

'CHRISTMAS PRESENTS: LOVE AND MERCY OR INDIFFERENCE'

HOMILY – 3 JANUARY 2016

As we look back at 2015, and plan ahead for 2016, we can wonder why?

Why such high road deaths in our State of Queensland. We remember the 242 people who died on our roads in 2015, despite the hard work of police, traffic officials, medical staff and others. Do we tolerate an indifference within us?

WHY such high figures for violence against women and children. We look at homeless figures. Again we know of people who work hard to prevent these tragedies. Do we tolerate an indifference within us?

This weekend, we celebrate the coming of the MAGI to the Christmas Crib, and hear the story from the Gospel of Matthew.

It is the **FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY** – the showing forth of Jesus to the world and its indifferences.

The Magi represent all the people in our world who are searching for truth, for the meaning of life, for those desiring to overcome indifference, for those pondering questions of self-image and self-identity, for those wanting to make a difference.

The Magi, known for their wisdom, find the answer to their search. Guided by a star, they find **JESUS**.

The answer is not **WHAT** but **WHO** - Responding to God's invitation to be in a loving relationship with **JESUS**, our Saviour.

Fr Gerry invites three people to come forward and place the Magi in the Crib.

He asks the children what the Magi are carrying - **PRESENTS**.

He asks if any children have waited to open their Christmas presents until now.

We gaze at the crib.

God has given us Jesus at the **FIRST** Christmas present.

Like the Magi, we ponder what presents we give to God.

We look to the Bible and the Word of God tells us to **FOLLOW** and **LOVE** Jesus.

POPE FRANCIS, in his New Year's Peace Message, gives us some advice as a present. It is our Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pope Francis invites us,

"to pray and work so that every Christian will have a humble and compassionate heart, one capable of proclaiming and witnessing to mercy."

He hopes that *"all of us will learn to 'forgive and give'."*

He hopes that we will *"refuse to fall into 'a humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine which prevents us from discovering what is new. Let us ward off destructive cynicism.'"*

Pope Francis explains how indifference leads us away from God and from each other and from our world.

In this New Year, I invite each one of us to read the Pope's Peace Message, and perhaps we can identify what destructive indifference may be within us and around us.

Why don't we live the Christmas **JOY, LOVE, HOPE, MERCY, WONDER** and **PEACE** each day of the year? **WE CAN. HOW?**

Let the Holy Spirit awaken the power to overcome indifference.

To discover and rejoice anew, by an openness to being loved by God every day.

Loved by God, we respond with humble and compassionate hearts of mercy, to open our eyes to the needs of our sisters and brothers.

To overcome indifference to road fatalities, domestic violence, homelessness.

To be even more, people of LOVE and MERCY.

In fact we receive presents everyday – the PRESENCE of God.

Let us pray.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Christmas Presents: Love and Mercy or Indifference - 3 January 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/010316.cfm>]

[Pope Francis message full text <http://tinyurl.com/gvnmh6z>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook03012016>]