

**Archbishop Anne's Motto for 2023**



***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.”***

**(Luke 4. 18-19)**

Inspired by Jesus's words from the Prophet Isaiah at the start of his ministry, I have chosen Luke 4: 18-19 to be my motto for 2023.

Isaiah preached these words as good and hope-filled news to a faint spirited, mourning, ash covered people in exile. He urged them to take heart because a *great exchange* would be taking place and that their days of exile would soon be over if they leaned on and looked to God.

The gospel words of Isaiah can be found in chapter 61. Instead of a faint spirit Isaiah prophesied that the people would have mantles of praise. Instead of ashes

there would be a garland, and instead of mourning there would be the oil of gladness and joy.

The people of God in exile did eventually experience that great exchange. They went to work rebuilding and restoring their cities, planting vineyards and gardens, and rebuilding the temple and synagogues. Songs of praise were heard again from within those walls. They are now some of the happiest songs we still sing in the book of Psalms.

Israel became a people of the resurrection and their worship, fellowship, and service to God shaped their national identity and their spirit.

Five hundred years later, inspired by the same Holy Spirit that hovered over Isaiah when he preached them, Jesus, the Messiah, stood in a Nazareth synagogue and proclaimed the same words from the Isaiah scroll. After he read the passage Jesus simply stated, "*Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*" (Luke 4.21) They were true words. As Jesus lived into the prophetic role, all of the *insteads* became visible through his ministry of healing, teaching, releasing, promising, and bringing hope to individuals and communities.

Eugene Peterson in his book, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, says that Jesus became a 'trading post for exchanges'. Through the power of the Holy Spirit living in Jesus, outcasts and throwaways in society were brought back into community. Women were given back their dignity and respect. The dead were raised to new life, the sick anointed with the oil of gladness. Those entrenched by sin were set free from its evil chains. A prodigal son returned home to his father's forgiving embrace.

If this is the way in which Jesus made his mission come alive, is there any reason why we should not do the same in 2023?

If being a bearer of good news is how Jesus chose to do ministry, should ours be any different?

Many people in communities within our diocese and beyond its borders live in exile, on the margins, without hope for the day let alone the future. But ours is a God who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, continues to be a trading post to make all things new.

As little 'Christs', called by name at our baptism, sealed with the life giving Holy Spirit, we are invited to stand with the one who is suffering, who is grieving, who is rejected, and be patient witnesses to God's great *insteads*, offering hope, healing, freedom, and restoration of life.

Millions of Christians have already done it. Thousands continue to do it every day in our diocese showing that Jesus Christ is a wonderful trading post. Will you join the mission and be a living trading post of healing and hope in our fragile world?

The picture I have selected to go with my motto that will be printed on the 2023 bookmarks was painted for me by Bishop John Watton of Central Newfoundland.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit to pray for each of the bishops in the Canadian Church, Bishop Watton painted a picture for each of us and presented them to us at the fall House of Bishops meeting at Mt. Carmel, Niagara Falls. The picture is titled "Sam's Pond" which is in Newfoundland. I am grateful for this gift and Bishop John's prayer for me and you.

Wishing you continued blessings on your Advent journey. May the God of peace bless you this week,

**+Anne**