



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and make you aware of his constant presence as we enter this season of Advent. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which is usually translated as ‘arrival’. But this word also has a richer meaning that referred to the triumphal and glorious entry of a general or emperor into a city. The word Advent therefore, not only points us to the fact that our Lord Jesus has arrived at his nativity but that Jesus Christ is the Lord and king we were waiting for.

It is also important for us to remember that Jesus came to save us because he is merciful, loving, and good. Nothing forced or compelled our God in Jesus Christ to act in this way. Jesus came to save us because we cannot save ourselves. Jesus chose to take on a human body (for the purpose of giving it up later on the cross) so that we would not be swallowed by sin, death, and destruction. Jesus loves you and will not lose you.

This salvation in Jesus Christ is all we need. It is all sufficient. Because of Jesus, we do not have to worry if we are good enough or have done enough good to merit eternal life with God. The truth is on our own we would never be able to earn, merit, or deserve our life in Jesus Christ. But we do not do it on our own because at our baptism Jesus Christ has made us his own. We are not worthy but Jesus Christ makes us worthy. Jesus saves us because we can’t save ourselves, and for that we should say – Thanks be to God!

So as we walk through this Advent let us all remember how blessed we are by the Lord who loves us and claims us. This is the Lord who saves us from death and brings us into his eternal life. He does this out of his mercy and goodness. When we can offer him nothing, he offers us everything. We have been blessed by the gift of Jesus. May we be led by him to be a blessing to our communities and to this world.

Have a Happy and Blessed Advent 2017
+Bishop Michael Rhyne



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