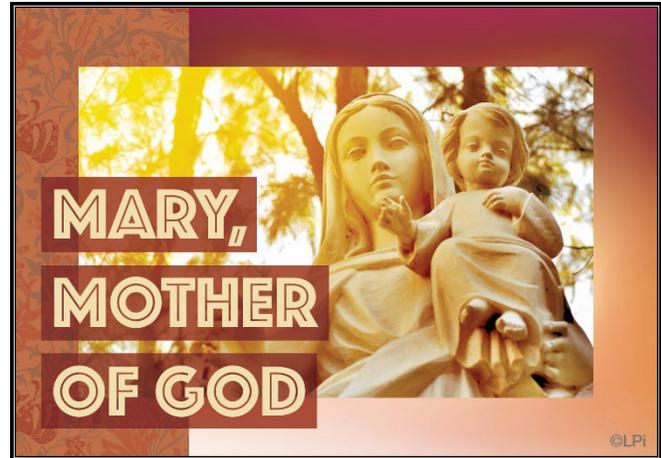


Dear Parishioners,

We are starting a New Year honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. The Apostle Paul refers to the mystery of the divine motherhood of Mary in his Letter to the Galatians. He writes, **"When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law" (4: 4). "Born of the woman" - Mary's greatest privilege is precisely to be Mother of the Son who is God.** The title "Mother of God", together with the title "Blessed Virgin", are the oldest titles for Mary. All other titles we use to venerate her are based on these titles.



Today, as we look at Mary, ever-virgin Mother of God's Son, let us learn from her to welcome the Child who was born for us in Bethlehem. When we truly recognize in the Child born of her the Son of God and accept him as our only Savior, we will recognize and accept Mary as Mother of God and our Mother. Although the Child lying in a manger looks like any other baby in the world, at the same time he is totally different: he is the Son of God; he is God, true God and true man. This mystery - the Incarnation of the Word and the divine Motherhood of Mary - is great and surly not easy to understand with the human mind alone. So, we pray as disciples did, **"Lord, increase our faith"**. (Luke 17:5)

As we begin a new year today, resolutions are probably on our minds. The name "January" comes from the Roman god Janus, the god with two faces, one looking to the past and the other looking to the future. This is indeed a time to look back at the year that has just ended and to look forward to the New Year ahead of us. How did I spend this one year of my life that has just passed? Did I use it to advance my goals in life? Could I have done better last year in the way I invested my time between the demands of work, family, friends and society, and the demands of my spiritual life? When we review the passing year, it leads us to setting goals and resolutions for the New Year.

Today many people will make the New Year resolutions. I think that most of them are not resolutions but only wishes. What is the difference between a resolution and a wish? A wish identifies a goal one wants to reach; a resolution specifies the steps one will take to reach it. A wish says where I want to be, a resolution says these are the steps I will take to get there. The wishful person says "I want to pass my exams this year" and the resolved person says "I will devote an extra hour to my studies every day in order to pass my exams." The wishful person says "I will have more peace and love in my family this year" and the resolved person says "I will spend more time with my family at table instead of rushing off to the TV or something else." The wishful person says "I will live a life of union with God this year" and the resolved person says "I will set aside this much of time every day to pray and hear God's word." The difference between wishing and resolving is: are we prepared to do what it takes to make our dreams come true? Resolutions demand perseverance and commitment.

I pray that the Lord Jesus fills your lives during the coming year with an abundance of blessings: **"May the Lord bless you and keep you! May the Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!**

May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Numbers 6:24-26)

May God bless us and Mary, Mother of God keep us throughout New 2023 Year.

Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis