



December 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Advent and Christmas provide us with some of the richest, most cherished moments of the year. I am pleased you have found your way to this site, and I encourage you to look around and discover all it has to offer. Our goal was to provide you with plenty of ideas from which to choose. Perhaps it will even inspire you to look for additional activities or prayers that will make this season meaningful and memorable.

The real joy of this season is the renewal we experience as we revisit the Scripture passages detailing the awe-inspiring events that transpired more than 2000 years ago.

Perhaps this year we will find strength in the annunciation narrative, which reminds us we must put our faith in God.

Sometimes we forget Mary was just a young woman who surely had difficulty getting her mind around what the angel Gabriel told her. God's messenger did not give her a blueprint. Mary did not know she would be traveling to Bethlehem with Joseph, or that they would have to flee to Egypt or that Herod would be coming after all of the children under the age of two in order to preserve his own kingdom. All she knew was that God was asking her to become the mother of the Messiah. And yet, she gave her whole-hearted consent.

As we struggle with the many unknowns in our own lives — as well as the overwhelming challenging news from every corner of the globe — we can turn to the example of Mary. She trusted God and then let life unfold, following the path that God had planned for her.

May God bless you and your loved ones with every grace this Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ.

+ Lawrence T. Persico
The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico
Bishop of Erie