

A Christmas Message from Bishop Columba



My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christmas is a sign of the thin veil that divides heaven and earth and shows us how close heaven is to earth as God himself became flesh and dwelt among us, yet heaven seems so far away from earth. As the world continues to battle with various issues that have caused unrest, we here in our own diocese have faced one of the worst droughts which is expected to go into the New Year.

As I travel across the diocese I see with my own eyes how dry our land is and as I hear the stories of our communities, my heart breaks to see the deep suffering everyone is enduring. Sadly, I do not have an answer or solution.

Therefore, how can we through our suffering see heaven among us when the earth is dry, our crops have failed, our rivers dead, our livestock gone and most of all our hearts weighed down with suffering and despair. As I reflect on the image and story of the Nativity I see how real the story is in our current crisis here in the diocese.

As the news of the birth of Jesus dawned on Mary and Joseph it caused much suffering as they endured the hardships of those around them as the world did not understand the deep mystery of the incarnation. The enduring long journey to Bethlehem causing much grief and pain and the greatest suffering of all was that there was no room in the inn, they were only offered a humble and dirty stable for God to be made man in the dark of night. Yet amidst the painful suffering of the journey to Bethlehem and the dirty surroundings of a stable in the darkness, God became man and the darkness of night was no more and the stable became heaven on that first Christmas night. Heaven did not dwell among those who were special, rather heaven dwelt amongst animals and those to hear the news that salvation had come into the world were not kings, queens or leaders but humble shepherds tending to the sheep and fields.

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters let us unite our hearts to the Christmas story and see that heaven is among us and we find heaven through the suffering that we are enduring, because Jesus chose the road of suffering from the very moment of his birth, God dwelt in drought on that first Christmas night and even 2,000 years later he dwells amongst us in our current drought.

This Christmas please be assured of my love, prayers and blessings to you all and despite our sufferings may we be reminded of the Blessed Baby Jesus in the poor manger and how much he loves us all.

May Our Lady and Saint Joseph continue to hear our prayers.

Merry Christmas to you and your families

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