

Bishop's Christmas Greetings

GOOD TIDINGS OF

Great Joy



There is good news and there is bad news. Which do you want to hear first? That depends on whether you are the giver or receiver of bad news, and if the news-giver wants the receiver to act on the information. "Doctors must give good and bad health news to patients, teachers must give good and bad academic news to students, and romantic partners may at times give good and bad relationship news to each other, and preachers must give good news and bad news to sinners." Today, with all the negativity and perplexities in our world, I eliminate the bad news and choose to bring you *"Good Tidings of Great Joy."*

In Luke 2:10, an angel tells the shepherds out in the fields, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." Over time, it has become common during Christmas time for individuals to say "Good Tidings of Great Joy" to one another.

"Good Tidings of Great Joy" comes from the angel's words in the Gospel of Luke. The angel had come to the shepherds tending their flocks at night in order for them to know the Messiah had been born (Luke 2:8-20). Ultimately, the angel was proclaiming the

message of Jesus being born into the world.

After the shepherds had received this message of great news from the angel, they were given instructions on where to find the Messiah in order for the shepherds to worship the newborn King. The angel told the shepherds that they would find the Messiah wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (Luke 2:12).

At that moment, a huge host of other heavenly beings appeared alongside the angel, and they worshipped God by proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests" (Luke 2:13-14). Once the angels had left to

return to heaven, the shepherds immediately went in search of the newborn King (Luke 2:15).

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the shepherds had found the Messiah just as the angel had said – wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (Luke 2:16-20). After the shepherds had worshipped the Lord, they went out and told everyone about the good news of the Saviour being born into the world (Luke 2:20).



The shepherds told the good news of Jesus everywhere they went as they wanted all people to know the same message the angel had spoken to them as well as what they had seen with their own eyes. In the same way, Christians today need to follow the example of the shepherds.

We should be willingly, actively, and prayerfully going out to all people and telling them about the *"Good Tidings of Great Joy"* – Jesus. At Christmastime, *"Good Tidings of Great Joy"* is articulated from the mouths of thousands of people across the world and its true meaning is found in telling others the good news of Jesus Christ.

Christmas is the perfect time to spread the gospel and help other people come to know the Lord. Simply proclaiming, *"Good Tidings of Great Joy,"* could cause many people to approach you, inquiring about what is the meaning of your words. You will be able to happily tell them the good tidings of knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The true meaning of Christmas is celebrating *"Good Tidings of Great Joy"* – the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We speak these words because it reminds us of the birth of Jesus and how wonderful, precious, and glorious His birth was in the world. Jesus was born into the world to save us from our sins. He willingly died for us because He loves us. (Romans 5:8)

As we have known the incarnation by the message of the angel, so by the cross and passion, we are brought into the glory of the

resurrection and ascension. Praise The Lord! We are Forgiven! Praise The Lord, we have Eternal Life! Praise the Lord, we have the Comforter! Praise the Lord, we await the Redemption of our bodies! I bring you *"Good Tidings of Great Joy."*

The Christmas season can bring a mixture of emotions – joy, excitement, and even sadness. The reality is, this year in particular, many in our congregation may be grieving the loss of a job, a decline in health, or even the loss of a loved one. This Christmas season we have a unique opportunity to encourage our members with God's Word and get them excited about the promise of Jesus. Now is the time to share messages of hope, healing, and restoration... and help our members hold onto God's promises that came with the birth of Jesus Christ. Bring your congregation *"Good Tidings of Great Joy!"*

On behalf of my wife, Jennifer, four children, ten grandchildren, the NET District Executive, I extend to all our Pastors, Workers, Churches and their families, a safe yet joyous holiday season. I sincerely pray for grace, peace, and wisdom as we anticipate a Christ-directed 2022. Shalom!

In His Love

Presiding Bishop
Raymond W. Boca (Dr.)

