MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS 2019 AND FOR THE NEW YEAR 2020 FROM BISHOP NOEL

With charity, we’re stepping out! This is the theme of our pastoral year 2019-2020. Of the three virtues of faith, hope and charity, charity is the greatest of the three, Saint Paul told the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:13). Indeed, it was out of love that God revealed Himself to us in Jesus. It is out of love that Jesus made himself one of us and was incarnated in a place, in our history, in a family, that of Mary and Joseph. It was out of love that Jesus became a little child, poor and close to us, especially the poor and the voiceless. It is out of love that He gave His life on the cross and rose again to bring us life, salvation.

In his footsteps and in his way, we are invited in 2020 to be “love” itself, to be love at the heart of our world, to give hands and a heart to love. So many of our human brothers and sisters in our diocese, our society, our world, expect words and gestures of love from us. So many lonely or ignored people die of loneliness, boredom or abandonment. So many others live on the streets or in miserable conditions, or have lost all hope or taste for life. They expect us to welcome them, to listen, to share, to show solidarity, to be present and to love.

To have the strength and generosity to respond to their needs and calls, we must draw on God's own charity, which alone can protect us from indifference, carelessness or defeatism. At the Synod on the Amazon, Pope Francis reminded us that the people who suffer most from the damage caused to our mother earth are the poor and the destitute. Following the example of Pope Francis, in 2020, let us show boldness and creativity in order to be close to the little ones and those left behind in our world, to chart new paths in the practice of charity and solidarity.

May the Child Jesus who comes to meet us with all those who are rejected or excluded from our society find in us, welcoming and open hearts at His coming! May He make us homes of love and joyful signs of His presence! May he watch over your families, over our parishes and Christian communities, over the whole Church and especially over our world still too afflicted by violence, hatred, misery and the shameful exploitation of our natural resources!

To all of you, I wish a Christmas of peace, joy and love as well as a new year 2020 filled with God's blessings, health and happiness! May God's charity become, following the example of Jesus the divine Messiah, gift, fraternity and solidarity! God’s love comes from His heart to dwell with us; may His love come out of our hearts for our joy and for the happiness of all our brothers and sisters to whom the Lord sends us!

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With my blessing,

Your Bishop + Noel