



The Anglican Catholic Chronicle

*Newsletter of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada
A Province of the Traditional Anglican Communion*

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2015



*A Message from
Archbishop Shane Janzen
Metropolitan and
Bishop Ordinary of the
Diocese of Canada West*

ALL too often when we speak of the Second Coming of our Lord, we tend to speak in terms of dread and distress. It is as if we had something to fear rather than to anticipate with joy. St. John wrote in his first Epistle that 'perfect love casts out all fear'. As Christians you and I, who love God and are loved by Him as His very own, should anticipate the Coming of our Lord in glory as a child anticipates Christmas morning.

The holy Season of Advent is not only meant as a time of preparation but also as a time of joyful anticipation. As we anticipate the joys of the Christmas Season about to come upon us; so we should anticipate the joy of that glorious day when we shall behold Jesus coming with power and great glory. When we shall look up and behold our redemption drawing nigh. There is a joy to this holy Season; and a thrilling expectation of all that is to come in God's time and in God's way.

In the ancient world history was regarded by the Stoics as being circular. They held that every three thousand years or so the world was consumed by a great fire, then it started all over again and history repeated itself. That meant, of course, that history was going nowhere and mankind was tramping round on a kind of eternal treadmill. Fortunately, this is not the view or understanding of history revealed by Jesus Christ to His disciples.

The Christian concept of history is that it is going somewhere; that history has a goal, and that goal is Jesus Christ. At the Second Advent of Christ all history will cease. There will indeed be a great consummation of the ages; but this consummation will not bring about a repetition of the past but a new and glorious age. For some this consummation will bring redemption and everlasting life; for others (by their own choices and decisions) it will bring fear and foreboding, judgment and damnation. And lest we be tempted to judge for ourselves or become self-righteous in our faith, we do well to remember that only God on His Throne knows in truth who is sinner and who is saint, "unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid." Also we do not know when the consummation of the world will take place nor what it will be like; that is not ours to know. But what we do know is that, as Christians, we live in the shadow of Cross, and in the certainty that we are loved by God. We are being prepared by Him to dwell forever in the glory of His everlasting Kingdom.

In Saint Luke's Gospel there is a passage describing how Jesus would spend the days teaching in the Temple, but at night would go out and stay in the Mount of Olives. This is not just a filler but a profound statement of how we should spend our time if we are to be prepared for the day of redemption. Jesus spent the day amidst the crowds of the Temple; He spent the night beneath the stars with God. He gained strength to meet the crowds through His quiet time alone with His Father. He could face the day-to-day world of men because He came to men each day from God's Presence. This is how we must face our world; coming to each day from God's presence. Prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection, are the cornerstones of life that prepares us both for tomorrow and for our life with God.

The Season of Advent then is for Christians a time of prayer and penitence, a time for eagerly awaiting the greatest gift of all, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in time and eternity. In turn, the Season of Christmas is 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. 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!

As we now enter into the Season of Advent, please allow me to wish each of you a holy and prayer-filled Advent; and with the coming Season of light and joy, my prayer that you and your family and friends may experience a blessed, holy and happy Christmas.

May the blessing of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son, and the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit, be with you in Advent and throughout the Christmas Season.

Archbishop Shane B. Janzen



*A Message from
Bishop Craig Botterill
Bishop Ordinary of the
Diocese of Canada East*

“**B**lessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest”. Advent is once again upon us, as the Church begins a brand new liturgical year, and reads the ancient lessons appointed for this season of penitential preparation for the coming of Christ. Have you ever been puzzled by the Gospel lesson for the First Sunday of Advent – the story of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the crowds straw palm branches in His way? You may be thinking: “surely this is the Gospel lesson for Palm Sunday, someone’s made a mistake”. You wouldn’t be alone in your thinking. Our ancient lectionary, developed by the Fathers under the influence of the Holy Spirit, fell out of

favour, as did our ancient liturgy, when “modern” Anglican leaders scraped it in favour of an ecumenical venture called the Revised Common Lectionary. Not only did they not value the Book of Common Prayer lectionary, they didn’t understand it. What place has this Gospel story to do with Advent?

