

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2019

PRIME MINISTER THE MOST HON. ANDREW HOLNESS

Merry Christmas! To all at home and abroad.

As Christians we believe in the Immaculate Conception and birth; the life examples and teachings, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the fundamental pillars of our faith.

Christmas is the time reserved in our calendar to celebrate the birth of Christ, which happened during a time of great suffering and hardship some 2000 years ago.

It was long prophesied that a great King would be born to liberate the people from bondage. However, Jesus and his message of personal liberation of the soul, by loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbour as you love yourself, was not the King or message that many expected, and indeed many conspired against him.

Today, the world still looks for the hope of liberation from the struggles we face, and the message of Jesus's birth remains the same.

We must love God and believe in Him, and we must love one another as we love ourselves. Simple, yet profound guidance that the solution to our problems rests with our spirituality and humanity.

The story of Jesus' birth does not seek to offer us a scientific explanation of the solutions to our problems, rather it is a story of faith, that God manifested in man and that man can know God and have a personal relationship with God.

It is a story of family; of Joseph and Mary regardless of their own struggles and poverty, sticking together and caring for one another.

It is story of great fraternity. People from near and far, humble shepherds and distinguished wise men saw the signs and journeyed to the lowly stables in which He was born to share in the good news... Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all.

So against the backdrop of our own personal struggles and worries about paying our mortgage, our personal safety with the high levels of violence in our society, the stress brought on by traffic and indiscipline on our roads, or the threat of disease and illness, let us take some time this

season to reflect on the hope that Jesus' birth has given to the world.

Let us start by renewing our personal faith in God and getting in touch with our spirituality. Indeed, this is the time that family members gather and rekindle the familial bonds. Let us express our faith and love through our family, that no matter the circumstances, wealth or poverty, sickness or health we are going to stick together and care for each other. And as we rekindle these bonds in our families, let the light of hope, faith and love emanate from our home to everyone in your community, rich or poor, young or old, able or disabled.

As we celebrate the season, let us take the time to acknowledge and thank those who stand guard in this festive season to keep us safe. Our essential services, air traffic controllers, doctors and nurses. I wish to specially acknowledge and thank the men and women of the JCF and JDF who are even now deployed to keep the peace in various communities across Jamaica. It is a difficult task, however we cannot give up. You are the last line of defence against those bent on destroying the peace.

We can only observe the true meaning of the season in peace, we can only celebrate and be festive in peace. As we celebrate, some in Churches and some at parties, remember to love your neighbour. If your neighbour is without, share; if your neighbour is alone and down, bring them cheer; and if your music is too loud, turn it down.

This Christmas, I pray that you will find peace, that you will be surrounded by the love of family and the goodwill of community.

Merry Christmas Jamaica!