

Joy Has Come!

CHRISTMAS WITH POPE FRANCIS ◦ 2022-2023

with reflections by Janet Schaeffler, OP

**SUNDAY
DECEMBER
25**

Christmas speaks tenderness. God invites us to never be afraid of tenderness. If we forget about tenderness, we can become cold, the opposite of how God created us. (Pope Francis, 12/10/13) We don't talk about tenderness a great deal; it usually isn't listed among the Christian virtues. Yet, notice the tenderness modeled within this season: the examples of Mary and Joseph, the witness of your family, friends and people you might have encountered for only a moment.

Prayerful Practice: Write the word "tenderness" on a post-it note, placing it on a mirror or your refrigerator. Each time you see it, recall how you've experienced tenderness and how you've shown tenderness.



**SUNDAY
DECEMBER
26**

On this feast of the first martyr, Pope Francis prayed that St. Stephen would give each of us the gift of coherence – the grace of living all of life consistent with the faith we profess. (12/26/14) Are there times we think our faith life is just about Sunday but not the other days? Are there daily happenings which we see as unconnected to our faith?

Prayerful Practice: At the end of the day, call to mind any happening which you view as not related to faith. Look more closely. How was faith present? How could it have been present?

**TUESDAY
DECEMBER
27**

Scripture tells us "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news." (Isaiah 52:7) The reality often is that good news does not appear in our news feeds. Yet, good always triumphs, even when we're not sure if it can. (Pope Francis, 12/31/15)

Prayerful Practice: Place next to your bed one of your shoes and a good news story from the newspaper (or internet). Let it be a reminder of your call to bring good news, care, kindness, and comfort.

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER
28**

As we make New Year's resolutions, it helps to hear: "...do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things!" (Pope Francis on Twitter, 4/26/13)

Meditative Musing: What talent has God given you to share to make the world a better place? When you dream of great things, what could you do to bring about the Reign of God in your part of the world?

**THURSDAY
DECEMBER
29**

New Year's is the world day of prayer for peace. "Peace is always possible. We must search for it." (Pope Francis, 1/1/15) Many Christmas cards depict the scene of the peaceable kingdom (Isaiah 11:1-10), which reminds us to dream of peace, to hope for a better time. Hope, of course, is not complacent. It empowers us to take the first step toward a peaceful, nobler time. If we dream it, we can achieve it.

Prayerful Practice: Place a picture of the peaceable kingdom on your dinner table. Imagine (then take a step) toward peace: forgive; let go of presumptions; see the other with understanding eyes.

**FRIDAY
DECEMBER
30**

Pope Francis gives us challenging possibilities for New Year's resolutions. "We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace." (10/1/13)

Prayerful Practice: What would be a practical New Year's resolution for you, flowing from Pope Francis' promptings?

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER
31**

"We need to get to know each other, listen to each other and improve our knowledge of the world around us. Sometimes after a meeting I want to arrange another one because new ideas are born and I discover new needs. This is important: to get to know people, listen, expand the circle of ideas." (Pope Francis, 10/1/13) Pope Francis lives this because he is convinced of the oneness of all people. God is the father of all.

Meditative Musing: Is there a place in your New Year's resolutions for listening to new ideas, for learning more about our world and its needs?



**SUNDAY
JANUARY
1**

The feast of the Epiphany, which we observe on January 8, invites us to recognize the wise women and men who are with us today, sage companions on our journey. Such people teach us not to be content with the mediocre, but to gaze toward the star, to be attracted by what is good, true and beautiful; by God who is all this and much more. (Pope Francis, 1/6/14)

Meditative Musing: Who/what is good, true, and beautiful in your life? How does this remind you of God? How do you bring the good, the true, the beautiful to others?