



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

January 5, 2025

Beloved Pilgrims of Hope,

Greetings of peace, love, joy and hope!

“Gift Giving and the Precious Gift”

As I write this letter and reflection for this Sunday’s celebration of Epiphany, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Blessed and Hope-filled New Year 2025.

On Christmas Eve, we, as a community of Disciples in the Diocese of Honolulu, embarked on the Jubilee of Hope, joining the Universal Church in rekindling our hope in the Lord as the theme calls us, “Hope does not disappoint.” (Romans 5:5) May God’s abiding presence through the example of Jesus and inspiration of the Holy Spirit brings us to this joyful hope for the New Year, 2025.

One of the most cherished memories from my school days was celebrating our Class Christmas Party. We would bring food to share and gifts to give. Sometimes, we had the Secret Santa, while other times, we placed our gifts under the Christmas tree, each marked with a number. We would draw numbers from a box to see which gift we received. The excitement and surprise of not knowing what gift we would get was always thrilling. Some of us felt a bit disappointed if our expectations weren’t met. Still, the joy of the experience was in the anticipation and the act of giving.

Have you ever wondered why gift-giving is such a central part of Christmas gatherings and parties? It is because we have received the greatest gift of all from our Heavenly Father—Jesus Christ, His beloved Son. As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, we remember the Magi from the East who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the Christ-Child. Their journey and their offerings teach us about the spirit of giving and recognizing the royalty of Jesus. They searched diligently for the Child and rejoiced when they found Him, offering their precious gifts.

Jesus does not need our material gifts. The true gifts we can offer Him are our faith, our lives, and our service, especially to our brothers and sisters who are poor victims of injustice, war, and calamities. The essence of gift-giving is realized when we make others feel the love of God, who gave everything to us. In return, we are called to love Him and our neighbors as ourselves.

As we welcome the New Year 2025, our Christmas Season festivities will soon come to an end. With renewed life and faith in Jesus, let us journey into this new year carrying the greatest gift we have received, Jesus Christ. Let us share Him with everyone we meet along the way.

May the Jubilee of Hope fill your hearts with joy and peace.

Your fellow pilgrim in hope,

Fr. Pascual