



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2025

DIOCESE OF POLYNESIA

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

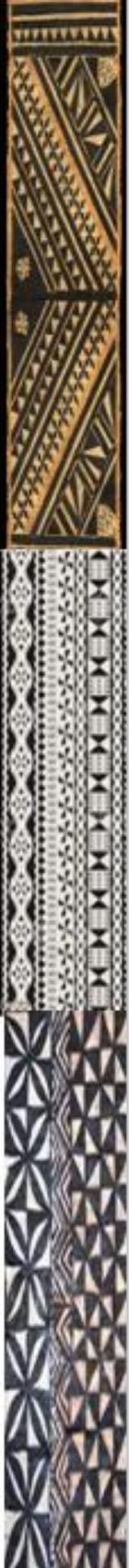
Peace be with you all.

At this holy and joyful season of Christmas, we gather at the threshold of mystery and grace to proclaim the heart of our faith: *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”* John draws us back beyond the manger, beyond even time itself, to the eternal truth that *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* This Word through whom all things were made did not remain distant or abstract. In Jesus Christ, the eternal Word took on our flesh, entered our history, and made his home among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:1–3, 14).

Christmas tells us that God does not love us from afar. God comes close. God chooses vulnerability, humility, and nearness. In the child lying in a manger, the Creator steps into creation; the infinite enters the ordinary; the divine embraces human life in all its beauty and brokenness. The Word made flesh is God’s declaration that our lives, our lands, and our waters matter, and that no place is too small, no people too marginal, and no darkness too deep for God’s light to dwell (vv.4-5).

This truth speaks powerfully to us as we reflect on my Charge for the 42nd Synod of the Diocese: that we are God’s people on God’s ocean. The Word who became flesh entered a world shaped by water, rivers, lakes, and seas, and called disciples from boats and shorelines. He taught from the edge of the water, calmed the stormy sea, and revealed God’s abundance from the depths. In Christ, God enters not only human flesh, but human geography and lived experience.

For too long, we may have been tempted to define ourselves by the smallness of our islands or by the limits placed upon us. Yet the Word made flesh invites us to see ourselves differently. We are not defined by the smallness of our islands, but by the greatness of our ocean. We *are* the ocean. The vast waters that connect



Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa, and Aotearoa New Zealand are not boundaries but lifelines, spaces of relationship, sustenance, memory, and hope. As God's ocean people, we are held within a creation that speaks of God's generosity, movement, and deep, abiding presence.

The Word made flesh assures us that God enters our ordinary and often turbulent lives. Just as the sea can be calm or storm-tossed, our communities and ministries carry both beauty and challenge. Yet the same Word who took flesh in Bethlehem is present in every crossing, every struggle, and every faithful act of love. Like the disciples on familiar waters, we are called to trust anew, to cast our nets again, and to believe that God's abundance can still be found where we least expect it.

As we stand on the edge of a new year, Christmas invites us into discernment, to listen for the movement of God's Spirit as one listens to the tides. Discernment calls for patience, humility, and courage, especially when the waters are uncertain. But the Word made flesh assures us that God's grace runs deeper than our fears, God's wisdom is wider than our horizons, and God's love is stronger than any storm.

May this Christmas renew our wonder and deepen our faith. May we live more fully as God's people on God's ocean, caring for creation, strengthening our shared life, and bearing witness to the Word who dwells among us still. And may the joy of Emmanuel, God with us, fill our hearts and guide us forward, now and always, into hope, peace, and abundant grace.

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "++ Sione S Uluilakepa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a double cross symbol at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Sione S Uluilakepa

Archbishop & Co-Primate of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Bishop of the Diocese of Polynesia

