



THE RT. REV. STEVEN ANDREW MILLER, D.D.

BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

*"Mild, he lays his glory by born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth born to give them second birth  
Risen with healing in his wings light and life to all he brings  
Hail thou Sun of Righteousness, Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace  
Hark! The Herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born king."  
(Charles Wesley, 1739. The Hymnal 1940, Hymn # 27)*

Dear Friends in Christ,

For me, as I imagine for many of you, it is the hymns of Christmas that speak deeply to my sacred memory. Each Christmas as I sing the hymns that I have known and sung since childhood, I am reminded of the faithful who have accompanied me on the journey of faith. I cannot sing "Joy to the World" without a part of me being the 10 year old boy singing between my father and grandfather in a little church in Rose City, Michigan. Each time I sing "O come all ye faithful," I see the face of a former senior warden at the first church I served in Virginia, coming in with gusto on the bass line, "O come let us adore him.

Many of you, I am certain, have similar sacred memories. What makes these remembrances more than nostalgic trips down memory lane is the practice and mystery of anamnesis which is central to our Christian faith. Each time we gather to break the bread and bless the cup we are engaged in this holy remembrance in which the past becomes present again so that we might meet God's future. Doing Christ's remembrance recalls the whole of what God has done in Jesus from Incarnation to Resurrection and what God is doing and will do in Christ until and through his coming again.

This year I am particularly drawn to the phrase in the great hymn by Charles Wesley, "Risen with healing in his wings." More than ever, the need for a healing of all humanity is evident. Division, strife, and separation dominate the world we live in from the cities, towns, and villages in which we live to the farthest reaches of the globe. It is to all this that God wants to bring healing, light, and life.

We gather this Christmas to proclaim that "the Word become flesh and dwelt among us." We gather to celebrate that in Jesus, the incarnate one, was light, that His light still shines and the darkness will not overcome it. Our world needs to hear this truth now more than ever. As Christians, we have been called for such a time as this to join the angelic chorus and proclaim with our lips and lives what was begun on this most holy night. And the God who humbled himself to share our human nature, will empower us by his Spirit to do this holy work.

As you worship this Christmas, my prayer is that you will know in a new and special way the power of Christ's incarnation for you. As you kneel at the Christmas crèche, may the love displayed there empower you to go forth in love to serve as herald of Christ's healing and light.

A blessed Christmas to you from all of my family. May God bless you and yours in this holy season.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "S. A. Miller".

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller  
Bishop of Milwaukee