



## **CHRISTMAS 2024**

I grew up hearing the Andy Williams' song, "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year". Most generations have heard it sung at some stage during their Christmas preparations. We readily agree with the sentiment even though there are many who face sadness at Christmas time. No matter what our experience, we can all see something in those lyrics as the day arrives.

Our lives are lived between hopes and disappointments, joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains. The delight of seeing children's excitement as they approach Christmas awakens us to the simple things that are so necessary in life. This leads us to joyfulness and the necessary things that give us purpose.

Yet, many will carry sadness to the festivities. The death of a loved one in the past year means an empty place at the Christmas table. However, a happy contrast comes when a new family member takes their place through a recent birth, or a new friendship being formed. These happenings in families are real and certainly contribute to the wonder of this time.

Every one of the experiences that we have on Christmas Day and in the year that has been since our last Christmas celebration is important. They are always important to the Christ who was born into experiencing every human condition. The babe we recognise, and who is the cause of our celebrating, was born to bring God's life into every single situation that makes our lives what they are.

In a world that is experiencing so much disruption through war and displacement of peoples, we continue to look to the One who came, that peace on earth might become a reality in the world, in our own backyard, and in our hearts.

The One who shows us how all this is possible was born in humility as God-with-us. He is the source of our joy and indeed His presence makes it the most wonderful time of the year.

Every blessing to you and your loved ones this holy time.

**Bishop Ken Howell**  
Bishop of Toowoomba

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