



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

Dear friends,

Christmas 2020

As the Christmas feasts begin, I am pleased to send you greetings in the form of an excerpt from the 2019 Christmas homily of Pope Francis:

“A charming legend relates that at the birth of Jesus the shepherds hurried to the stable with different gifts. Each brought what he had; some brought the fruits of their labour, others some precious item. But as they were all presenting their gifts, there was one shepherd who had nothing to give. He was extremely poor; he had no gift to present. As the others were competing to offer their gifts, he stood apart, embarrassed. At a certain point, Saint Joseph and Our Lady found it hard to receive all those gifts, especially Mary, who had to hold the baby. Seeing the shepherd with empty hands, she asked him to draw near, and she put the baby Jesus in his arms. That shepherd, in accepting him, became aware of having received what he did not deserve, of holding in his arms the greatest gift of all time. He looked at his hands, those hands that seemed to him always empty. They had become the cradle of God. He felt himself loved and, overcoming his embarrassment, began to show Jesus to the others, for he could not keep for himself the Gift of gifts. ... Dear brother, dear sister, if your hands seem empty, if you think your heart is poor in love, this night is for you. The grace of God has appeared, to shine forth in your life. Accept it and the light of Christmas will shine forth in you!”

Christmas is God who comes to us! Christmas saves us, lifts us up, fills us, and frees us! During this time of profound fear and suffering, I wish you the experience of light, life and love!

Merry Christmas!

✠ *Douglas Crosby*, OMI
(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton



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