



BISHOP'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE — CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Diocese of Peterborough,

The celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus is soon upon us, and every Christmas invites us to embrace joy, thanksgiving and hope. In the child born for us and the son given to us—as foretold by the prophet Isaiah—we see God's unbounded love for the world.

Our recently departed Pope Francis opened the *Jubilee Year of Hope* on Christmas Eve last year. Our Holy Father Pope Leo will conclude the Jubilee on the *Feast of the Epiphany*, with the closing of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. This Jubilee has been an occasion for all Christians to embrace the great virtue of hope—a hope founded on God who has revealed his love for us in Jesus Christ. I pray that through the graces of this holy year all of us have been renewed in hope, which was the fervent prayer of Pope Francis when he dedicated this year to the theme, "*Pilgrims of Hope*".

As we prepare to close the Jubilee Year on the *Feast of the Holy Family* (along with all dioceses outside of Rome), I find myself looking back on the graces of this Jubilee in the Diocese of Peterborough. Many pilgrimages were made to our four Jubilee churches, where people experienced the mercy of God through the Jubilee Indulgence. Numerous celebrations were held in the past twelve months, acknowledging the rich diversity of all that the Church does. These included Jubilees for men and women in Consecrated Life, Youth and Post-Secondary students, and members of Lay Organizations highlighting the vibrant life of faith in our diocese. Study and faith-sharing groups in many of our parishes explored the profound themes of this Jubilee. Our liturgical celebrations and gatherings on the *Feast of the Assumption*, and the *World Day of the Poor* were superbly organized and well-attended. The hundreds of people of all ages who participated in our Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Martyrs' Shrine in Midland can attest to what a special day of grace it was.



The Jubilee was made even more special in our diocese as it coincided with the bicentennial of the Peter Robinson migration, so fundamental to the founding of Peterborough and surrounding communities. Those who came two centuries ago brought their own faith and hope as they settled in what has since become the Diocese of Peterborough. Among other things these celebrations were a reminder of the treasure of faith that was bequeathed to us by our ancestors.

As we approach the end of this year, I look forward to welcoming you to the closing Mass of the Jubilee, being celebrated on the *Feast of the Holy Family*, December 28th at 10:30 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains. It will be an occasion for prayer, rejoicing and thanksgiving to God, as we look back on this Jubilee Year.

The Jubilee Year of Hope will end, but the great gift of hope continues in the Church, and it inspires us to share that message with all we meet. That hope burns brightly at Christmas time when our Lord came to us as a little child, and as a light shining in the darkness of our world. May the rich treasure of hope, founded on all that God has done for us, be with you and yours this Christmas season and well beyond, as we continue together our journey as Pilgrims of Hope.

Yours in Christ,

+ **Daniel Miehm, Bishop of Peterborough**