



The Right Reverend Mark Calder

The Bishop's Registry
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Christmas op-ed – Bishop Mark Calder

Anglican Diocese of Bathurst – covering central and western New South Wales

Will Christmas celebrations offer any reprieve from the anxiety and uncertainties we face through COVID-19 at the present time, especially with omicron?

About a month ago, it looked as though we could plan for a pretty much normal Christmas. Hotel quarantine for international travellers has been scrapped. Requirements of wearing masks and checking in through the QR codes had been relaxed and we were able to plan family reunions and Christmas holidays.

Now all of that is up in the air as NSW case numbers are blown out of the water. Some of your friends may have now been deemed as close contacts of a COVID case and you're not able to meet with them. Christmas holidays have had to be put on hold for many people. Some planning to travel to Queensland are now no longer able to get there simply because they haven't got their test results back in time.

I think anxiety levels are now higher than they at any time during the lockdowns that we've known.

Yet into all of this, Christmas will surely come, and it is the message of Christmas that can give us some hope, some comfort, and some perspective.

Perhaps you've been singing some of the ancient carols, where we sing words such as:

"He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all".

"So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n"

"Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled"

By turning up here on earth in the historic person of Jesus Christ, God reached out to us in love, and the invitation is there this Christmas and always, to reach back to him and find some hope, strength, perspective, calm, peace, and even joy, in the midst of our mess.

ENDS

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Video version here: https://youtu.be/EQXelyHoU_c