

# Merry Christmas

## FROM BISHOP MURPHY

During this season of Christmas we ponder the meaning of life. With the anniversary of the birth of our Saviour at Bethlehem, the reality of life in its most innocent form becomes most paramount and thought provoking. Thus, we ask ourselves what is the purpose of our lives and what value do we attach to life itself? Within that context, we deplore any meaningless deprivation of life or barbaric assault on innocent lives, as witnessed at Bondi Beach, in recent times. Moreover, we oppose whatever religious connotations were construed that denies the inalienable right to life and religion that pertains to our human dignity. Life at all times is always sacred and a gift from God. It warrants our vigilance and care, at all phases of our existence, especially when we are most vulnerable; that is, both ends of the spectrum, from womb to tomb.

At the coming of our Lord, so long ago, in the city of David, at Bethlehem, to fulfil the ancient prophecies (Isaiah 9:6) that he would be borne of royal lineage, we note his birth amid strangers and that they were unwelcome at the Inn and even foreigners in a distant land. Ought then, our sentiments of hospitality be heightened towards others in need, at the anniversary of his birth? Who in our community can we welcome, who might be alone or unwelcome, to our Christmas luncheon this year?

In addition, as we contemplate the simplicity of the stable of Bethlehem, we acknowledge the utter poverty in which the Christ Child was born. God emptied himself of the wealth and glory of his divinity (Philippians 2:7), and so entered our world amid the poor and weak. At this time, how can we not think of those who are poor and marginalised in our society? Let me take, this opportunity, to express my heartfelt gratitude to the members and volunteers of Saint Vincent de Paul, who are so active and generous to the poor in the parishes of the Diocese of Armidale: we thank you and may God bless your efforts!

Lastly, I would encourage us all at Christmas time, after attending Mass to worship the Lord, to spend as much time, as possible, with your families. In spite of the difficulties that our families may undergo and their inherent imperfections, God in heaven holds, every family on earth as precious, for did he not will to enter our lives by means of a family and lived for so many years within a family. So even if your family may be fragile and wounded, make the most of it, until one day, that day, when we are all reunited in the eternal family of heaven.

May God bless you all in this festive Season and in the New Year of 2026.



+ Peter Murphy





DIOCESE OF  
**ARMIDALE**



Nativity (Adoration of the Shepherds)  
Antonio da Correggio, 1529-30