“Bearers of the Hope Born from Christ”

The Bishop’s Pastoral Letter at the close of the Jubilee Year – November 30, 2025 (First Sunday of Advent)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

the Jubilee Year 2025 is drawing to a close. During this year we have, in many ways, been able to experience God’s mercy and faithfulness. Now, on the First Sunday of Advent, the liturgical readings invite us to look ahead in hope, to strengthen our trust in God’s promises and to prepare to receive Christ, who comes to us.

The central message of Advent is the same as that proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah: “In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established and… All nations shall stream toward it.” This vision of the mountain of peace reminds us that God guides the course of history. Advent opens our eyes towards the time when God’s peace will not only be a promise but a reality. Already now we are called to walk in His light and to make our lives a sign of peace in the world.

In the psalm we respond to this call with joy: “Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.” The joy of entering the house of God is not an outward celebration, but an inner movement towards God who calls us into communion with Himself. Even though the world around us is restless, the pilgrim’s joy reminds us that we walk towards the light and that the Lord strengthens us on our journey.

St. Paul urges us to wake up: “It is the hour now… to awake from sleep… put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Advent is a time of spiritual watchfulness. To put on Christ means to take on His grace, His gentleness and His truth. It is a call to turn away from darkness and to step into the light of the day of God.

In the Gospel Jesus says: “So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” With these words Jesus does not seek to arouse fear, but to encourage a trusting vigilance. Each day is a new opportunity to prepare our hearts for meeting him – in prayer, in love and in service. Those who live in the light of Christ can look forward to His coming with joy.

For this reason I encourage you to read the Gospel every day during this Advent. The Word of God is living, and in it the Lord Himself addresses us. When we listen to His voice, He opens our hearts, consoles us and calls us to live in love. On the pages of the Gospel we find what God asks of us, but also what He gives us: light, peace, forgiveness and strength.

What we receive in prayer and meditation is not meant to remain only within us. God’s gifts call us to concrete actions: to love, to justice and to service. By living in this way, we can bring the presence of Jesus to those around us and be witnesses of hope – as Pope Leo XIV reminds us.

As the Jubilee Year ends, the Lord calls us to continue along the path of living hope. Not a light or passing hope, but a hope that is born from an encounter with Christ – with Emmanuel, God with us.

As Christmas draws near, we open our hearts so that Jesus may be born in us: in our thoughts, in our hearts, in our daily lives, in our families, in our workplaces, among friends and neighbours. When we empty ourselves – of our pride, our fears and our wounds – we can allow God to fill us with His own light.

May this Advent be a time of silence, reconciliation and humble service. Let us lift our eyes to Him who will come. Then we will also be able to show to others the joyful face of Christian hope.

With fraternal affection I bless you all in the Lord's name and ask that the Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope, may walk with us on the way towards Christmas.

In Christ, who is our righteousness and our peace,

your bishop, who loves you and prays for you without ceasing,

+ Raimo