

December 9, 2015

Dear Friends,

Warm precious Christian greetings from the Diocese of Newala!

Flemming Rutledge wrote,

"It is not impossible to convey, even to young children, the sense that the real meaning of Christmas lies precisely in the combination of magical ceremonies and the grown-up message that, in the very midst of our human selfishness, the way-laying love of God has broken through to us unconditionally."

In this first week of Advent 2015, the coming of our Lord and Savior requires our hard work and focus. We, the Christian Church throughout the world, are confronted once again with the task of keeping the discipline of Advent: focusing on the coming of Christ in the midst of violence all around us. Not only this, but we need to retell the story of Advent and Christmas to our children.

Knowing that we are not the first ones faced with this task is reassuring. During World War II, Moms and Dads from both the USA and Great Britain kept the faith and the witness of the Christmas gospel despite their trial; this was and continues to be a source of inspiration. So is the thought that Moms and Dads, men and women of the church, have carried on the Advent and Christmas traditions through all the other historic moments of struggle and tragedy that have come to us between the end of that great war and the world-wide war on terror that now afflicts the world.

Keeping the Liturgies of the Advent Wreaths, the Christmas Lessons and Carols, and the family focus and traditions of each of our households, all matter greatly in times such as these. The certainty of "the way-laying love of God . . . breaking through to us unconditionally" again and again transforms the routines of Advent into moments where we can receive the hope that does not disappoint us. In Romans 5:5, St. Paul wrote, ". . . and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

The joy of being the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese in Newala is seeing the light of the Holy Spirit in the eyes of the people, missions, and churches from our region. One of the unique ways we are called to carry the gospel at this season are those faithful practices and traditions we have received as Anglican Christians; what you're doing matters and will help more than you know to keep the light of hope and the fire of the Spirit burning in people's lives for generations to come.

Thank you for your faithfulness in helping to accomplish this throughout the year. Now as we come to years end, please plan to remember the Anglican Diocese in Newala in your giving. Beyond your regular offerings, the end-of-the-year donations to the Diocese are always a much needed boost going into the New Year. This support makes a difference no matter how large or small and thank you again for your generosity.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you all!

Yours in Christ,

+Bishop Oscar Newala.