



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word  
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan  
December 22 – December 28**

**1 -- "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord." (Lk 1:46)**

...Have I placed anything as more important than God in my life?

**2 -- "...to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk 1:79)**

**3 -- "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Lk 2:14)**

Extended meditation:

**PEACE**

The man prided himself on bringing peace to the entire world. He held a ceremony that officially closed the shrine of the God of War, a symbol that war had ceased forever. In fact, he looked on himself as more than a man and the people under him began to think of him almost as a god. People were making his birthday to be the first day of a new year because it marked the beginning of good news for all the world. They were calling him the "savior of the whole world." From that moment on, he knew that his name symbolized peace. His name: Caesar Augustus, ruler of the Roman Empire from 44 BCE till 14 CE.

The evangelist Luke must have had all of that in mind as he wrote the beginning passage describing Jesus in his Gospel. Luke put everything connected with the birth of Jesus into the setting with Caesar Augustus, the emperor who established a temporary peace, and he did it purposely. The facts of chronological time and history do not at all match what Luke says. History does not have any record of Caesar Augustus making any such decree. We know that Quirinius conducted a census, but it was not in Galilee where Joseph was nor was it at a time that matched Jesus' time of birth. The feeling of many Scripture scholars is that Luke deliberately set up a parallel for us to study. As Caesar Augustus historically was to bring the hope of peace forever, so Jesus was to bring a hope of real peace, true peace forever.

Such a peace was going to come with a price. Jesus was to discover that later in his life. As one studies history and the people who really wanted peace in the world, we see what happened to them. In bringing about peace, most of them had to resort to violence, as it did for Caesar Augustus and eventually it was violence that took them out of power. History shows a continual contrast between the force of good and the force of evil.



That force of good, of course, translated to Christianity, is the force of God through Jesus and we are not unlike those who wanted peace for the world. We must decide what to do with the good that we possess even as we also see the possibility of evil in our lives. Every one of us in our own way can bring peace into our personal world.

I suggest that you watch a movie called “War Horse”. As World War I progressed, it destroyed the quality of life of thousands of people and because of the time, horses. The writers of the screenplay present a scene in miniature of the horrors of war and the guide to peace. Joey, the war horse, is thrown onto the field of war known as “No Man’s Land.” Frightened, he rushes through German trenches, eventually heading for British troops. As he does, he pulls up barbed wire fencing until he is totally entangled in it, and is completely immobile. Two soldiers, one British, the other German, collaborate in finally freeing the animal. The scene presents the only remedy for war—people communicating with one another to eliminate the problem, and thus bringing about peace.

The peace of Caesar Augustus, of both World Wars and indeed every war, as all of the moments of peace in history, was short-lived. But the peace of Jesus Christ is not, because it has a divine foundation. It is real, just as real as we are and we have the means to bring it about if we want to.

**4 – “He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.”**  
(Jn 1:10)

...In what ways have I not accepted the Lord into my life?

**5 – “He saw and believed.”** (Jn 20:8)

...Do I “see” the Lord by a continual reading of the Gospels; do I show my belief in my actions?