

CHRISTMAS 2017 – REFLECTIONS FOR ST JOSEPH’S & ST ANTHONY’S PARISH

THE PINEAPPLE AS A SYMBOL

Bracken Ridge has been known in its past for growing **pineapples**.

A symbol for us. The sweetness inside.

The rough exterior that we need to go beyond, to see beyond, to enjoy the inner sweetness.

As a parish community this Christmas, let us acknowledge the roughness and the injustices of our nations and world, and the sweetness of God’s love that enables us, in love, to face these challenges together.

We are challenged by the grace of God to live lives of:

- Justice and Mercy,
- Hospitality and Encounter,
- Solidarity and Peace,
- Hope and Faith,
- Love and Humility.

OUR NEIGHBOURS THIS CHRISTMAS

Our neighbours in the world this Christmas include:

- South Sudan,
- Iraq,
- Syria,
- Yemen,
- Nigeria,
- Korean Peninsula,
- Lonely, dispossessed and marginalised people in Australia

One example for reflection is of a people who have shared their generosity and now need help.

THE MARONITE ARCHBISHOP SAMIR NAZSSAR OF DAMASCUS, SYRIA

The Maronite Archbishop Samir Nazssar of Damascus, Syria says that war in Syria has led to over 12 million internal and external refugees.

"These poor people have lost everything and have not found a roof, charitable organizations gather them in camps or buildings where everything is missing.

In the face of this suffering some try to flee to other more peaceful places, but often they are sent back".

"many have found death during the journey or have drowned, others have died of illness or even committed suicide"

"in the past the Syrian people showed great generosity by welcoming the Armenian refugees in 1915, the Assyrian refugees in 1924, the Palestinian refugees in 1948, the Kurds in 1960, the Lebanese in 1975, the Iraqis in 2003." Now the Syrians themselves have become refugees: isolated and saddened".

CHRISTMAS AND A DEEP FAITH COMMITTED TO FACING OUR WORLD'S CHALLENGES
POPE FRANCIS AND HIS ADDRESS TO THE ROMAN CURIA

During the week, Pope Francis addressed the Roman Curia for Christmas.

"Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I began our meeting by speaking of Christmas as the Feast of Faith.

I would like to conclude, though, by pointing out that Christmas reminds us that a faith that does not trouble us is a troubled faith.

A faith that does not make us grow is a faith that needs to grow.

A faith that does not raise questions is a faith that has to be questioned.

A faith that does not rouse us is a faith that needs to be roused.

A faith that does not shake us is a faith that needs to be shaken.

Indeed, a faith which is only intellectual or lukewarm is only a notion of faith.

It can become real once it touches our heart, our soul, our spirit and our whole being.

Once it allows God to be born and reborn in the manger of our heart.

Once we let the star of Bethlehem guide us to the place where the Son of God lies, not among Kings and riches, but among the poor and humble."

Fr. Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Reflections for St. Joseph's & St. Anthony's Parish – Christmas 2017]

[Facebook post](#)

[Pope Francis: Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia – 21 December 2017](#)

