



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

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"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once again, we approach the joyous celebration of Christmas, and I am filled with gratitude for the many blessings God has bestowed upon our Diocese this year. In a society that prefers secular ways of celebrating Christmas, we need to pause and reflect upon the wonder of the Nativity—God becoming one like us, born in a humble stable, in the darkness of night, and yet bringing the light of hope to all. This year, as we gather in our parishes, homes, and communities, we remember that this Child is the Light that shines in our hearts, guiding us in love, compassion, and peace.

Christmas, at its core, is about God's presence among us. The birth of Christ reminds us that He came to bring hope and healing to a world often marked by struggle, pain, and uncertainty. We celebrate His coming both as a historical event and as a present reality. Amid our own challenges, we are invited to recognize the presence of Christ in our midst, strengthening us for the journey ahead.

I invite you to join me in prayer for those who are facing difficult times as Christmas approaches. Please remember the poor, the lonely, the sick, immigrants and refugees, victims and survivors of human trafficking, those who are incarcerated, and all who are separated from their families this Christmas. The Church, especially here in the Diocese of Harrisburg, remains committed to supporting and caring for all members of our community, regardless of their background or circumstances. We have witnessed remarkable acts of charity, kindness, and service this year, and I am deeply grateful to you—our clergy and religious, lay leaders, and all the faithful—for your continued dedication to making a difference in the lives of those most in need. Our local Church is a beacon of hope to those who feel alone and marginalized, especially those who are vulnerable, displaced, or struggling to find a home.

Christmas is the promise that we are not alone in our struggles. Christ did not remove Himself from the brokenness of our human condition, instead He experienced our poverty. Jesus always identified with the spiritually, physically, and materially poor of this world. The Child who drew His first breath in a manger in Bethlehem was the Christ of Calvary who gave His life that we might one day share eternal life with Him. The Christmas story reminds us that God is to be found right before our eyes in the ordinary, in the people and the situations we take for granted. If the glory of God that comes to us as a baby is not to be lost, we must ask the Lord for the grace in this short life of ours to do things His way. By softening our hearts and sharing what we have with the poor and the needy, we lessen the gap between what we are and who we should be.

On behalf of the entire clergy, consecrated religious, and staff of the Diocese, I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and joyful Christmas. Be assured of a remembrance in my Christmas Masses and Prayers, and please pray for me as well. As Pope Leo reminds us, "Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, who generously gave her "yes" to participating in the work of salvation, to intercede for us and accompany us on the path of following the Lord, so that we too may become joyful laborers in God's Kingdom." (*Angelus*, July 6, 2025) As we prepare for 2026, may Christmas be a reminder to all of us that Christ's light still shines in our world to reassure us that His love will prevail and His peace will reign forever.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg