

REFLECTION FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY

WORLD DAY OF PEACE

Eight days after the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus, the liturgy invites us to look at Mary, the mother of God (“*Theotókos*”), who was solemnly designated with this title at the Council of Ephesus in the year 431. With her “Yes,” she made it possible for Jesus to be present in our lives and in our world. She was the one chosen to be the Mother of the Son of the Most High, thus becoming the Mother of the Lord, as Elizabeth called her. This is why the Church gave her the title of Mother of God, affirming that the Child she gave birth to in Bethlehem was truly God, who came to set up his tent among us, to dwell among us. The Word of God became man and dwelt among us as St. John tells us.

This day is also the first day of the calendar year: it is the beginning of a journey that we want to walk hand in hand with this God who loves us, who blesses us, and who will guide our steps with a Father's care, throughout this New Year.

We are also celebrating the World Day of Peace: in 1968, Pope Paul VI proposed that people of good will pray for peace in the world on the first day of each new year. Today, therefore, we ask God to give us peace and to make each of us a witness and herald of reconciliation and peace. The Holy Father, in his Message for this year, says: *“I offer heartfelt good wishes of peace to every man and woman. I think especially of those who feel downtrodden, burdened by their past mistakes, oppressed by the judgment of others and incapable of perceiving even a glimmer of hope for their own lives. Upon everyone I invoke hope and peace, for this is a Year of Grace born of the Heart of the Redeemer!”* And he says more: *“May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises. May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed: hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours; hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others; hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others; hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world.”*

The readings that this day's liturgy proposes embrace this diversity of themes and evocations.

The first reading offers us, through an ancient blessing formula, the certainty of God's continuous presence at our side on the paths we walk every day. He will always be a source of life and peace for us.

The second reading evokes God's love and care, manifested a thousand times in human history. He sent his Son Jesus to meet us to free us from slavery and to make us his “children.” It is in this privileged situation of being free and loved “children” that we can address God and call him “*Abba! Father!*”

The Gospel shows how God's presence in our history is a source of joy and hope for all men and women, but particularly for the poor and marginalized, represented in the shepherds to whom the Good News of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, in Bethlehem, is announced. He was born poor, to come and announce the Good News of the Kingdom to the poor. It also suggests that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the model of the believer who, in silence and without fuss, welcomes God's proposals, keeps them in her heart and allows herself to be guided by them.

A Happy New Year with God's blessings, and as the first reading tells us:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen.

Reference:

[*[LVIII World Day of Peace 2025 - “Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your peace”](#) | Francis, para. 1, 13, cf. [Moment of Prayer on the Tenth Anniversary of the “Invocation for Peace in the Holy Land”](#), 7 June 2024.]