



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

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

In this familiar passage from our Mass on Christmas, we read that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. “For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:5).

Most of the readings for the liturgies on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day tell of the coming of Jesus as a time of peace and remind us that He is the true source of peace, forever holding for us that great gift. In Isaiah, we read, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news” (Is 52:7).

And from the Gospel of Luke, “A multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:13-14). Even the setting of the birth of Jesus is reported by the Evangelists as one of simplicity and peace. “She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk 2:7).

Yet, as we once again celebrate the beautiful feast of Christmas, peace remains elusive for too many and in too many places. We see a world that is torn apart by war and violence, inflicting unimaginable pain and suffering upon countless people. Sadly, we see these things occurring because too many people have rejected Jesus, rejected what He stands for, rejected His example of a life of humility and simplicity, rejected His teaching about love and His message of peace. When humanity becomes indifferent to the person and teaching of Jesus, when we allow self-centeredness to prevail and hatred to fill our hearts, evil will grow in the world, and suffering will befall all humanity.

My hope is that during this Christmas season, parents will take the time to teach their children about Jesus and all He taught and did— bringing Jesus into their Christmas celebrations. I pray this Christmas will be more about the miraculous birth of Jesus and less about Santa Claus and that it will be more about simplicity of life and less about consumerism. My greatest desire for each of you is to see this joyous season as one that is more about praying together at home and in church and less about social media and isolation.

Christmas brings the best of God to humanity, His best present to us; therefore, it should also bring the best out of humanity, our best to God and to each other.

During this holy season, please be assured of my heartfelt prayers. May God bless you and your loved ones, and may you enjoy a very happy, joyful, blessed, and Merry Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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