

Homily. Christmas 2024.

As many of you know this hasn't been a good year for our Mum's health. In her 93rd year of life she's had multiple hospital admissions for illnesses and worsening age related conditions. Living in Maryborough 4 or more hours away from my brother, Justin, and myself adds another level of difficulty to our efforts in supporting her.

On his recent trip up to Mum my brother noticed that she hadn't got around to putting up any sort of Christmas decorations at all. This is something Mum has always done for as long as we can remember, even if she's only put out a crib set on dining room table. I might have thought this unimportant at this stage in her life, but Justin didn't.

My brother isn't particularly religious or sentimental, but he is respectful of our beliefs and values. Seeing this absence in her home my brother went out to a local Christian bookshop and bought a small nativity scene with all of the animals and characters just as you see them here in our Church.

He sent me a picture of the set arranged on the dining table and then he posted it on Facebook adding this 4 word caption; Look after each other. His gesture of kindness struck me where it counts. It's the best message I've heard this Advent, the perfect message for our Christmas which is why I'm sharing with you.

If we could just look after each other, as my brother did for Mum and as Gods does for us in giving us Jesus, our lives would be immeasurably better and our world a much happier, more humane and holier place.

Certainly, this is the message of Christmas, a message of care, kindness and generosity from God to us, everywhere and for all time.

The challenge is for us to live out this looking after of each other. If, with God's help, we can pull this off a little better each day by making the meaning and spirit of Christmas our practice, then we can celebrate Christmas joy and hope every day which would be wonderful indeed.

Now we thank God for the gift of the Christ-child to us this Christmas, a son and brother given to us who looks over and after all of us. As the Angels proclaimed, he's the one who brings peace to people of good will. I hope and pray with you that we'll experience his peace and light tonight/today and always, making sure that we share his 'looking after each other' with everyone we meet and greet in the year that lies ahead.