



Christmas Greetings from the Whanganui Catholic Parish

Fr Marcus

One of my cherished memories of Christmas, growing up and still today, has been listening to the list of titles given for the long awaited Messiah, in the reading from the prophet Isaiah from our First Reading at the night Mass: "For a child has been born to us, a son given to us; authority rests on his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is. 9: 6) People then, as for today, were afflicted with all manner of threats to their safety and prosperity.

Life has changed and so has its challenges but we are still in need of the same love and reassurance. The message of Christmas is just the tonic we need. Christ is our redeemer! As victor over sin and death in his resurrection he answered all our needs and desires super-abundantly. Christmas is the dawn of God's love shining on a darkened and anxious world with the promise of endless day.

This we taste in sacrament as already reigning in our hearts: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.." (Rom 8: 15-16)

We rejoice in God's love today and its that love which overflows to our families, friends, fellow parishioners and strangers in the street or waiting in line at the supermarket.

Whatever our situation let the joy of Christmas fill our hearts since: "You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, a people exult when dividing the plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian." (Is. 9: 3-4) Happy Christmas everyone

Fr Don Don

"When they saw the star, they rejoice exceedingly with great joy"

~ Mathew 2:10~

We often hear that Christmas season is the time for sharing, a time with the family, a time to hear harmonious Christmas carols, a time to put up beautiful holiday ornaments and a time to feast on delicious traditional foods. It is THIS TIME of the year that everyone is hooked up with all the preparations to have the happiest celebration one could ever have. But if we ask this question, "HOW READY ARE WE?" What is the answer that immediately comes into our minds? Does our answer reflect on the abovementioned preparations or is our answer has something to do on how we spiritually rejoice with the coming of our Saviour?

This Christmas season, I extend my warmest greetings to your homes. May the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ be not just pure festive preparation but more on our spiritual readiness as well. Let this readiness reflects through our actions by showing our love and care with one another not just this season but throughout the year. May our hearts rejoice and be filled with happiness and excitement by sincerely remembering the true spirit of Christmas.

Merry Christmas everyone! May God continuously bless all your families and may your celebration be as meaningful as it should be. I am praying for a safe trip to those who will be traveling and all the best for the coming 2018.

Fr John

On the anniversary of my Father's death I remembered the age-old custom of making New Year's resolutions. As we have worked our way through Advent I have been conscious of the need to prepare for the Lord's coming at the end of the age. I have found a few things to tidy up before then. I am thinking of these as my thanksgiving gifts to the Lord whose Nativity we celebrate tomorrow.

I am very aware that each of you is an example of faith encouraging me. Thank you. I hope and pray you will enjoy a happy and blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with all God's choicest gifts.

As a St John Officer I cannot avoid saying: Take great care when driving, walking, sun-bathing, working around the house and so on. We do not wish to assist you after an accident.

I will remember you all at the Altar as I celebrate the Mass of the Nativity.



Merry Christmas