



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Do not be afraid: for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Christ, the Lord” (Luke 2:10).

The Angel of the Lord said these words to the shepherds at the first Christmas. They are just as meaningful today as they were over two thousand years ago. At this moment we are in the midst of a pandemic. We need some ‘good news’.

There is no question that COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on our world and on our lives. Our Christmas celebrations will be very different this year. Since extended families and friends will not be able to gather, many traditions will need to be altered. This can all be very troubling.

The good news is that COVID-19 cannot stop Christmas! We need not allow our fears and anxiety to rob us of the joy and peace that we celebrate on this feast.

If our temporal activities are significantly restricted this year, perhaps God is giving us an opportunity to contemplate the spiritual meaning of the birth of our Saviour.

In the Gospel of St. John, we are told that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). This radical love of God is the central theme of Christmas.

We need not worry or be afraid because God will never stop loving and caring for us. Like Our Blessed Mother Mary, all we need to do is trust in that love and be filled with joy.

This year, as we contemplate the Holy Family at Christmas, consider the tranquility that filled the manger scene despite the chaos of the world around them. They were in the presence of Divine Love and this brought them hope and peace.

So be not afraid and trust in God’s love for you. This is indeed the ‘good news’ that we need at this time!

May you have a blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.  
Bishop of St. Catharines