

JANUARY 1, 2022
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Luke 2: 16-21

“MARY, OUR MOTHER.”

“There is a beautiful, little story about a long, boring train journey made, one Christmas day, by some elderly residents of a nursing home who were on their way to a vacation spot. At one station, a young mother with a small child entered the train. The child smiled at all the grim faces around him and began moving from one lap to another talking, shouting with joy, and chatting with everyone. Instantly, the grim and silent atmosphere in the train was changed to one of joy and happiness. Today we remember with joy and gratitude, how Mary and her Divine Son Jesus transformed a hopeless, joyless and sinful world into a place of joy and happiness.”¹

My sisters and brothers, today we are celebrating the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God as we begin the New Year 2022. In this solemnity, we give honor to Mary in her most ancient title: *Theotokos* which means ‘Bearer of God.’ We are being reminded here that as she accepted to be the Mother of God, she became the first disciple of Jesus her Son, the first one to hold and live on, and embrace the Gospel of hope, compassion, and reconciliation. “We learn the great truth that Mary is the Mother of God from St. Luke's gospel, in the message given by the angel to Mary: ‘You are going to be the mother of a Son and you will call Him Jesus, and He will be called the Son of the Most High.’ When the Blessed Virgin Mary visited Elizabeth, after the angel had appeared to her and told her that she would be the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth said, ‘Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me?’ [Lk. 1:43]. The Holy Scriptures teach us that Jesus was both God and man. John writes: ‘The Word became flesh and lived among us’ [Jn. 1:14]. St. Paul refers to this event when he writes to the Galatians,

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

‘God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.’ Based on these references in the New Testament and on the traditional belief of the early Church, the Council of Ephesus affirmed in 431AD that Mary was truly the Mother of God because ‘according to the flesh’ she gave birth to Jesus, who was truly God from the first moment of His conception by Mary. Twenty years later, in 451AD, the Council of Chalcedon affirmed the Motherhood of Mary as a dogma, an official doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church. Since Jesus is God and Mary is his mother, she is the Mother of God, Mother of the Messiah, and the Mother of Christ our Divine Saviour. We also learn from the Holy Scriptures and Tradition that God filled the mother of His only Son with all celestial graces, freed her at the moment of her conception from original sin, allowed her to play an active role in the redemptive work of Jesus, and finally took her to heaven, body and soul, after her death. As He was dying on the cross, Jesus gave us the precious gift of His own mother to be our heavenly Mother.”²

My sisters and brothers, our gospel talks about the journey of the shepherds to Bethlehem to see the Baby Jesus as described by the angel. They all believed to the good news and journeyed to discover the Messiah. We, too, have our journey of life. Like the shepherds, we need to listen, believe, and proclaim what we have heard, seen and experienced in our own lives, and share that to others. Also, like the journey of faith of Mary, we need to imitate her as she listened, treasured, and pondered all the messages of God in her heart. All these things, Mary acted on it, a contemplative in action. Every time we pray and reflect on God’s word and messages, we allow God to be born in and through us. So, may the Mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary be our inspiration to give to Jesus all our lives as we begin this New Year 2022. May the Blessed Mother be our intercessor to have a meaningful, fruitful, and abundant new year!

² ibid

I would like to end this homily with a suggested “list of resolutions prepared by the Rev. Walter Schoedel. He calls them '7-UPS for the New Year.' No, this has nothing to do with the soft drink. These 7-UPS fall under the heading of attitudes and actions.

The first is **WAKE UP** - Begin the day with the Lord. It is His day. Rejoice in it.

The second is **DRESS-UP** - Put on a smile. It improves your looks. It says something about your attitude.

The third is **SHUT-UP** - Watch your tongue. Don't gossip. Say nice things. Learn to listen.

The fourth is **STAND-UP** - Take a stand for what you believe. Resist evil. Do good.

Five, **LOOK-UP** - Open your eyes to the Lord. After all, He is your only Savior.

Six, **REACH-UP** - Spend time in prayer with your adorations, confessions, thanksgivings, and supplications to the Lord.

And finally, **LIFT-UP** - Be available to help those in need - serving, supporting, and sharing.”³

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for giving us your Mother to be our Mother, too. May I imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary in giving my life to you, my Savior, and my Lord. My prayer is that this New Year bring hope, peace, blessings for me and for my family, friends, and relatives. Like Mary, may I always listen, reflect, and act on your Word and messages for your greater glory, now and for ever. Amen.”

³ ibid