



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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A Christmas Message, 2025

Dear members of the household of the faith,

As we move into the last days of Advent and see the great feast of Christmas just ahead, I want to extend to you my hope that you and your loved ones will experience a renewal of your faith and love during this holy season.

Remember what we celebrate: *God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that anyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life* [John 3:16]. This is no small matter. God became man in Jesus so that our twin enemies, sin and death, might be defeated and we might become by grace the holy children of God we were created to be and inherit the fullness of eternal life.

In a world full of conflict and suffering, what God has done – what Jesus preached and the Church continues to proclaim – is truly good news. It's too good to keep to ourselves. I urge you to speak to others of your faith in Jesus Christ when opportunities present themselves and tell them how your relationship with him within the Church he founded has brought you strength and blessings. *Do not be afraid*, says the Lord; *From now on you will be catching men* [and women and children, too! Luke 5:10]. If a fisherman, at times headstrong, at times timid, could tell others of Christ, so can you and I.

A beautiful Christmas carol begins: "It came upon a midnight clear that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, from heaven's all-gracious King. The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing." It is Jesus our Lord who brings peace to human beings, both the inner peace that comes from a clear conscience and trust in God, and peace among people, who learn to forsake jealousy and violence and embrace friendship and mutual aid. It is that Lord whom we must serve and whom we must make known to others.

Hear the angels sing once again of our Savior's birth. Rejoice that God has not abandoned us even if we have so often abandoned Him. Love is at the core of God's being. Let us learn from Him to love and to share with others the faith that is fulfilled by love.

A Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year to you all!

Sincerely in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan

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Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston