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## *A day without violence*

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On Nov. 29, BBC News rejoiced with the headline “New York City celebrates day without violent crime.” “For the first time in living memory,” the article states, “New York has spent a day entirely without violent crime.... Not a single murder, shooting, stabbing or other incident of violent crime was reported all day.”

Perhaps New York is celebrating Christmas early with “peace on earth, good will toward men.” Certainly we can rejoice with every evidence of peaceful solutions. Averting one act of violence holds the promise of solving problems without violence. Peace sets the stage to increase good. There is increased opportunity for innovation, cooperation, and economic progress in a peaceful atmosphere. Perhaps part of the recovery from superstorm Sandy is people's willingness to help one another and be merciful instead of murderous.

Jesus Christ was born into a world rife with violence. Although his birth was humble and peaceful, his parents soon fled to another country to protect him from infanticide (see Matthew 2:16-18). He was protected although hundreds of very young children didn't survive. It's interesting that Jesus was prophesied to be the Prince of Peace, when violence dogged his every step right up to and including the crucifixion. Yet Jesus overcame violence and death with the resurrection and ascension. Jesus' life holds the promise of peace victorious.

Perhaps the Christmas message shows how to bring spiritual peace to humanity. Christ is the divine inspiration from God to humankind that protects and directs. This Christ message is present year round to prevent violence.

Recently I traveled through drug cartel-controlled areas of Mexico. I found myself praying to feel spiritual peace and protection. The inspiration that came to me was “Christ goes before you.” Christ, the healing and saving power of God, goes before me clearing the way and removing violent impulses. It's a mental activity. Christ is a powerful mental force acting on human thought – transforming and calming.

First, prayer acts on our thought to calm us and make our thoughts less disturbed. Prayer connects us with the ever-presence and power of God. It tunes out the static of fear and helps us tune in to divine guidance. Then prayer acts on human thought around us. Like the calming presence of a parent comforting a distressed child, Christ brings peace and stillness to our lives.

My time in Mexico passed without incident. Yet I continue to feel the peaceful presence of Christ in my thought and life. Might this not be the Prince of Peace coming to the world through thought? This peaceful presence is available in Syria and Egypt, in Afghanistan and any troubled area. Christ goes before us, protecting and guiding everyone involved.

As we near the Christmas season, celebrating the birth of Jesus and the revelation of eternal life, it's appropriate to express gratitude for every evidence of "peace on earth, good will toward men." Each prayer brings a promise of peace replacing violence.