



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

THE MOST REVEREND COLUMBA MACBETH-GREEN OSPPE D.D
BISHOP OF WILCANNIA-FORBES

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we come to the end of 2021 we find that we are living in a world that seems overwhelmed at the moment by three big problems that many see as grave threats to our way of life and even our very existence. For many the three biggest problems facing the world at the moment are Covid 19, Climate Change, and the threat of war or economic instability caused by great powers flexing their muscles and greedy for dominance.

People's responses to these problems are interesting and diverse. Anxiety, frustration, anger and even denial of the problems are common. People, overall, because of their powerlessness to address these problems individually are looking for saviours to solve the problems for them since they cannot 'save themselves'.

Many people put their faith in scientists for salvation. Our problems can be fixed with new vaccines, alternate 'green' power sources or better defence technology to 'keep the peace'. Some turn to politicians to solve the problems and save humanity. Others turn to activist movements of 'people power' as saviours of the world that is heading for disaster.

What is sad is that fewer people are turning to God to save them in their time of need. Maybe our world is convinced that human beings alone can fix any problem, control any situation, bend creation to our will - If we make ourselves into 'gods' then there is no room left for the real God! The real Saviour!

At Christmas time we are reminded that the biggest problem facing the world are not the ones I have just mentioned but is in fact SIN.

When sin first came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, our human nature was weakened and we became separated from God. People then, as now, let sin rule their lives. If sin rules people's lives then you can expect injustice, greed envy, persecution and war to be pretty much part of the culture. Ever since that time God has been trying to reconcile us and free us from sin.

This drama of Salvation comes to its climax when the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, humbled himself and took on a human nature and was born in a little stable at Bethlehem. Why? Because God loves us so much and wanted to Save us. How? Jesus taught us how to live, and then he suffered, died and rose from the dead to conquer sin and free us.

Jesus showed us that we are pilgrims on the Earth and that our true home is in Heaven. Jesus then founded a Church so that we might strengthen one another by our common prayer and worship and be strengthened by the Grace we receive in the Sacraments in order to have a strong personal relationship with Christ, resist temptations to sin and live lives that imitate Christ and communicate Christ to our world. In living the life of Christ as a Christian there is no place for hatred, greed, envy, lust or despair. These are replaced with Love, forgiveness, respect for other people and God's gift of creation, generosity, and Hope.

If you are anxious about the problems in the world, open your heart to Christ our Saviour, Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7). Friends, Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord and his gift to each one of you is Peace!

May you all have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Peace filled 2022

In Christ Jesus

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Columba Macbeth' with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Most Reverend Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE DD
Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes