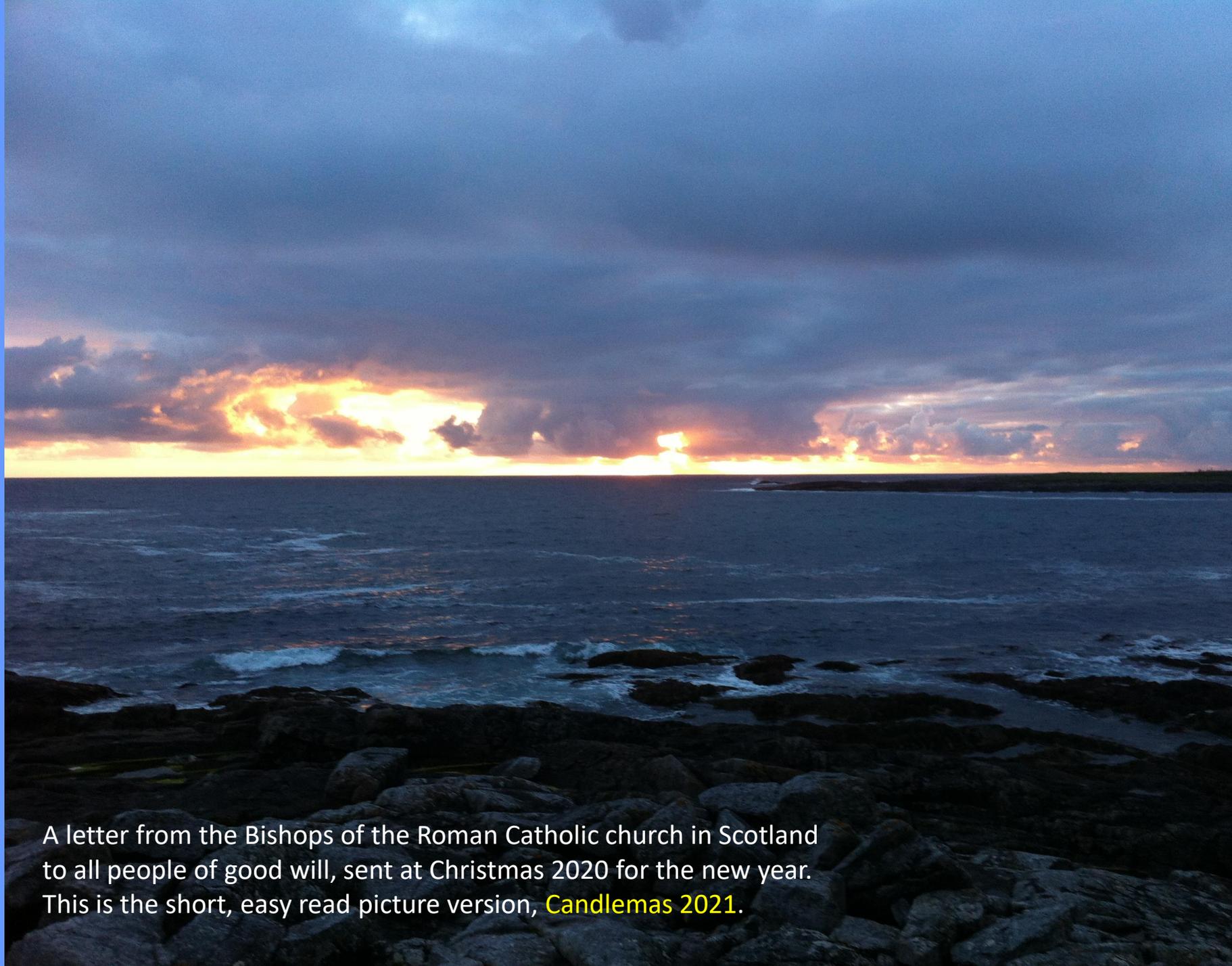


'Light
shines in
the
darkness'



A letter from the Bishops of the Roman Catholic church in Scotland to all people of good will, sent at Christmas 2020 for the new year. This is the short, easy read picture version, [Candlemas 2021](#).



We see reasons for hope, even in this year of Covid –
because nothing can separate us from the
love of God in Christ Jesus



When Covid led to lockdown in Rome, the Pope said, 'let's pray'. He thought of the friends of Jesus who were in a boat with him during a bad storm.



We used to feel powerful, and to think that we could do everything. We were wrong. The Spirit is calling us to trust in God.



