



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In this holy season of Christmas, words from the Book of Wisdom echo in our hearts: *For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word leapt down from Heaven from Thy royal throne, as a fierce conqueror into the midst of the land of destruction.* (Wisdom 18:15).

We have many reasons to think of our world as “the land of destruction.” Today, so many people across the globe suffer the ravages of war and violence, the burden of illness, crushing poverty and displacement, and natural disasters that are often weather related.

Our faith affirms that the Eternal Word of the Father took our flesh, shared our human condition in all its troubled dimensions, and then as “a fierce conqueror” lifted us up into new life. This mystery at the center of our faith gives us renewed hope and encouragement as we make our pilgrim way in this wounded world. Indeed, across the coming Holy Year, we celebrate the hope that only the Lord in his goodness can give us. It is hope, Saint Paul tells us, that *will not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.* (Romans 5:5)

As you gather with family and friends in this holy season, I will pray for you and for a renewal of your hope. May the upcoming Holy Year with its theme *Pilgrims of hope* be an opportunity for all of us to learn how to be signs and instruments of hope for our struggling and burdened world.

As I celebrate the Eucharist in this holy season, I will ask the Lord to help you and your loved ones to cling to his word of promise that is the true source of our hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Chicago

