

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Dec 13th 2015**

In the fast-paced and sometimes scary world we live in, a message telling us to have no anxiety can make us stop in our tracks. No anxiety, we might think. What about my job, my family, politics, war, destruction? How can I not be anxious? Today's second reading gives us a bit of a game plan for reducing anxiety, a map for us to find our way as we prepare the birth of Christ.

Rejoice. And then rejoice again. Rejoice always. That's what we often lose when we get caught up in life. We lose the joy of knowing that God loves us and watches over us. Find joy in prayer. Find joy in God's creation. Find God in the people we meet.

Be kind. Sometimes in the rush of life, we forget the power of a smile, a helpful hand, a kind word. The power of a small act of kindness is that that one act can reverberate, sending out ripples of kindness. Life's frustrations often make us want to lash out at people, often not the people we are frustrated with. Perhaps things aren't going as we planned. Embrace the new plan. Find joy and kindness where you didn't expect to find it.

Be thankful. The rush of everyday life often leaves us in a whirl of busy-ness. We do need to accomplish our goals, to create a good life for our families and ourselves. But we can't lose sight of God. A deep breath, a whispered thanks can help ease that anxiety.

Pray. Find the peace of God to "guard your hearts and minds."

In today's Gospel, we get more stops on that map to help us find our way. In the reading from Luke, John the Baptist tells the crowd if they have two cloaks, to give away one. John tells them to be fair and honest and to wait for the one who is coming.

Let's rejoice, be kind, be thankful and pray that we find our way to the peace of Jesus Christ.

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