Week 10, December 9-15

The thought for today is **Peace**. Peace Activist Claude Thomas writes: “Peace is not an idea. Peace is not a political movement, not a theory or a dogma. Peace is a way of life: living mindfully in the present moment.... We must simply stop the endless wars that rage within... Imagine, if everyone stopped the war in themselves – there would be no seeds from which war could grow.”

Peace is a gift before it becomes a task. It is gift from our Lord Jesus: “My peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give to you. A peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you” (John 14:27). We have been gifted with the peace of the Lord; with his own peace. It is a gift that no one else can give to you. Sit and meditate on that rare and precious gift.

What Frances did on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ near the little town called Greccio in the 3rd year before his glorious death should especially be noted and recalled with reverent memory. In that place there was a certain man by the name of John, of good reputation and an even better life, whom blessed Francis loved with a special love … Blessed Francis sent for this man, as he often did, about 15 days before the birth of the Lord, and said to him: “If you wish us to celebrate the present feast of our Lord at Greccio, go with haste and diligently prepare what I tell you for I want to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem, and set before our bodily eyes, in some way, the inconveniences of his infant needs: how he laid in a manger, how comma with an ox in and an ass standing by, he laid upon the hay where he had been placed. When the good and faithful man heard these things, he ran with haste and prepared in that place all the things the saint had told him.

But the day of joy drew near;  
the time of great rejoicing came.  
The brothers were called from their various places.  
Men and women of that neighborhood prepared with glad hearts,  
according to their means,  
candles and torches to light up that night  
that had lighted up all the days and years with its gleaming star.  

At length the saint of God came,  
and finding all things prepared,  
he saw it and was glad.  
The manger was prepared,  
the hay had been brought,  
the ox and ass were led in.  

There simplicity is honored,  
poverty is exalted,  
humility is commended,
and Greccio was made, as it were, a new Bethlehem.

That night is lighted up like the day,
and it delights people and beasts alike.
The people come and are filled with new joy over the new mystery.
The woods ring with the voices of the crowd,
and the rocks make answer to their jubilation.
The brothers sing, paying their debt of praise to the Lord,
and the whole night resounds with rejoicing.
The saint of God stands before the manager,
uttering sighs,
overcome with love,
and filled with a wonderful joy.
The solemnities of the Mass are celebrated over the manager,
and the priest experiences a new consolation.

[Thomas of Celano, 1st Life 84-86]

Psalm Fragment:
“The mountains will bring news of peace to the people,
and the hills will announce justice.” ~ Psalm 72:2-4

Reflection Question:
When are you not being peace, even if you might be doing peace?

Action for this Week:
Greet everyone you meet with “Peace and Good!” Take a sacred pause to meditate on the solemnity of the nativity of Our Lord, the poor King.

Prayer for the Week:
God of heavenly light, Father of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin to bring Good News to the World, our world is so greatly in need of Your peace. Fill the hearts of all men and women with Your love, poured out on us so abundantly, place within us all, through the gracious gift of sanctifying grace, your joy, love, and peace, so that each of us may receive You willingly and lovingly into our hearts. May your Holy and Divine Will reign here, as in heaven; And, may our world be peace-filled this Christmas season, and always. Amen.

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