



## Christmas Message 2015

All of human experience is wrapped up in the Christmas story.

At the first Christmas Mary and Joseph found no room at the inn for the birth of their child and had to flee with him as refugees into Egypt. As we prepare to receive thousands of refugees this Christmas and beyond we might ask: will there be room in the inns of our hearts?

At the first Christmas there were the wise kings bearing gifts while another king slaughtered innocent children. As Christians and other minorities face terrible persecution in the Middle East and terrorists threaten whole cities and regions we might ask: can there be peace on earth and goodwill amongst people?

At the first Christmas there was a comet in the sky and poor shepherds shivering in the fields with their animals, so that the natural ecology took part in the story too. As we consider momentous questions about climate and the needs of the poor we might ask: can we reverence our natural environment while putting the human ecology first?

Christmas words like 'joy' and 'peace' and 'good will' can sound naïve amidst the challenges of today, yet they are the deepest cries of the human heart at this very time. They are precisely what we most want and need.

There are many causes for concern but never for cynicism. Why? Because amidst the tensions, violence, ecological challenges there is Christmas hope. There is a God-made-Baby who says: human beings are made for greatness, for truth and beauty and goodness. Turn to that Christmas Babe so humble, fragile, gentle and relearn from Him habits of simplicity, contemplation, joyfulness and peace.

A Dominican sister recently told the Scottish Parliament that we are made to celebrate, for life is full of great and varied blessings, especially life itself. Christmas recalls that greatest gift of life is Christ, the 'wee Babe' whose arrival is hope and joy for every anxious heart. God bless you all this Christmas!

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