



ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 9, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always!

The seasons of Advent and Christmas offer us a time each year to remember and renew the love, respect, and friendship that bind us together in so many ways as we celebrate God's coming into our world. It is especially important for us to do this when these bonds are challenged by those who would disrupt them and sow the division and hatred that our Lord came to earth to heal. I am writing you to address a situation that has recently arisen.

There have been two instances of vandalism that have taken place in recent weeks at Saint Andrew's Parish in Eagle River. We do not know what has motivated people to do these serious and disturbing actions. These are especially significant in the context of the many expressions of anger that have become so commonplace in our society, our political system, and even our Church. This must be called out for its attack on the dignity of each person and their religious practice. We, as Catholics, must do what we can to promote peace and respect and restore the trust and security upon which healthy human relationships depend.

We do this primarily, of course, through the witness of our Christian faith and through prayer, seeking love and reconciliation in the face of hopelessness, misplaced anger, and intolerance.

Within our Archdiocese, our response must be more proactive and directed. We are actively pursuing more security measures at our facilities to help prevent such activities from happening. In these measures, and in any response to disruptive and violent actions that do take place, our ministers and staff members will cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities, seeking their immediate and sustained intervention and assisting in any criminal investigations.

Let us pray for all this Advent and Christmas Season, especially those who find themselves consumed with feelings of hopelessness, despair, and paralyzing anger, that they may find the healing, peace, and grace that our Lord, Jesus Christ, offers through His Incarnation. May this season bring us all closer together in love and respect, reconciling our differences and healing our divisions in the Spirit of the One whose coming we celebrate.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Andrew E. Bellisario, C.M.
Archbishop of Anchorage-Juneau