



# Catholic Diocese of Victoria

*Office of the Bishop*

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*Christmas 2024*

Dear people of the Diocese of Victoria,

It is always a joy to witness the beautiful ways families and parishes prepare for and celebrate Christmas. These preparations often centre on extending extra effort and awareness to the poor in our midst, both locally and globally. This great outreach is born of hope—a hope rooted in the words of John 3:16: *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

The birth of the Son of God as man—the Word made flesh and pitches God's tent among us—is a timeless event. That marvelous and fateful night in a humble stable continues to resonate in dramatic and pressing ways in our time.

Today, God continues to pitch His tent among us—on our doorsteps, on sidewalks, and perhaps even in the parking lots of our churches. Migrants and refugees cross borders and arrive on storm-tossed shores, longing for a place of peace. Yet too often, the message of fear and indifference is sent: "There is no room for you."

This "no room" mentality reflects the rigid walls of fear and self-protection. However, Christmas is the season of the heart. Dear People of God, open wide the doors of your heart so that all may hear the angelic proclamation to Mary and the shepherds alike: *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people"* (Luke 2:10).

Do not fear becoming a gift of hope and an instrument of peace. Do not be afraid of embracing the time of God's favour. Know that God's light within you—your joy in Christ Jesus—dispels all darkness. The Christmas story endures wherever and whenever we expand the walls of our own tents to include others.

Jesus' birth, in the midst of a desperate time of war and discord for God's people, represents God's embrace of all that is vulnerable, fragile, and impoverished. It proclaims the eternal good news: "God is with you." His birth in a stable and His outpouring love on the cross will never disappoint, for they reveal God's tender and compassionate plan of hope that embraces us all.

This Christmas, dear people of God, my prayer for you and your families is that hope will be the gift you receive and the gift you give as we prepare for the Jubilee of Hope in 2025.

Christmas blessings and abundant hope in the New Year.

Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria