

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson

Office of the Vicar General

December 18, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Since our Bishop Gregory is still in hospital continuing his recovery, once again I have been asked to write these few lines on his behalf.

As you know, our Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025 comes to an end on the 28th of December, the Feast of the Holy Family. Pope Francis desired that this Jubilee be for the spiritual benefits of us all, Pilgrims of Hope. By the grace of God many of us had the opportunity to participate in the various events and pilgrimages, and to obtain the fruits of this Holy Year. Even though the year will come to an end, may its Spiritual fruits ever endure in us!

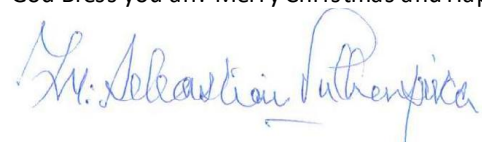
If you look at the Book of Leviticus (Chapter 25), we can see God's plans for the Year of Jubilee. Among other things, three points stand out. First, it was to be a time of **REST** and **RENEWAL** for the people and for the land. Second, people were called to **FORGIVE THE DEBTS** of those who were in bondage and thus setting them **FREE**. Finally, it was also a time to **COME HOME**: to one's own family, to one's own land given by God.

When we look at the Year of Jubilee in the context of the Incarnation of the Only Begotten Son of God, we can see God's plan for us in our times. We as Disciples of Jesus Christ, are called to receive all that God is offering us, not simply by observing a particular time or season. We receive those blessings through the **PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST**, Whose Birth we celebrate at Christmas. Jesus comes to give **REST** for our souls, and to **RENEW** our broken relationship with God. He is the Only One Who sets us **FREE** from our bondage to sin and death. As St. Paul tells us, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5.1). However, St. Peter in his first letter warns us not to use our freedom as a pretext for evil (See 1 Peter 2.16). Finally, Jesus alone can bring us to our true homeland and to inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

Now a couple of thoughts for us to ponder. Even as Jesus sets us free from our bondage to sin and death, are there people in our life whom we hold in the bondage of our **UNFORGIVENESS**? If so, is it not the time for us to forgive them and set them **FREE**? Or maybe there are some among us who are upset with what is happening in their families, or even in the world around us, and enslaved to the darkness of bitterness and despair.

That is why Christmas is the best time to come to the Child born in Bethlehem to bring to Him, not gold, frankincense and myrrh; but rather our sins, our unforgiving hearts, and the darkness of our hopelessness. Because Jesus is truly the great light seen by those who walked in darkness, the light that has shone on those who have lived in the land of deep darkness (See Isaiah 9.2b).

God Bless you all. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Very Rev. Sebastian Puthenpura
Vicar General