

Bishop Fabbro's 2024 Christmas Message

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our Advent journey as a Diocese has been a time of grace preparing us to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. Traditionally at Christmas, the joy of our encounter with Jesus overflows in gatherings, meals and activities with family and friends. We are especially aware of those most in need in our communities and our hearts reach out to them in acts of charity.

As I look back over the past year, I thank God for the many blessings I have witnessed. There are so many signs of hope in our Diocese. Mass counts in our Families of Parishes in all parts of the Diocese continue to increase. Many of our youth and young adults are expressing a desire to know Jesus and deepen their relationship with him. I am impressed with the generosity of families and groups in the Diocese who are involved in their local communities assisting those who are poor and living on the margins. Our parishes are sponsoring refugees who come from across the world seeking safety and a new life in Canada. These are the seeds of the Gospel bearing fruit in our world today.

This year, our celebration of Christmas will lead us into Jubilee Year 2025. The theme of the Jubilee is *Pilgrims of Hope*. The tradition of jubilee years can be traced back to the Book of Leviticus. Occurring every 50 years (every seventh Sabbath year), they were a sacred time for the people and the land to rest, to seek God's mercy, to forgive debts and to free prisoners. Like the Sabbath, a jubilee year was a time to

cultivate right relationships with God, with others and with the earth.



The Holy Father's Jubilee prayer refers to the grace that reawakens in us "a yearning for the treasures of heaven." It states: "May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our redeemer throughout the earth." The prayer is an urgent plea on our part that Christ bring peace in a world that continues to see too much war and too many displaced people.

To launch the Jubilee Year in our Diocese, I will celebrate a special Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 29, the Feast of the Holy Family. That Sunday a Mass will be celebrated at all the

Families of Parishes across the Diocese. I invite the faithful of the Diocese to participate in these Masses which will unite us spiritually with Pope Francis and the universal Church as we, Pilgrims of Hope, begin the Jubilee.

I wish you a blessed Christmas and assure you of my prayers. Let us join together in asking Our Heavenly Father, "may the *faith* you have given us in

your son Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of your Kingdom."

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Ronald Fabbro, CSB*

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
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