



Christmas Message 2015

Christmas: from feast to joy!

Many say, “this Christmas would not be like others”. Thinking of the victims of recent (terrorist) attacks and their families, thinking of persecuted Christians in the world and all those whose life is endangered because of their engagement in justice and peace, thinking of all those who are forced to leave their countries, thinking of numerous worries confronting our lives, how can we celebrate Christmas as if nothing had happened?

For us Christians, it is not just about merrymaking but rejoicing. Rejoicing of the birth of a child who came to re-join man so that man may be saved. To achieve this goal, this child has not exercised any power being political or religious. He moved from village to village proclaiming a message that rejoiced the heart of mankind. The novelty of this message - source of joy, is that with Jesus Christ, the salvific power of God is already at work in the world. Thus, this power overcome the forces of evil and the darkness of death as witnessed by the miracles of Jesus: “the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up.”¹ The salvific power of God neither reveals itself in a spectacular manner nor in violence; it is rather comparable to a leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour and it leavens all dough; or like a mustard seed which is the smallest of all seeds but which becomes the greatest of all garden plant.² In an astonishing way, the salvation given by God will be totally and fully revealed on the Cross.

At this Christmas feast, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our diocese, “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!”³. When we are taken by doubt, let us contemplate the child of the manger, for “those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.”⁴

To each one of you and your families, I wish you a joyful Christmas.

+ Pascal Delannoy
Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Denis in France.

¹ Gospel according to Saint Luke 7: 22

² Gospel according to Saint Matthew 13: 31-33

³ “The Joy of the Gospel”, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, § 86.

⁴ “The Joy of the Gospel”, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, § 1.