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December 24, 2021

Comfort and Joy

Christmas, 2021

Dear Friends,

Comfort and joy are two words that are prominent in our Christmas tradition. Many sources of comfort and joy play a role, indeed, in warming our hearts during this wonderful holiday. Most often, we find comfort and joy in spending time with family and friends, in exchanging meaningful gifts, and in remembering in worship the Child sent to become the Savior of the world. What's more, the colorful decorations and light displays that create such a festive atmosphere everywhere lift our spirits in the midst of the gray of winter.

While the season of Christmas offers much to rejoice about, these special days of celebration are also a time when many of us feel blue and are in need of a greater measure of comfort and joy. All too often, difficult life circumstances touch and even overwhelm our lives during the holidays. Hence, the attentive kindness of family and friends is particularly important, and can be the best gift to give as a healing balm to a hurting heart.

No matter the circumstances of our lives, the true joy and comfort of Christmas is in remembering the good will of God towards all people. The words of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, when Gabriel says to her: "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you," are also words of comfort and joy for us because you and I are favored and the Lord is with us.

Scott and I are looking forward to our first Christmas in Pittsburgh, and we both send you our best wishes for a Christmastide filled with much comfort and joy.

Blessings to you and to your loved ones now and always,

Bishop Ketlen



Image: Detail from *Annunciation* by Leonardo da Vinci, 1472 ca.