



Kia tau te rangimārie ki a koutou

In this Advent season, and as we come towards the end of another calendar year I am hearing so many people commenting about what a strange and challenging year it has been, and what a disruptive time we are living in as Covid continues to affect everyone. Many are saying that Christmas is going to be different, and they are wary of gatherings and of travelling.

I hope that the following prayer will help us to pause, pray and reflect. Whatever life brings us our challenge is to reflect and find the presence of God in whatever the event is or whoever the person is.

***God in the return to a simplified  
Christmas; God in the advent of  
extravagant joy:***

***may we, who are so accustomed to  
connecting happiness with an  
accumulation of things, receive the gift of  
valuing the connections we already have.***

***May a stripped down celebration and a  
slower pace to the holiday reveal the  
treasure that was ours all along.***

***And may we find in the strangeness of this  
year's Christmas the wonder that was  
present in its first incarnation.***

***Amen.***

*Corrymeela Community in Ireland*

As I thank you all for the work of this year, for your supportive prayer and for all that you do in parishes, schools and colleges, or whatever your work may be throughout the diocese, I assure you of prayers of gratitude. I pray in the final words of the above prayer that you may find ***“the wonder that was present in its first incarnation”***. I remember reading many years ago these words of G K Chesterton: ***“There are plenty of things to wonder at in this world what is lacking is wonderment”***.

Despite COVID-19 and the many challenges it has put before us, despite vaccine certificates, contact tracing, scanning in, face masks, social distancing, double vaxing and booster shots, I do hope that this Christmas is filled with wonder. Jesus Christ is present in our world, will always be present. We give thanks.

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present in its first incarnation.***

With abundant blessings for a Meri Kirihimete

Naku noa

+John



Cardinal John's Newsletter will return at the beginning of February 2022.

On behalf of all the staff in the Cardinal's Office we wish you a very happy and holy Christmas. We look forward to working with you all next year.

Take care, stay safe and stay well