



*Remain in my love
Jn 15:9*

Christmas Message 2020

The end of the year is upon us, and many of us might be saying it can't come soon enough! With Covid-19, life has been very different since the middle of March, and in some ways, life will be different in the future.

Pope Francis, in the introduction to his recent encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, on fraternity and social friendship, explains that our false securities have been exposed with the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic:

.. The storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities...Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another (#32)

I am sure we have all reflected on what we regard as essential. The importance of our relationships with family, friends and the community is most evident when we are isolated. For those lacking the support of family and friends Christmas can be a difficult time, may we reach out to these people.

Health requirements have placed certain restrictions on our ability to gather in our homes, our churches and within the community. I hope that we have been able to see these things in the light of the common good; where we are members of a common family, where we are all brothers and sisters.

It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. During these times I am sure we have endeavoured to keep in contact with our loved ones as best we could. I trust that we have also maintained and strengthened our relationship with the Lord.

As restrictions are gradually lifted, may we again experience true communion as we gather together to celebrate and participate in the Eucharist. May our fellowship with the Lord and each other be renewed and strengthened.

What are your plans for Christmas? Perhaps with the easing of travel restrictions, we may once again be able to travel to where we had hoped. Do travel safely and be considerate of others on our roads. May we not forget that this is a very special time. Wherever we might be, may we play our part in creating a welcoming community where people experience God's love, which is something real, bringing joy and hope.

A Christmas gift of financial support to people in need is certainly a meaningful and worthwhile act of charity, something that speaks louder than words. Donations may be made to Caritas Australia www.caritas.org.au or to the St Vincent de Paul Society www.vinnies.org.au or to some other charity of your choice.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones now as we move into the future.

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