

HOMILY ~ MARY MOTHER OF GOD DECEMBER 31, 2021

The name January comes from the Roman god Janus, the god with two faces, one looking at the past and one looking to the future. As we start a New Year, I think we should spend time assessing the past year and looking at the future with an eye to what you would like the coming year to be. I think in doing this we need to take our example from Mary. In the Gospel reading, we hear an account of that first Christmas morning when the shepherds told Mary about the message they had received about Jesus. We hear that: "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." I think we need to do that.

First of all, review the past year. Be honest with yourself. What were the good things and what were the not so good things. Then ask yourself, "What are the lessons I need to learn from the past year?" After you have reflected upon this, let the past year go. You cannot change the past; you can just learn from it and move forward. Next pick one thing you would like to change for the coming year. Pick something general and positive within your control. "I am going to be more kind to people I do not know well." "I am going to be more loving to my spouse." "I am going to spend more time with my children." "I am going to get more involved with my St. Edith Family." Pick one thing. That will be your general direction, but otherwise you are going to let go of the future. You cannot control the future, so you are going to put that in God's hands. Next, you are going to make your New Year's resolution. We do not like to make New Year's resolutions because we do not keep them. We do not keep them usually because they are unrealistic. Pick one thing that you can work on. The second reason why we do not keep them is that the first time we fail, we give them up.

This is the resolution I am going to suggest for you. Make a resolution to start each day with five minutes of prayer, where you are going to reflect upon the general positive thing you picked to work on for the New Year. This may be five minutes after the alarm goes off before you get out of bed. This may be five minutes in the shower. This may be five minutes of your commute to work. Pick what will work for you and stick to it. Everyone can do these five minutes every morning. This is what you will reflect upon. How did I do yesterday? If you did well, affirm yourself. If you did not do so well, resolve to do better today and let yesterday go. Next, pick one small thing you can do today. You are going to start each day anew. If you did not do very well yesterday, you are going to let it go and start over. Stick to your five minutes of prayer every morning. When you pick something every day that you can do, you can shape your resolution each day so it remains reasonable. For example, if you pick being more kind to people you do

not know well, you can pick things like: I will thank the person at Starbucks for coming to work and providing my morning coffee; I am going to affirm my co-worker that I am sometimes short with because I find them irritating; I am going to give the wait person an extra big tip when I go to dinner tonight. By the end of the year, you will be one kind person to people you do not know well. *Reflect upon that.*

Love & Peace,
Fr. Jim