

The Shepherd Speaks

Greetings to you in Jesus Name



We have just celebrated the Solemnity of Jesus Christ the King after which the season of Advent begins as a preparation time for Christmas.

The Liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church is so beautifully arranged in order to help us journey through the life and times of Jesus and intended to help us grow into a deeper and meaningful relationship with Him. Unfortunately, when we get caught-up with the cares and worries, allurements and attractions in life, we can end-up only distancing ourselves from Him and His message for us and may even become a counter-witness to Him.

The Holy Father Pope Francis already so aptly described this situation in his Christmas message three years ago. He said “In a society so often intoxicated by consumerism and hedonism, wealth and extravagance, appearances and narcissism, this Child calls us to act soberly, in other words, in a way that is simple, balanced, consistent, capable of seeing and doing what is essential. In a world which all too often is merciless to the sinner and lenient to the sin, we need to cultivate a strong sense of justice, to discern and to do God’s Will. Amid a culture of indifference which not infrequently turns ruthless, our style of life should instead be devout, filled with empathy, compassion and mercy, drawn daily from the wellspring of prayer”.

How is Christmas regarded today? The legend of Santa Claus, the Christmas tree, the decorations of tinsel and mistletoe, and the giving of gifts all express to us the spirit of the day we celebrate; but the true spirit of Christmas lies much deeper than these. It is found in the life of the Savior, in the principles he taught, in his atoning sacrifice—which becomes our great heritage.

The Christmas season is often considered as a season of Giving and of spreading cheer amidst the people around us. But we often tend to confine ourselves in giving to those whom we know.

For thousands of people shattered by natural calamities like floods and cyclones, this Christmas is not going to be a time to celebrate. But you and I can bring hope and joy to them if we reach out to help them reconstruct their homes and their lives. In doing so, we will be fulfilling the very purpose for which Jesus Christ was born among us. His birth was first announced to the Shepherds, representing broken, the lost, lonely, poor and socially ostracized.

The real Christmas comes to him/her who has taken Christ into his/her life as a moving, dynamic, vitalizing force. The real spirit of Christmas lies in the life and mission of the Master. In the Christmas story, the spotlight is also very much on Mother Mary without whose “Yes” to God we would not hear this beautiful story of Christ’s birth. She is our model of Faith. May we also grow closer in our love for her.

This Christmas, may you bring hope into the lives of people who seem to have no hope. Become a beacon of God’s love.

I wish you a Blessed season of Advent and a very Happy Christmas.

✙ Archbishop Peter Machado
Archbishop of Bangalore