

## Homily of the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, January 1, 2025

Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67:2-3, 5-8; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

The Catholic Church begins the year, every year, by invoking the Blessed Virgin Mary's intercession for the world. The Church honors her today by her highest title, The Mother of God, in Greek, *Theotokos*, meaning "God-bearer." The Incarnation, the Word became flesh, took place in her womb. She gave birth to God the Son. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **THE WORD WAS GOD.**" Luke 1:41-43, "Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that **THE MOTHER OF MY LORD** should come to me?" Colossians 2:9, "In Him dwells **ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD** bodily." Being the Mother of God means that she is the mother of all. As we invoke her, may she intercede for us as she interceded for the couple during the wedding banquet at Cana (John 2:1-12). As we begin 2025, may Jesus change our water into wine. May our anxious moments become joyful moments. May we become bearers of God as Mary was.

Today is a day of thanksgiving. We thank God for keeping us alive, keeping us together, and bringing us to 2025. We thank God for the gift of one another, and for the gift of family and friends. We thank God for what we are, who we are, all he has given to us, and for his countless blessings. None is by our power nor by our might. Only the fool says that there is no God (Psalm 14:1).

It is a special day to gather in God's sanctuary to receive his blessings, which launch us into the new year. The first reading is God's blessings on us:

May the Lord bless us and keep us. Amen.

May the Lord let his face shine upon us and be gracious to us. Amen.

May the Lord look upon us kindly and give us peace. Amen.

(Numbers 6:22-27).

It is a day to thank God for giving us another opportunity. That we are alive today is not because we are better behaved than those who passed on. It is by God's grace. Therefore, 2025 is God's new chance for each one of us! The question is, what am I going to do with this new chance God is giving to me? Sometimes, when a gadget malfunctions, a good solution is to shut it down and restart it. Many of us need a restart. Malfunction does not mean crash. We may only need to delete some virus apps.

Very importantly, it is a day of reflection. Jesus' Parable of the Net in Matthew 13:47-48 encourages us to put what is good into buckets and throw away what is bad. As we begin 2025, let us throw away what has not helped and will not help. Let us keep and improve on what has helped and will continue to help.

It is, also, a day of prayer of committing and surrendering everything about us to God to take charge and be in complete control in 2025. We pray that he will shelter us with his pinions, and under his wings we will take refuge; that his faithfulness will be our protecting shield; and that he will command his angels with regard to us, to guard us wherever we go (Psalm 91). Amen.

I wrote a piece that can be a spiritual guide. The title is, **WHAT WE CELEBRATE, MULTIPLIES.**

If we celebrate positive thoughts and positive actions, God multiplies them.

If we celebrate negative thoughts and negative actions, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate faith and courage, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate doubt and fear, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate trust and confidence, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate distrust and suspicion, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate love and acceptance, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate hate and violence, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate understanding and harmony, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate discord and disagreement, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate self-control and peace, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate anger and revenge, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate forgiveness and reconciliation, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate resentment and unforgiveness, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate uprightness and integrity, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate dishonesty and deceit, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate generosity and hospitality, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate meanness and unfriendliness, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate kindness and upliftment, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate unkindness and pulling down, the Evil One multiplies them.  
If we celebrate gratitude and thanksgiving, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate ingratitude and ungratefulness, the Evil One multiplies them.

If we celebrate virtue and goodness, God multiplies them.  
If we celebrate weakness and sin, the Evil One multiplies them.

Indeed, what we celebrate, multiplies! Therefore, let us celebrate God's blessings, and may he multiply them.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and our mother intercede for us.

Happy New Year to you all!

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