



December 2022

Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI

No Room At The Inn

Christmas Message

Dear sisters and brothers,

The arrival of Christmas will find many of us tired, running, distracted. Advent is to be a time of preparation for Christmas, however, for many of us it is more a time of making ready to celebrate with our families, friends, and colleagues than preparing for Christ to be born in our lives.

It is understandable that the weeks before Christmas are often harried and hurried with putting up decorations, shopping for gifts, sending out cards, preparing food, and attending Christmas socials. In the days leading up to Christmas, many of us struggle to do all the things we need to do to be ready for all that needs to happen in our houses, churches, and places of work. This, added on to the normal pressures within our lives, might well have us feeling: *"I'm not going to make it. I won't be ready. I won't be ready for Christmas."*

This pressure means that the time of preparation is generally more of a time to prepare our houses than a time to prepare our hearts and possibly more of a time of shopping than of prayer.

Arriving at Christmas with a life too busy and too distracted to make more room for Christ is not a sign that we are bad, faithless or pagan. It is a sign that we have limited time and energy. We are distracted, busy, pressured and tired. This makes it difficult to make a deep conscious consistent effort to make this season and feast a time of real spiritual renewal in our lives. This is a part of what it means to be a limited physical human being in concrete circumstances with many competing, worthy priorities. Indeed, everyone struggles with this in some fashion. No one is perfect; no one gives a full place in his or her life to Christ, even at Christmas time.

But it also leaves us with a pressing challenge: There is too little room for Christ in our busy, distracted lives if in our preparations for Christmas, we make very little space for the spiritual, for Christ to be born more deeply in our lives.

And the end result is that, like the biblical innkeepers who had no room for Mary and Joseph at the first Christmas, we generally arrive at Christmas with "no room at the inn", no space in our lives for a spiritual rebirth.

The spirit of Christmas is still in us and real. We want to be spiritually renewed at this time. Perhaps we might picture this desire for Christ to be born at a deeper level in our lives as being a neglected baby in the straw waiting to be picked up. And we do intend to pick up the baby, but simply never get around to it.

I invite you to raise again the spiritual preparation for Christmas higher on your list of priorities. Perhaps you might sit on your own, quietly with a cuppa for five minutes a day looking at the front picture of one of the beautiful Christmas cards you have received and become aware again of how much Jesus loves you.

Even if everything on our too-do list is not completed (gifts; cards; decorations; food; the requisite number of social obligations). Even if that list is only half done, if you find yourself in church at Christmas, if you find yourself at table with your family on Christmas day, and if you find yourself greeting your neighbours and colleagues with a little more warmth, you've made it.

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winhangadiligi Baayami-gu miil-bula-wuruwin Learn who you are in the eyes of God

