

Archbishop's 2023 Christmas Message

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's:

***How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion,
"Your God reigns."***

(Isaiah 52:7)

This is the opening line of the first reading of the "Mass during the Day" on Christmas. Through it, the prophet Isaiah speaks to us of a God who wishes his people to find in Him great joy and peace and to be messengers of that joy and peace to our world.

With all the challenges, conflicts and difficulties presently facing individuals, societies and the international community, messengers and agents of joy and peace are needed now as much as ever.

In this year's "Living with Christ" missalette Christmas reflection, Bernadette Gasslein shares that her mind and heart are "boggled" at the depth and breadth of the mystery of the incarnation and she then goes on to state:

In response I can only cradle our God, whose flesh today is the refugee child; the homeless young adult searching for a dwelling place; the nurse tending the dying; the parent working three jobs; my limited, sinful self. And join the angels and shepherds in praise and thanks for grace upon grace.

Christmas can be at time of great joy and peace and happiness, but it can also be a time of great sadness, loneliness and despair. So much depends, not only on our situation, but also on our openness to the "great light" of God's love in our lives, and to the many ways, large and small, that this love is made manifest.

That "first Christmas" was not an easy one for Mary and Joseph and yet it was wonderful! They had each other, they had a new, healthy, baby boy, they had the visit of the shepherds, and they had a faith so deep and strong that they were able to see and trust in God's presence and work in all of it.

In celebrating Christmas, we celebrate a God who has come among us as one of us; a God who has shared our human condition and all the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears that are so much a part of it. Christmas is a time for us to bask in the light of His love and to recommit ourselves to sharing this love with others, especially those who seem to be "walking in darkness" and/or living through a time of sadness, hopelessness and fear.

With prayers and best wishes for God's blessings upon you during this Christmas season and always,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's.