Sermon St Peter's Advent 3 2023

'The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all'

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Each year at Christmas, the Christian church makes a royal proclamation.

That in Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has appeared, in fulfilment of the Old Testament, of the human race, and of creation.

A human king, in the line of David, the Messiah has come.

Bringing blessing to all the families of the earth.

Bringing freedom, justice and peace to the world.

For Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God, is very God.

In him, God himself reigns.

Over an eternal, unshakeable kingdom.

Over a kingdom, that shall last forever.

Born of Mary, Jesus Christ, is one with God. In him, the Kingdom of the Creator God, has dawned upon the world.

This is the fulfilment of God's Old Testament promise. This is the fulfilment of man. This is the fulfilment of creation.

In Jesus Christ, born of Mary, the eternal Son of God, there before the foundation of the earth, the one in whom all things were made, and have their being, in whose hands is their destiny, in Him, God is with us, to rule and to reign in our hearts.

And by this rule of God himself in human hearts, by the Spirit of Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, God is gathering up all things, the human race, and creation itself, into himself. God is uniting the human race, and creation itself, into his reign.

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The red bows tied to the trees in the streets of Brighton Beach at Christmas proclaim it. The Christian churches in Brighton, in their liturgical worship, in the individual life of the Christian, proclaims it. The world of nature, everywhere in Brighton, proclaims it.

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near repent and believe in the good news'. The message of Jesus, is the message of the Christian church. Good news for the human race. Good news for the creation itself.

It is not yet the day, when, at Christ's return, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. That that day is coming, we were all reminded, by the lightning, and the thunder, on Tuesday night. He is coming! He is coming, to judge the living and the dead. And on that day, the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

It is not yet the fulness of the day. But in Jesus Christ, born in the manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the day is here. Already now, the new day has dawned.

The message of the kingdom of God is a message of good news of great comfort and joy for all people. The good news, has gone out to all the world. Already now, all people, all nations, are being gathered, reconciled, united, in Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God.

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

In the words of the gospel writer John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace... Noone has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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