

SACRED HEART
SANDRINGHAM



CHRISTMAS 2018

Dietrich Bonhoeffer Letter to his parents, December 17, 1943

Of course you can't help thinking of my being in prison over Christmas, and it is bound to throw a shadow over the few hours of happiness which still await you in these times. All I can do to help is to assure you that I know you will keep it in the same spirit as I do, for we are agreed on how Christmas ought to be kept. How could it be otherwise when my attitude to Christmas is a heritage I owe to you? I need not to tell you how much I long to be released and to see you all again. But for years you have given us such lovely Christmases, that our grateful memories are strong enough to cast their rays over a darker one.

In times like these we learn as never before what it means to possess a past and a spiritual heritage untrammelled by the changes and chances of the present. A spiritual heritage reaching back for centuries is a wonderful support and comfort in face of all temporary stresses and strains. I believe that the man who is aware of such reserves of power need not be ashamed of the tender feelings evoked by the memory of a rich and noble past, for such feelings belong in my opinion to the better and nobler part of humankind. They will not overwhelm those who hold fast to values of which no one can deprive them.

For a Christian there is nothing peculiarly difficult about Christmas in a prison cell. I daresay it will have more meaning and will be observed with greater sincerity here in this prison than in places where all that survives of the feast is its name. That misery, suffering, poverty, loneliness, helplessness and guilt look very different to the eyes of God from what they do to man, that God should come down to the very place which men usually abhor, that Christ was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn - these are things which a prisoner can understand better than anyone else. For the prisoner the Christmas story is glad tidings in a very real sense. And that faith gives the prisoner a part in the communion of saints, a fellowship transcending the bounds of time and space and reducing the months of confinement here to insignificance.

On Christmas Eve I shall be thinking of you all very much, and I want you to believe that I too shall have a few hours of real joy and that I am not allowing my troubles to get the better of me....

It will certainly be a quiet Christmas for everybody, and the children will look back on it for long afterwards. But for the first time, perhaps, many will learn the true meaning of Christmas.



GRACE AT CHRISTMAS DINNER

Living **G**od,

You are both father and mother of us all.

We thank you for gathering us together in this day of Jesus' birth.

We thank you for all good things : food, drink, our family and friends.

Be with us today and always and lead us in the ways of peace and justice.

We pray this through Christ our Lord. *Amen*

The first people to see the humble glory of the Saviour, after Mary and Joseph, were the shepherds of Bethlehem. They recognized the sign proclaimed to them by the angels and adored the Child. Those humble and watchful men are an example for believers of every age who began the mystery of Jesus, and are not scandalized by his poverty.

Rather, like Mary, they trust in God's word and contemplate his glory with simple eyes. Before the Mystery of the Word made flesh, Christians in every place confess with the words of the Evangelist John :

"We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1.14)

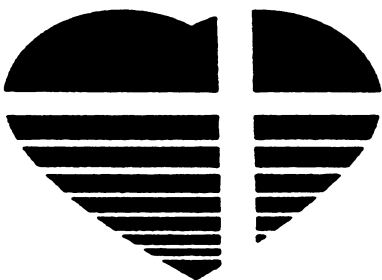
*(Pope Francis
Christmas 2017)*

CHRISTMAS waves a magic wand
Over this world, and behold,
Everything is softer and more beautiful

(Norman Vincent Peale)

AND here is my secret,
A very simple secret:
It is only with the heart that
One can see rightly;
What is essential is invisible
to the eye.

(Antoine de Saint-Exupery)



Sacred Heart Parish Sandringham

Parish Priest : Fr Frank O'Loughlin
Mass Times : Sunday - 9am & 11am; 6pm Sat evening
Baptisms : By appointment - Tel 9598 1511
Marriages : By appointment - Tel 9598 1511
Sacrament of
Penance : 1st Saturdays 5pm
Enquiries : Parish Office - Tel 9598 1511
Email - domecc.sand@bigpond.com
Website - www.sandringhamcatholic.org.au