



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 2024 Newsletter

Advent: A Pilgrimage of Hope

Dear Families,

On Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, marking the official beginning of the Jubilee Year of 2025: Pilgrims of Hope. This Jubilee Year, often referred to as a Holy Year, is traditionally a time for spiritual renewal, repentance, and reconciliation, with the Church inviting the faithful to reflect on their spiritual journeys and return to God with renewed hearts.

Much like the Jubilee Year, Advent is also a pilgrimage where each step brings us closer to celebrating Christ's birth and deepens our longing for His return. As we enter this season of Advent on December the 1st and begin our own journey of hope, we are called to step back from the busyness of daily life and approach Advent as true pilgrims, leaving behind distractions, seeking moments of stillness, and reflecting on our relationship with God and others.

Pope Francis reminds us that as pilgrims of hope, we are called to serve others as messengers of mercy and witnesses to God's love. "Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring" (*Spes Non Confundit*, Pope Francis's Bull of Indiction for the 2025 Jubilee Year).

Indeed, the Jubilee Year is a powerful reminder of the hope we share as Christians—a hope rooted in the knowledge that God's love is ever-present, and that as we journey together, we are always called to be bearers of that hope to the world, bringing comfort to the desperate, companionship to the lonely, and support to the needy.

United as Pilgrims of Hope, let us journey together toward the light of Christ, sharing His peace and love with all we meet. May this Advent season be one of spiritual renewal, bringing us closer to God and to one another.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton