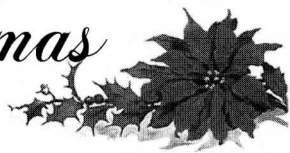


# Merry Christmas



Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Once again I have been given the great gift of another Christmas, and I thank God for it. When one becomes old, every day is a special gift from God. I am happy to be with every one of you during this time of Christmas, and to be able to wish all of you a truly BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS. All of us here pray for each of you - every day and at the Masses of each day.

The only appropriate atmosphere for Christmas is a truly spiritual atmosphere. Wherever Christ is absent at Christmas time, one finds sadness and boredom and depression, even though the usual abundance prevails. In those places where Christ is the central Figure at Christmas time, one finds joy and peace and serenity, even though real poverty is sometimes a condition of life in those places.

Christmas is a truly important day. It is the day when the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, Incarnate, was born as Man. The first Christmas was the day of the arrival of the long awaited for Messiah! It was the day when the REDEMPTION of Man began its work! Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity - GOD - left His place in the Heavenly Court for the sole purpose of Redeeming Mankind!! He came to Redeem Man - not to establish some sort of solidarity between heaven and earth, as some disoriented geniuses now proclaim! Christmas is a very important Day.

Each year, at this time, we focus our attention on the worsening of our changing times, and we all sit back and complain as the ill winds of our times continue to blow us about. It is idle to lay stress on any COMING bad times, especially today. Bad times are already here! The storm is directly overhead.

Can anyone doubt that we are in the middle of some very bad times? Rather than complain about our troubles, let us turn our attention to that which alone can help: PRAYER. In spite of all trends today, the perfection of our religious living has to be given the first place on our list of preparations. Our contact with the Good and Merciful God must be repaired. The best way to do that