



SHUTTERSTOCK



EMBRACE THE JUBILEE OF HOPE:

## A Journey of Renewal and Light

BY BISHOP ERIK T. POHLMEIER

“Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). With these words, Pope Francis has introduced preparations for a Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church, and I am thrilled to join in this sacred time with you. Since God created us and invited us to share in his life, he has continually called us to rest with him. Even after sin entered the world, God’s desire to sustain and restore us remains unbroken.

Each week, we are invited to honor the Lord’s Day, and throughout Scripture, we see celebrations of God’s works among us. In ancient times, whole years were marked as Jubilees. The church preserves this tradition, inviting us to rest, restore and reconcile our hearts with God.

The Holy Father has declared 2025 a Jubilee Year with a focus on hope. He draws from St. Paul’s

words because he recognizes the challenges we face today in keeping hope alive. Doubt and cynicism can cloud our hearts, leaving us torn between longing for closeness with God and the hard reality of a broken world. Acknowledging this, Pope Francis reminds us that “hope is born of love and is based on the love that springs from the pierced heart of Jesus on the cross” (*Spes Non Confundit* 3). Hope

does not disappoint because Jesus took on the weight of our broken world on the cross, endured death and rose again to break the bonds of sin and death. Hope is found when we turn our attention to the victory already won. When we carry our own crosses, we share in the new life of the Resurrection.

This Jubilee Year invites us to remember this promise in our daily lives. Pope Francis is calling pilgrims to Rome and highlighting aspects of our shared humanity. Since most of us cannot travel to Rome, we will share in the Jubilee here, in our part of God’s Kingdom. In the Diocese of St. Augustine, plans are underway to connect our local Church with the Universal Church.

A Jubilee calendar of events has been released in Rome, and we’re preparing to observe those dates with gatherings here. The Holy Father has called every diocese to begin the Jubilee Year with a Mass in its Cathedral on the Sunday after Christmas. For our diocese, the celebration will be on Dec. 28 at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine with a 5 p.m. Mass. From this day forward, we will offer local pilgrimages and parish celebrations, providing opportunities for everyone in our diocese to connect with one another and the Universal Church. Please stay connected for more details as the year unfolds. (Turn to page 18 for more information)

The Christmas season is an ideal time to begin this celebration. During Christmas, our hearts are more attuned to the wonder of God born among us. The Child in the manger is the gift of God that calls us to find light in the darkness. In the coming year, we will strive to remain in Christ’s light, to thank God for the richness of life and to fulfill our calling to his mission. This Jubilee of Hope is a beautiful opportunity to pray together, to seek renewal and to remind one another that hope does not disappoint.

Our world needs this renewal of hope. God’s plan is to let his disciples be the reminder our world needs. Each of us has a role in reflecting God’s light in the paths we walk. As we look to this new year, consider how you can open yourself to God’s mission. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and everything else will follow. In God’s Kingdom, you will find hope that does not disappoint. 🐦