

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

January 1, 2024

Gospel: (Luke 2:16-21)

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Reflection:

Often New Year's resolutions are about such things as losing weight, trying to stop smoking, cleaning up our language, etc. The readings for this festival honoring Mary might challenge us and our resolution-making in another direction. Perhaps this year we might resolve to take time each day to see and hear what God is revealing to us in the ordinary things of our lives: in the grateful smile of a child, in the gift of a compliment, in the unexpected call or visit of a friend. Also, we might resolve to spend more time, as Mary did, pondering and reflecting in our hearts God's mystery of salvation. We might set aside a special time each day to pray and then stick to it. (Living Liturgy, p.30)

Vincenzian Meditation:

Mary is the ideal disciple, the model listener. She hears God's word and acts on it. In Luke's first two chapters Mary is evangelized by Gabriel, by Elizabeth, by the shepherds, by Simeon, by Anna, and by Jesus himself. All of them proclaim the good news of God's presence and sing in praise of God's goodness. Luke tells us that Mary kept all these things in her heart, turning them over and over again. Mary is indeed the "Listening Disciple", and this is the core of New Testament spirituality: all disciples, like Mary, are called to listen to the word of God attentively and act on it. Let us ask from Mary the grace to be a listener, "to listen to the word of God and act on it. (Maloney, Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, p. 110-111)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

What New Year's resolution do you want to make this year?

Closing Prayer:

Mary, you who are the Mother of God, we now pray:

-help us to see and hear what God is revealing in our lives.

Mary, wellspring of grace and peace,

-help us to take time to ponder and reflect.

Mary, you who are the "Listening Disciple",

-help us to listen to the word of God and act on it. Amen.

