

# LIVING FAITH

JANUARY 1

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD WORLD

DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE

NEW YEAR'S DAY



## THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

### Luke 2:16-21

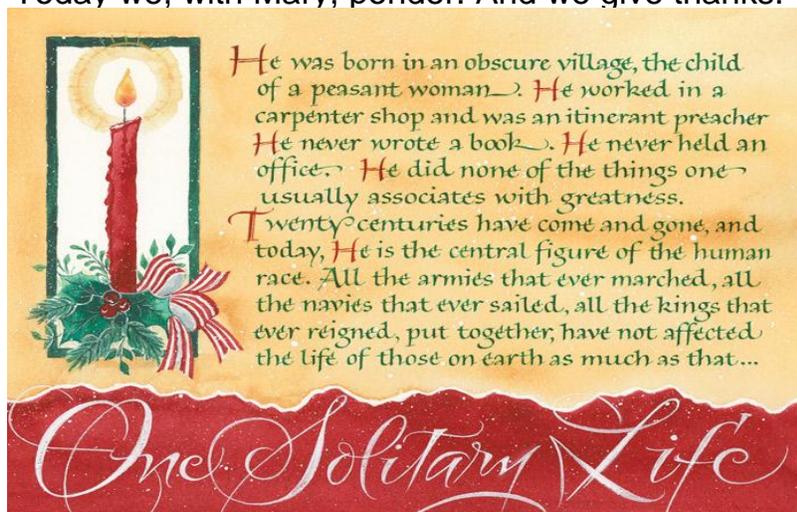
So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD OF GOD

The Gospel today focuses at first on what the shepherds saw and experienced when, after the announcement of the angels, they hurried to the stable. There, they found exactly what the angels had promised- a man and a woman and a baby, Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Mary and Joseph must have been startled to see the shepherds running to the stable. But the shepherds quickly told them that they had come in response to their encounter with the angels. Mary and Joseph were amazed, the Gospel tells us; they were just learning that the news of their baby's birth was Good News to people far beyond their own "family bubble." And this was just the beginning! Jesus would change the lives of many people during his earthly life, and throughout history.

And what was Mary's response to all of this? "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." Today we, with Mary, ponder. And we give thanks.



# Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

We know that Mary is Jesus' mom. Why is she called the Mother of God? The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all three persons in one God. That means that we can call Mary, "Mother of God" or "Mother of Jesus!"



Check out some family interactive Christmas and other games from Our Sunday Visitor [here](https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/family/games/grade_1).

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## THE CHURCH TEACHES MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

In his homily for the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God in 2018, Pope Francis had this to say about the feast and the mystery we celebrate today...



The year opens in the name of the Mother of God. *Mother of God* is the most important title of Our Lady. But we might ask why we say *Mother of God*, and not *Mother of Jesus*. In the past some wanted to be content simply with the latter, but the Church has declared that Mary is the Mother of God. We should be grateful, because these words contain a magnificent truth about God and about ourselves. From the moment that our Lord became incarnate in Mary, and for all time, he took on our humanity. There is no longer God without man; the flesh Jesus took from his Mother is our own, now and for all eternity. To call Mary the *Mother of God* reminds us of this: God is close to humanity, even as a child is close to the mother who bears him in her womb.

**The word *mother (mater)* is related to the word *matter*. In his Mother, the God of heaven, the infinite God, made himself small, he became matter, not only to be *with us* but also to be *like us*. This is the miracle, the great novelty! Man is no longer alone; no more an orphan, but forever a child. The year opens with this novelty. And we proclaim it by saying: Mother of God! Ours is the joy of knowing that our solitude has ended. It is the beauty of knowing that we are beloved children, of knowing that this childhood of ours can never be taken away from us. It is to see a reflection of ourselves in the frail and infant God resting in his mother's arms, and to realize that humanity is precious and sacred to the Lord. Henceforth, to serve human life is to serve God. All life, from life in the mother's womb to that of the elderly, the suffering and the sick, and to that of the troublesome and even repellent, is to be welcomed, loved and helped.**

We need to remain silent as we gaze upon the crib. Pondering the crib, we discover anew that we are loved; we savour the real meaning of life. As we look on in silence, we let Jesus speak to our heart. Only one thing is said about the Mother of God: "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19). *She kept them*. She simply kept; Mary does not speak...

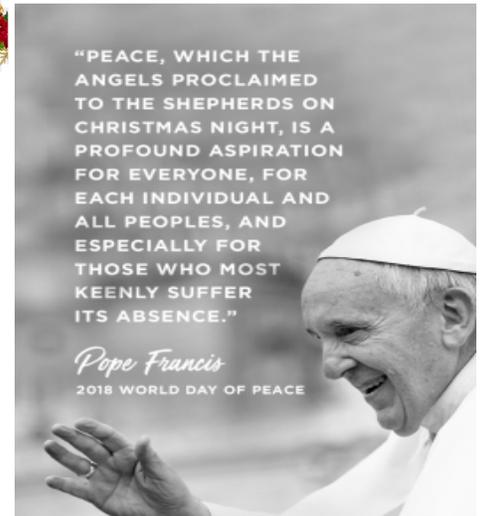


# THE CHURCH TEACHES WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE

Wisdom from Pope Francis as we mark this 54<sup>TH</sup> World Day of Prayer for Peace...

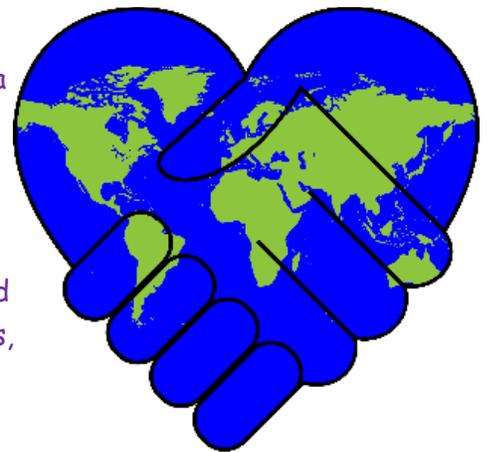


The world does not need empty words but convinced witnesses, peacemakers who are open to a dialogue that rejects exclusion or manipulation. In fact, we cannot truly achieve peace without a convinced dialogue between men and women who seek the truth beyond ideologies and differing opinions. Peace "must be built up continually"; it is a journey made together in constant pursuit of the common good, truthfulness and respect for law. Listening to one another can lead to mutual understanding and esteem, and even to seeing in an enemy the face of a brother or sister.



The peace process thus requires enduring commitment. It is a patient effort to seek truth and justice, to honour the memory of victims and to open the way, step by step, to a shared hope stronger than the desire for vengeance. In a state based on law, democracy can be an important paradigm of this process, provided it is grounded in justice and a commitment to protect the rights of every person, especially the weak and marginalized, in a constant search for truth. This is a social undertaking, an ongoing work in which each individual makes his or her contribution responsibly, at every level of the local, national and global community.

The ecological conversion for which we are appealing will lead us to a new way of looking at life, as we consider the generosity of the Creator who has given us the earth and called us to a share it in joy and moderation. This conversion must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin and source of all life. For Christians, it requires that "the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them".



Fear is frequently a source of conflict. So it is important to overcome our human fears and acknowledge that we are needy children in the eyes of the One who loves us and awaits us, like the father of the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-24). The culture of fraternal encounter shatters the culture of conflict. It makes of every encounter a possibility and a gift of God's generous love. It leads us beyond the limits of our narrow horizons and constantly encourages us to a live in a spirit of universal fraternity, as children of the one heavenly Father.

*Read the full text of Pope Francis' message [here](#).*