

# A Christmas Message from Bishop Fabbro

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

My greetings to you during this Advent season as we solemnly prepare for the joy-filled celebrations of the birth of our Saviour on Christmas Day. This is always a special time of year for the Church. While the days outside grow colder and shorter as winter descends upon us, we feel a special unity in the warmth and light of our community and our worship.

On Christmas Day, we recall the words of St. Athanasius, "He became as we are that we might become as He is." These words summarize the essence of the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus entered our world to minister to us and ultimately sacrifice himself to redeem us from our sins, so that we may live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In addition to the normal celebrations this season, after Christmas we will have a special Mass to close the Jubilee Year in the Diocese. Pope Leo XIV and other bishops will do the same in Rome and around the world on Sunday, 28 December. The theme for the Jubilee Year is "Pilgrims of Hope". It is fitting to look back on the year at the many signs of hope we have seen as we celebrate the birth of Christ, the source of all hope.

In many of our Families of Parishes across the Diocese, I have heard that there has been an amazing increase in the number of adults seeking to convert to Catholicism. Recently at the seminary, so many young men registered to visit for a "come and see" weekend to explore a calling to the priesthood that it was filled to capacity. Our youth ministry had strong responses to all of its events this year, from Theology on Tap, youth leadership camps and a sold out young

adult Advent retreat at Holy Family Retreat House. What wonderful signs of hope that our prayers, our mission and our discipleship are yielding such abundant fruit! By our faith-filled presence in the world we are showing how our love for each other embodies Christ's love and its enduring meaning in the world. As he served us by his Incarnation and Passion, so we serve others.

Reflecting on the Jubilee Year, Pope Leo XIV echoed this sentiment when he said to the youth gathered outside of Rome: "I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Hope...With her help, in every part of the world, continue to walk joyfully in the footsteps of the Saviour, and spread your enthusiasm and the witness of your faith to everyone you meet!"

Hope and joy are infectious. They bring strength to those already with us and will bring to us people who are searching for community, belonging and meaning in life beyond material possessions.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. May your Advent and Christmas celebrations be full of hope and joy. I want to assure you of my prayers, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, our diocesan patron, intercede for all in our diocesan family. May the radiant light of her Son shine brightly on us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Ronald Fabbro, CSB*

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB  
Bishop of London

