



Christmas Message from
Archbishop Malcolm
McMahon

I have always loved giving and receiving presents at Christmas. The element of surprise is so exciting as the parcels are unwrapped and the gifts revealed. In choosing gifts for those we love, and respect can involve a lot of care and consideration, and the gift no matter how small becomes an expression of love. Receiving gifts tells us that we are loved and lovable.

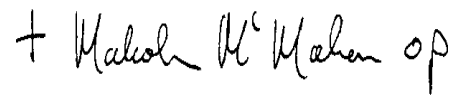
On Christmas day we celebrate the greatest gift we will ever receive. The gift of the Christ-child, Jesus, is freely given to us by our loving God. God has given us everything that we own even our own lives and God's loving gift of life sustains us throughout our earthly lives. That is not an easy idea for us to understand because we are so used to doing things for ourselves, making our own lives, deciding what we want to be and how we live our lives. But we often forget that the degree of autonomy to make these decisions is a gift from God. In this age of self-entitlement we easily forget that human rights derive from our human dignity which is also a gift from God.

Jesus, the gift of God himself to us, is not a present that is easy to receive. He is not quite what we want or expect. He is not wealthy or powerful. He doesn't live in palaces, wear expensive clothes or have large armies. He makes us wonder what kind of person he is. Jesus was born in poor circumstances, and we are reminded that it is not wealth that makes the gift worthwhile but the love with which the gift is given and received.

In our time many people throughout the world especially those who are refugees or are in war zones give birth to their children with joy and gratitude to God. Their newborn children are gifts from God as well as signs of his love for them and an expression of hope for the future. Every person who is born into the world has a special purpose. That person is called to a life on earth and, in eternity, to be with God. St John Paul II called this the universal call to holiness. That call or vocation is a special Christmas gift that comes to us along with the babe in the manger. As we draw close to Jesus over the Christmas season, we can be sure that he is calling each of us to some definite service. This call or vocation takes many forms which often change at different stages of life. We should not be daunted by this but see

it as a gift from Jesus who walks with us through life. He will guide and support us – yes, Jesus the Christ-child is the true gift that keeps on giving.

I wish you and your loved ones a very happy and Blessed Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Malcolm McMahon OP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon OP

Archbishop of Liverpool

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