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## **Archbishop's Christmas Message**

### ***Peace on Earth To Men & Women of Good Will***

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have come full circle, a journey of 365 days, to another celebration of the birthday of our Blessed Lord, who came primarily to save us. He came at a time when the world was in turmoil. Therefore, His 2000-year-old message of *Peace on Earth to Men and Women of Good Will*, is unchanged. In fact, it has remained responsive to the needs of every age, after all, this is why he came!

Alas, as we enter this special social season of *Peace*, we are challenged to ask ourselves as a nation, whether we have adequately responded to the Saviour's message during this past year? I am certain, that we can all reminisce on former times when we experienced a greater sense of *peace, tranquillity, and good will* among all citizens. We can reflect with nostalgia, on the days when the Christmas festivities were celebrated with a strong sense of family; when everyone was everyone's neighbour; when family, friends, acquaintances and even strangers just dropped in to enjoy a moment of joy and good cheer; when everyone made sure that Christmas mid-night Mass, or the Christmas morning Mass was a must; when every young boy pitched marbles and spun tops as their seasonal pastime, and by no means least, the bursting of bamboo-cans, all done to herald the Saviour's coming in local style. Then, the toy gun was a must, for the young boys in the community to entertain themselves in a game of cowboys and crooks.

Regrettably, today, our modern lifestyles leave much to be desired. We have quickly graduated from the toy gun to the fully loaded machine weapons, with their attendant consequences. Seventy-one violent deaths to date in 2022, for a country such as ours, is deeply disturbing. While every citizen continues to live in hope, for a return to the good-old-days when we can celebrate the Lord's birth in true Saint Lucian style, we are mindful that it is the responsibility of us all.

My brothers and sisters, just as the first Christmas came about because humanity was deemed incapable of self-salvation, so too, any redress to our present sinful condition will hardly happen without a conversion to the demands of the Christ-Child. Therefore, ours is a responsibility to storm the heavens with prayers, seeking the necessary

assistance for a change of disposition towards each other, for the sake of the common and greater good.

It is often said in local parlance: *“Si e pas ni situwes, e pas ni volè: If there is no enabler, there is no thief.”* I hereby wish to plead with those who turn a blind eye to our present scourge because of the benefits they receive from the proceeds of crime, namely: parents, friends, spouses, and associates of those who are directly involved, to reconsider their response. Let us choose to work together at building a peaceful Saint Lucia, for our sake and the sake of our children.

In this season of *‘Peace and Good Cheer,’* it is fitting for us to recognise the persons in our society who, by virtue of their office, serve the good of our community. They deserve our thanks and commendation for their stewardship. I refer to leaders, both civil and religious, our public servants and educators, the judiciary and law enforcement agents, the business community, professionals, private citizens, farmers, fisher folks, etc., so that their continued contribution for the well-being of our society will reflect the true objective of the Peace and Joy of the Lord’s birth.

*A merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to everyone!*