

PRINCE of PEACE

“Peace on earth and good will to men;” is a greeting heard during the Christmas Season. In Sacred Scripture, that phrase has been translated as “...and peace on earth to men of good will.” A more recent translation renders it as “...and on earth peace to those on whom his (God’s) favor rests.” It is the greeting of the angels as they announce to the shepherds the birth of the Savior. This is preceded by “Glory to God in the highest.”

We sing of peace. We wish peace. We yearn for peace. We celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. Yet, peace appears to be so elusive. After over 2,000 years, following that first Christmas, we should have been able to find it. Perhaps, we are looking in all the wrong places. Perhaps, we are neglecting the key to peace.

According to the Angels’ pronouncement, the birth of the Savior was to bring “Glory to God in the highest.” Peace was to come to those of “good will” – that is, to those whose hearts would be in accord with the mission of the God Who came to be among his people. Some would find that peace. Many would not. And, indeed, that is the way that it is.

As I grow older, I am becoming more and more aware of the need to “let go and let God.” That has brought me a great sense of peace personally. I have experienced that, relative to the life of our Diocesan Church. Whether it was the reconfiguration of parishes, the addressing of child abuse, or the current adjustment in the governance of our schools, I have sensed the Lord’s Spirit working things out if I but allow it.

For so many reasons, our Diocesan Church can have a sense of peace. The faithfulness of God’s people to the Church and to the Lord remains strong. There appears to be a growing realization of what is important in our relationship with the Lord and what is not. At the same time, I know that there many of those who comprise our Church who are not at peace. My heart goes out to them, for they will deny themselves of one of the most important elements of the Christmas Season.

Personally, I come to this Christmas Season experiencing a deep sense of peace. That, of course, is based not on what I have done but, rather, on what the Lord has done for us. It also comes from having a dedicated and cooperative diocesan staff, as well as from the support and encouragement that I receive from our clergy and the faithful. For all of this, I am deeply grateful.

Several of the Christmas Cards that I have received speak of peace. Combining the thoughts that they convey, I pray that the Lord of Peace dwell in our homes and in our hearts as a Diocesan Church. May this be the gift that we receive and give this Christmas and throughout the New Year of Grace 2007!

The Prince of Peace has truly come. All that is required of us is to be a people of good will and to allow him to enter our hearts and be carried in our hands. To a certain degree, peace is of our own making.