



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2023
The Most Rev. William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary
President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Dear friends,

The Christmas season is an invitation to experience the renewed joy and hope that comes to us in the realization of God's promises. In the words of Pope Francis: "It returns us to the horizon of hope, a horizon that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God". This hope is what we desire in our hearts despite the darkness that can permeate our world. In our current times the reality of war and terrorism, violence and hate crimes, economic and social injustices continue to disfigure our shared dignity as human beings and the world in which we live.

In the Solemnity of the Birth of Jesus we celebrate the Incarnate Word, the nearness of God which has transformed human history and restores to humanity this profound gift of hope and joy. It is when we choose to draw near to others that we can experience this gift of Christ's presence in our brothers and sisters. It happens on a daily basis in ordinary and also profound ways. It is found in those who give their lives to pursue freedom and justice for the oppressed, those who advocate in promoting human life from conception to natural death, those who care for and visit the sick, those who serve at foodbanks and all who are close to those who suffer the loss of a love one, separation from family, and who are imprisoned with the addictions that afflict their life.

In this Christmas season we will hear the proclamation of the Word of God in celebration of the Eucharist. May our lives be founded on this Word which confirms us in the hope and the joy of the Gospel message which is echoed in the song of the angels each Christmas... "Rejoice a Saviour has been born for us"!

May the humble witness of our faith and service be the joyous gift we give to others to restore in them the hope which is promised in this Christmas Season. God's blessings in the New Year.

20 December 2023