

# THE DIOCESE OF THE WINDWARD ISLANDS

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*The Rt. Rev'd C. Leopold Friday, B.A., M.A.*

## **Bishop's Christmas Message 2017**

"The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
And they said that His name was Jesus.

Chorus:

He come from the glory,  
He come from the glorious kingdom.  
He come from the glory  
He come from the glorious kingdom.  
Oh yes, believer; oh yes, believer:  
He come from the glory  
He come from the glorious kingdom."

The Christmas message is grounded in our faith in God who created the universe and who loves and cares for all that is in it. We believe that we are called to live in harmony, love and fellowship with God, creation and one-another for we are created in the image and likeness of God. In addition we acknowledge that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it.

As persons who are created in the image and likeness of God we have misused our freedom and made wrong choices, which means that we have not been true to our calling to live in harmony, love and fellowship with God, creation and each-other. The carol states that the Virgin Mary had a baby boy, and they say that His name is Jesus. He came from the glory, He came from the glorious Kingdom. It is our faith that Jesus came to save his people from their sins. His Kingdom is glorious for with God there is forgiveness, harmony, love, fellowship, peace, joy, grace and salvation. This Christmas let us reflect on ways in which we can make life and this world more glorious for all: yes we can forgive our slanderers and those who have done us wrong/betrayed us, a companion, friend, workmate or family member. We can make the effort to live and work together with those who are different from us, from

a different church, ethnic background, political party, level of education, social and economic status. We can help those who are less fortunate than ourselves, the sick and elderly, and represent those who cannot speak for, defend or help themselves. We can be agents of reconciliation and brokers of peace. We can provide support for those whose lives have met with adversity, counselling, care, presence, meals, and financial assistance. We can assist in changing people's lifestyles – funding directly or sourcing funding for their children's education, guiding, correcting, mentoring and coaching children and those who have a tendency to follow negative influences and make poor/wrong choices. We can celebrate important occasions in people's lives; birthdays, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, anniversaries, promotions, successes, graduations, and achievements.

Christmas tells us that Christ is here in the midst of all the challenging and difficult experiences of our lives. Let us not sit idle by and wait and look to the future for a more glorious day when the world will be a better place, for Christmas tells us that Christ is here. It is here and now that we are to believe and trust in Jesus Christ, and by His grace participate in His mission of making life and this world more glorious for all. I end with the first verse of the carol: "Hark the herald angels sing"

"Hark the herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

On behalf of My Wife Lois and three daughters, Marcella, Malaika and Mikayla I take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed and glorious Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Your friend and Bishop

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Leopold Friday". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

The Rt. Rev'd C. Leopold Friday  
Bishop of the Windward Islands