



## DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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November 26, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the holy season of Advent, the Church invites us to slow down, watch, and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord. These weeks before Christmas are marked by a quiet yet profound anticipation—an invitation to renew our trust in God, to awaken our sense of hope in God's promises, and to recognize the many ways Christ is present among us even now.

During a recent audience with pilgrims from Latvia, Pope Leo XIV said that "Hope, which is the central theme of this year's Jubilee, does not mean having all the answers but rather it calls us to put our trust in God and to follow Christ more closely."<sup>1</sup> Advent offers us this very opportunity. In a world often filled with uncertainty, conflict, and distraction, Advent invites us to turn our gaze toward the One who comes to bring light into our darkness, hope into our challenges, and peace into our unrest.

This season also encourages us to be attentive to God's grace in the present moment. Pope Leo further reflected, "While we are encouraged by hope, at the same time, we need to unite it with the virtue of faith in order to keep our eyes on the present and see the many ways that God is blessing us here and now."<sup>2</sup> Advent is a time to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christ's birth while at the same time recognizing His presence already at work in our homes, our parishes, and throughout our Diocese. It also means recognizing Jesus where we do not expect to find Him, in the poor, the marginalized, and the stranger.

Each candle of the Advent wreath reminds us that Christ's light grows steadily, even gently, in our lives. We are called to carry this light to others—especially to those who are lonely, struggling, or seeking meaning. Simple acts of charity, compassion, and kindness can illuminate another person's life in extraordinary ways.

My prayer for you and your families is that this Advent will be a time of grace-filled renewal. May your hearts be strengthened in faith, your spirits lifted in hope, and your actions rooted in the love of Christ who comes to dwell among us.

May Mary, our Blessed Mother, who awaited the birth of Her Son with joyful trust, continue to intercede with Her Son for us during this holy season and throughout the new year.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior  
Bishop of Harrisburg

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<sup>1</sup> Leo XIV, "Greeting of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to the National Pilgrimage from Latvia," *The Holy See*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/november/documents/20251124-pellegrinaggio-lettonia.html> (accessed November 25, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Leo XIV, "Greeting of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to the National Pilgrimage from Latvia," *The Holy See*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/november/documents/20251124-pellegrinaggio-lettonia.html> (accessed November 25, 2025)