



Update from JJ TenClay December 2020

Dear Friends,

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,

For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

In some ways, 2020 has felt like an extremely long year, and in some ways, I can't believe it is already December. I wonder if some of you feel the same. Many of us have experienced deep pain, suffering, grief, and loss this year. Some have experienced isolation—physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual. For most of us, it has been a trying year.

He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger.

It has also been an incredibly difficult year for refugees and displaced people. We know that by the end of 2019 over 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced by war and violent conflict, persecution, disasters, terrorism, economic and political instability or collapse, and climate change. The same data will be collected after December 31 of this year and will be studied and released in a report by the UNHCR in June 2021, but we already know that the number will, again, show us that the number of people who are forced to leave their homes to seek refuge continues to grow at an alarming rate.

Truly He taught us to love one another;

His law is love and His gospel is peace.

2020 has also reminded us that those who are displaced from their homes continue to be vulnerable on their migration journeys and as they plead for global humanitarian assistance and welcome—the type of welcome that allows them legal protection and the means necessary to meet, at minimum, their basic needs and live in peace.

The August 4 Beirut explosion immediately displaced 300,000 people in just one day; many of those affected by the explosion are refugees (mostly from Syria and Palestine), and at least 43 refugees were killed in the explosion.

The September 9 Moria Refugee Camp fire on the island of Lesbos, Greece left up to 13,000 refugees and displaced people without food, water, shelter, and other needed services. Many are still without shelter three months later, as winter sets in for the season.

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In November, a violent conflict began in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, which has, so far, led to the displacement of one million people. Over 96,000 Eritrean refugees live in camps in the region near the Ethiopia/Eritrea border and are at great risk of starvation, death due to lack of medical care, and violence/abduction.

These are only three of the many ongoing events that continue to threaten the life and liberty of refugees and displaced people worldwide.

Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;

And in His name all oppression shall cease.

This is the good news of the gospel! 2020 has been a stark reminder that we live in a broken and hurting world, but it is a broken and hurting world loved by God. So loved by God that God sent Jesus Christ to us as a baby, who lived and ministered on this earth for 33 years. Therefore, we will continue to work as ambassadors of Christ to love one another, to be purveyors of Christ's law of love and gospel of peace, and to break the chains of slavery and oppression. **With your support, we will continue to share this good news with refugees and displaced people—those who live in our communities or have come to our countries seeking refuge, as well as those who live far, far away.**

Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,

His power and glory evermore proclaim.

His power and glory evermore proclaim.

With Love and Gratitude,

JJ TenClay (On behalf of Tim, Sophia, and Petra)



*Italicized lyrics are from the carol *"O, Holy Night"* by Adolphe Adam, as translated into English by John Sullivan Dwight