The truth is liberal Anglicans forgot what Advent is for – a time of sombre, penitential preparation for the coming of Christ, not only as the Babe of Bethlehem, but as King and Judge at the end of time. Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem correctly sets the tone for Advent as we prepare ourselves for His return to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire. Exchanging the traditional purple colour of the season for bright, festive blue, perhaps they have also forgotten that purple is the colour of Kings, and that in Advent we anxiously await the coming of Christ the King.

I bid you to use this season of Advent as a time of penitential preparation for the coming of Christ so that when He returns to earth again as King and judge you can joyfully exclaim: “Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”

*+Craig Botterill
Canada East*

CHRISTMAS: WHAT CAN BE

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to that believe on His Name.” St. John 1: 12.

WHENEVER we dwell on what is not, or what could have been, our hearts and spirits sink. Where are all the accomplishments and achievements that we were certain would have come by now, but have not. Where are all the successes and promotions, victories and tangible signs of growth, that were supposed to be, and are not?

And whenever we dwell on what is not but used to be, our souls weep. The loss of youth and energy, the loss of family or friends; the loss of love, the loss of dreams and hopes. We grieve the loss of things that once were but now are gone.

Similarly, whenever we dwell on what we cannot do, what we cannot change, our hearts too shrink and fail. We lament our inability to create and to build as we would; our inability to bring about meaningful change both in our own lives and in the life around us. Our years of effort seem to be for not. Our goals though once high are now but bare survival.

As a result of these, and so many other inward thoughts and doubts, many risk becoming empty and vision-less individuals. Many become defeated, turned inward; mesmerized and paralyzed by what was and yet cannot be? And in that state and place of being is found darkness; a darkness that suffocates, a darkness that pins us to the ground, a darkness that sucks the light of life from our very soul. A darkness that saddens, sours, and even sickens our spirit. A darkness that shows in our eyes and in our world.

What then is the solution? What then is the answer? A determined optimism? A greater love of and belief in oneself? Some choose this road. Others choose to tread the path of "any day now", and wait for some magic person or event that will change everything.

The real solution, the real answer, is Christmas. In the midst of the darkness of "what is not and can not be" Christmas is the celebration of what IS and what CAN be.

Into a seemingly unchangeable world, into a history of human loss, disappointment, and inability came the Son of God. Into a dark and dying world, the light of the God-man Jesus Christ shone. He entered into and shone upon a creation trodden down by what is not but used to be. This creation that had been holy, righteous, and good,

was now sinful, wayward, and evil.

The whole point of Christmas; the whole point of the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ, the whole point of Mary's babe lying in a manger, is that "what is not" has become "what is"; and "what cannot be" has become "what can be."

On the eve of the first Christmas the "what is not" list was long. There was no peace between God and man, no lasting hope, no divine forgiveness, no eternal life, no enduring light, no Messiah and Saviour. And for those with insight into the gravity of the human situation and the depth of our fall, the situation appeared impossible to change. Disappointments were many, shattered dreams legion.

But with the birth of the Christ Child, the Word-made-flesh, nothing is the same, or can be, ever again. With His birth, along with His saving life and death for us, He turns the "what is not" into "what is." Hostility is turned into peace, hopelessness into hope, darkness into light, condemnation into salvation, death into life. What is predictably old, becomes unpredictably new. What is "impossibly not" becomes "what is."

Even the manner of Jesus' birth highlights this turning of the "what is not" into the "what is" and "what can be." Virgins do not conceive and give birth. Mary did. Babies are not born without human fathers. Jesus was. The finite is not capable of the infinite. But in Jesus, it was. As the Angel Gabriel declared unto Mary, "For behold, with God nothing is impossible." (*Luke 1:37*)

Christmas is the celebration that "the Word became flesh and dwelled among us," which is fitting because everything depends on where we dwell. If we dwell on what is not but should be, our spirits and souls will sink, for our focus should not be there. If we dwell on what is not but used to be, our souls and hearts will weep, for our focus should not be there. If we dwell on what

cannot be, our hearts will shrink and fail, for our focus should not be there.

Instead we should dwell on the miracle of Him who dwells among us, our Lord Jesus Christ. For through His birth, life, death, and resurrection, all that is not and can not be, now is and can be. We are forgiven, redeemed, made holy and pure in God's sight. We are loved, cherished, accepted; the apple of God's eye; His chosen ones in His Chosen One.

