



**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!**

**In** this time of Advent, it seems we are all praying that the sacred night of Christ's birth might bring stillness, hope, and peace to our world. Countless hearts are filled with fear, and far too many lives are interrupted by wars, upheaval, and insecurity. Finding a way to help one another truly celebrate the joy of Christmas this year is a challenge, as it has been from the very beginning.

**Long** ago God knew His extraordinary plan to come into the world would elicit fear in those chosen to participate in preparing the way for the birth of His Son. Each was called by name as they were told: Fear not, Zechariah; fear not, Mary; fear not, Joseph! And when an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, they were terrified, but they had indeed been chosen to be the first to hear what had transpired! The angel's words were clear: "Fear not! I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord!"

**May** God bless us with all the assurances we need to once more share the good news of Christ! Calling us by name, stilling our fears, encouraging us by the wondrous, extraordinary ways God has, indeed, prepared us to continue His work and serve one another in love!

**In** words ostensibly written by Jesus that begin: *If you look for Me at Christmas*, the anonymous author concludes:

*If you but take a moment  
from your lists of things to do,  
And listen to your heart,  
You'll find I'm waiting there for you.  
You're the one I want to be with,  
You're the reason that I came,  
And you'll find Me in the stillness  
As I'm whispering your name!*

**Thanking** God for your ministry, I wish each of you a very peaceful, joyful Christmas, and a blessed 2025 year! May our fears prove false, our hopes grounded in God's grace!

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