



Office of the Bishop

## Christmas Message 2015

December 12, 2015

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

As you and I celebrate Christmas with loved ones, as your brother and bishop it is a pleasure for me to wish you and yours God's choicest blessings as we remember the birth of God's great gift to us, his Beloved Son Jesus, the Christ, born of Mary.

At the request of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, we have begun the *Jubilee of Mercy*. We are reminded that when God first revealed his name to Moses, he said, "I am who I am." (Ex 3:13) Hebrew scholars interpret this name as meaning "I am the One who will always be there for you." And on another occasion, God referred to himself as "a God merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). In the fulness of time, God became one of us. Jesus is the Incarnation of the Mercy of God! May the liturgical celebration of his birth be for us an occasion to embrace and appreciate ever more deeply the awesomeness of this mystery.

In his exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis reminded us that as women and men of faith, we are "missionary disciples" sent to the peripheries of our world. This year, as we "pass through the *Door of Mercy*," may we taste the joy which comes from encountering the resurrected God. May this year be an occasion for us to profess our faith with renewed conviction, strengthen us in giving witness to mercy; a time to experience and embrace the mercy of God towards us and become instruments of God's mercy to others. May this year give the Church new impetus as we commit ourselves to being, as Church, "an oasis of mercy."

As we pray for each other as well as for all those who will be touched by the mercy of God during this year, we ask Mary, the Mother of Mercy, to intercede for us.

The blessings of Christmas be on you and yours. You will be in my thoughts and prayers as I celebrate Christmas Mass.

+ Robert Harris

✠ Robert Harris  
Bishop of Saint John