In Him we have security, for He guides our lives for good. In Him we have purpose, for we are called by Him to further His kingdom and do His will. In Him we have a future, for heaven has been reserved in our name. Because of Him, ours will be a happy ending that has no ending.

With Christ there are no 'can not's' but only 'can bes'. What refuses to change, can change; what refuses to move, can move; what refuses to become possible, can be possible. The birth of Jesus has done this.

On this Christmas reality we should dwell and focus daily. Just think if we did this what joy and fulfillment would be ours. How our spirits would soar, our souls rejoice, our hearts enlarge. What changes we would see, not only in ourselves but in our world. Yet this is not easy.

For many voices, especially around Christmas time, it seems, remind us of what is not, of what we don't have, of what cannot be. Others may have but not us. Others may be able to but not us. It is easy to give ear to these voices and to dwell on what is not and what cannot be. It is precisely at such a time, when we are confronted with these voices of what is not, that we must stop and instead listen to the voice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and dwell on Him and His message of life and love and salvation. Then we will be the "what is" and "what can be" people of God.

And herein lies the real Christmas joy; the real message of Christmas.

IN AND AROUND THE ACCC

Diocese of Canada West

On September 20th, Archbishop Janzen made a visitation to All Saints Parish Calgary, where he confirmed two young girls; as well as held meetings with Father Alan Edwardson and members of the Vestry. The Archbishop enjoyed meeting parishioners during the reception following Mass.

Following his return from the United Kingdom and Zambia, Archbishop Janzen visited the Parish of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Burnaby in November, where he also confirmed a new member of the parish. The Archbishop was encouraged by growth in both of these parishes, and their continued outreach to the larger community.

On December 6th, Advent II and the Feast of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, the Bishop Robert Crawley Memorial Window was dedicated at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Evangelist, Victoria, in the presence of Mrs Bobbie Crawley and her two daughters, Christine and Nicole. December 9th marks the first years mind of Bishop Crawley.

Diocese of Canada East

Bishop Botterill has concluded visits to the missions and parishes of Canada East. These included two trips to meet with the clergy of the Mission of St. Thomas More, Toronto, and to celebrate Mass at the Warkworth Federal Penitentiary, in Ontario.

The Bishop also made visits to the Parish of St. Stephen the Proto-martyr in St. John's, Newfoundland, and St. Athanasius, Montreal, Quebec, as well as bi-monthly visits to St. George-by-the-Sea at Moser River, Nova Scotia, which is without an incumbent.

More recently Bishop Botterill conducted the funeral of Fr. Ted Bowles, retired Rector of St. Edmond King and Martyr, at Kitchener, Ontario.

Provincial Council Meeting

The annual teleconference of the Provincial Council and combined Diocesan Councils was held on Saturday, November 28th. All members of the Council were in attendance. The audited financial statement for fiscal 2014 was received by the Council, along with the third quarter report for fiscal 2015. In addition, the Council approved the venue for Synod 2016 to be at the FCJ Centre in Calgary, Alberta between July 12th to 15th.

Archbishop Janzen and Bishop Botterill briefed the Council members on recent ecumenical relations with and among the other Continuing Anglican Churches in North America and England. In particular, discussions are currently underway in England with the Free Church of England and the Nordic Catholic Church. In North America, discussions are proceeding with the Christian Episcopal Church, the Anglican Province of America, the Diocese of the Holy Cross, and the Anglican Catholic Church (Original Province). It is hoped that these discussions will eventually lead to intercommunion between these jurisdictions and ourselves, and in the course of time, perhaps organic union as one traditional Anglican church worldwide.

In Memoriam: Father Lloyd Gedge



Father Lloyd Gedge died on Sunday, November 15th at the age of 92. Father Gedge was from Holden, Alberta, but most

recently was in a care facility in Viking, Alberta. A funeral service was held on Thursday, November 19th at the Holden Ukrainian Catholic Church. James Stolee attended the funeral and expressed condolences on behalf of the Parish of the Resurrection, Edmonton. Father Gedge was predeceased by his wife Airini. His family has asked that any memorial donations be made to the CNIB. Please keep his daughters, Elizabeth and Pauline, in your prayers.

