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Dear Clergy, Religious, and People of God of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined.” (Isaiah 9:2) This passage from the Prophet Isaiah speaks to me very much today. I think people are seeking light – light that illumines the shades of grey and even darkness that we deal with on so many levels today. We live in a world with so much plenty and progress, and yet there is still much anguish, competition and rivalry, and degradation – of people and creation.

Amidst this situation comes Our God – the babe Jesus Christ – who comes as a new king, not in pomp and splendor, but in humility, littleness, and dependence on Mary, Joseph, and the very people and environment He ironically comes to save.

The world continues every Christmas to reflect on the **way** Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World comes to us. Indeed, the very *way* that He comes, I think, gives us more than just a hint about the *way* forward. His light does continue to illumine the darkness.

Two key lessons of the Advent season are the themes of **waiting** and **forgiveness**. The Advent season is a time of waiting – which is one of the most difficult issues for a culture and world with such abundance and focus on the immediate gratification of any want. I have learned about waiting here on the Prairies. Our farmers know this lesson well – you can put so much careful work into preparing the soil and seeding the land. However, then comes the time of waiting – which may see too much or too little rain; or too much or too little sun and warmth. Of course, there are many other variables as well. And yet, God blesses! He may sometimes lead us through an unexpected time – one we had not counted on. But God always blesses – not on our terms, but on God’s terms!


One of the other features of the spiritual life is the journey of ongoing conversion of life and heart. It is no surprise that during this season of ‘preparing the way of the Lord’ that we are also called to **reconciliation** and **healing**.

Let us all be inspired by John the Baptist who calls us to prepare for the coming of our Saviour by a *watchfulness* and *wakefulness* that features ongoing forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation.

I take this opportunity to thank you all so very much for your prayers, support and faithful work as God’s holy people. I also thank you for your inspiration and desire to realize the call to holiness. Let’s us continue to help each other this coming 2020 to *have the same mind and heart as Christ!*

Sincerely in Our Saviour,

✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God’s love to all peoples.