



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

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

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 25, 2025

Beloved Disciples of Jesus,

Greetings of peace, love, joy, and hope!

“Empowered to Shine”

Almost a month ago, our streets, homes, churches, and nearly every place we went were bright with radiant lights. Some even danced to familiar Christmas melodies. Whenever we paused to take in those shimmering lights and joyful tunes, something within us lifted. For a moment, our hearts remembered hope.

Now the season has passed, and the brightness of those days has faded. Life has returned to its usual rhythm, home, work, school, and parish life. Yet even as the outward lights dim, I pray that something within us has changed. We have seen the true Light, the One who does not fade with the season: Jesus Christ, the Light who shines not on our streets but in our souls.

When we look honestly at our world today, we cannot deny the shadows that surround us. We see violence claiming the lives of the innocent. We see families strained, communities divided, and the dignity of life, born and unborn, often disregarded. We witness addiction, corruption, and the slow erosion of truth in a culture that sometimes prefers convenience over conviction. We feel the weight of conflict among nations and the tension within our own society. These realities can easily discourage us and dim our hope.

Yet into this very darkness, Christ continues to shine. The same Jesus proclaimed by the prophet, *“the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light”*, is the One who walks with us today. His light does not ignore the darkness, it exposes it, transforms it, and calls us to be part of His work of renewal. Like the first disciples, we are not spectators but participants. Christ empowers us to brighten the world around us, not by our own strength, but by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Each time we gather for the Eucharist, we receive not only the Body of Christ but also the mission of Christ. His Word speaks into our minds and hearts, helping us discern what must be embraced and what must be rejected. His presence strengthens us to live with integrity, compassion, and courage. His Spirit sends us forth to be instruments of peace, truth, and healing in a world that desperately needs all three.

May we allow the light of Christ to shine through us, in our families, in our workplaces, in our communities, and in our country. And may our witnessing help others rediscover the hope that no darkness can overcome.

Your Friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual