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Message of the Holy Father and “Urbi et Orbi” Blessing on the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

Christmas Message of the Holy Father

Christmas wishes after the *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing

At midday today, Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, from the central loggia of the Vatican Basilica the Holy Father Francis, before imparting the “Urbi et Orbi” Blessing, addressed the traditional Christmas message to the faithful present in Saint Peter’s Square and to those listening via radio and television.

The following is the Holy Father’s Message for Christmas 2019:

Christmas Message of the Holy Father

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Is 9:1)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Merry Christmas!

From the womb of Mother Church, the incarnate Son of God is born anew this night. His name is Jesus, which means: “God saves”. The Father, eternal and infinite Love, has sent him into the world not to condemn the world but to save it (cf. Jn 3:17). The Father has given him to us with great mercy. He has given him to everyone. He has given him forever. The Son is born, like a small light flickering in the cold and darkness of the night.

That Child, born of the Virgin Mary, is the Word of God made flesh. The Word who guided Abraham’s heart and steps towards the promised land, and who continues to draw to himself all those who trust in God’s promises. The Word who led the Hebrews on the journey from slavery to freedom and who continues to call the enslaved

in every age, including our own, to come forth from their prisons. He is the Word brighter than the sun, made incarnate in a tiny son of man: Jesus the light of the world.

This is why the prophet cries out: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (*Is 9:1*). There is darkness in human hearts, yet the light of Christ is greater still. There is darkness in personal, family and social relationships, but the light of Christ is greater. There is darkness in economic, geopolitical and ecological conflicts, yet greater still is the light of Christ.

May Christ bring his light to the many children suffering from war and conflicts in the Middle East and in various countries of the world. May he bring comfort to the beloved Syrian people who still see no end to the hostilities that have rent their country over the last decade. Today may he stir the consciences of men and women of good will. May he inspire governments and the international community to find solutions to allow the peoples of that region to live together in peace and security, and put an end to their unspeakable sufferings. May he sustain the Lebanese people and enable them to overcome the current crisis and rediscover their vocation to be a message of freedom and harmonious coexistence for all.

May the Lord Jesus bring light to the Holy Land, where he was born as the Saviour of mankind, and where so many people – struggling but not discouraged – still await a time of peace, security and prosperity. May he bring consolation to Iraq amid its present social tensions, and to Yemen, suffering from a grave humanitarian crisis.

May the tiny Babe of Bethlehem bring hope to the whole American continent, where a number of nations are experiencing a time of social and political upheaval. May he encourage the beloved Venezuelan people, long tried by their political and social tensions, and ensure that they receive the aid they need. May he bless the efforts of those who spare no effort to promote justice and reconciliation and to overcome the various crises and the many forms of poverty that offend the dignity of each person.

May the Redeemer of the world bring light to beloved Ukraine, which yearns for concrete solutions for an enduring peace.

May the newborn Lord bring light to the people of Africa, where persistent social and political situations often force individuals to migrate, depriving them of a home and family. May he bring peace to those living in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, torn by continuing conflicts. May he bring consolation to all who suffer because of violence, natural disasters or outbreaks of disease. And may he bring comfort to those who are persecuted for their religious faith, especially missionaries and members of the faithful who have been kidnapped, and to the victims of attacks by extremist groups, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

May the Son of God, come down to earth from heaven, protect and sustain all those who, due to these and other injustices, are forced to emigrate in the hope of a secure life. It is injustice that makes them cross deserts and seas that become cemeteries. It is injustice that forces them to endure unspeakable forms of abuse, enslavement of every kind and torture in inhumane detention camps. It is injustice that turns them away from places where they might have hope for a dignified life, but instead find themselves before walls of indifference.

May Emmanuel bring light to all the suffering members of our human family. May he soften our often stony and self-centred hearts, and make them channels of his love. May he bring his smile, through our poor faces, to all the children of the world: to those who are abandoned and those who suffer violence. Through our frail hands, may he clothe those who have nothing to wear, give bread to the hungry and heal the sick. Through our friendship, such as it is, may he draw close to the elderly and the lonely, to migrants and the marginalized. On this joyful Christmas Day, may he bring his tenderness to all and brighten the darkness of this world.

Dear brothers and sisters,

I renew my best wishes for a happy Christmas to all of you who have come from every part of the world to this Square, and to all who in different countries joined us through the radio, television and the other means of communication. I thank you for your presence on this joyful day.

All of us are called to give hope to our world by proclaiming with words, and above all by the testimony of our lives, that Jesus, our peace, is born.

Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good Christmas dinner and... *arrivederci!*
