



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

*Bishop da Cunha's 2020 Christmas Message*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Christmas is upon us, although seemingly a bit different this year. Because of the pandemic, many of us will not be celebrating in the ways we typically associate with Christmas - large family gatherings, holiday parties, seasonal concerts, and caroling.

However, I firmly believe that this can be a very special Christmas with less emphasis on many of the external and social dimensions of the season. What we have instead is an opportunity to focus more on the spiritual aspect—the true meaning of Christmas: the coming of Christ into our lives and into our world. So my prayer and hope for each one of you is that, as you celebrate Christmas this year - as family, as friends, as a community of faith – Jesus will be at the center of all that you do, the purpose for all you do and give meaning to all you do. Let us put Jesus back into Christmas, and as the saying goes, make Jesus truly the “reason for the season”.

This year, more than ever before, is a time to remember the blessing of the Octave of Christmas. The Catholic Church does not keep the celebration of Christmas to December 25<sup>th</sup> only. Christmas is celebrated over eight days, from Christmas Day to January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. What a marvelous opportunity to embrace the joy of the season, allowing the Light of Christ to dispel the darkness of the past nine months. Just as I did during Advent, I again encourage you as a family to place Christ at the center of your celebrations.

To all of us in the Diocese of Fall River, may the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace, fill us with a new peace, one that only He can give. Let us embrace not only His peace, but the joy of this season. I believe we will get through all the challenges ahead of us with the Lord's help. In His presence, in His grace, we'll reach a unique place this year where we can truly say that Christmas is about Christ.

May the peace, hope, and joy of this season be with us now and remain with us far beyond this Christmas. May these gifts, that only God can bestow upon us, reign in our hearts, in our homes, and in our world. May God bless you and your loved ones, and may you enjoy a very happy, joyful, blessed, and Merry Christmas.

*Merry Christmas! Feliz Natal! Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noël!*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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