

## FROM THE BISHOP OF MOTHERWELL, JOSEPH TOAL



I send my best wishes to all the people of Motherwell Diocese and offer the support of my prayers to you and your families.

It has been a cold December and that must have caused added difficulties for those struggling with heating bills and the rise in the cost of living. In the struggles many face and the uncertainties about the future, it is right that we think of those with less and are generous in supporting local charities and initiatives that reach out to those in need. As we celebrate Christmas, we recall Jesus' birth in difficult circumstances, and reflecting on this, we ask him to help us to see him in others, particularly those with least and the most disadvantaged.

Many people have enjoyed the recent Football World Cup, and, despite the imperfections, it has been good for nations from around the globe to meet in sporting competition and offer entertainment and enjoyment to so many. As human beings, we are best when we come together, and sport helps us appreciate one another's cultures and differences, and the wonderful talents people have received and put on display. We are all richly blessed by God, and each Christmas, we celebrate with joy, the good news of salvation, in which we acknowledge God's love, in the person of Christ the Lord, born in Bethlehem to save us all.

Unfortunately, many places do not enjoy at present the peace of Christ, and we pray especially for them at Christmas. We have been moved by the suffering of the Ukrainian people through 2022, and our thoughts and prayers are with them in these dark and cold days. May peace reign in all our hearts, and especially in those who lead our world and make decisions which can inflict so much pain and destruction on others. May the Angels' song of "Peace to all who enjoy God's favour" come true for those who cry out for renewed peace and hope as 2023 approaches.

I offer you a Blessed and Joyful Christmas, and a Happy New Year. With my prayers and best wishes.

**+ Joseph Toal, Bishop of Motherwell**

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