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Peace

The run up to Christmas can be hectic! On top the normal pressures of work, for many there are the extra tasks of hunting for presents, planning special meals, preparing to receive guests. Much of which can be fun, but it also makes life very busy.



For many too there is the extra pressure of how to finance it all. How can we satisfy the expectations of the children whose friends always seem to receive far more expensive presents than we can afford? And in a culture where success seems to be measured by how much we can consume we can put pressure on ourselves, somehow feeling that we have failed because our Christmas cannot be as extravagant as someone else's.

That's before you add in the stress of family and relationship tension. People who we long that we could celebrate Christmas with but they will not be with us for one reason or another and a sadness hangs over us. Or of course people who will be with us but we might wish would not be!

So that by the time we get to Christmas Day all we're ready to do is collapse in a heap. And so it is ironic that the message of Christmas is a message of peace and goodwill to all.

Not that the first Christmas was without its stresses for Mary and Joseph. An unplanned pregnancy, a long journey nine months into it, a crowded town with nowhere suitable to stay never mind give birth. Followed by becoming refugees soon after the birth because of the violence of an insecure king.

And yet many down the centuries, including me, have found peace in the middle of turmoil because of this baby. For his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection have convinced us that, behind all the pressures of this wonderful yet terrible world, there is a God who loves us unconditionally. A God who has come to be with us and who wants us to know his presence in our lives. A presence that brings peace.

I pray that you will know that love and find peace in the middle of whatever stresses you face this Christmas.