



December 23, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christmas is the time to celebrate the miracle of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and joyfully proclaim that *“For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.”* (Luke 2: 11) It is a time to remember the birth of the Prince of Peace who continues to break through the darkness of the world, guiding us to share His love with all, and bring His peace to our world. During this holy season, we are especially called to pray for peace in the Holy Land, the land of Christ’s birth, whose citizens are overwhelmed with war and violence.

Pope Francis has designated 2025 as a Jubilee Year dedicated to the theme of “Pilgrims of Hope.” He writes: “Hope is a gift and a task for every Christian. It is a gift because it is God who offers it to us.... Hoping is waiting for something that has already been given to us: salvation in God's eternal and infinite love.... To hope, then, is to welcome this gift that God offers us every day. To hope is to savor the wonder of being loved, sought, desired by a God who has not shut Himself away in His impenetrable heavens but has made Himself flesh and blood... to share our lot.” (*Pope Francis, A Light in the Night, Meditations on Hope, 2024*) This is the Christmas message. I encourage all in our Diocese to reflect on how we can be bearers of hope in our own families, communities, and beyond during this Christmas season. Pope Francis suggests that: “...in the evening, before going to bed, as you’re thinking over the events you have lived through and the encounters you have had, go in search of a sign of hope in the day just gone by. A smile from someone you didn’t expect, an act of gratuitousness observed at school, a kind act encountered in the workplace, a gesture of help, even a small one.... Let us train ourselves to recognize hope. We will then be able to marvel at how much good exists in the world. And our hearts will light up with hope.” (*Pope Francis, A Light in the Night, Meditations on Hope, 2024*)

The world around is clothed in tinsel and lights to celebrate the Christmas season, while Christians find themselves wrapped in a deep spirit of hope restored. I pray that you will have a very Merry Christmas, filled with much love, and a New Year blessed with happiness, hope, and our peace. You and your intentions will be remembered in all my Masses and Prayer in the Christmas season. I humbly ask that you pray for me as well.

As we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, let us carry the spirit of Christmas with us throughout the year. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you now and always.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg