



# ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF CHRIST THE KING

## OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

THE MOST REVEREND FREDERICK G. MORRISON

DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2016.

Dear Fellow Clergy and all our Faithful People.

I have just been reading some sermons from my first Advent after ordination – and wondering how I had the audacity to stand in a pulpit and utter such incomprehensible nonsense – such high-sounding religious phrases should **not** be confused with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel tells of *receiving – through giving, of life through – death and victory through – sacrifice*. This is **strong direct teaching** and **exactly** what we should be providing!

Indeed the Gospel words ring in my ears as we hurtle through these last days of the old year towards that celebration for which these Advent weeks have been trying to prepare us. Words that are - we would all agree - pretty powerful. I find I am alarmed by much of the commentary I read in the writings of present day religious pundits and particularly those concerning the offerings from pulpits. Even on occasion I hear concerns from the people within our Province or hear for myself as I make parish Visitations. I am left with a perception that there is a deal of frustration about the irrelevancy of some of what is being offered and a great hunger for the teaching and guidance available – for the people – from within the Gospels. Apparently the sheep are looking up and are not always being fed.

We read what the Advent giant – John the Baptist is saying to us – words simple and direct and later we wonder to ourselves – **are we not** – in this very day and age called upon to be messengers for Jesus Christ in exactly the same sort of way.

Another seasonal giant is Joseph. Scripture simply tells us that he was “betrothed” to Mary and a righteous man. Before they lived together it became obvious that Mary was pregnant and Joseph knew he was not the father. We welcome Joseph when Christmas approaches. The angel of the Lord comes to each of us and tells us that a child has been conceived in Mary through the Holy Spirit. Our challenge is – can we really believe such a story? In Matthew’s Gospel we read “When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife into his home”.

This Christmas I invite you all to pray with me for Joseph’s kind of openness to God’s unpredictable projects revealed for our world and our Province in the year ahead. That we may open our minds in order to see beyond our own dreams and schemes so that Emmanuel may be ever more present in us and through us. God is not far off! God is literally with us!

May God bless **you** and in all your endeavors this Christmas season.

*With our love and best Christmas wishes to you all and those whom you love.....*

✠ *Frederick and Jennifer Morrison*

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