



Archdiocese of Regina *Bulletin*

*Merry Christmas
&
Happy New
Year*

Christmas Greetings from Archbishop Don

Warm greetings to you all as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's birth in this tumultuous year of 2024. I want to start with a couple of quotes which have been meaningful to me over the years, and which aren't very Christmassy, but they do set a framework for understanding what Christmas and the Incarnation bring to us. The first is from the great American writer Annie Dillard, who in processing a very harsh experience, writes: "it is late, a late time to be living."

In the midst of the wars which continue on relentlessly in our world, the over 100 million refugees and displaced persons, amidst the deep and polarizing differences which only seem to be getting more entrenched throughout the Western world, it does seem like a late, late time to be living.

The other quote comes from C. S. Lewis, who is writing about the impact of his mother's death when he was still a child: "With my mother's death all settled happiness, all that was tranquil and reliable, disappeared from my life. There was to be much fun, many pleasures... but no more of the old security. It was sea and islands now; the great continent had sunk like Atlantis."

I offer those reflections because I think they help name the experience today that the foundations on which our society, and indeed our world, have been built upon, now seem very shaky. The collective values which have sought to uphold human dignity and the value of each human person, advancing in some ways, are deeply threatened in others. Trying to describe this moment in history, C. S. Lewis's words come to mind: it is all sea and islands now.

But faith offers a different kind of foundation, not rooted in a general and perhaps naive sense that things are ever progressing in a good direction. Rather, faith grounds us in God's capacity and desire to enter into our history in all its struggles, and bring a different kind of transformation. The birth of Jesus, the coming of God in the flesh, proclaims God's desire to be near us, to walk with us, to show us a face of incredible mercy and great tenderness. This is the foundation on which we can live with hope and joy, despite shakiness of the moral and political landscape with which we live. I am sure that at the time of Jesus's birth, in the midst of tremendous political instability and oppression, it also felt like a late time to be living. The fact is, God has created us to live here and now, trusting that God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is here with us in the mess and fray, in this time and place.

Finally, I invite you to consider one more thing, which has to do with the way that God has come into the world in Jesus. If you were all powerful and trying to change the world, trying to bring about a kingdom of peace and justice, seeking to create a communion of joy among all peoples, would you do so by sending a baby into the world? Would you step aside from your power and might and send yourself in vulnerability and hiddenness?

This is what God does. This is who our God is. This is how God is revealed to us. In the most intimate, tender, vulnerable way imaginable. God has come to walk with us. This Christmas season, I invite you to ponder that, and to reflect upon the incredible mercy and compassion that is revealed there. And put a hold on all temptations to discouragement or despair. And look at what God is doing. Then trust in that, find joy in that, and try to do things God's way, to live and act in the way God opens up before us, with great trust and hope, joy and mercy.

Merry Christmas to you all! May you know the great blessings of the Christ Child!

Bishop Donald Bolen