

Season's Greetings



December 2021



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



A Christmas message from the National President for the Society in New Zealand



This year, with the relaxation of the Covid restrictions, people will more easily get caught up with the glitz and glamour of the holiday

season and miss the real message. However, as Vincentians we remember that Jesus was born into poverty and we are acutely aware of the poverty and needs of the real lives of the people we serve. For many the practical help we bring, will be bringing Jesus into their lives. Jesus will be found not in a stable, but in an over crowded house, a garage, a shed, even a car or a lonely person's home. Where we go with our gifts and practical help, Jesus will go with us and we will receive the gift of a strengthened faith.

Thank you for all the work you do and the difference you make. And as we complete our final tasks in the countdown to the birth of Christ, let us err on the side of generosity as we provide our gifts of food, time and resources to alleviate the suffering of others.

Finally, as we rest in preparation for a new year let us be aware that the future, with Covid, is likely to be more challenging, both materially and spiritually and I ask for the Holy Spirit's protection for you all.

I wish you all and your families a happy and holy Christmas as you enjoy the peace and love of Christ thorough this Season.

Stay safe and with every blessing

Terry

A Christmas message from Fr. Alan Roberts



A great meditation for me is to ponder the characters in the Nativity story: Joseph, Mary, The Three Wise Men and observe what comes

to mind. When I do this, two words keeps surfacing: *generous* and *listen*. Joseph is a much under-rated character in the entire story. He's knows how to listen to the Spirit through his dreams. His fiancé is pregnant but he takes her in. He goes down to Egypt (the land that speaks of slavery) and returns, not to his familiar dwelling, but to Nazareth in the region of Galilee. All this to co-operate with God to protect the infant Jesus.

These qualities in Mary are much more publicized. The Angel appears to her and says "you are to conceive and bear a son." Mary replies "I am the servant of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me". She too knows how to listen and co-operate with God.

The Three Wise Men had an instinct to follow a particular star. They knew they had to bow down to the infant they were seeking and so they offered appropriate gifts. And they knew not to return to Herod. They sensed his destructive power.

Vincentians can reflect these characters by asking themselves: Where is God calling us to serve? How shall we carry out our work? Mary, Joseph and The Three Wise Men took enormous risks. But in this they gave Christ to the world. That's what we do when we serve the poor with generous love.

Ngā mihi o te wā

Fr. Alan





A New Zealand Christmas



Oh, the grace was on it that He chose that country—
 We have kind oxen and our straw is sweet,
 We have shepherds too now, and stables and a manger,
 Had we but one footprint of His little feet!
 Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of summer,
 Through the sleepy summer, slow with streams and bees,
 Had my land been old then, here He might have lighted,
 Here have seen His first moon in the *ngaio* trees.
 Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting
 While our lilies open and our *tuts* sing,
 Had my Lord been born here angels might have ringed us,
 Standing round our islands wing wide to wing.
 Had my Lord been born here in the time of *rata*,
 Three dark-eyed chieftains would have knelt to Him,
 With greenstone and mats and the proud *huia* feather,
 And the eyes of Mary, seeing, would grow dim.



Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting,
 We too have oxen and our straw is sweet,
 We too have shepherds and stables and a manger,
 Oh, for one clear footprint of His little feet!



by Eileen Duggan



Christmas blessings
from National Office

CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE:

20 December 2021
until 17 January 2022