



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**MESSAGE TO THE NATION BY  
DR THE HONOURABLE KEITH ROWLEY, MP  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF  
CHRISTMAS 2015**

Fellow citizens,

On behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend warm Christmas greetings to our Christian Community and all those who share in the spirit of the Season.

Christmas is a very special time in Trinidad and Tobago. In our own unique way we have created signature music in the form of parang and parang soca to complement the festivities. Our Christmas cuisine of baked ham, pastelles, fruit cake, ginger beer, ponch de crème and sorrel delight the taste buds of locals and visitors alike.

But after the hustle and bustle of the preparations, Christmas day presents an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of the celebrations.

Whether we choose to go to church or remain at home to receive family and friends; we should take a moment to pause and remember that today we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who in the Christian tradition, is the ultimate symbol of unconditional love, forgiveness and hope.

As a vulnerable baby lying in a manger in very modest surroundings on that first Christmas day, the image of the Christ child begs us to remember our own children and the awesome responsibility we hold as parents, guardians and mentors to protect and nurture our young people.

Two weeks ago, when my wife and I hosted the Prime Minister's Annual Christmas Party, I saw such joy, expectation and happiness reflected on the faces of those children that I was convinced that there is no rational excuse to abuse or harm a young, innocent child.

On this Christmas Day, I want all of us, individually and collectively as a Nation, to re-commit to safeguarding our children and improving the quality of life they may enjoy in our country.

Every day, with an open heart, we must continue to share the love that is so evident at Christmas...especially with our children.

For the sake of our families, our children, our communities and our blessed country; let us learn from the messages of the Christmas story.

We recall Mary's obedience and courage in the face of possible humiliation; we recall Joseph's anger then his acceptance and trust in the will of God; we recall the generosity of the inn keeper, the faith of the wise men and the enduring respect and reverence of the shepherds.

So too, in our own lives, we must demonstrate that we have the courage and faith to overcome life's trials whether they are personal matters; work-related differences or are more national in scope.

By all indications, 2016 will be another challenging year in Trinidad and Tobago. Yet, it is in how we choose to surmount what may be difficult circumstances that will demonstrate the strength of our character as individuals and as a Nation.

Attention to duty and responsibility; respect for oneself and others and above all, trust in God and the determination to do what's right, are the traits which I hope will come to define us as a people, and Nation, as we move forward into the New Year.

I have no fear of what is to come because I have confidence in myself as a leader, I have confidence in our Government and above all, I have faith in the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Together we have an incredible spirit of resourcefulness that will lead us positively through any rough waters we may be called upon to navigate.

Today we celebrate the birth of Christ Child. Let us take this opportunity to open ourselves to the hope and joyous expectation which surrounds this miraculous event.

From my family to yours, I wish you all a very blessed, safe and happy Christmas and a productive, peaceful and prosperous New Year.