In Memoriam: Father Ted Bowles



The Reverend Mervyn Edward (Ted) Bowles, P. Eng, Rector (retired) of Saint Edmund King and Martyr, Waterloo, Ontario.

With great sadness we announce the passing of Father Ted on November 26, 2015 in his 94th year. Survived by his wife of 67 years, Wyn, his sons, Griffith, Greville and Andrew, grandchildren Amber (Meyer) and Eldon, great-grandchildren Caleb, Hannah and Hudson.

A Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Ted was celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist, Victoria, by Archbishop Shane Janzen. The funeral service, celebrating Fr. Ted's life, was held on Friday December 4th, at Memory Gardens Funeral Home and Cemetery, in Kitchener (Breslau), Ontario, Bishop Craig Botterill, Q.C., officiating.

TAC NEWS

Lincoln, UK and Lusaka, Zambia



Bishop Ian Gray with his clergy and people in Synod at Saint Katherine's Cathedral, Lincoln, UK

At the invitation and request of Bishop Ian Gray, Archbishop Janzen, accompanied by Father Glenn Galenkamp as Chaplain, traveled to Lincoln, UK in October to attend the Synod of the Traditional Anglican Church in Britain (TACB – our sister TAC church in England). The Synod discussed and approved the re-organization of the TACB, and approved the new revised Concordat of the Traditional Anglican Communion approved last year by the College of Bishops. In addition, on behalf of the TAC College of Bishops, the Archbishop met with bishops of the Nordic Catholic Church as well as bishops of the Free Church of England, as part of an ecumenical dialogue with the Traditional Anglican Church in Britain and the TAC.



Archbishop Janzen, Bishop Brian Marsh (ACA), and Bishop Ian Gray (TACB)

Again, at the invitation of Bishop Michael Gill of Southern Africa, Archbishop Janzen

with Father Galenkamp and joined by Bishop Stephen Strawn (Anglican Church in America) traveled from London, UK to Lusaka, Zambia (via Johannesburg) for the consecration of Father Andrew Mukuyamba as the first Bishop for the Traditional Anglican Church in Zambia.



Archbishop Janzen and Father Galenkamp were met at the airport by a large delegation of clergy and laity, including members of the Mothers' Union, from the Diocese of Zambia, led by their Bishop-Elect, Father Mukuyamba. While there, the two Bishops along with Father Galenkamp had the opportunity to meet with some of the clergy and people of that Diocese.



Welcoming party with banner at the Lusaka International Airport

The consecration of Bishop Mukuyamba took place at the Makeni Ecumenical Centre in Makeni, Lusaka on October 25th before a packed congregation of some 300 people.

The Makeni Ecumenical Centre was started by Fr. Pierre Dil and his wife Wenda; Mrs. Wenda Dil is still resident at the Centre and involved in its activities.



Tea time at the Makeni Centre with Mrs. Wenda Dil, Bishop Michael Gill and Bishop Stephen Strawn



Archbishop Janzen presents the new Bishop with his crozier, a gift from the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Evangelist



Gathering of the Bishops, Clergy and prior to the procession to the outdoor meeting tent for the Consecration and Mass



Newly-consecrated Bishop Andrew Mukuyamba with his Consecrators, Bishop Strawn, Bishop Gill and Archbishop Janzen

Dear Parents with Children in Church

You are doing something really, really important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring.

I watch you bounce and sway trying to keep the baby quiet, juggling the infant car seat and the diaper bag as you find a seat. I see you wince as your child cries. I see you anxiously pull things out of your bag of tricks to try to quiet them.

And I see you with your toddler and your preschooler. I watch you cringe when your little girl asks an innocent question in a voice that might not be an inside voice let alone a church whisper. I hear the exasperation in your voice as you beg your child to just sit, to be quiet as you feel everyone's eyes on you. Not everyone is looking, but I know it feels that way.

I know you're wondering, is this worth it? Why do I bother? I know you often leave church more exhausted than fulfilled. But what you are doing is so important.

When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about Bible Study or personal, quiet contemplation but coming together to worship as a community where all are welcome, where we share in the Word and Sacrament together. When you are here, I have hope that these pews won't be empty in ten years when your kids are old enough to sit quietly and behave in worship. I know that they are learning how and why we worship now, before it's too late. They are learning that worship is important.