NG172: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio
The Supper at Emmaus, 1601
© The National Gallery, London

We see reasons for hope. In Scotland we agreed to stay at home to save the lives of older people and those with health problems – while our sisters and brothers have been **keyworkers** all year, putting their lives at risk, to help people they do not know.

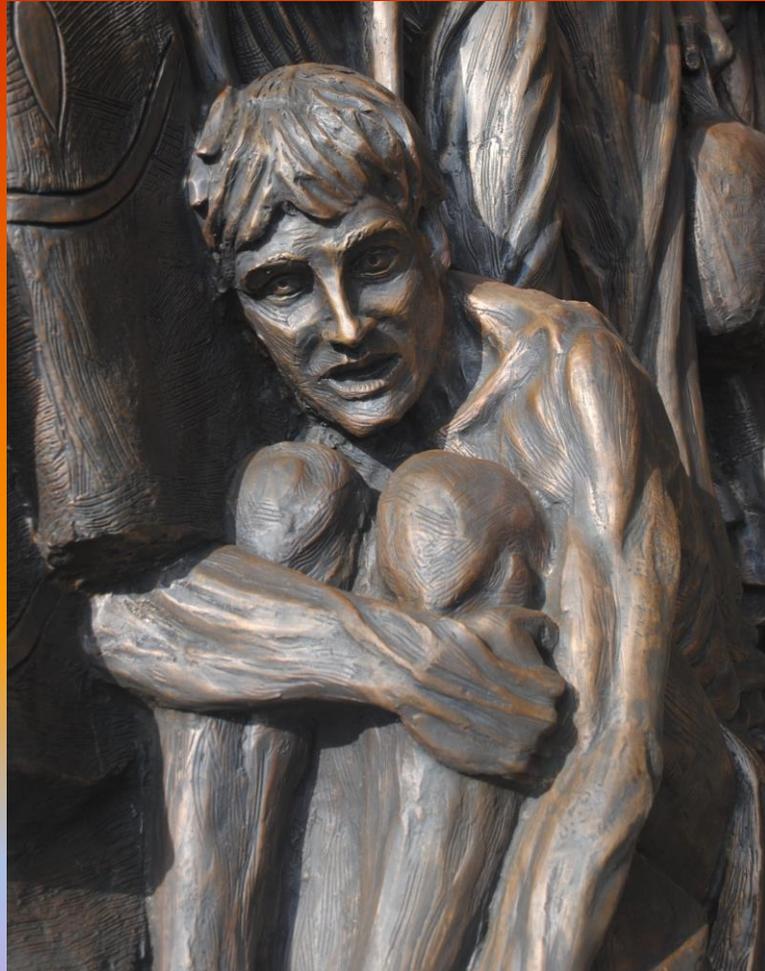


© Scottish Ambulance Service



This shows us the value of all human life. We welcome this chance to commit ourselves to protecting and supporting everyone.

**Each person,
whatever in their
life makes them
vulnerable,
is our neighbour.**



Timothy Schmalz sculptures
'Angels Unawares' & 'Homeless Jesus'
Photos © Tim Schmalz

Our full letter is online at

<https://www.bcos.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/BCOS%20COVID%20PASTORAL%20LETTER%20071220.pdf>

Let's make this message of **'love our neighbour'**
the way we all live our lives



*Triptych of Yezidi women who escaped ISIS captivity, by
Hannah Rose Thomas (tempera and gold leaf on panel) ©*

‘Love our neighbour’ comes as a message of faith – and the churches need prayer to live this out: alone and together.



The churches and the politicians can work together on this – just as doctors work closely with chaplains who also listen to patients. Don't leave anyone out.



Care workers, shop assistants, delivery drivers and others
have been celebrated as key workers – that's good.
Pay them fairly too.



© Joel Muniz,
Unsplash

**Dealing with Covid shows us what really matters –
time with friends and family, and in nature**



It's great news there are vaccines to take in 2021. Each one is good to use. We should make sure everyone across the world gets the chance to take them, not just people in rich countries.



© Timothy Schmalz:
'Angels Unawares'

Let's be more aware of the hard and heavy things in the lives of people around us – and let's do things to make it better. Each of us can take action. So can our government.



But don't rely on yourself – join up with people of goodwill who are different to you.

Jesus has gone before us to show the way.

The world was a mess when he was born in a stable on that first Christmas.

Happy Christmas to everyone, and for all of 2021,
from the bishops of Scotland.

