

Greetings, my fellow Jamaicans!

At this most wonderful time of the year, families all around the world are brought together by the spirit of Christmas. It is the season of hope and joy, inspired by Christ's universal message of peace on earth and goodwill to all men. As we come together to celebrate Christmas, we demonstrate the beautiful reality that, despite our differences, we are all connected by the shared common bond of our humanity.

Christmas is a time of love and happiness. We in Jamaica love to come together to enjoy the season in our own special way.

We love wi sorrel, we Christmas cake, wi gungo rice and peas, and wi fresh cool Christmas breeze.

But Christmas is not only about the food and festivities. The true joy of Christmas resides in the spirit of giving with which it comes. Many Jamaicans look forward to the Christmas treats for the children and the elderly, the food drives for the homeless..... touching the lives of our most vulnerable in a caring way. This is true spirit of Christmas.

And we give thanks for the beautification of our streets and communities, often providing some employment and a little Christmas income for many who need it most.

As you indulge in the season's festivities, I encourage you to do so with caution. In particular, road fatalities are running at an alarming rate in our country, so please proceed with care on the road.

When I reflect on this passing year, I have to salute the tremendous character and resilience of our citizens. Each of you who teach, lead, protect, care for or serve our great nation in big and small ways, I salute you.

To our Security Forces and the Jamaica Fire Brigade, who often endure long and harrowing conditions of duty in an effort to keep the nation safe, we thank you for your service and sacrifice.

To our Healthcare Workers who have bravely taken care of the sick among us, your courage and dedication have earned our deepest gratitude and respect.

To our Educators who have adapted to new models of learning after two years of the pandemic, we are truly grateful for your vital role in assuring the future of our nation.

To our Civil Servants and other Public Sector Workers who play such a significant role in the growth and development of our nation, we salute your service to Nation Building.

To all the people of this blessed island of Jamaica, let us celebrate this Christmas holiday by showing love, compassion and care for each other. Remember the essential message of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is that we are our brothers' keeper, so let us commit ourselves to showing love in the true spirit of Christmas.

As we look forward to the new year, let us forge ahead with unity and purpose.

At the level of our political leaders, let us treat each other with respect, and seek to build a common understanding of how to tackle the major challenges facing our people. There is so much more around which we can unite for the progress of our Nation, than there is to divide us.

To those of you who have lost family members this year, and for whom this Christmas falls on heavy hearts, I pray that you may find strength and comfort during this season by focusing on the joyous message of Christmas.

On behalf of my own family, and family of the People's National Party, I wish all Jamaicans, at home and abroad, a very Merry Christmas and a safe and joyous holiday season.

One Love!

Mark J. Golding, MP

Leader of the Opposition