



Christmas 2019

*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*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This verse from John's Gospel beautifully depicts the wonder, awe and joy of Christmas, for God has *made his dwelling among us*. What we celebrate is truly remarkable. Our God is not distant, removed, or even unfamiliar to us. Rather, our God is personal, interested and devoted to each one of us.

The scene at Bethlehem on that first Christmas night may appear to be quite different from the Christmas scenes you and I will celebrate with family and friends, but little has changed in 2,000 years. Our world is still marked by suffering and pain; people are still swept away from believing by doubt and despair; and the busyness and distractions of this life still offer little room for faith and devotion. Yet, God still dwells among us; we still see *his glory ... full of grace and truth*. Each Christmas, our hearts become the little manger in Bethlehem, welcoming God in the most humble of surroundings.

There is not a more worthy place for God to dwell than in a heart fully given to Him. This is the greatest "gift-exchange" imaginable: He offers us His life and we offer Him our love. During this blessed Christmas season, I pray that all of us, together, can more fully enter into this exchange. Let us approach the sacraments with new fervor and devotion. Let us reach out of our comfortable lifestyles and give to those less fortunate. Let us, united in the love of Christ, seek to share that love with those who have yet to encounter it. May God bless you and your families this Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

**Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecki**  
Archbishop of Milwaukee