



# Diocese of Brownsville

Office of the Bishop

December, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The birth of the Son of God is a mystery that is accessible to the merest of children. Even the simplest of these little ones understand the panorama of love that shows itself when we contemplate the littleness of the child Jesus, the smile of his Mother, and the perplexed face of Saint Joseph. Each one of us, —if we have not lost our capacity to be amazed while in the presence of the most precious things in life—can intuit in the nativity scene the beauty of love. Love is a dynamic gift given between persons: The Virgin Mother loves her Son, and the smile which surges spontaneously from her as a gesture of tender acceptance reaches out to the open eyes of the Child. Love is directed to a person, and it is a gift freely given without reserve. And the Son receives this love – under the sign of the smile – and before He can even pronounce a word in human language, He knows that He is loved. Mary envelops her Son in the mantle of her smile; the Child responds with a tentative movement of his arm towards her. Love given, love returned. The Lord Jesus Christ finds his first place of welcome in this world precisely in the unique space that is the heart of Mary. All of this happens under the anxious gaze of Saint Joseph. The foster father of Jesus does not doubt all that has happened in the life of Mary, how God the Father chose her to be the Virgin Mother of the Son of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit. If this holy man shows lines of worry on his face, it is because he knows that it falls to him to protect this space where the love of Mary surrounds her Son, and where the love Jesus returns to her can reach its full expression in the gift of himself on the Cross. Joseph surrounds Mary and Jesus under his protective cloak. From this moment forward his mission is to love the Mother and the Son with a love that is indistinguishable from his mission to be guardian and protector. And, in a certain mysterious way, the child Jesus recognizes in the face and in the walking stick of Joseph the human signs of that paternal love which brought forth the same Son of God before all ages. Truly, love is a dynamic of self-giving welcome, and the Nativity Scene which today we contemplate illumines this mystery of human love, and lifts us up to the heights of divine love. Around these three figures, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, angels sing and shepherds from the fields come to adore. The highest beings and the simplest of men praise the Most Holy Trinity for having designed so perfect a beginning to the salvific work that is directed to our world.

I ask God the Father that His Love revealed in the birth of his Son from the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, reigns in the homes of all the Catholic Faithful in the Rio Grande Valley. I pray that your families know joy and peace during these Holy Days; and I pray that the Peace of Christ take deep root in the hearts of all persons of good will. Merry Christmas! Amen.

In Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel E. Flores". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Daniel E. Flores, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Brownsville