

Christmas Message 2023

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BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF WILCANNIA-FORBES



Dear friends in Christ,

We all spend so much time waiting - waiting for something to happen, or for it to stop; waiting to begin, to grow, to restore, to thrive. We wait for our turn or for something to be ready - waiting for results or news, waiting for the perfect moment. Countless times we find ourselves waiting for someone, perhaps the same person. It just wouldn't be the same without them - so we wait.

We watch and wonder, sometimes patiently, often with frustration. Those frequent moments of waiting are too often wasted. The average person spends five years waiting in lines and queues throughout their lifetime. Priceless, life-changing things usually take time. They're worth waiting for.

For thousands of years the entire universe was waiting, was aching. The world longed for justice, for mercy, for freedom, for redemption. Mother Mary waited with such unwavering faith and profound love. Our Lady teaches us how to balance expectation for what is to come and attentiveness for what or who is right in front of us.

Every soul held onto the hope of a Saviour - and He came! The eternal God descended from His heavenly throne and came among us, not in splendour and majesty, but in poverty and simplicity. The Heavenly Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, sent us His very own Son gift-wrapped in humility - a baby in the arms of Mary. When God came among us His first place of refuge was in the arms of woman. We also turn, in our time of need, with immense confidence to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Everything happens in God's time. Nothing goes unnoticed. Jesus never abandons us. This Christmas, God is waiting for us. He is waiting for you! The Prophet Isaiah tells us that, "the Lord still waits for you to come to him so he can show his love and compassion". God longs for us to hold on to Him (or to turn back to Him), to pray to Him, to love Him, to follow Him, to welcome Him.

Give the past absolutely no power to hold you back. Open your heart and your soul in trust to every blessing that God is offering you during these holy days. Come, let us enter the house of the Lord. Let us come into His holy presence lifting up songs of praise and thanksgiving. O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

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