

HOMILY MARY MOTHER OF GOD

January 1, 2026

In the Gospel reading today we hear that Mary, shortly after giving birth to Jesus, listened to the shepherds and what had been told to them about Jesus. She kept all these things reflecting on them in her heart. Mary had a lot to reflect upon. Nine months earlier she found out that she was with child by the power of the Holy Spirit. She found that her cousin Elizabeth who was beyond child bearing years was with child. And now the message about the child, Jesus. This was quite a lot for a young woman in her early teens to take in. It was quite a lot for her to reflect on. This is a type of quiet prayer. I think we need to spend more time praying this type of prayer. Just sitting with God quietly reflecting.

Today as we start the New Year, I think we need to reflect upon the past year and look forward to the New Year. We need some time in quiet reflecting prayer. I came across an article in the New York Times that listed 7 questions to reflect upon as we start the New Year and I would like to share them with you. Pick questions to reflect upon that are meaningful for you.

- When did you feel the most joyful? It can be spending time with particular people or in a place that you love, your job, your volunteer work. Whatever brought you joy. You want to make sure you spend time doing that again next year.
- What gave you energy and what drained it? This is not just the specific activities you did last year, but your reaction to them. You may want to spend more time with what gave you energy. In spiritual terms, this can be thought of in terms of spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation. If you have energy around something, spiritual consolation, even if it is something very difficult for you, it is likely that this is what God is calling you to do. If

the activity zaps your energy or leads to spiritual desolation, this may be something you want to avoid in the future if possible.

- What is something that seemed impossible at the time, but you did it anyway? This is evidence of your resilience and will help to bolster your confidence. God will assist you in getting through the seemly impossible things that you face in the New Year.
- What are things that you did inconsistently that had a positive effect in your life? Think of the positive things you did last year that you could do more frequently. Quiet prayer, exercising, eating healthy, and doing service projects. Make these things into habits by repeating them on a consistent basis.
- What did you try to control that was out of your control? You cannot control what other people do or how they respond to you. You can only control how you act and react. Let go of what you cannot control.
- Whom do you need to forgive? Jesus tells us we must always forgive. Forgiving does not mean that what they did was ok. It does not mean that you have to forget what they did. It does not mean that you have to continue to let the person hurt you. Forgiveness is about you, not the person who hurt you. You cannot wait for an apology or for someone to make things right. The past is in the past and cannot be changed. You do not want to let something that someone did in the past control you in the future. No one wants to carry around the anger. That does not feel good. Forgiveness is the gift you can give yourself. So, keep all of these things reflecting upon them in your heart.