

Primate's New Year's Day address

January 1, 2011

What follows is the text of an address by Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. As is traditional, the Primate's New Year's Day address was delivered at Christ Church Cathedral in Ottawa.

Imagine yourself in a crowded food court in a shopping mall a few weeks before Christmas. Appearing at first glance to be answering a call on her cell phone, a young woman stands up and bursts into song, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah". Her crystal clear soprano voice is immediately followed by a deep and mellow base voice echoing the same words. And so begins a wonderful rendition of *The Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's *Messiah*. The shoppers look around. Some are dismayed. Some are delighted and quickly drawn into the act. By the end of the chorus all are on their feet, and singing with heart and soul "King of Kings, Lord of Lord, and he shall reign for ever and ever", This actually happened at the Seaway Mall in Welland, Ontario on November 13th. Produced by Alphabet Photography and titled *Christmas Food Court Flash Mob* it has been viewed on the internet by some 16 million people worldwide.

It doesn't have all the finesse of a presentation of that great oratorio in a grand concert hall but it surely captures the spirit of its glorious finale. The Hallelujah Chorus inspires the way we ponder the loving purposes of God in sending his Son into the world, and pray for that day when all the peoples of the earth will be reconciled and brought together under his gentle and loving reign.

On this eighth day of Christmas, we celebrate the naming of the Holy Child. For Mary the occasion may well have brought to mind the visit of the angel Gabriel and his word concerning the child she would carry. "He will be great" and "will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the House of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end". (Luke 1:32)

For us the announcement recalls the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messianic King.

"For to us a child is born
to us a son is given
and the government will be upon his shoulder
and his name will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"

The naming of the Holy Child calls us to rejoice in the fulfilment of this prophecy and to anticipate the eternal joys of a new heaven and a new earth, held together by the one in whom "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10) – Jesus, the Christ.

“To take his name upon our lips” writes Stephen Reynolds, “still more to manifest his name in our lives – is to become what Jesus is, human life in intimate communion with God” (p. 38, For All the Saints). As the Creed puts it, he is “God from God, light from light, true God from true God”. We can only ever be but a reflection of such complete and perfect union with God, and that only through the grace of God shed abroad in our hearts. For that grace we continually ask, and especially on this New Year’s Day, praying that our lives may be worthy of the Gospel we celebrate.

Our deep and abiding desire as a Church to be “a people seeking to know, love and follow Jesus in serving God’s mission” was renewed in a profound way at the General Synod held in Halifax last June. Delegates gathered under the theme of “Feeling the Winds of God: Charting a New Course”.

One of the major reports under consideration was VISION 2019. It sets out priorities for our Church over the course of the next nine years. What I like about VISION 2019 is its focus on mission, - and our call with Anglicans worldwide to be

- learners and teachers of the love of God
- servants of the compassion of God
- advocates of the justice of God
- instruments of the peace of God
- stewards of the harmony of God revealed in the splendour of creation

I am absolutely delighted that our Church - at every level - in parishes, dioceses, and through the General Synod is living more fully into these multiple dimensions of our vocation in the world.

Where will VISION 2019 take us?

I envision a Church in which worship, while grounded and rooted in tradition, will be enlivened to meet the needs of our diverse membership. Revision of texts will be in accord with sound liturgical principles, sensitivity to the many languages and cultures within our Church, and an unabashed drawing of resources from around the Anglican Communion and the ecumenical world. A variety of media will be utilized in proclaiming the Gospel. Drama will find a new place in the liturgy. The grandeur of choral tradition will be complemented by the simplicity of Taize and spaces for deep silence before God. The sacraments of our redemption will be celebrated with sheer joy before the Lord. The fasts and feasts of the liturgical year will be so pronounced through sign and symbol, word and wonder, that we won’t want to miss a step along the way of that annual journey by which we follow our Lord’s most holy life and ministry. There will be a great gladness across this land as Anglicans happily say, “Let us go to the house of the Lord”. (Psalm 122:1) Banners will mark the entrance to our churches – banners like one I know at a church in Toronto “There is Life Here”. Through the liturgy the people will taste and see that the Lord is good, and that he calls us into that same goodness for the sake of the world. We will have been lovingly gathered, and nurtured, and then with focus and grace sent for our work in the neighbourhood and in the world.

