



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2022

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the ninth chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah we find these words, “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Approximately seven hundred years after the death of Isaiah, this prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. On a cold winter night in Bethlehem, we received the ‘Prince of Peace’ and the world was changed forever.

In the Gospel of St. Luke we are told that at the time of Jesus’ birth angels from heaven appeared to shepherds saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those he favours” (Luke 2:14). From that moment to the present, the gift of God’s peace has continued to be offered in many wondrous ways.

People of faith believe that Christmas is a time of miracles. A beautiful example of this truth can be found in an event that happened in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War.

On Christmas morning, after many months of fierce fighting with great loss of life, the guns mysteriously became silent. Eventually both the British and German troops ventured out of the trenches. The two enemies gathered on the battle-scarred terrain and spontaneously began to sing Christmas carols in their own languages. They also shared food and drink and exchanged simple gifts. Similar encounters took place across the entire Western Front. Historians call the event the Christmas Truce of 1914. It can also be called a Christmas miracle.

As the world continues to deal with the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the many other places where there is armed conflict, we can begin to lose heart. It is so easy to become discouraged when we do not believe in miracles. With God all things are possible!

This Christmas, let us pray for more than just a truce in Ukraine. May the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, soften the hardened hearts of those at war. May enemies, touched by Divine Love born in Bethlehem, become allies and even friends. “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those he favours.”

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