



Diocese of Fall River

Office of the Bishop

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

Christmas Message 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"For You O Lord are my Hope...my trust is in You" (Psalm 146:5).

How well this ancient Psalm conveys the true source of our joy at Christmas. For amid the darkness of winter emerges a transcendent light of hope in the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is the moment, as Pope Francis said, when *"hope came into the world"*. Through the birth of the Christ child, we experience that sense of hope from a humble manger in Bethlehem. That experience of hope should enliven our Christmas celebration.

We live in a time rife with darkness and challenges. War. Poverty. Mistreatment of those fleeing unrest in search of a better life for themselves and their families. We also have personal struggles, perhaps from illness, economic uncertainty, family conflict. Yet, Christmas reminds us that God has not abandoned us. *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"* (John 1:14). The Savior came to bring hope and joy and from this, we find strength and take comfort. Like the lighthouses that line our coast and the islands, the light of Christ endures as a beacon of love, hope, and in the upcoming Jubilee Year, renewal.

On Christmas Eve, the Holy Father Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to officially begin for the Universal Church the Jubilee Year 2025. He has chosen as its theme *Pilgrims of Hope*, writing, *"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire..."*

The Jubilee Year offers us a wonderful opportunity to reinvigorate our faith, and as a Diocese, we are looking forward joyfully to this event, which the Holy Father has said will be *"of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church."*

Beginning soon, you will learn more about the opportunities for renewal, reconciliation, and recommitment in our Diocese of Fall River as part of our observance of Jubilee Year 2025. I encourage all our faithful people to become pilgrims of hope and, like the three Wise Men we commemorate on Epiphany, welcome Christ with open hearts, minds, and a desire for hopeful transformation.

It is my sincere prayer that during this Christmas season, we may all be restored and renewed as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. I pray that His peace and hope will fill our hearts and homes, and His light will guide us in this Jubilee Year.

I wish you and your loved ones a very happy, joyful, blessed and Merry Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V.
Bishop of Fall River