I envision a Church entirely renewed in its commitment to biblical literacy, theological education basic and advanced and preparation for ministries of many kinds. I see a Church that will have explored a whole range of models of ministry. We will see the fruits of Back to Church Sunday and Fresh Expressions will have taken deep root in Canadian soil. I envision a Church in which children are celebrated, youth are nurtured in their faith and capacity for leadership. Ask and Imagine will continue to be a blessing for our Church and the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gatherings will call us to new frontiers in our life and witness.

VISION 2019 calls us to be attentive to our needs as a Church but also attentive to the needs of the world, to be a Church not turned in upon itself but turned out toward the world. We become bread for the hungry, haven for the homeless, light for the city and salt for the earth. In word and action we are bringing forth the kingdom of mercy and justice.

The General Synod of 2010 was a wonderful gathering of our Church. Among members there was a profound sense of being upheld by the prayers of the whole Church. Nowhere was that felt more deeply than in our discussions over sexuality, in particular, - the blessing of same-sex unions. From the beginning it was clear that the Holy Spirit whose wind and breathe we sought was at work in our midst – moving us from a model of resolution and debate to a place of dialogue and discernment. Conversations were marked by grace. Members listened with intent to one another. They felt they were being heard. Fears and hopes were expressed. So too were commitments to never walk apart but always together in Christ. The Pastoral Statement on Sexuality which emerged represents a watershed moment for our Church. It signifies a new patience in “bearing one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). Pray, dear friends, that such a spirit will continue to prevail in our beloved Church, and throughout our worldwide Communion.

I am confident that as our Communion lives into its Marks of Mission the bonds of affection by which we are held together will be strengthened. Companion Diocese relationships will continue to be a blessing. Global relations will find new expressions. The Networks for healthcare, relief and development will be strong. Together we will be advancing the Millennium Development Goals and the hope they represent for millions of people.

I especially ask your prayers for the primates as they gather in Ireland this month to take counsel over matters of covenant, unity and mission.

Pray also for Rowan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as he endeavours to faithfully fulfil his role as a focus for unity throughout the Anglican Communion.

In other paths we're called to walk, Synod made some significant steps. With respect to Indigenous Peoples, the Church enshrined in its Constitution the Office of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, adopted a Canon on Indigenous Ministries, and celebrated developments in Area Missions with indigenous leadership – all in the spirit of the desire for self-determination as expressed in A Covenant of Spiritual Renewal dating

back to 1994. I see a renewed sense of hope in the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, hope in a future in which they have voice and vote – the power to speak and the power to decide in the interests of those they are called to serve. I anticipate renewed commitments to indigenous ministries across communities in The North, and I stand with all those who call on our Church to give due attention to ministry among indigenous peoples who are living in huge numbers in large urban centers in The South. We cannot be passed by and overlooked their needs. In the name of Christ, we must reach out with hands that befriend, help and heal.

Our Church continues to honour its commitments through The (Residential Schools) Settlement Agreement. I am particularly grateful for the ministry of Archbishop Terrence Finlay who serves as my Special Envoy for the Residential Schools. He serves on the Ecumenical Working Group that tracks activities by way of follow up to The Agreement and the Prime Minister's Apology in 2008.

It was with pleasure that our Church commended the Government of Canada for signing the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in November. In doing so Bishop Mark MacDonald and I assured Members of Parliament that our Church would be following their actions in accord with the principles set out in The Declaration.

We also support in every way we can, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Appointed to hear, record, and preserve the stories of the survivors of the Residential Schools, the commissioners are hosting several regional and community gatherings. Having attended the first gathering in Winnipeg last June, it is my intention, on behalf of our Church to participate in all of the regional gatherings. This year there are two, one in Nunavut and one in Nova Scotia.

By the time the five-year mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is completed, I hope that First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples will have experienced healing, that long held derogatory attitudes towards aboriginal peoples, will be a thing of the past, and that this country will be brought to a new place of profound respect for the First Peoples of this land, and for their traditional ways and wisdom.

Our Church is deeply immersed in every effort of the churches to live more fully into Jesus' prayer "that we all may be one". Of particular note this year is the 10th Anniversary of Full Communion with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). As we mark that milestone, we look forward to a joint meeting of General Synod and National Convention here in Ottawa in 2013. We foresee the hosting of a public gathering on The Hill, addressing from a faith perspective issues of concern in Canadian society. Of particular concern is the growing number of Canadians including many children and elderly people who are dependent on food banks, a crisis demanding our attention and action as followers of Jesus.

As Anglicans and Roman Catholics mark the 40th anniversary of dialogue, international and national, we renew commitments to meet, study, and pray together for the full visible unity of the Church. Personally I long for the day when ordered ministries are recognized and Eucharistic hospitality is shared, for that is the ultimate expression of

the unity for which Jesus prays. All are welcome at His table and everyone shares the feast whose making is none but his and his alone.

2010 was a year of enormous human suffering through natural disasters in the world. Canadian response to the earthquake in Haiti and flooding in Pakistan was extraordinarily generous and I take this opportunity to thank everyone who extended the reach of our Church through the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). Faithful to its heritage, PWRDF has recently adopted as a vision to inspire its work "a truly just, healthy, and peaceful world". With other partners in the Anglican Communion, and through Action by Churches Together (ACT) we work to accompany communities in crisis, build a moral global economy, weave cultures of peace with justice, and heal Mother Earth. As we know PWRDF is deeply committed to work with refugees. Within the span of the 50th Anniversary, 38 families were sponsored by Anglican parishes across the country. In the warmth and welcome, the hope and the help you have given, I rejoice and give thanks to God. Refugees are people displaced from their homelands, most often through oppressive regimes and wars, sometimes through prolonged periods of droughts and famine. Now there are also environmentally displaced people, - the result of climate change. This issue continues to be of grave concern in the world. In the spirit of a General Synod resolution I called for strong leadership throughout the Church in educating our members on this issue and in programs for greening parishes, reducing our carbon footprint, and exerting pressures on governments to be steadfast in pledges to reduce gas emissions that escalate global warming. Let us make every effort to care for this earth our "island home".

Anglicans love to sing. In 2009 we sang "Amazing Grace" and we raised \$115,000 to fund Suicide Prevention programs in indigenous communities across the North. In 2010 we sang "Silent Night" to raise funds to build up The Bishop Ordinariate Trust Fund. The goal is to ensure provision for a fully salaried half-time position. The whole country and beyond in fact is the realm in which the Bishop Ordinary provides pastoral care and oversight for the chaplains of the Canadian Armed Forces and those they serve. Bishop Peter Coffin's ministry is deeply appreciated. In September, Brigadier General the Venerable Karl MacLean was installed as the Chaplain General of the Canadian Forces, and in November, Colonel the Venerable John Fletcher was installed as the Archdeacon for The Forces. Entirely devoted to those they serve, they are deeply aware of the demands of military chaplaincy. In deployment and in homecoming, in quiet and in danger, in ramp and repatriation ceremonies they accompany the Forces personnel and their families. As we give thanks for their ministry let us pray for them and those committed to their care. As we pray for peace in the world let us renew our pride in those who serve in the Regular and Reserve Forces. They are men and women of great courage devoted in every way to peace and security among the nations. And let us be mindful of their families who with love and fear let them go. They too make a sacrifice that should not go without recognition.

As I conclude this address, I thank the Bishop and the Dean for this annual opportunity to speak from your Cathedral – a place whose many ministries remind us as the newly installed Bishop of Cuba said, in her installation address, "The Church cannot stop from being for our society a place of gospel values, a place of humility and understanding, a

place of mercy and justice, a place of meeting and great hope". (Excerpt from sermon delivered by The Right Rev. Griselda Delgado del Carpio at her Installation as Bishop of Iglesia Episcopale de Cuba.)

As we come to 2011 "let us" as German theologian, Karl Rahner once said, "inscribe above the gate of this new year the name of God in whom is our help (cf. Ps 124:8), the name of Jesus". (p 389, For all The Saints)

To Him we come this day
to adore and receive in the Eucharist,
to view, not only as cradled in the hay
but enthroned in highest heaven,
"King of Kings, Lord of lords,
and he shall reign forever and forever.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah"