

22-12-2016

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

It is my singular privilege to welcome all of you to this Christmas Get together. We are immensely happy and greatly honoured to have all of you at this function. Your presence with us this evening has certainly doubled our joy, and made our Christmas Function a memorable one.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, who is the Saviour of the world. He came into this world to pay the price for our sins. Jesus lived, died and rose, not for any particular clan or a specific religious sect, but for the whole humanity and, therefore, the celebration of his birth has a universal dimension and calls for everyone's participation in celebrating it with great jubilation. This is precisely why that the Archdiocese of Bangalore has been organizing this programme every year to give a true meaning of Christmas and to make it a common celebration.

I am indeed overwhelmed to see so many of you who have graciously responded to our loving invitation and are here to partake in our common celebration. We do appreciate your kind presence and thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us.

We are indeed very happy to have with us Shri Deve Gowda, the Former Prime Minister of India; Shri Siddaramiah, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka; Shri K.J. George, Minister for Urban Development, and the other distinguished Guests of Honour from the State Govt., Political Parties, Administrative Sectors, Educational Institutions, and Inter-Religious Groups. On behalf of the entire Archdiocese of Bangalore, may I accord a very warm welcome to all of you.

An occasion like this invites us to know the true meaning of Christmas, which is nothing but the Celebration of God's love. St. John, the Disciple of Jesus Christ says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17). Yes, the true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of God's love!

Christmas reminds us of God becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. By celebrating Christ's birth, we celebrate God's eternal love, peace, compassion and joy. We celebrate His birth by worshipping Him, greeting one another, giving each other gifts, and reaching out his love to the poor and the less fortunate.

Christmas also invites us to live a life of spiritual aspiration, purity and devotion, and thus make Christ-spirit takes its birth within our hearts. It is the real Christmas when the Divine element begins to express itself in our hearts and the divine light is lit, in order to expel the darkness of hatred, vengeance, animosity and selfishness.

Christmas also is a season of great joy. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special child. True joy can be expressed only when it is shared. It is said that *Joy shared is joy doubled*. And therefore let us make others happy by our simple words and deeds.

The Archdiocese of Bangalore through its various developmental activities is trying to translate the message of Jesus Christ into actions. Recently, we have undertaken a number of programmes for the uplift of women, the differently-abled, the migrants, and for the other socially and economically weaker sections in the six districts of Karnataka. We have undertaken a special programme by giving financial and material help to the poor in the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese of Bangalore is spear-heading its services for the Differently-Abled People and has undertaken a numerous projects for their well-being. We appeal to

the Govt. to help us empower them and make them self-reliant, especially to pave the way for their education and employment.

While thanking the State and the Central Governments for the initiatives they have taken for the betterment of the Christian minority, we say that lot more can be done for them if the privileges and benefits that are given to the major communities are also given to everyone equally. We hope that our rights are respected and our concerns are taken note of and answered positively.

I would like to conclude my speech with this prayer:

*Light of Bethlehem:* burn brightly in our hearts this Christmas;

*Light of Peace:* heal the bitter wounds in our society; show us the path of forgiveness and love;

*Light of Joy:* fill our homes, city, state and country with happiness – cast out the darkness of conflict or worry;

*Light of Comfort:* strengthen the sick, the needy, prisoners and all those who cannot be with their dear ones on Christmas Day;

*Light of Hope:* guide our way forward as we begin a New Year;

*Light of the World:* teach us to love you more and more each day, and serve you joyfully;

*Light of Bethlehem:* shine in our lives this Christmas, and in the coming year – 2017 and always.

I wish all of you A Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May the choicest blessings of Jesus Christ be showered upon all of you, upon the people of Bangalore and our beloved Karnataka State, especially during this Christmas season and in the coming year.

Thank you and have a pleasant evening.

**Most Rev. Dr. Bernard Moras**  
Archbishop of Bangalore

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