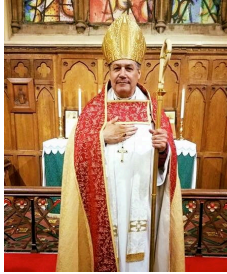




OFFICE OF THE PRIMATE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION

"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."



ADVENT is upon us again with the suddenness of the Season it heralds. The Church year has wound down and now begins anew. For many of us the turning of the Season from green to purple vestments, (and in the northern hemisphere at least) from autumn leaves to winter chill, with the lighting of the Advent candles upon a wreath of green, these call us to the approach of Christmas, and to the glorious celebration of the first coming of Christ in the Babe of Bethlehem. Advent is indeed a season of preparation, a time to prepare our hearts and our homes for the coming of the Redeemer King.

In the midst of what can become a hectic time of year for many, comes the challenge of Advent: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee...Prepare ye the way...Make ready a highway for our God." Advent reminds us of the significance of the first Coming (advent) of Jesus, and calls us to look forward to the final Coming of Christ in glory at the end of time. Advent tells us that God has come, is present with us now, and that He will come again in glory.

Though twenty centuries have passed since the Advent of our God that first Christmas in Bethlehem, the Church still waits and watches as a faithful Bride for the coming of the Bridegroom. When our Lord came among us in the Word-made-flesh, there were many who doubted whether He was really the One whom they had expected. Was this Jesus of Nazareth in very truth God's final and fullest revelation of Himself to man? Even John the Baptist, while in prison, sent word asking, "Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" His own people doubted that God had come among them. So it is in our world today -- an anxious people await the Good News of their salvation but have difficulty believing that in Jesus is the Source of salvation and the true reflection of God's love for His people. Men and women still challenge His presence and seeming failure to bring about the world they would want or imagine God would will. Yet the incredible mystery of the Incarnation is the most powerful and convincing evidence of God's concern and love -- and of His ultimate will and desire for humanity.

We enter into the Season of Advent with an eye to the future: A future that is both temporal and eschatological. In Advent we prepare our hearts and homes for the coming Christmas Season; in our souls we prepare for the coming Day of Judgement, when all shall be revealed, and each person receive from the Lord the reward for his or her labours. The two-fold nature of Advent mirrors the two-fold nature of our lives -- for we live in time but are fashioned for eternity.

The Season of Advent is for Christians a time of prayer, a time for eagerly awaiting the greatest gift of all, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in time and eternity. The Season of Christmas is also a time of prayer and giving, when we celebrate the greatest gift God could give to His people -- the gift of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world! As Christians, we are not ashamed to profess our faith in Him; nor to proclaim to all the world: *Jesus Is The Reason For The Season!*

Finally, please allow me to wish each of you a holy Season of Advent. As your Primate I am privileged to serve you in this ministry and to call you my dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Together we share in our common journey of faith. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all as we enter into the new Christian year and celebrate the joys of this holy Season.

+Shane