



Homily given by Bishop Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Homily for Christmas 2020
Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, 25 December 2020

In these past few days much has been said about Christmas. Sadly, almost none of it has been about Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word of Life, the Incarnate Son of God, the Christ Child born in Bethlehem, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

One headline that caught my attention simply read “Christmas could be cancelled”. I asked myself what that even means. What does it mean for you?

Have the festivities and the secular cultural practices that surround the celebration of the birth of Christ displaced or overshadowed the true meaning of Emmanuel, God-with-us?

For many, Christians, and non-Christians alike, Christmas is seen as an event. And yet, we believe and know that it is much more than an event. The commemoration of Christmas takes us beyond a mere historical record from the past and it is certainly more than a public holiday.

Another headline that caught my eye supposed that infectious disease experts were giving instruction on how best to “salvage Christmas”. Again, what does that even mean?

Rather than a commemoration that honours and rejoices in the Truth of the Incarnation and Birth of the Christ Child, Christmas has become, for many, an empty and sometimes lonely holiday, whereby people eat, drink, and take time out simply because that is what people have become accustomed to do.

Have we lost the ability to reflect deeply upon the meaning of life? Has our society become so self-reliant that we can no longer identify the difference between good and evil, life and death, salvation and damnation?

Are we nurturing a culture which is self-serving, interested primarily in personal wealth and beauty, disposable income, and the accumulation of temporal goods?

Are we forgetting the value and dignity of human life, from conception until natural death? Have we lost our awareness that God created the Universe and entrusted us with the care of our planet?

Do we place all our hope in things that are seen and grasped and known in this life?

One of the great scars that remains as a reminder of Original Sin is that the poor, the lonely, the unwanted and unloved are still largely ignored or left at the bottom of the heap of humanity.

The birth of Jesus Christ, who was poor and small and vulnerable, gives our world reason to pause and to think. Why would the Word of Life, the creator of all that is, seen and unseen, not cling to Godliness? Why would God's anointed Christ be born in a stable in Bethlehem? For two thousand years, philosophers and theologians, kings and princes, women and men, have asked that very question. And for two thousand years they have returned to the truth that God is love. It is only through love that we can make sense of the festival of Christmas.

Families come together because of love. Friends give gifts at Christmas because they love each other. Foes sit down and feast together because love is stronger than hatred. Ultimately the love of God, which is more powerful than death, is why the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Angels sang, the Shepherds adored, the Magi worshiped, all because of love. The love of God is made manifest in the birth at Bethlehem of the Christ Child, who was poor and little, lowly and humble. He is the reason for Christmas. Christ is our Mass, our offering of love to the Father. He is our salvation, our life, our joy.

In these challenging times, I urge you to join with me, my sisters and brothers, as together we humbly kneel before the Saviour of the world. Our faith does not make these difficult times easy, but it does make living with love, and joy, and peace possible.

Our faith gives us hope. Our hope is in Jesus Christ. He is our Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, our daily bread, and our constant during change. As we celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas, may the world come to know Jesus Christ in a way that is more real and personal than ever before.

May you and your families be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the Angels, the eagerness of the Shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the Peace of the Christ Child.

May you have a happy and blessed Christmas. Amen.