



DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

Office of the Bishop

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January 17, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The year 2025 holds a unique significance for the Church as Pope Francis has declared it a Jubilee Year of Hope. This designation offers the Church, and each one of us, an opportunity to look inward and strengthen our relationship with our Lord while also encouraging us to invite others to experience God's love and mercy.

We are so blessed here in the Diocese of Raleigh to enter 2025 as the first of the next 100 years of our diocese. As we celebrated our centennial year, we recalled the missionary spirit of those who came before us and shared their Catholic faith across eastern North Carolina. It is only fitting that we begin anew, as "Pilgrims of Hope", with a renewed fervor to grow our Church.

This Jubilee is an opportunity to deepen our relationship with Christ. Let us spend more time in prayer and in the company of our fellow pilgrims as we walk together on this journey of Hope. Let us rediscover the beauty and truth of the Gospel and allow it to transform our lives. Let us approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with open hearts, seeking to heal the wounds of sin and experience the joy of God's merciful embrace. And as we receive mercy, we are called to extend it to others. Let us forgive those who have wronged us and strive to be instruments of hope and reconciliation in our own communities and our own families.

While many of us are not be able to make a pilgrimage to Rome during this Jubilee, we may take this opportunity to visit the pilgrimage sites in our diocese, the Basilica of Saint Mary in Wilmington and Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh as part of this Holy Year.

I would also encourage the faithful to visit other significant parishes in our diocese. Our Lady of Guadalupe, centrally located in Newton Grove, has held a special role in the mission of the Church in eastern North Carolina. Bishop Vincent S. Waters, Bishop Joseph Gossman and many priests of the diocese are buried at the cemetery there. This year, you may also wish to visit some of the first Catholic Churches in our diocese as a "Pilgrim of Hope." Mother of Mercy Church in Washington, St. Patrick Church in Fayetteville and St. Paul in New Bern, known today as Old St. Paul, each have claim as being the first parishes in what would become the best diocese in the world.

May this Jubilee Year be a time of profound spiritual renewal for our diocese as we begin our next 100 years. I pray that each of us may experience the fullness of God's mercy and love for us, the hope which it inspires in our daily lives, and to share that with the world.

In Christ,

† Luis Rafael Zarama
Bishop of Raleigh