

Andover Clergymen Offer Thoughts On Christmas

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!' (Luke 2:13-14)."

There is an aura of peace which descends upon the world during the Christmas season. There is something almost magic about the last few days before Christmas. The rich help the poor; the strong give a helping hand to those who are weak; and men are kind to one another. No one is stingy with his blessings. It's "Merry Christmas" to all in sight.

Yet throughout the world during this Christmas season are countless battlefields. In spite of the glory of Christ's birth, injustice is still the lot of many a man. Yet the message of Christmas is "peace among men". It is through the humble birth of Jesus that peace becomes an alternative for all men who will hear His voice.

Peace is a golden word of infinite worth. It is also a reality which governs the life of man of faith in his dealings with other men. If we are to have peace with our fellow man, then we must be prepared to treat him with justice and out of a sense of love.

The "peace" of the Christmas season is not merely that "certain good feeling" or that "warm all over feeling", it is rather a commitment of our lives to all men. As God in Christ loved us, so must we love Him and our brother man. Then and only then will we know the peace of which the angels sang so long ago. As we go forth from this Advent season, may we be bearers of the peace which can be found in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

REV. ALAN CHARLES MINARCIK

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, Good-will toward men". This was the message of the heavenly host on that first Christmas night. Quite a different message is now screaming at us from the sons of men. Their words are: Demonstration, Riot, Lawlessness and War. As we listen to these voices, we have a tendency to think that the angels were wrong when they spoke those words so long ago. Let us listen to all of the Christmas message and I am sure we will realize that the glad tidings which they had to bring can be applied to our hearts today.

It was a message of reconciliation with a God who was displeased with the sin and error of mankind. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord". Through this one who came we can be justified before a holy God.

"Unto you is born" indicates that this one who came identified himself with humanity and therefore he is able "to feel our infirmities". Not only does He know our sorrows and temptations but He has asked us to let Him dwell in our hearts so that He can help us overcome them.

It was also said of that one who was born on that first Christmas, that he was born a king. This prince of peace has not yet brought peace upon this earth, but we have the assurance from the Bible that it will not be long before this hope will be realized. He will return to us to set up His Kingdom in righteousness of which there shall be no end.

This is what Christmas means to me.

REV. MILTON C. HURNE

News That's Print To Fit

Well folks, if you were "Dreaming of a White Christmas" — it sure looks like your dreams have come true. With several inches of that white stuff already on the ground — and still snowing, with the thermometer around 20 and the wind making it seem like a real blizzard — about the only conclusion is: "Old man Winter is here".

And, speaking of Christmas, in this week's edition of "The News" we have done something different than in previous years. Instead of a "Merry Christmas" wish on the front page, we have given our local Clergymen a chance to express their "thoughts on Christmas" for all of their members that may not be able to attend their own Church.

Due to the make-up and composition problem, these messages had to be limited to the available space allotted, and in order not to show any partiality, their position was decided in the order that they were brought into our office with the date and time being written on each one as we received it.

Here's hoping that you all enjoy and appreciate the time and effort that our Clergymen expended — as well as their messages.

Last week, this column had to become a casualty because we wanted to bring you up-to-date coverage of the spectacular truck accident at the over-head, and this week we have had to push ourselves to the limit in order to publish before Christmas.

However, there is one item that we wanted to call to attention. And, from our standpoint of view, we hope that it can be corrected.

Several people have reported to us that they have been getting nuisance phone calls at all hours of the night and, since there is a new law that has recently gone into effect, we feel that every one should know about it.

Now, "It is a crime under the N. Y. Penal Law to make a phone call for annoying or harassing purposes. This includes calls where the caller remains silent as well as those in which the offender is threatening or obscene".

The penalty can be imprisonment for one year and \$1,000 fine! So, whoever is responsible — had better put a stop to it — or you may end up behind bars! !

We have checked with the manager of the Telephone Company and he tells us that if people report these nuisance calls to the Telephone Office in Alfred, they will be sent a card to fill out with whatever information that can be filled in. The card is then to be sent back to the Office and will be turned over to the proper authorities for action.

So-o-o, if you should get any of these calls — don't forget to report it and, sooner or later the culprit will be caught up with and put away on ice.

Then too, along unfinished business, we still have a "Letter to the Editor" as well as a picture of some of the Trout that were killed from the gasoline that was dumped into Dyke Creek resulting from the truck accident.

Our Lord has quite a number of special names which are emphasized at Christmas time. One of these names is "IMMANUEL", meaning "God with us". You and I are included in that "us", not just the world in general. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angels sang — "Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord". Isaiah had prophesied "Unto us a Son is born; unto us a Child is given".

Jesus Himself said — "I am come that you might have Life and that you might have it more abundantly", or again, "that you might have joy, and that your joy might be full. Although there are various ways by which a person can come to Jesus, only as we come through Him is it possible to come to God. He said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me".

By our personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, He restores to us all the good that was forfeited by mankind's choice of sin; Eternal Life instead of Eternal Death; Forgiveness instead of Condemnation; Accomplishment instead of wasted Efforts; Anticipation instead of Fear; Certainty instead of Doubts; Fellowship instead of Distrust; Protection instead of Defenselessness; Victory instead of Defeat.

Because Jesus Christ cared enough to take upon Himself our humanity, He became the "way" by which God can actually be "with us", in this world as well as in the next. May His Presence be real to each of you both now and in all eternity.

REV. FLOYD C. B. ALDRICH

Thousands of pilgrims again this Christmas will visit the Church of the Nativity, the traditional site of Jesus' birth. Its bells will be heard around the world, and the second chapter of Luke will be read more than any other portion of the Scripture. Why? Because the message to the shepherds is timeless and strictly up to date. The angel said, "I bring you good tidings." (Luke 2:1-20) Why was it good news?

It was a message of authority. It was not of man's design. God himself sent it by the angel. To our day of uncertainty and insecurity, the Christmas message is still good news because it is absolute. "God hath spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. 1:1,2)

It was a message of great joy. The angel said, "Unto you is born . . . a Saviour." This is the very heart of the joyous Christmas message. The glad purpose of reconciliation is constantly emphasized in prophecy and in the gospel accounts. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins." To a despairing world, burdened with sin, this is "good news" indeed!

It was a message of peace. Men have sought desperately for peace. Leagues and unions of nations have been formed, but have fallen apart. The message of Christmas is good news because, in the midst of chaos and war, the message of the Christ-child brings peace wherever it is received. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The message of Christmas is a message of authority, of joy, of peace to all people. Will you receive it this Christmas?

REV. GERALD A. WOLTER

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