

Mary, Mother of God (Happy New Year)

“With Mary, we are better children of God”

Happy New Year! The life of Jesus on earth begins with Mary. Therefore, it is appropriate that we begin the New Year with a 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 fitting one of joy:

Today we honor the Virgin Mary as Mother of God. We honor her, not only as the earthly mother of Jesus of Nazareth, but as the Imm. Virgin who gave the Son of God, flesh and blood. Today's feast will tell us that Mary is not only Jesus' biological mother, she is his spiritual mother as well.

Friends, not all of us have our mothers alive today; so we may not have our mothers to spiritually guide us. But we all have Mary, the perfect spiritual mother. Through her prayers and intercession, she continues to care for us; she continues to teach us how to reflect on the word of God. Through her motherly tender love, she is always ready to embrace us and draw us closer to her Son. Yes, she is blessed among women, and we are also blessed to have her as our mother.

How many times did you say or hear that today? In other words, is it really possible to find genuine happiness in the New Year? It would be a mistake, of course, to expect perfect happiness this year or any year in this life. It would also be a mistake also to identify happiness with pleasure. Perhaps nothing has caused as much unhappiness to as many people as the pleasures or accumulating possessions.

A right answer can be found in Bethlehem. Let us go to Bethlehem to see what it is. Look into the cave. There is none of those things in which we seek happiness. There is no riches, no fame, no power, no conveniences, no pleasure, nothing but a cold-almost empty cave on the outskirts of town. The only presence is a couple of animals, who warm up Jesus.

Now look at Mary and Joseph kneeling before the manger. They must be tired. They have traveled 100 miles or so from Nazareth to Bethlehem on foot/or on the jolting back of a donkey. They must be very hungry. They haven't had a real meal since they left Nazareth some 5-7 days ago. They must be cold in the midst of winter. It must have been very humiliating for them to discover no room among their relatives in their ancestral home or at the village Inn.

Yet in the midst of all of this, Mary and Joseph are the happiest people to walk the face of this earth. In Bethlehem, they are teaching us the amazing paradox that it is *only when we lose ourselves in love* and service of Jesus, we do find happiness. Happiness that this world can never give us, and no one can take away from us. But how can we lose ourselves in the love and service of Jesus? Jesus has made it very simple, "Whatever you do, to the least of my brothers, that, you do unto to me."

So, on this very first day of the New Year, let us ask for the grace to *know Jesus more intimately, love him more ardently and follow him more closely*, and serve him joyfully in our brothers and sisters so that this New Year may be a year abundant blessings & of true Happiness, for us! Happy New Year!