



Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie

CIRCULAR

Christmas 2020 – Looking forward

In the time of Covid-19, lock downs, restrictions and face masks are you looking forward to Christmas? This simple question allows us to reflect on the meaning of Christmas in our lives.

Many years ago, whilst I was still learning and understanding the English language, after celebrating Advent Mass a little girl asked me a simple yet to me, complicated question: **“Father, are you looking forward to Christmas?”** Literally I interpreted that question as: Father, are you seeing in front of you Christmas? That did not make any sense. So, I checked my dictionary and there stood a simple definition – *looking forward means ‘waiting with joyful expectation’*. For me, that is the simplest definition of advent as a time of waiting with joyful expectation for Christmas.

During the time of Advent, I had an opportunity to share my advent reflection with a few of our parish and school communities. Those reflections began with this simple question. If the time of Advent is waiting for Christmas, what brings joy to our life during Christmas? The most common answer was meeting and gathering with family and friends.

Christ being born into a human family sanctified our families. The celebration of Christmas is about our families. This aspect of celebration is very important to us all. As members of the Catholic Church, we build one family of God. Church can be described as a family of families. If the meeting and gathering of family members is important to each one of us, it is also important to meet in our parishes during celebrations of Christmas in churches.

Covid-19 restricted many Catholics from sacramental encounter with Christ and could have created an excuse for dispensing ourselves from practising our faith. Celebrating Christmas as members of God's family gives us a wonderful occasion to renew our commitment to God.

Sometimes Christmas will bring a tear to our eyes, especially in those families who have experienced loss, crises or difficulties. Due to current restrictions some of us will not be able to visit or welcome family members who are living overseas. Sadly this situation will not allow them to fully experience Christmas joy. If you know someone who is struggling or lonely use this opportunity to invite them to your Christmas table.

From Christmas celebrations we then move into a new year, making some resolutions and plans. We hope and pray that this New Year will bring us freedom from the pandemic restrictions and allow us to renew our sacramental commitment to worship God without limitations.

Traditionally during Christmas time we wish each other peace and joy. I join these greetings wishing you also a holy and blessed encounter with Jesus, born not only over 2000 years ago but born also in your heart and welcomed in your family.

+ Naval Palayochi SSS