

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas has come and gone! A New Year has been born! Yet, in the Scriptures at least, the melody lingers on!

As this New Year begins, the shepherds of Bethlehem invite us to join them in seeking Jesus. It wasn't enough for them to see the angels. You'd think it would have been. Night sky shattered with light. Stillness erupting with song. Simple shepherds roused from their sleep and raised to their feet by a choir of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest!" They could never have imagined such splendor.

But it wasn't enough to see and hear the angels. The shepherds wanted to see the One about whom the angels sang. They wanted to see Jesus!

Not far behind the shepherds was the old man, Simeon, whom we heard about in last Sunday's Gospel. It had been revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Christ. According to the Scripture, this prophecy was fulfilled only a few days after the shepherds had seen Jesus. Somehow Simeon knew that when he looked on the baby cradled in Mary's arms, he was looking on the face of God. For Simeon, seeing Jesus was enough. It was everything! Now, he was ready to die: "Now, Lord, you can dismiss your servant, in peace, according to your Word. For, with my own eyes, I've seen your salvation."

This coming Sunday, we will hear of the Magi who had the same desire. They wanted to see Jesus. Like the shepherds, they were not satisfied with the spectacular star that led them to Bethlehem. They wanted to see the Light of Bethlehem. They wanted to see Jesus!

They succeeded! They all succeeded! More remarkable than their determination to see Jesus was Jesus' willingness to be seen. Jesus

wants to be seen! All who sought Him, found Him! All who looked for Him, discovered Him!

What is worthy of our consideration today is that in each instance—the shepherds, Simeon, the Magi—all found Jesus cradled in His Mother’s arms. On this Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, it is worth noting that many a saint has found that the best way to approach Jesus is through Mary. In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius insists that prayer should begin with what he calls three colloquys—first, pray, asking Mary to take you to Jesus and then pray, asking Jesus to lead you to the Father who will open you to the Holy Spirit who is praying within you.

If you are as determined as the shepherds and Simeon and the Magi to see Jesus for yourself come to Him through Mary. “How do I do that?” you may ask.

Pray the Rosary! Pray the Rosary every day! Make this your New Year’s resolution.

But don’t just finger the beads, mindlessly saying Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory bes. Reflect on each of the mysteries—events of the Lord’s life, put yourself in the picture, with Mary at your side. Then, keeping that picture in your mind, finger the beads. I promise you that you—like the shepherds, Simeon, and the Magi—will find Jesus through Mary. Jesus wants you to find Him. He wants you to see Him, loving you, living within you. **PRAY THE ROSARY! PRAY THE ROSARY EVERY DAY! HAPPY NEW YEAR!**