

## **01/01/2024, Monday. New Year**

The name "January" comes from the Roman god Janus, the god with two faces, one looking to the past and the other looking to the future. This is indeed a time to look back at the year that has just ended and to look forward to the New Year ahead of us.

The human life of Jesus begins with Mary. Therefore, it is appropriate that we begin the New Year with the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God. Since Mary is the Mother of God she is the mother of joy, joy to the world. So the traditional greeting on this first day of the New Year is one of joy: Happy New Year!

Today's newspapers are full of individual and collective new year resolutions. Most of those, however, are not resolutions at all but only wishes. What is the difference between a resolution and a wish? A wish says this is where I want to be, a resolution says this is the road I will take, this is what I will do to get there. The wishful person says "I want to pass my exams this year" and the resolved person says "I will devote an extra hour to my studies everyday in order to pass my exams." The wishful person says "I will have more peace and love in my family this year" and the resolved person says "I will spend more time with my family at table instead of rushing off to the TV, so that we get to know and understand ourselves better." The wishful person says "I will live a life of union with God this year" and the resolved person says "I will set aside this time everyday to pray and hear God's word." The difference between wishing and resolving is: are we prepared to do what it takes to make our dreams come true, are we prepared to pay the price?

The gospel today presents Mary to us as a model of that new life in Christ that all of us wish for ourselves in the new year. There we see that Mary was prepared to do something to realize this goal. What did she do? We read that the shepherds, when they went to adore the Child Jesus in the manger, told all that the angels had said to them. "But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). Again after the boy Jesus was found in the Temple, we are told that "His mother treasured all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51). Mary was a woman who valued the word of God, who treasured it and made time to meditate and ponder it. It is true that the holiness of Mary is attributed to the grace of God, but this should not make us forget that she needed to make an effort in order to cooperate with the

grace of God. She pondered the word of God in order to discern what God was saying to her at every stage in her life as the handmaid of God.

A new year means 365 new opportunities, new dreams, new goals, new achievements, and new relationships. You may have had some really good memories about the past year, but you never know what the new one is bringing you. It is time to be hopeful, have new dreams, make new resolutions, and be determined to do your best and be your best. It's time to move on and embrace what's new.

So as we welcome the first day of the New Year, we also need to be prepared for the appointed time when God will come into our lives and reveal Himself to us. So as we begin this New Year, and as we look at so many days ahead, let us look at one second at a time, one moment at a time. Together with Mother Mary, let us offer each second and each moment of every day to the Lord so that He will bless it and make it holy, so that every moment of every day, we will be loving and peaceful and joyful.

If you are excited about the new year that begins tomorrow, remember the good moments of last year, and resolve to make better moments this new year. I hope your life will be full of surprises and joyful moments in the new year that's about to begin. May God bless you with good health, noble friends, peaceful homes, meaningful and rewarding jobs and joyful days throughout the new year.

**Happy New Year.**