I see them learning. In the midst of the cries, whines, and giggles, in the midst of the crinkling of pretzel bags and the growing pile of crumbs I see a little girl who insists on going two pews up to share peace with someone she's never met. I watch a child

excitedly color a cross and point to the one in the front of the sanctuary. I hear the echos of Amens just a few seconds after the rest of the community says it together. I watch a boy just learning to read try to sound out the words in the worship book or count his way to Hymn 672. Even on weeks when I can't see my own children learning because, well, it's one of those mornings, I can see your children learning.

I know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but I want you to know, it matters. It matters to me. It matters to my children to not be alone in the pew. It matters to the congregation to know that families care about faith, to see young people... and even on those weeks when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children. It matters that they learn that worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome, that their worship matters. When we teach children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are enough right here and right now as members of the church community. They don't need to wait until they can believe, pray or worship a certain way to be welcome here, and I know adults who are still looking to be shown that. It matters that children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their badly (or perfectly timed depending on who you ask) cries and whines are a joyful noise because it means they are present.

I know it's hard, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family – with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy – are not simply tolerated, you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.

“Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not; for unto such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

St. Matthew 19: 14.

**SAINT NICHOLAS:
THE REAL 'SANTA CLAUS'**

AN ancient merchant had three lovely daughters. But due to a tragic turn of events, he had lost all hope that his daughters would be able to marry and live a happy life. It was the third century, and this businessman had lost his fortune when pirates pillaged his ship. His beautiful daughters were of marrying age, and without money he could give them no dowry.

In those days, young women without a dowry had few options for survival. Many were forced into slavery or prostitution.

The father prayed around the clock that somehow God would grant a miracle for his family. A young Christian bishop discovered the plight of this man and his daughters. This bishop was a wealthy man, having received a large inheritance at the death of his parents. One evening, in the middle of the night, the bishop secretly slipped a sack of gold through a window into the merchant's house. This timely gift saved the virtue of the man's oldest daughter.

Later, another sack saved the second daughter.

Anticipating a third gift of gold, the father determined to discover who was helping his family. He stayed up all night and when the sack was dropped through the window, the father ran down the road and apprehended the mysterious benefactor. The merchant immediately recognized the young bishop and tried to give thanks to him.

The humble bishop deflected the praise. "No, all thanks go to God, not to me." The father answered, "I need to let everybody know you did this." The bishop responded, "No, you must promise me that not until I'm dead will you let anyone know how you received the gold." This compassionate bishop believed literally Christ's injunction that when we give, we should do so in secret, sacrificially in Christ's name and not our own.

The merchant promised that he would tell no one of the way this holy man helped save this family. And it wasn't until after his death that the world learned the numerous stories of the generosity of this bishop of the early Church, Saint Nicholas of Myra.

Through his timely gifts, Saint Nicholas helped to restore the hope of this family, and hundreds more in his community. But the ministry of Saint Nicholas extended beyond giving gifts. History tells us that he was persecuted by the Roman authorities and imprisoned for his faith. Later, when Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion, St. Nicholas boldly defended the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325).

Throughout his ministry, Saint Nicholas selflessly poured out his life and his fortune as he served the people in and around his home.

The story of our modern Santa Claus begins with this same Nicholas, who was born during the third century in Patara, a village in what is now Demre, Turkey. His wealthy parents raised him as a Christian. But they died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young, and he was left with their fortune. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," St. Nicholas used his inheritance to assist the suffering, the sick, and the poor.

During the persecution of Christians by Roman Emperor Diocletian, St. Nicholas was exiled and imprisoned along with thousands of other Christians. Though he suffered for his faith in Jesus Christ, mercifully St. Nicholas survived this persecution and was eventually released.

After returning to his post as bishop, St. Nicholas was called upon to defend Christianity against the heresy of Arianism. A contemporary of St. Nicholas and an early church theologian, Arius taught that God the Father and God the Son did not exist together eternally. Arius also taught that the

pre-incarnate Jesus was a divine being created by (and possibly inferior to) the Father at some point, before which the Son did not exist.

