



Anglican Network in Canada

Christmas 2013

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOPS OF THE ANGLICAN_NETWORK IN CANADA

Dear Friends in Christ:

My dear fellow ANiC friends,

It is my joy, once again, this year to greet all of you at this happy Christmas time on behalf of my friends and colleagues: Bishop Don and Trudy, Bishop Trevor and Dede, Bishop Stephen and Nona, Bishop Malcolm and Mary Lou and Bishop Ron and Jan and of course my wife Judy... It is our prayer for you and all you love that the joy and peace which Jesus came to bring will be your portion more and more this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

It is an interesting thing to think about the peace that Jesus brings. I would suggest to you that this peace does not necessarily mean that everything in life will go smoothly. Actually, this year as I have been rereading the accounts around the birth of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, I have been struck by how gloriously disruptive the birth of Jesus was to everyone who is touched by him. It's a glorious disruption because of who Jesus is. To have Jesus in your life certainly shakes up your life but the inclusion of Jesus makes everything truly right and brings peace.

I encourage you to read Matthew 1:18-25. There you will find Joseph, heartbroken making plans to quietly divorce his engaged wife Mary because she was pregnant. To Joseph, an angel appears in a dream assuring him that the child that Mary was carrying was a result of the miracle of the Holy Spirit.

'But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins". All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel "(which means, God with us)." (Matthew 1:20-23)

The joy and peace for Joseph was not just the relief that Mary's pregnancy was a miracle of the Holy Spirit which meant that she still was a virgin after all, but who the child she was carrying was, was an even greater joy. The very name assigned for this child, Jesus, makes clear the nature and purpose of the mission of this visitation of the Son of God for this broken needy world.

Forgiveness of sins, God with us is what this world needs as do you and I and all those we love. There are no guarantees of immunity from difficulties or disruptions or complications. In fact on the contrary Jesus said just before his arrest and crucifixion; "I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

It is Jesus who is the gift that we long for, "*the pearl of great price*"; He is what we need and seek, he whose very name conveys his victory over sin and the joy his presence brings to our lives. This is our prayer for you, for those you love, and for this world that God loves so much that he gave his only Son: that you will seek to know Jesus more and more this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

So dear friends, Christmas love, greetings and real peace to you and all you love!

+ Charlie

The Right Rev Charlie Masters
Bishop Coadjutor