

December 2024



Tidings of Comfort and Joy

Dear Sisters, Companions, Colleagues and Friends,

These words from the refrain of a favorite traditional Christmas hymn deserve some attention in this season. They echo Isaiah 40:1 “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God” which we commonly hear during Advent.

The presence of the word ‘comfort’ in this refrain is especially poignant, for we know “that the whole of creation has been groaning together...” (Romans 8:22) Today more than ever, the world and its peoples stand in need of comfort, a soul-place of rest from distress, anxiety, sadness and pain.

Comfort is given to another through a kind and loving word, action or simple gesture. When received, it touches the core of who we are, creates a space for love and compassion and beacons us to engage life - with all of its light and darkness.

Joy is often hard to experience in the midst of a global reality of the mass migration of peoples, wars, or national and domestic stressors. Continuing with Isaiah’s words, we are reminded in Luke 2:10 “Do not be afraid – I am bringing you good news of great joy...”.

Joy has been offered in and through Incarnation - mystery of Divine – becoming – human. Joy has been given; we need simply to receive it through contemplation of a sunrise, a sunset or the wonderful uniqueness of a snowflake.

This Christmas, let us focus our attention on both receiving and giving comfort and joy, the gifts of the One who is Comfort and Joy – Christ the incarnate One, and

“... let nothing you dismay;
remember Christ our Saviour
was born on Christmas day.
Oh, Tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy.
Oh, Tidings of comfort and joy!”

Theresa Mahoney, Karen Gleeson, Marian Krauskopf, Jean Ann Ledwell
for the Ursulines of Chatham