



Archbishop Miller's Christmas Message

December 25, 2019

The birth of Jesus has changed the course of human history. God became man, a Saviour who gave a new direction for us to follow.

Everyone involved in the first Christmas events experienced a transformative change in their lives. Mary and Joseph set out on a life-altering journey to Jerusalem. The shepherds were called away from their fields. The Magi responded from hundreds of kilometres away to seek the new-born Child.

After the Nativity, such dramatic changes continued. All who heard the Good News told by the shepherds were amazed. Mary took in what had happened and continued to ponder all these things in her heart.

No one comes through the celebration of Christmas with an unchanged heart.

Likewise, in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, this was a year of being led in new and challenging directions. It has been a time of self-examination and of listening, especially to survivors of historic clerical sexual abuse and to those identifying better ways to confront this tragedy. As with those involved in the first Christmas, we are invited to leave behind former ways and to follow the Spirit's guidance in more faithful directions.

Changing direction – or conversion – is always a difficult challenge. Too often we are set in our ways and resist adopting fresh attitudes and approaches. Pope Francis is particularly good at inviting us to be open to surprising directions – not with new beliefs or teachings, but with novel perspectives on our situation and a willingness to move out of our comfort zones.

During Advent we read about John the Baptist calling people to “prepare the way” for Jesus. This not only means setting out on a specific, possibly unknown path, but also making the route easier for those who will follow.

This year we were called as Catholics in Vancouver to move away from an inward focus, and toward reaching out to victims who have been hurt by those representing our Church. It's not enough to hope someone else does the difficult work of aiding the stranger on the side of the road. We are all called to prepare the way – and to proclaim to everyone God's love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ.

I invite you this Christmas to be open to hitherto unknown paths that the Lord may be proposing to you, whether it's your relationship with Him and with your neighbour, or the way you respond to the marginalized in your midst. Perhaps the way you've always done things – adequate until now – has served its purpose and it's time to explore new ways of living your life according to God's plan.



Archdiocese of Vancouver

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The good Lord has a path for you to follow. Commit yourself to finding it this Christmas season and following it throughout the new year. Whatever road he places before you is the one best designed for you to get closer to Jesus, the Child born of Mary who changed history.

With my prayers and blessing, I remain
Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver