

CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS

INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to welcome you to Westminster Cathedral, in the heart of London, where, in a few moments, we will be beginning our celebration of Midnight Mass.

We are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, born of Mary, in the stable in Bethlehem.

During this Mass our prayer is one of thanksgiving for the unswerving love of God, who comes to be with us, who chooses to share our human condition for that is the truth made real in the birth of Jesus. He, alone and uniquely of all human beings, is truly both God and man.

During this Mass we also pray for the gift of peace for our troubled world. The town of Bethlehem will be uppermost in my prayer as I think of all the difficulties faced by its people and the harsh security conditions imposed upon them. We pray, too, for all those serving in our armed forces, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. May this night be peaceful and quiet for them, and indeed for us all.

ENDING

Our celebration of Mass has ended and the congregation will soon be spilling out of the Cathedral onto Victoria Street setting off on journeys home, no doubt mingling with others who are also celebrating Christmas. As we go we take in our hearts the wonderful message of this Feast: that God so loves our world that he sent his only Son to be our Saviour. This is the true source of our peace and our happiness.

May I wish you all a very peaceful and happy Christmas. May the day ahead, and those which follow, be marked by the peace which the Christ-child brings, which is more profound, and more lasting than any happiness we can achieve or purchase for ourselves.

May God bless you and your families now and in the coming New Year.