

EXPLORING THE INTENTIONS OF POPE FRANCIS  
FOR OUR WORLD, THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON  
THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH (YEAR B) – 27 December 2020



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#### POPE FRANCIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Pope Francis, in his [2020 Christmas Message to the world](#), says to each us:

*‘At this moment in history,  
marked by the ecological crisis and grave economic and social imbalances  
only worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, it is all the more important for us to  
acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters.  
God has made this fraternal unity possible, by giving us his Son Jesus.  
The fraternity he offers us has nothing to do  
with fine words, abstract ideals or vague sentiments.  
It is a fraternity grounded in genuine love, making it possible for me  
to encounter others different from myself,  
feeling com-compassion for their sufferings,  
drawing near to them and caring for them  
even though they do not belong  
to my family, my ethnic group or my religion.  
For all their differences, they are still my brothers and sisters.  
The same thing is true of relationships  
between peoples and nations: brothers and sisters all!’*

#### POPE FRANCIS ASKS JESUS TO HELP OUR WORLD

Pope Francis asks Jesus to help our world.

In those who suffer, he sees Jesus pleading for our help.

*‘May the Child of Bethlehem help us, then,  
to be generous, supportive and helpful,  
especially towards those who are vulnerable, the sick,  
those unemployed or experiencing hardship*

*due to the economic effects of the pandemic,  
and women who have suffered domestic violence  
during these months of lockdown.  
In the face of a challenge that knows no borders, we cannot erect walls.  
All of us are in the same boat.  
Every other person is my brother or my sister.  
In everyone, I see reflected the face of God,  
and in those who suffer, I see the Lord pleading for my help.  
I see him in the sick, the poor, the unemployed, the marginalized,  
the migrant and the refugee: brothers and sisters all!*

#### POPE FRANCIS - PLACES & PEOPLES

Pope Francis draws our attention to places and peoples experiencing enormous challenges:

- ‘children worldwide, especially in Syria, Iraq and Yemen
- ‘Middle East and in the Eastern Mediterranean.’
- ‘the wounds of the beloved Syrian people’
- ‘the Iraqi people’
- ‘the Yazidis’
- ‘Libya’
- ‘Israelis and Palestinians’
- ‘the Lebanese people’
- ‘Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in the eastern regions of Ukraine’
- ‘Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger’
- ‘Ethiopia’
- ‘the Cabo Delgado region in northern Mozambique’
- ‘South Sudan, Nigeria and Cameroon’
- ‘the American continent’
- ‘Chile’
- ‘Venezuela’
- ‘Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines and Vietnam’
- ‘the Rohingya people’

#### POPE FRANCIS INVITES US

Pope Francis invites us, as sisters and brothers, to love, to joy and to hope this Christmas:

*‘Dear brothers and sisters,  
“To us a child is born” (Is 9:6). He came to save us!*

He tells us that pain and evil are not the final word.

To become resigned to violence and injustice would be to reject the joy and hope of Christmas.

On this festive day, I think in a special way  
of all those who refuse to let themselves be overcome by adversity,  
but instead work to bring hope, comfort and help  
to those who suffer and those who are alone.

Jesus was born in a stable,

but was embraced by the love of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph.

By his birth in the flesh, the Son of God consecrated familial love.

My thoughts at this moment turn to families:  
to those who cannot come together today and to those forced to remain at home.  
May Christmas be an opportunity for all of us  
to rediscover the family as a cradle of life and faith,  
a place of acceptance and love, dialogue, forgiveness,  
fraternal solidarity and shared joy, a source of peace for all humanity.  
Merry Christmas to everyone!

#### OVER THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

In addition to the intentions of Pope Francis over these 12 Days of Christmas:  
+ We [pray for the people of Fiji](#) and other areas recovering from Cyclone Yasa.  
+ We pray for the work of Sister Rita, providing water wells in villages of South Sudan.  
+ We pray for Blackall Tambo Parish in central Queensland.  
+ We pray for family members travelling this Christmas.  
+ We pray for those in lockdown around the world.  
+ We [pray for safe COVID -19 vaccines](#).

#### LUKE'S GOSPEL 2:22-40

On the *Feast of the Holy Family*, we focus in today's Gospel  
on two holy adults, Simeon and Anna.  
Each, in turn, encountered the baby Jesus when he was presented and consecrated in the  
Jerusalem Temple.  
Like Simeon and Anna, may we recognise Jesus in the lives of children and adults.  
Both Simeon and Anna could see with eyes of faith, as they behold Jesus present.

Let us behold Jesus now.

[pause]

+ We pray to Jesus for the people of our world.  
+ We pray to Jesus for the earth, our common home.  
+ We continue to [pray for our sisters and brothers  
in the parish communities of the Northern Beaches Deanery](#) in NSW.  
And we humbly thank them for praying for us.

Let us pray.

#### PRAYER FOR NORTHERN BEACHES, NSW

We pray to you, Jesus, this Christmas,  
during the COVID Pandemic  
for our sisters and brothers  
in the Northern Beaches Deanery NSW.  
We pray for the Parish communities of  
Pittwater (Mona Vale and Avalon),  
The Lakes (Narrabeen and Collaroy Plateau),  
Warringah (Dee Why and Narrabeena),  
Frenchs Forest (Forestville, Davidson and Terry Hills),  
North Harbour (Manly Vale and Balgowlah)  
and Manly Freshwater Parish.  
We pray to you, Jesus, this Christmas,

in prayerful solidarity as one family together.  
We thank you, Jesus, our Saviour,  
for the gift of hope this Christmas.  
Amen

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122720.cfm>

**PRAYER FOR NORTHERN BEACHES, NSW** printable version:  
<http://bit.ly/PrayerNorthernBeaches24122020>