



**Christmas Letter - 2021**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

*Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord (Lk 2:11).*

How blessed are we to celebrate with profound joy the birth of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary and Joseph! He is “Light from Light,” and for more than 2,000 years, we have walked in the light that he brought the world at his birth.

Born in the midst of darkness, Jesus’ light heals the world. He calls us in turn to carry that light and, by his grace, to illuminate a world in desperate need of his compassion, love and healing. The Wise Men followed a star shining in the sky, and, because of their trust and faithfulness, they saw the face of Christ. Likewise, each time we choose to follow the Lord and share his light, he transforms us little by little, and we grow closer to the newborn King, the King of Kings.

As we reflect on the challenges we have experienced this past year, we should consider whether we journey through our circumstances like the Wise Men, journeying closer to God in trust. This Christmas season, reflect on the word Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” No matter our challenges and experiences, God is with us and wants to accompany us on our earthly journey.

Throughout this Christmas season and into the coming year, we have a unique opportunity to welcome Christ into our lives more deeply. In anticipation of our Golden Jubilee in 2024, I have called for two preparatory years in advance. The first year, which began on November 21, is devoted to the Eucharist. I encourage you to participate in one of the many 40 Hours Eucharistic devotions taking place throughout the Diocese this Christmas season. In adoration of Our Lord, we remember that he truly is with us—he is Emmanuel.

At this time of great joy and celebration, let us ask Our Lord to help us grow in love of him and of our neighbor and to trust in him just as the Wise Men trusted in him. He is our Light, our God.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, and may the peace and abundant blessings that only Jesus can give be yours at Christmas, throughout the New Year, and always.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge  
Bishop of Arlington