

A message from Bishop Robert

17 December 2024



Thank you!

These coming days will, I know, be ones filled with activity in our parishes and communities across the diocese as we welcome thousands into our churches to celebrate Christmas with us. There will be carol services, school nativities and end of term services, Christingles, crib services, midnights and Christmas morning celebrations. Some will be large, some small, all will require time and effort in preparation and welcome. It is a welcome that will be supported by a cast of thousands, cleaning, decorating, copying service orders, rehearsing music. It really is a busy time.

I, and I know Bishop Rachel, want to say to all involved a huge thank you. Together you are expressing the hospitality of God, who in Jesus Christ, born in the stable, comes to live among us and to share our life. Jesus is present with us in each and every place we gather. A busy time indeed, one lived in the midst of a busy and fractious world and Church. It matters.

What we do in these coming days takes us back to the foundations of our faith, to God's heart of love for us, in the Word made flesh, dwelling with us. What we are doing in these coming days reminds us that, as someone once commented, the most interesting thing about the Church, if the Church is being authentically the Church, is always God.

In these coming days we proclaim Emmanuel, God with us. God with us, in our lives, joys and struggles, in the lives of family, friends all who we live. The bright spark of light that begins to shine wherever we gather, in our villages, towns, estates and suburbs. A bright spark that is the power of God that from these beginning that we celebrate, that we invite others to share, will shine out to pierce the darkness of every community and nation, of our world with the hope and the promise of new life for all.

It may seem just like dusting a pew or sticking a candle in an orange, but it is so much more. It is sharing the love of God, proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Robert". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.