

Bishop Fabbro's 2019 Christmas Message



My dear brothers and sisters,

I offer you my warmest greetings this Advent season. We have embarked on a new liturgical year, and we joyfully celebrate our faith, our gifts, and our love for one another.

In churches across our diocese, and in many homes, the Advent candles shine brightly. These candles, three violet and one rose, mark the passage of the four weeks leading up to Christmas. With both solemnity and joy, we are reminded of Christ's nativity, when the Word made flesh brought hope and light into the world. In Catholic tradition, adventus celebrates the first "coming" of Jesus as God incarnate, and helps us prepare for his promised second coming as Judge at the Last Day.

In a special way, our own baptismal calling sends us out to be witnesses, by our words and deeds, of the light of the Saviour, a light which shines deep within each of us. Jesus commissioned us to go forth and spread that light to all nations; this is at the very heart of my vision of the Diocese of London being a mission-oriented Church that forms disciples of Jesus.

Earlier this year, at Pentecost, I proclaimed the Year of Prayer for the Diocese. From June 9, 2019 until the next Pentecost Sunday on May 31, 2020, we are praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we seek to be missionary disciples of Jesus. We ask the Holy Spirit, whom we received at our Baptism, to renew us, to transform us, and to help each of us to be a true missionary disciple.

Pope Francis said, "You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. This is how prayer works." Inspired by his example, and by the people in our diocese whose faith is evident in action, this year on the World Day of the Poor, I announced the Pope Francis Fund and committed one million dollars to be endowed for the ongoing benefit of people who are poor and needy. As you know, there are many people in our cities who are struggling to meet basic needs such as housing, food, or clothing. I announced the Fund publicly so that agencies know about a potential source of funding, to show that caring for the poor is a priority for us, and to invite others to join in this outreach.

The world continues to change at an incredible pace, and people, both religious and non-religious, are struggling to find meaning and purpose in their lives. As she always has, the Church encounters people where they are and is eager to share the Good News. Let us be a bright beacon of light that illuminates the darkness with warmth, love, and truth.

Together, as disciples of Christ, we bring his light to the world. I encourage you to stay closely connected to your parish and faith community and to join us this Christmas to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. Please pray for each other, for your priests, for Pope Francis, and for Bishop Joseph and me.

May the Lord bless you with peace and love this Christmas, as well as our friends, neighbours, and all the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.*

Most Rev. Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.
Bishop of London

Diocese of London: *being a mission-oriented Church that forms disciples of Jesus.*