Church history tells us that St. Nicholas vigorously fought Arianism, and was listed as a participant in the First Council of Nicaea. This important gathering, held in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day Iznik in Turkey), was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325 A.D. This was the first ecumenical council of the early Christian Church, and it produced the first uniform Christian doctrine -- the Nicene Creed.

It is also believed that St. Nicholas participated in the destruction of several pagan temples, among them the temple of Artemis. Because the celebration of the goddess Diana's birth is on December 6th, some have speculated that this date was deliberately chosen for St. Nicholas's feast day to overshadow or replace the pagan celebrations. But December 6 is also listed as the date of St. Nicholas's death, which is more likely the reason the feast is celebrated on this day.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be honoured by Christians of all denominations.. By his example of generosity to those in need, St. Nicholas is a model of Christ's call to selfless giving.

Widely celebrated in Europe, St. Nicholas' feast day on December 6th kept alive the stories of his generosity and kindness. December 6th is still the main day for gift giving in much of Europe. In the Netherlands, candies are thrown in the door, along with chocolate initial letters, small gifts, and riddles. Dutch children leave carrots and hay in their shoes for St. Nick's horse, hoping it will be exchanged for gifts. Simple gift-giving on St. Nicholas Day helps to preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

The story of St. Nicholas was almost forgotten during the 16th century as Protestants downplayed the veneration of the saints. Both reformers and counter-reformers tried to eliminate the customs of St. Nicholas' Day, but they had very little long-term success.

Because the common people loved St. Nicholas, he survived on the European continent as people continued to place nuts, apples, and sweets in shoes left beside beds, on windowsills, or before the hearth.

The first Europeans to arrive in the New World brought the story of St. Nicholas with them. The Vikings dedicated their cathedral to him in Greenland. On his first voyage, Columbus named a Haitian port for St. Nicholas on December 6, 1492. In the United Kingdom, St. Nicholas became 'Father Christmas' with the red robes and white fur trimming of a bishop.

After the American Revolution, New Yorkers were looking to break with British tradition, and they remembered with pride the colony's nearly-forgotten Dutch roots. John Pintard, an influential patriot who founded the New York Historical Society in 1804, promoted St. Nicholas as the patron saint of both the society and the city.

In January 1809, Washington Irving published the satirical Knickerbocker's History of New York, which made numerous references to a jolly St. Nicholas character. This was not a saintly European bishop, but rather a Dutch burgher with a clay pipe. The jolly elf image received a big boost in 1823 from a poem destined to become immensely popular, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," -- now better known as "The Night Before Christmas."

Washington Irving's St. Nicholas strongly influenced the poem's portrayal of a round, pipe-smoking, elf-like St. Nicholas. The poem generally has been attributed to Clement Clark Moore, a professor of biblical

languages at New York's Episcopal General Theological Seminary.

In North America, the popular name Santa Claus was taken from the Dutch Sinterklaas, which originated with a contracted form of Sint Nicolaas (Saint Nicholas). The "Mall Santa" that we are all familiar with -- sporting a red suit with white cuffs and collar, and black leather belt, became the popular image in Canada and the United States in the late 19th century and early 20th century because of the "Merry Old Santa Claus" images created by political cartoonist Thomas Nast.

Beginning in 1863, Nast began a series of annual drawings in Harper's Weekly that were inspired by the descriptions found in Washington Irving's work. These drawings established a rotund Santa with flowing beard, fur garments, and a clay pipe. Nast drew his Santa until 1886, and his work had a major influence in creating the modern American Santa Claus.

In the mid-20th Century a series of Coca-Cola advertisements featuring a rotund and jovial Santa Claus was drawn by artist Haddon Sundblom and further popularized Nast's depiction.

There are, of course, controversial aspects of the North American Santa Claus fiction. Some Christians believe he takes the focus of Christmas away from Jesus Christ, placing it on a fictional character with little redemptive value. Others insist that it is unhealthy for parents to lie to their children to enforce their belief in Santa Claus. And others say that Santa Claus is a symbol of the commercialization and consumerism that has seized the Christmas holiday in the West. Still for others, Santa Claus and the modern celebration of Christmas is seen as an intrusion upon their own national traditions.

But beneath all the symbolism and tradition that has been attached to the modern Santa Claus, he, like so many other "Father

Christmas" characters before him can hearken back to a simple Christian bishop who loved God and loved people. Saint Nicholas displayed his love through the giving of gifts, just as our Heavenly Father gave the gift of His Son to us that first Christmas morning over 2000 years ago.

In this season, we celebrate how God gave His Son, Jesus, to bring hope to the world. May each of us prayerfully consider how we, like Saint Nicholas, can give of ourselves to help restore hope to those that God brings into our lives.

~ THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY ~



What makes the Season of Epiphany unique is that in this Season we celebrate not what Jesus did or said, but Who He is. We celebrate Him, Jesus Christ -- not as on His field of battle or in His solitary retreats in prayer to His Father, nor even upon His Cross of victory, but as the eternal Son of God, the glorious King of kings, the Lord of heaven and earth, and the Saviour of the world. In the holy Season of Epiphany we behold Him as the object of our worship and not as the focus of our petitions, needs and wants. We worship God for being God -- nothing more, nothing less.

Throughout the six weeks of Epiphany the manifestation of Jesus' glory as the only-begotten of the Father, is revealed to us in the Lessons of the Prayer Book lectionary; yet in the telling of the Scriptures, the events and the people portrayed seem to be but ordinary occurrences, ordinary men and women going about the daily things of life, except to those who see them through the eyes of faith.

In the First Sunday of Epiphany, Jesus manifests His glory in the Temple at the age of 12 years, sitting among the doctors of the Law, and astonishing them with His wisdom and insight.

In the Gospel for the Second Sunday, our Lord manifests His glory at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee by turning water into wine – a miracle not of necessity or urgency, but an act of generosity and hospitality – the act of a King, who out of His abundance gave a gift to His own, ‘wine to gladden the heart of man’.

In the Third Sunday, the leper (outcast of his people) worships Christ, who in turn heals him; the centurion, one who is outside the faith of Israel and indeed regarded as an enemy of the nation, approaches Jesus with a plea for His healing mercy upon his servant, and the Lord of life grants his plea while hearing the words of humble access: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.”

In the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday, we hear of the great storm which arose upon the lake while Jesus slept peacefully in the boat, and how the Apostles were terrified they would perish; but Jesus rises and rebukes the wind and sea, and immediately the wind ceases and the waters are calm again; and the beholders worship Jesus, the Lord of earth, and sea, and sky.

On the Fifth Sunday After Epiphany, we have revealed to us something of Christ’s kingdom on earth; of the enemy sowing tares amidst the good seed, how both must grow together, for good and evil must dwell together for a time, but that justice and righteousness and truth will prevail in the Kingdom of our God. For, as we have revealed to us on the Sixth Sunday, the Lord of righteousness will come again in glory at the end of time, and His epiphany will be “with power and great glory” to judge the nations and to receive the homage of His

holy people, redeemed for all time by His saving grace upon the Cross of Calvary.

Who Jesus is stands clearly revealed to us, if we but behold His manifestations and epiphany with the eyes of faith. Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem amidst the doctors of the Law stands revealed as Prophet; in the turning of water into wine at the Wedding in Cana, as Priest; in the healing miracles, as the Lord of life; in the rebuking of the wind and sea, as Sovereign King, whose word is Law; in the parable of the wheat and tares, as Guardian and Ruler of His people; and in His Second Coming, as the Lawgiver and Judge.

But even as we have revealed to our eyes Who Jesus is, both for us and for the world, we also have revealed to us in the Epistles and Lessons of this Season, our place and our privileges, duties and responsibilities in the Kingdom of God. We are called to be God’s own chosen people, gathered together as the Flock of Christ, formed to show forth His glory and praise in the world.

As Christians, we are at one and the same time the temple of Christ, and His worshippers and ministers. We are collectively the Bride and Body of Christ; and individually, we are the friends of the Bridegroom, the guests at the marriage feast. We are called out beyond ourselves to proclaim the good news of salvation, and to manifest the glory of Christ in our own lives – so that others may come to worship Him with us as Lord and Saviour. We are called to live lives of righteousness, knowing that it is by His grace alone that we are saved. We are called to walk the way of the Cross in our journey of faith, knowing that it is the only way to everlasting life.

Let us then be thankful for the holy Season of Epiphany. Let us rejoice and be glad – for Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, He is the Saviour of the world, and He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Amen.