



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA

CHANCERY OFFICE

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Archbishop's Christmas Message, 2021

“ ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord... And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’ ” -- Luke 2:10-14

My dear brothers and sisters,

The peace and joy of Jesus Christ be with you on this Christmas Day!

As we celebrate Christmas and the joyous birth of our Infant King, Baby Jesus, I extend my prayers to all people of Guam. Something so magnificent as the Son of God becoming flesh to save us from our sins should stir our hearts to prayer, fervently and frequently. We pray in exaltation. We pray in appreciation. We pray as a way of conversing with our Lord and telling him how much we love him for all that he has done and continues to do for us.

The birth of our Savior, the coming of our Redeemer is the source of our happiness as baptized children of God. He is why as Christians, we can experience agonizing hardships, losses and sorrow yet still emerge steadfast in our faith. Without his saving grace, we are ruined. Without his guiding Light, we are lost.

This Christmas season, I encourage all people to resolve to follow the Light of Jesus Christ more closely. Just as the Magi were guided by the Star of Bethlehem in their search to find the holy infant king born to Mary, trust in the Light of the World to guide you in every endeavor and decision that you undertake. May you grow in holiness with each step that you take.

A complete trust in God and surrendering to the will of the Holy Spirit is precisely what our Archdiocese of Agaña and the Church throughout the world must do in the next several months. Pope Francis has called the Church to embark on a journey of COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION and MISSION as part of a Synod on Synodality that will bring the bishops together in Rome in 2023.

The Church on Guam commenced our diocesan phase of the synod during Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 7 at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica. On the eve of the Feast of Santa Marian Kamalen and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we certainly found more reason to come together in prayer. Please include in your daily prayers, earnest petitions that our Archdiocese will recognize and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit during the diocesan phase.

In this synod we will journey together with a purpose of being more inclusive as we look to our future Church, paying special attention to those on the margins whose concerns and perspective are so often overlooked. In a very real sense, the process will not be a time for preaching by the Church, rather it will be a time of reflection and listening.

The Church will organize listening sessions throughout the island which will welcome the hearts and voices of a wide range of people. We'll strive to create a space to hear the Holy Spirit together and get a sense of direction the Church should take at this moment in history. Synodality seeks to include not only those who attend Mass and are active in our parishes but the silent majority as well as those who have left the Church, feel excluded or feel pushed to the periphery in the Church and society.

During our local endeavor, it's important that we strengthen our friendship with Jesus because he is the one that will be walking with us as we walk this Synod on Synodality. That's the gift we celebrate during Christmas and all the days of our lives, that God gave his only Son to be with us, to guide us and to save us from our sins.

"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." – John 1:14.

Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Byrnes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Michael J. Byrnes, S.T.D.
Archbishop of Agaña