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Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS
Bishop of Motherwell

19th December 2025

Bishop Toal's Christmas Message 2025

At Christmas this year we will bring to a close the Jubilee Year of 2025, so let us give thanks for the blessings received and the Spirit of Hope renewed. Through Advent that same Hope has been stirred up as we look forward with expectancy to the Celebration of Our Saviour's Birth, and to the Lord coming again in glory and majesty. The Advent liturgies have called on us to be ready and watching so that we "may inherit the great promise in which now we dare hope". Yes, we are indeed "Pilgrims of Hope", and each Christmas is a mile-stone on our earthly pilgrimage and an opportunity to be refreshed and renewed in our personal faith and its practice in the community of the Catholic Church.

It was the 1700th Anniversary recently of the Council of Nicea, whose great proclamation of the Christian faith we profess at Sunday Mass. We will do also with special fervour at the Christmas Masses, emphasising in particular the Lord's Incarnation, his birth at Bethlehem – "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man". We are a people of faith in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we are proud to profess it, particularly on Christmas Day. So let us be at Mass to do so!

Of course, we need to put our faith into action through our works of charity, our love for our neighbour, and Christmas is a time of generosity and sharing with those we love. Let us try also to extend our kindness to those who are more in need, both locally and further afield, recognising that the Lord asks us to do so in his name and with his compassion and self-giving. The Word did become flesh, and continues to dwell among us through those who show his love.

I wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas, praying especially that the Peace sung of by the Angels at Bethlehem may reign within and among us, and throughout the whole world.

May the Lord bless you, your families and friends, and keep you strong in faith, hope, and charity.

With my prayers and best wishes

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal