

## PASTOR'S NOTE CHRISTMAS 2017

*“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.’”  
(First Reading for Christmas Day)*

So spoke the prophet Isaiah who also declares in the first reading of Christmas Midnight Mass, a “child has been born for us, a son given to us.” He is named, “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

The people of Israel looked forward, knowing the Saviour would come; we look back 2000 years to this amazing event of God sending Jesus to be one of us and one with us.

Christmas is a time to pause, to marvel at the generosity of God, and to open our hearts to welcome Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. It is also a time to reflect on ourselves, our community and to ponder on our relationship with Jesus. Are we one with him?

It is also a time of thanksgiving and joy for our community. Like the community of the angels, shepherds and magi who welcomed Jesus in the stable with Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem, we thank and praise God for one another, for our community here at the Cathedral of Ss. Patrick and Joseph, at St John's in Parnell, and St Peter's in Waiheke. I am conscious of the generosity of so many people in our Parishes. Generosity begets generosity.

We see God's generosity continue in those who open their hearts to others, like the people who worked so hard for the Christmas Fair two weeks ago. Those who donated their gifts and those who contributed their time and energy to make the Fair such a success, are examples of people being connected and working together to strengthen community bonds and friendship. There are others whose contribution and gifts are often unrecognised; nevertheless they are priceless to the well-being of our community life. Your openness to the gift of God enables all of us to reach out to others, inspiring them in turn to open their hearts in search for Jesus as the magi did. You are the people of whom Isaiah says, “You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” You “shall be called, the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord.” You are those today of whom Isaiah speaks, “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.’” We thank all of you who form the community of angels, shepherds and magi adoring Jesus today, not in Bethlehem, but here in Auckland. Thank you so much. Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus.

May the peace of the new born Saviour be with us, the joy of the angels find voice in us and the gift of God to us be given to all whom we serve. Amen.

A very happy and peace filled Christmas.

*Sr Mary Neven rsm on behalf of the Pastors and staff of our Parishes.*