



BISHOP'S LETTER

Christmas 2020

My dear friends of the Anglican Network in Canada,

“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,”

John 1:9-12

I greet you on behalf of my fellow bishops and all of ANiC. We are so thankful for you and assure you of our loving prayers for you and all you love, perhaps, this year, even more fervently and intensely than ever before in the midst of the very real challenges of these days. The way you are faithfully standing for the Lord through these extraordinary days is a huge inspiration and encouragement to us as your bishops.

Given the situation we are all in, and given the incredible year we have all experienced, perhaps it is not surprising that this one point has struck me this year with new force: that Jesus, the one who created all, and for whom everything was created, when he entered this world, born of a Virgin, he entered an entirely hostile environment. Even those who had the background of all the prophets and should have welcomed him, mostly did not.

There were glorious exceptions, like the shepherds (Luke 2:8-20), the magi from afar (Matthew 2:1-11), Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38) but generally Jesus was received with hostility and attempts to do away with him.

There was, as we know, “no room in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

The world, as represented by Herod, was so determined to do away with this baby, born to be the King of the Jews, that he made sure every boy baby two and under in the Bethlehem area was killed; so intense was his desire to eliminate this one. This meant that Joseph and Mary and the baby had to flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23). This world was hostile to the visitation of God in his Son, to say the least.

But here's the point: Jesus entered this unwelcoming environment, this world, in incredible costly love on the biggest and most important intervention and rescue mission. To a dark but loved world, he, the light, came to save.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.” Isaiah 9:2

Praise the Lord, he refused to abandon us to the darkness though he legitimately and righteously could have, but instead, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8) and “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

This is good news, dear friends, to say the least. The darkness doesn't win. In fact “to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

The one who is the light—he wins and everyone drawn to the light by faith gets in on his glorious victory.

So, my friends, this Christmas, this year, as never before, look to the light who is Jesus and experience the joy the shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna discovered in this little baby boy who was born to be the King of kings.

Everything is going to be fine because his rescue is complete and eternal.

No wonder the shepherds couldn't keep quiet about what they had seen and heard nor should we (Luke 2:15-20).

What a joyful relief! All these carols we have been singing all these years are absolutely true!

“Mild he lays his glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Risen with healing in his wings
Light and life to all he brings
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Risen with healing in His wings
Mild He lay His glory by
Born that man no more may die”

Though from my home, I will be worshipping this year, as will many of us. I am going sing out with all my heart “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

I’m going to “Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!”

Please join me wherever you find yourself, my friends, and rejoice in Jesus. Whatever may be going on in this broken world, this Jesus is ”good news of great joy that will be for all the people.“
(Luke 2:10b)

Christmas blessings for you and your family right into and through the coming year!



+ *Charlie*

The Right Reverend Charlie Masters
Diocesan Bishop



Anglican Network
in Canada