



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

Bishop da Cunha's 2021 Christmas Message

A Season of Opportunity

Dear Friends in Christ,

Opportunity is defined as a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. The last two years have presented us with various circumstances, some extremely difficult, with which we can do something beautiful. We can come together and use these moments to breathe fresh hope into our homes, parishes, and world. While the Covid-19 pandemic continues to concern us, and require our caution, I look toward the celebration of Christmas and the New Year that is nearly upon us with expectant hope and faith.

This year, Pope Francis invited the whole Church to join on a two-year journey (2021-2023) to focus on synodality: a decisive theme for the life and mission of the Church. The Holy Spirit is undoubtedly moving in our Diocese. As the theme of my pastoral letter, I chose *Journeying Together: With Jesus on the Path of Faith and Hope*, shortly after Pope Francis announced the synod theme, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*. Synodality asks us to consider: how can the Church better function as the Body of Christ?

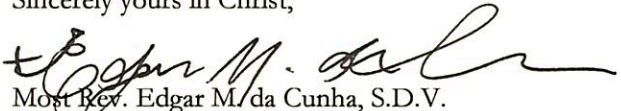
The central hope for us embracing this synodal process is for all of us to become part of a caring and listening Church. Journeying together requires a great commitment to listen to the voices of all who make up the People of God. Individually and as a parish, we have an opportunity to embrace the process as a means for growth and creating meaningful connections. First, during this joyous time of holiday gatherings, either in person or virtual, open your heart to truly listen to your friends and family—pay attention to their cares and concerns; what a magnificent way to experience the synodal process in your life. Second, the synod will create opportunities for parishes in their revitalization efforts. What remarkable potential the formal and informal coming together of the People of God presents.

I also look forward with faith and hope to the nationwide Eucharistic Revival set to launch next summer and conclude with a Eucharistic Congress in 2024. I am truly excited as plans are taking shape for this initiative. I can already envision the many blessings these will bring to the Church at large as well as to the Diocese of Fall River. The three years working together to better understand and communicate the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist will bring innumerable graces. I have no doubt hearts will be set aflame, people's faith will be reignited, and souls will grow ever closer to Christ.

During this Christmas season, I pray that we all experience a renewal of faith and hope as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. May our celebrations strengthen us to remain steadfast in our desire to share this Good News with the world. May we see all the good things put into motion this year come to fruition in our lives, our Diocese, and the world. May all answer God's call to be a part of the revitalization and renewal of the Church, through our love, dedication, and perseverance as disciples and witnesses of our Eucharistic Lord.

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

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