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# Replacing Masks of Hate with Masks of Love

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“Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.”

### James Baldwin

As we embrace this advent season, we are called to reflect on what 2020 has meant to us all. The year 2020 has called humanity to look honestly and earnestly at itself. To face the realities of the world we live in. The events of this year have caused the world to remove the window dressings which have painted a false narrative to embedded systems of racism, which have existed for over 400 years in this country, and even longer in others.

This year has exposed those inaccuracies and has begun to fill in the blanks of our existence. Some as outlined in Isabel Wilkerson’s book “Caste,” are finally recognizing that they are part of a long-running play. Each person has been assigned a costume, character, and position on the stage. I would also add, a mask to wear.

James Baldwin wrote, “Love takes off the masks that we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.” How prophetic the words are to the times we live in today. Facing a reality that the masks we wear are in many cases not chosen, but inherited or assigned. It has become the bane of our existence, moving people within preset measures, within a preset system, making us participants in this global condition.

The mask is an anchor for some, allowing access to entitlement without admitting guilt, responsibility, or the complicit behavior necessary to assure the perpetuation of the racist systems, which made their entitlement possible. Others find themselves forced to wear the mask of survivalist, conformist, or unwilling, unknowing sacrifices to guarantee or assure the validity that systemic and systematic racism is as real today as in 1619, when the first slaves arrived in Point Comfort, Virginia. This year has challenged us to examine the mask we wear and remember the words of Jesus:

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:13-13)*

These words affirm that there should be a spirit of love working in each of us. And it is that same love which should move us into action, to remove the masks of fear, entitlement, hatred, oppression, injustice, and replace them with actions of brotherly love.

As this year comes to a close we are quickened in our spirit, knowing that regardless of what 2020 might have brought, how it might have challenged us, this is not our fate, not our character or the mask we must wear.

“For to us a child is born, a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders... he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

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[June 2020](#)

[May 2020](#)

[April 2020](#)

[March 2020](#)

[February 2020](#)

[January 2020](#)

[December 2019](#)

[November 2019](#)

[October 2019](#)