

“Rents hobble family budgets” “Extremist pays tab for his crime”, “Outbreak has an impact”, “Bronx officer shot on patrol.” “Wall street, D.C. scramble as limit on borrowing nears.” “Secrets in the garage.”

These are headlines from the Times Union for this past Wednesday. Have you watched the news on TV recently or listened to it on the radio? We are being fed a constant diet of negative news day after day. What effect does it have on you and me? It doesn't make us cheerful. It's depressing.

I remember a song from years ago “The Merry Minuet” sung by the Kingston Trio; “They're rioting in Africa. They're starving in Spain. There's hurricanes in Florida and Texas needs rain. The whole world is festering with unhappy souls. The French hate the Germans. The Germans hate the Poles and I don't like anybody very much.”

We seem to be bathed in a bath of negativity. But it doesn't need to be so. We can begin to bathe ourselves in positivity. Listen to today's Gospel, “the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.” “The Kingdom of God is at hand.”

We are in the first month of a new year. Can this year be different? Can it be a good year? It can! We can do some soul work. We can let that light of Christ shine deeply in our hearts. You may know that the word Gospel is an old English word for Good News. Yes, the Gospel brings us good news of God's love for us not the bad news of violence and lies and deceit.

Please consider nourishing yourself on a minimum of 10 minutes a day with the Gospel and quiet prayer. Read papers and articles and books about the goodness of God and people. And you could read less anxiety provoking news items and less negative stories on the TV. I guarantee you deeper happiness in your life.

I love these words in today's Gospel ‘...the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.’ Jesus' public life is beginning. It continues around us and don't forget, Jesus is waiting for you in the Holy Eucharist.