



Reflection

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate - The Episcopal Church

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah pronounces these words to a people who remember the yoke of slavery laid on their shoulders. They've been waiting for this child, whose birth transforms that yoke into a mantle of authority. They are promised that this authority will continue to grow as the peaceable commonwealth is established – with justice and righteousness for all, and for ever.



This promise is spoken anew to people in every age, to those who have lived under oppression or in dark depression, to the hungry and ill and imprisoned. The birth we celebrate offers hope, in Word made flesh, who comes among us to heal and walk this way with us. The mantle of authority on his shoulders begins in the swaddling clothes of a child born in the humblest of circumstances. Yet that authority is recognized even by foreigners from far away. That mantle of authority does continue to grow, through a life offered for others, raised into new life, and passed on to new generations of fleshly God-bearers. Wherever justice

and righteousness is done, that authority is growing, borne on the shoulders of the Prince of Peace.

He comes again, bearing the grace of the One whose image he wears in flesh. Seek him, sing his new song, declare his glory, and tell out the good news to all the nations: God reigns, and he is coming bearing righteousness and truth on his shoulders.

May you discover that humble authority born again on the edges of the world's notice. May that royal inheritance and authority of the stable be born in you, enliven your heart, and rest on your shoulders. Bear it abroad in peace, this year and throughout the ages.