



**DIOCESE OF RALEIGH**

**Office of the Bishop**

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Christmas 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Christmas season always feels familiar and comfortable as we return again to beloved traditions and treasured holiday memories. In addition to carols and sounds of celebration we will listen again to the story of Christmas. Through Mary and Joseph humbly welcoming the child Jesus, God enters our world, revealing His love through his human vulnerability and ultimately inviting all of humanity into salvation through him.

The Christmas story may be familiar to us but if we listen with open hearts we will find that it always brings something new – something that stretches us, challenges us, and calls us to go deeper in our faith. As we reflect on Mary’s “yes,” we remember that God chose to bring salvation into the world through her free and loving response. He did not impose His plan – He awaited her trust. God asks for our trust and waits for our “yes” as well.

During this Advent and Christmas season, I encourage all of us to embrace the joys of the holiday which are so dear to us but also to welcome the new and unfamiliar. Listen closely as God’s Word is proclaimed and allow even the most familiar readings to surprise you. Be especially attentive and compassionate towards those with whom you gather during this season. Ponder whether God may be speaking to you through both the joys and struggles of friends and loved ones. And seek moments of quiet prayer amid the busyness of the season to discover what the Holy Spirit is whispering to you. How is God calling you to go deeper in your vocation? What is the “yes” He is asking for in your life?

In a time marked by uncertainty and doubt we cannot lose sight of how God reveals himself - often in ways that appears small or are easily overlooked – a Child in a manger, a quiet act of kindness, a heart turning to Him. To discover the true meaning and true joy of the familiar Christmas story we sometimes need to look for what is unfamiliar or uncomfortable to us.

Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones at every Christmas Mass I offer. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother and Saint Joseph, may their Son and our Lord Jesus help us to live as God's holy family at Christmas, throughout the New Year and all the days of our lives.

In the Love of Jesus,

† Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.  
Bishop of Raleigh