



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2019

For many, Christmas is a wonderful time of year! Homes are decorated, families gather, gifts are shared, the best meal of the year is served, and the music at Christmas Masses is always uplifting – to say nothing of the Christmas homily!

Sadly, for others Christmas is a time to dread! The unemployed, those who are on the streets, those who are alone perhaps isolated from family, those who are in prison, those who are in hospitals or suffering from mental health or other serious illnesses, and those who are mourning the loss of a loved one, can find this time of year challenging and very difficult indeed!

If we have been blessed, we must bless. Can we make the Christmas season a time of blessing for others? We bless when we recognize others to be sisters and brothers, and treat them with the dignity that is theirs, listening to them and speaking to them with respect and affirmation. We bless when we support the *Good Shepherd Ministries* of the Brothers of St. John of God, the *DeMazenod Door* at St. Patrick Parish, Hamilton, the *Out of the Cold* programs, hospice care and other similar programs in our Diocese, where people are respectfully cared for and lovingly nourished!

At Christmas, we celebrate our belief that “God comes to us”! God comes to us as a baby, unthreatening, dependent, and in simplicity. All we have to do is open our hearts to welcome the Lord of life and love. We recognize and welcome Him in every person who comes to us in the same simplicity of spirit, seeking from us the same generous greeting of peace.

May God bless you this Christmas and always! Let us pray for one another.

Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!

Ex corde, *† Douglas*, OMI