

Intercessions 9am Christmas Day 2015

Introduction

Father of Christmas, on this happy morning as we celebrate again that birth that changed the world, that changed our lives, we offer our thanks to you that you are not a remote God but one who would come among us, firstly as a baby, then as a refugee child, then growing up as part of family with father, mother, brothers and sisters, becoming the man who modelled grace and peace and spoke truth, the incarnate God willing to die that we might live. Your love for us is beyond words.

On a morning when gifts are given to reflect our love, what do we bring to you to show our love for you? What gifts would please you?

The World

If we treasured your world, didn't strip it of forests that purify the air, took resources that were needed responsibly and didn't pollute rivers and oceans, would that be a gift that would give you joy?

If we talked quietly with each other to find peaceful ways to settle disputes, emptied ourselves of pride and bigotry and replaced them with peace and goodwill to all, would that be a gift that would take the tear from your eye?

If these be in your will, then your will be done, in Coffs Harbour, on earth, as it is in Heaven.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

The Church

Would you get a buzz if all of us here today, and those worshipping over on the hill, down town, out the road, in Sydney, Cyprus or Scandinavia were all excited that each group of us, regardless of label or language, was worshipping Jesus, the Christ Child, and not giving two hoots for our differences?

And if we were known in our communities as Christians and it was said of us "See how they love one another", would that be the sort of gift that pleased you?

If these be in your will, then your will be done, in Coffs Harbour, on earth, as it is in Heaven.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

The Community

Would you find the gift of us speaking out with grace for justice in our community one that gave you joy? If we acted in a Christ-like manner, rather than turn a blind eye, whenever we saw abuse, whatever its label, be it domestic violence, pedophilia, bigotry, or whenever another was belittled, is that a gift from us you would like?

If we had hearts attuned to the needs of others, acted with practicality and sensitivity to meet those needs, be they poverty, loneliness, sickness or isolation, do you see that as a gift to you?

Would a gift of thankfulness for all those who make our community safe, who make it function, who enrich it as a place to live, care for the sick and injured, keep the roads safe or put out the fires or patrol the beaches; is that pleasing to your heart?

If these be in your will, then your will be done, in Coffs Harbour, on earth, as it is in Heaven.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

The Sick, etc

Gracious Father, whilst we talk of gifts for you, we know that you are the great giver of gifts, We pray for your gift of healing, peace and companionship to all those who are unwell this Christmas, and for wisdom and compassion in those who care for them.

For those who are experiencing Christmas without someone who has been close to them, perhaps for the first time, we ask for the reassuring company of Holy Spirit to walk with them this day.

May that same Holy Spirit be the companion of all who are lonely and for whom Christmas is a hard time, not a joyous one.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

The Departed

You have given to us people who have loved us, nurtured us, shaped our lives, who are part of our story and for whom we give you our most grateful thanks. Some of these much loved people are no longer with us but are now in your closer presence. Christmas seems to bring home how much we miss them. We pause to remember them with love and thankfulness.

(Pause)

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers,

**Grant that what we have asked in faith we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**