

2021 Christmas Message from **Bishop Michael McCarthy – Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I write this message at the beginning of December and the summer rains are with us. It is beautiful driving around and seeing the deep colours of green, the land transformed and knowing that our land folk will have a good season. It is the hope that one from the land holds in one's heart. This is similar to the hope of Christmas, a time of anticipation, hope, love and family.

As we approach each season of the land with both anticipation and some nervousness, we are hopeful that the planned opening of borders will unveil the arrival of loved ones we possibly haven't seen in person for almost two years and family reunions. However, the opening of the borders will also bring COVID into our communities, something from which we have been quite protected from to date.

While we should not become complacent of what is going on around us, the Christmas message provides us with great hope and peace. The Responsorial Psalm for the Christmas Mass during the night proclaims that "Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord." Christ came into the world – a world of hurt, and pain and uncertainty. But also, a world of love and bringing with him the greatest hope and message of peace.

I pray this year that you and your families find that peace and hope in Christ at Christmas time, and know the love of the Father and those dear to us that we can all share. We do face some unknown times. I urge you all to stay safe and do your utmost to be protected.

Most Rev Michael McCarthy
Bishop of Rockhampton