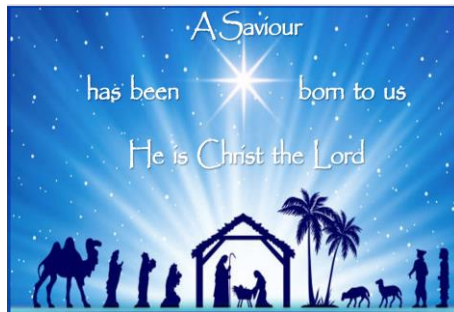


Christmas Message 2022



Our Lady of Reparation, Croydon
(St. Mary's RC Church)



Beloved people of God, here we are again celebrating Christmas, that wonderful season of grace when everyone aligns with the festive mood the season brings to share joy and gifts as we make merriment, eat and drink in the blistering winter weather. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus, the Son of the eternal Father who was born in time for us, sharing in our humanity through the mystery of his incarnation, to enable us to participate fully in the life of God.

The coming of Jesus the anointed of God was foretold by the prophets. Every year the season of Advent enables us to listen again and ponder on the various oracles proclaiming the coming in distant future of the Star of Jacob whose entry into our world would usher an era of peace, justice, and love leading to the joy of redemption. The baby born at Bethlehem reconciles God and sinful humanity, restoring what was lost at Eden through his self-giving sacrificial death and his glorious resurrection. He sets us free still through the ministering of healing graces to us in the Sacraments of the Church. What shall we give to him who has done so much for us as we recall his first coming into our world and as we prepare for his eventual return?

Our celebration of Jesus' birthday calls for sober reflection amidst the noises, difficulties, disappointments, insufficiencies, strife, and sufferings experienced daily. This year has been particularly difficult for many families. Austerity is biting hard. More people lose their jobs and livelihood daily. The lyrics of Sr Miriam Therese Winter's (b 1938) Christ, Come Quickly comes to mind: 'the sick go unattended, death deals a heavy hand, the dreams of men are empty, their cup of sorrow full.' These daily realities that are a global phenomenon are created and fuelled by our selfishness and lack of sensitivity towards the needs of peoples. Migrants still die at sea; the blows of the pandemic remain unhealed; nations are in turmoil; Ukraine is in darkness caused by war; my beloved Africa and many nations under the siege of heartless individuals who steal the commonwealth and leave nothing for the commoners; politicians are creating ideologies devoid of compassion and lacking human façade, and hopelessness becomes the air that is breathe by all. Yet we must not become despondent for our pondering on the mysteries of Christmas should make us recourse to Jesus to restore the light of hope that this hardship of the present time shall not go on forever.

This is what Christmas does! It restores hope and recreates in us the beauty and joy of knowing, loving, and serving Jesus. This message must not fly past us. It must sink into us as we make a pledge to make the world a better place and create in us the consciousness to make recourse to God in thanksgiving for the gift of his beloved Son to us as we pledge to be as selfless as Jesus the heaven-born Prince of Peace and the son of righteousness who brings light and life to all. That is the essence of Christmas, and Christmas is the reason why we are Christians. May our celebration this year and indeed our daily living of the Gospel of Jesus make us light and make us shine enough to dispel all that challenges peace, justice, harmony, hope and love in our world.

Have a blessed Christmas and a New Year ahead filled with God's refreshing graces.

Fr. Patrick Feyisetan