means to enter eternal life in God’s kingdom.

However, the gifts we exchange, the food we share together, the greetings of peace and good tidings we extend to one another, are all signs of that hope that rests in our hearts. We remember the wonderful Christmases of the past and we want to make this Christmas also a special one to remember. The goodness of God’s love, made manifest in Jesus who was born 2000 years ago and who invites us into His life in a special way at Christmas, all make this time, an important moment of memory.

As we prepare to share in this holy season, we turn our minds and hearts to its true meaning, and especially we share this meaning with our family and friends. Christ came into our world to bring us life and peace. We are striving for that world peace which we so badly need. We look for an end to all violence and to all forms of abuse, and we value the great gift of life in all its stages and developments. Christmas is a season for giving thanks and for reconciliation. As we worship together and in our prayer, we know that God listens to our needs and helps us in our journey and is there to keep us safe.

May this season bring you and your family the goodness, grace and love that you are so faithfully awaiting and may it be a true ‘Christmas to remember’.

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