



Zurich. A message of hope in difficult times—Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider has deliberately chosen a joyful and expressive motto for the year 2021: “Our faith in Jesus Christ is to define our future,” he said. “For this reason, the motto for the new year will be: “Christ, our future!”

Following is the international Church leader’s address for the New Year:

The past year 2020 was characterised by the coronavirus pandemic. Reports have reached me from all around the world, many of them filled with worry and grief. But there is one thing that this crisis has not been able to take from us: our trust in God! He is and remains our heavenly Father, who wants only the best for His children.

This faith is also to define our future. Although we do not know what this new year 2021 will hold in store for us, we begin it in the certainty that Jesus is coming soon! The return of the Lord is not a dream we occasionally use to suppress the problems of daily life. Our belief in the return of Christ makes us strong, gives us courage, and holds us together firmly as the Lord’s church in one spirit, in one mind, and in one hope.

The coming Christ is the goal of our faith we have chosen. Therefore, the motto for this year is: Christ, our future!

Many passages in Holy Scripture emphasise this future dimension of the Christian faith. The author of the letter to the Hebrews states: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12: 1b–2a). Many battles must be waged if the victory is to be gained

in the end. Like an athlete, the believer must make an intense effort, never become slack, and respect the rules all the way to the goal. But we do not wage our battle alone: Jesus Christ stands by us.

It is in Christ that we find the energy and motivation required to endure on our path of faith.

Let us look to Jesus Christ our Lord! Neither the difficulties of life nor the conduct of others are to discourage us. And let us not feel sorry for ourselves or complain about our lot in life. That would be a waste of time and energy. Let us rather resolutely make our way to the goal.

Let us not forget that Jesus Christ gave His life for us. His death and resurrection are the basis of our salvation. He has conquered sin and death and thus all evil.

It is Jesus Christ who has elected us in full knowledge of our situation. He knows that we are capable of attaining salvation, and provides us with everything necessary for this purpose.

The promise of the Lord that He will bring His work to completion is certain: "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1: 6). His truth will prevail. It is He, and only He, who will acknowledge our worthiness at His return.

By remaining faithful and loyal to Him, we can hope in His grace to make up for our imperfections. And we can be certain that His glory will outshine all of our sorrows.

Now it is up to us to decide how we live, how we act, and how we believe. Our choice for the future defines our lives. In order to live with Christ forever we already today seek fellowship with Him. And we make all our decisions by aligning them with His teachings. His gospel is the foundation on which we build our life as a couple, raise our children, and establish our relationship with our neighbour. Jesus Christ is the model we want to resemble.

When we think about it, our congregations are comprised of people who are very different from one another. Yet this diversity is not a problem if we concentrate on what is essential: we all have the same goal and must follow the same path to reach it!

I wish you all peaceful thoughts and experiences for this year. May the blessing of God abide with you, and may the peace of the Risen One be with you! Let us keep our trust in Jesus Christ, because our spiritual future depends on it. By keeping our eyes fixed on Christ, we will reach the goal!

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider

1 January 2021

