



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

Bishop da Cunha's 2018 Christmas Message

Dear friends in Christ,

This year that is coming to a close, has been a year full of challenges for our world, our country, our diocese and for the Universal Church. We have seen natural disasters: fires destroying homes, lives and entire communities in California; we have seen powerful hurricanes affecting the lives of millions of people; we have seen violence in our country and around the world; we have seen racial tensions and migrants suffering from displacement. We have seen scandals ripping through the heart of the Church and affecting the faith and trust of God's people in the Church and her leaders. We have seen the face of sin and evil all around us.

In our own diocese, four churches closed: Saint Bernadette, Holy Rosary, Holy Cross and Saint Anne. As Bishop of Fall River, these were difficult decisions to make, knowing that closing these beloved places of worship would cause tremendous sadness for the faithful parishioners of these parishes.

On the other hand, we have also seen commitment of so many good people to remain faithful and connected to God and the Church. We have seen the solid faith of so many who are not abandoning God or the Church. We have seen people fighting the evil of racism, working to eradicate the sin of sexual abuse, and dedicating their talents to protect life and to protect this planet, our common home. It is because of the generosity and commitment of so many good people, and because we know that God will never abandon us, that hope is kept alive. God's grace and our faith continue to help us remain committed to making this world a better place.

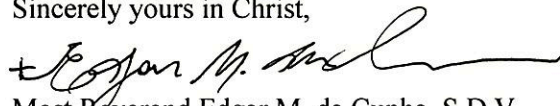
As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember that when Jesus came, He did not find a peaceful, loving world; He found a world filled with discrimination, division, violence and war. Jesus Himself was a victim of these evils, but He faced these evils head-on because He is the Prince of Peace.

Jesus comes to us again this Christmas, in the midst of all the evil in the world, to bring peace. He asks us to embrace with Him the mission of transforming the world by eliminating what is evil in ourselves first. "Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye" (Mt. 7:5). Christmas is the perfect time for us to pause and reflect on how we each contribute to what is not going well in the world and how we can contribute to make the necessary changes. The message of peace and Salvation that Jesus brought us 2,000 years ago will only be realized when we accept our responsibility to make a difference through our faith and with our talents.

This Christmas, as we gather with family and friends, let us remember that Christmas is much more than just a holiday or feast; it is a Sacred moment celebrating the coming of Christ to save us and our world and entrusting us with the task of continuing His mission of saving and Sanctifying the world. Let us pass on to our children and young people the values we received from our ancestors and rekindle the real Spirit of Christmas in our hearts, our homes, our families and throughout the world.

Merry Christmas! Feliz Natal! Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noel!

Sincerely yours in Christ,


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