



**Chancery Office
Eparchy of New Westminster**

**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE MOST REVEREND KEN NOWAKOWSKI,
BISHOP OF NEW WESTMINSTER ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF THE
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2018**

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

The unapproachable God, out of mercy, wished to become visible for us. He comes in the flesh, to be born as a human being of the most pure Virgin, in the city of Bethlehem. Therefore, let us hasten with devotion to receive him.

[Sessional hymn, pre-feast of the Nativity]

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Where will you be for the Christmas holiday season? I know that this is a question many people ask one another: Are you staying in town, going to visit your family in Saskatchewan or heading off to some white sand beach resort? Often, we find ourselves planning our Christmas holidays months ahead of Christmas. We book tickets and hotel rooms, prepay meals and schedule activities typical for the location.

Then there's the question: Are you ready for Christmas? Usually that means: Did you get all your Christmas holiday shopping done? Are the outdoor lights up before the snow or rain comes? Have you finished baking for the holidays, wrapping and sending off your Christmas gifts? In our busy world these are not unusual questions.

We do need to plan ahead so that we can be with family or make the most of our vacation time away from work or school. But what if in asking ourselves about the where and what of Advent and Christmas, this is what we responded: During Advent I decided to donate to the local food bank, to a charity that really makes a difference in people's lives. I spent time at a retreat or made a day of spiritual renewal. I went to confession

so that I can be ready to celebrate the birth of Our Lord. Oh, and where am I going to be on Christmas? In church, of course!

The “where” and “how” of our celebration depends on the ‘who and why’ of Christmas. Our highly commercialized society tries to convince us that we will be fulfilled if we shop, till we drop, and go from party to party, pretending festive joy before the actual feast. We know better! Let’s make sure that for us and our families “Jesus is the reason for the season!” Let the “Who” our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the “why” – His entrance into human history at the Nativity, be the center of our celebration. Then the “where” and “how” will fall into place: Christ is born! Glorify Him!

With assurance of my prayerful best wishes and blessings to you and your family, I remain,

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

+Ken Nowakowski
Bishop of New Westminster