

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM FATHER PATRICK FEYISETAN

Dearly beloved in Christ, 2020 has been a very special year as indeed every opportunity for us to live as God's creatures is a special privilege. Christmas 2020 is a very special Christmas indeed! It is so different in many ways: face masking, social distancing, different tiering regulations, physical restrictions, controlled singing, job loss, furlough, bad economy, Brexit deadlines, R-rates, not forgetting the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been lost to the invisible monster that has thrown things upside down for most of this year. Yet the commemoration of the birth of our Saviour is here again and we cannot but be filled with sentiments of joy and gratitude. Joy, that in spite of all that tell of the contrary we are still here and we are opportune to gather as brothers and sisters to relish the joy of Christmas. Gratitude because that is a sense that Christmas should evoke in us: the coming to our world of the Only Begotten Son of the Eternal Father in the mystery of the Incarnation should make us swell with high sense of gratitude to God for his love and mercy upon us. For, if God did not become man, we would have been forever condemned to death and misery. But because Jesus took on flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and was born for us, he was able to experience our pain and misery, share in our death and restore us to life. This is the reason for this season of joy and gratitude. In the words of St Augustine of Hippo to the people of God, 'let us then joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. Let us celebrate the festive day on which he who is the great and eternal day came from the great and endless day of eternity into our own short day of time.' Our celebration of joy and gratitude should move us to be open in love and generosity to those who have been immersed in sorrow at the time. We must, like the child born for us, share in the pain, misery and woe of the homeless, the unloved, the afflicted, the abused, the jobless, the sick, the grieving and all those who find no reason to rejoice at this festive season.

On behalf of the entire parish, I wish you all a blessed celebration of the birth of Christ. I pray for you all to remain joyful in hope, active in love and untiring in charity. I also thank all the stewards who have been contributing their energy and time to making the church safe for worship. Equal thanks to you all who have been supporting the parish financially at this very hard time. May the joy and peace that Jesus brings last in us forever.