



Catholic Diocese of Geraldton

Bishop of Geraldton W.A.

2025 Christmas Message 'True Hope'

"Hope does not disappoint", words taken from St Paul's letter to the Roman Christians, were the words Pope Francis used to announce the Jubilee of Hope for the year of 2025 to the whole world. The last part of or this sentence in Romans, is, "because the love of God has been poured out in our heart through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" [Rom5:5].

This makes the 'Hope' referred to a Holy Hope, a living Hope, and not just wishful thinking hope! Hope poured out into the heart of every person of Faith, giving them support, courage and guidance through all the joys and the challenges of life.

This is the same Hope that dissolved Mary's fear following the announcement of the Angel Gabriel, **"Do not be afraid"**! It was this same Hope that stirred Mary to her **'YES'** to the mysterious call to become the Mother of Jesus Christ.

In the stillness of the night as Joseph wrestled with the news Mary had given him, an Angel appears to guide him. It is in this moment of faith that Joseph sees with eyes of Hope and answer's YES to God's call to protect Mary and Jesus, who was yet to be born!

Mary and Joseph pondered what might happen to their child, Jesus, but they never abandoned their hope and trust in God, even after having to flee as refugees from their home to the safety of Egypt.

None of us have the capacity to see what will happen in the future, but it is when we place our Hope and Trust in the Lord, hope is able to enter our lives and, as an anchor, it holds you firm. A hope that encourages us to not give up; to always give it our best. Not in isolation, but in and through our community, our families and friends, our Faith.

Since the first Christmas, 2,000 years ago, countless people have lived out their life of Faith with great hope, anchoring their resolve, despite many obstacles and challenges or persecutions.

This Christmas we celebrate 250 years since *Venerable Nano Nagle* founded the Presentation Sisters in Cork, Ireland in 1775. She is one of those that never lost that 'hope'. It was a terrible time in Ireland and Nano Nagle risked everything, status, comfort and wealth living in France, to answer the call of God to return to Ireland to bring Catholic Education to the people, families and children of Cork. At night, she carried her lantern among Cork's attics and alleyways, bringing comfort and hope to the city's poor, sick and elderly. Becoming known as **"The Lady of the Lamp"**.

During the Day, Nano Nagle taught children in secret hedge schools because of oppressive laws barring Catholic children from education. Nano realized the burden was too much for herself! There were other women who wished to help and spread the care and hope of God among the people and so together they began the Presentation Sisters in 1775! This Christmas give thanks to God for the great gift the Presentation Sisters have been to our diocese since 1891, living out the vision of Nano Nagle as lights of shining hope.

Advent is a time of rejoicing and reflecting on how our Incarnate God is present in our midst, strengthening us with the Hope that does not disappoint. Each of us, even in a small but significant way are like **"the shoot springing from the insignificant stock of Jesse"**, carrying that hope, and making a difference to another person's life, just like Mary, Joseph and Nano Nagle who were lanterns of hope for others!

Enjoy your moments together with your family and friends as we leave aside the busy pace of life for a short time. See the other person in our life as a blessing, journeying together into 2026, full of hope.

I leave you with these words from Charles Dickens. ***"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year"***.

Most Rev. Michael H. Morrissey
Bishop of Geraldton