



# *The Word was made flesh.*

*John 1:14*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During this time of Advent, I send one and all, greetings and prayers from our beloved St. Stephen of Hungary Mission Church in Chicago's West Town neighborhood.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas this year and conclude 2025, I am reminded of these words, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

Recently, I was in Rome for the Jubilee Year 2025 when Chicago's own Pope Leo XIV invited pilgrims to celebrate, receive and share the gift of hope. His predecessor Pope Benedict XVI once wrote, "The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life (Spe Salvi, No.2).

During my pilgrim journey I visited the various Hungarian sites in Rome: San Stefano Rotondo, once Cardinal Mindzenty's church and under his leadership, the Hungarian Papal Pontifical Institute and the Hungarian Academy. The latter two are located very close to Vatican City and are located together at the former Falconieri Palace. In a sense, one can say our Hungarian church is dear to the heart of the Holy See.

Our Hungarian people and church through the Hungary Helps program had an exhibit in Rome called Hope from the Ruins which I saw. I was moved and encouraged as destitute communities receive not only our charity but our moral support giving them hope. What a witness! In challenging times when our global situation seems bleak, we call to mind during this holy season that God sends us hope for the light came into the world at the birth of our Savior in Bethlehem.

Here at St. Stephen of Hungary Mission we are a hopeful people and wish to celebrate with you this hope this upcoming Christmas whether you can join us, or are away. Above all, you are in our hearts and prayers.

There will be Mass on Christmas day, Thursday, December 25th at 10:00AM.  
Have a blessed and Merry Christmas!

James Atya

*Rev. James J. Atya*