



Catholic Archdiocese of
Canberra and Goulburn

Christmas Message 2017

-“NO ROOM IN THE INN” - EXPRESSING HOSPITALITY IN PRACTICAL CHARITY

Surely one of the saddest lines in the Gospel is when Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem and Joseph and Mary had to find emergency accommodation at a stable as there was “no room in the inn.” (Luke 2/7)

Already Jesus is found to be on life’s periphery. He seems homeless. There is a lack of hospitality in Bethlehem.

We can easily sentimentalise these moments but, in fact, they hide a harsh reality that still ought to trouble us even today.

The social services agencies of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn advise me that homelessness is increasing at an alarming rate in our area. This real poverty has an increasingly younger face and involves many more single mothers with young children.

Like Jesus, there seems to be “no room in the inn.”

Let us give priority this Christmas and New Year season to practical charity. We could focus on our families, neighbourhoods and the wider communities. For a start, we could give generously to Christmas appeals for monies or Christmas gifts to the marginalised, especially the homeless.

Then this Christmas will begin to reverse the inhospitality of the first Christmas over two thousand years ago.

May you and your families and loved ones be blessed in these fragile and troubled times.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn