

Christmas Message 2019

We are all familiar with the story of Christmas – the journey that Mary and Joseph embarked on, their expectancy and anticipation of the imminent arrival of the baby Jesus. But, as we celebrate Christmas 2019 in a world that is troubled and where so many people have to leave home because of war and persecution, we might reflect on the fact that at the very centre of the Christmas story were two people also seeking a welcome from strangers. Mary and

Joseph were displaced and seeking accommodation at a vulnerable time in their lives. Their immediate concern was to find shelter and safety for the birth of their child. One man took pity on the couple and gave them shelter in a stable.

During our recent listening process, which took place as part of our preparations for next year's Diocesan Assembly, the joys, anxieties and hopes that come with family life were very clearly expressed to me.

Receiving help in our times of need is a concern that all families share. Pope Francis recently tweeted 'The true worship of God is always expressed in love of one's neighbour'.

So, this Christmas I would like to remember and pray for two groups of people: those in need

of assistance and those who give assistance. Those who need assistance include all who are homeless, our own people and displaced people who come to our shores seeking refuge and the welcome of strangers. Those who give assistance include the many women and men who work with the emergency services who are there when needed, medical personnel, ambulance, fire brigade, Garda Síochána and a great number of volunteers and organisations who make all the difference. As we see the selfless assistance these people give, might we also be inspired to look out for each other through the coming year?

As we remember the birth of Jesus, our Saviour may we be inspired to carry the love of God and the hope of Christmas into the world. And may all of you, your family, and your friends have a wonderful and blessed Christmas.

+ Francis Duffy, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois

Wishing all parishioners
and visitors a very happy
Christmas and new year

Christmas Greetings and Good Wishes

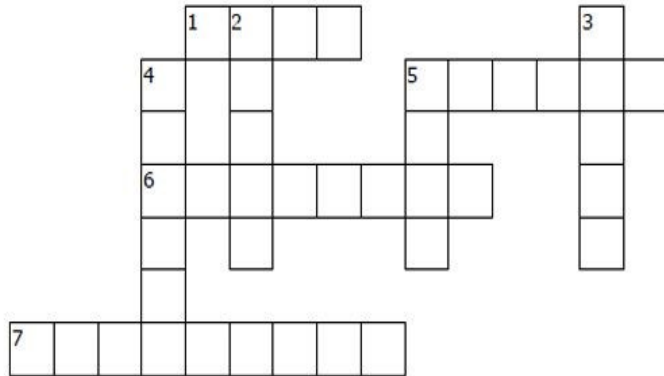
On behalf of the priests of the parish I wish all parishioners and all who worship with us from other parishes a very happy Christmas. We extend a special welcome to all who are on holidays and visiting family and friends. As we come to the end of the year we have much to be grateful for as a parish—the involvement of so many people: readers, ministers of holy communion, servers, choirs, collectors/counters, parish pastoral council, finance committee and many other organisations and helpers who serve and enrich the life of our parish. The ever changing face of the Irish Church brings with it many challenges, not least the serious fall off in numbers attending Sunday worship and an ageing clergy with no replacements in sight. We look forward to the Diocesan Assembly in May 2020 with the hope of renewal and a new energy in honouring the birth and life of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Already, there are signs of new life, evident from the faith, commitment and enthusiasm of our parish delegates who have contributed to the preparation of the Assembly and who will be an important part of the Assembly deliberations in May. The message of Christmas is a message of hope. A baby, born in a stable, homeless and rejected, is loved into life by Mary and Joseph. While many of our Christian family remain wounded by the sins and failures of the past, the Christmas story invites us to continue our journey with hope, acknowledging that our human condition is flawed, but confident that it can be redeemed through the power and love Jesus Christ, the infant Saviour.



The Birth of Jesus

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 (KJV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 2:1-20



ACROSS

1. An infant or very young child
5. The place where Mary laid the baby Jesus
6. A person who takes care of sheep
7. The city where Jesus was born

DOWN

2. Heavenly being that told the shepherds about Jesus' birth
3. The savior of the world
4. The earthly father of Jesus
5. The mother of Jesus

JOSEPH	ANGEL	BETHLEHEM	BABY
MARY	SHEPHERD	JESUS	MANGER

Religious Christmas Word Search



WORD LIST

ANGELS	GABRIEL	MANGER	NATIVITY	STABLE
BETHLEHEM	JESUS CHRIST	MARY	PROPHECY	STAR
FRANKINCENSE	JOSEPH	MYRRH	SHEPHERD	WISEMEN